Durham E-Theses

Homeric epic and world literature: A comparative study of method

ZABEL, BLAZ

Abstract

Homeric epic and world literature:
A comparative study of method

Blaž Zabel

This dissertation addresses the relationship between Homeric epic and world literature by focusing on the history of scholarship, specifically Homeric studies and world literature studies. It investigates three questions: how do ideas about world literature and the globalised world affect interpretations of Homer; how do readings of Homeric poetry inform our understanding of world literature and assist in the process of world-making; and why should anyone interested in world literature choose to focus on Homer? The dissertation is divided into three parts, each dedicated to a historical investigation of a method in which world literature and Homeric epic have been studied: the historical approach, the comparative approach, and the study of literary circulation. In the first part, I discuss how the first theoretician of world literature, J. W. Goethe, and how the father of Homeric scholarship, F. A. Wolf, understood the relation between classical and world literature. Because they were contemporaries and knew each other, there is a rich body of material here that illuminates the discussions and tensions between Goethe and Wolf. In the second part, I focus on the beginnings of literary comparisons by the Irish comparatist and classicist H. M. Posnett, who promoted a historical-comparative approach to literature, and the work of Milman Parry, who developed similar ideas in Homeric scholarship. The third part of my dissertation investigates the ways in which world literature is built through connection rather than comparison. First, I provide a new reading of the history of comparative literature by discussing how literary influences were conceptualised by the French comparatists in the early 20th century. Then I investigate how similar ideas were used by William Ewart Gladstone in his Homeric scholarship and his political life, and further, how the same approach was taken up by Homeric scholars who see the connections between Greece and the Near-East from a postcolonial vantage point. By demonstrating that receptions of Homeric poetry act as a form of world literature's localisation, this dissertation proposes a new perspective in world literature studies and global classics. While the two disciplines mostly focus on global comparisons, cultural hybridity, cultural exchange, and studying various post-colonial contexts, this dissertation argues that processes of literary localisation, nationalisation, and delimitation are equally integral responses to globalising pressures.

HOMERIC EPIC AND WORLD LITERATURE:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF METHOD

Blaž Zabel

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Classics and Ancient History

Durham University

2020

INDEX

Declaration and Statement of Copyright

This work has been submitted to Durham University in accordance with the regulations for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. It is my own work, and none of it has previously been submitted to Durham University or any other university for a degree. The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. All information derived from this thesis must be acknowledged appropriately.

Acknowledgement

The completion of this dissertation would not have been possible without the help and support of many people.[1] First and foremost, my primary supervisors Barbara Graziosi and Ed Richardson. Barbara supervised this project from the very beginning, offering remarkable guidance and productive criticism. When she later moved to Princeton, she continued overseeing my work to its very end and her supervision remained invaluable. Ed took over as my primary supervisor in the third year of my programme. His exceptional support and useful feedback helped me bring this work to its completion. To both of them, I am immensely grateful.

I would also like to thank my other teachers, mentors, and readers that I met along the way. My secondary supervisors Johannes Haubold and Nicholas Saul offered feedback at various points throughout the programme. David Elmer supervised my work during a term spent at Harvard, and Joshua Billings was my academic advisor during the year spent in Princeton. Johannes also taught me Akkadian and I learned from seminars led by Gregory Nagy, David Damrosch, Thomas Kaufmann, and Joshua Katz. Drafts of chapters were read by David Damrosch, David Elmer, Joshua Billings, Robert Kanigel, Joep Leerssen, Andreas T. Zanker, Marko Juvan, Jernej Habjan, and Tone Smolej. Their response was extremely useful, and they often led my research into new and intriguing directions. I further benefited from chatting with Georg Danek, Katherine Harloe, Athena Leoussi, Daniel Hartley, Lorna Hardwick, Jenny Strauss Clay, Athanassios Vergados, and Steve Reece. I would like to thank all of them for their teachings, comments, and rich discussions. Without them this dissertation would not have been the same.

Lastly, I would like to thank my friends in Durham, Harvard, Princeton, and Ljubljana who made my life over the past few years so pleasant. Alex, Andrea, Carlo, Giacomo, Giulia, Elena, Sarah, Seren, Simona and other friends of friendship made Durham a place I called home. Petra, Junoš, Teo, and Tadej reminded me why I will never leave Ljubljana behind. And Emre, Diego, Jorge, Soha, and many others made me feel so very welcome in the United States. It was because of my friends that the past few years were one of the most enjoyable experiences of my life.

INTRODUCTION

> This thinker observed that all the books, no matter how diverse they might be, are made up of the same elements: the space, the period, the comma, the twenty-two letters of the alphabet. He also alleged a fact which travellers have confirmed: in the vast Library there are no two identical books. From these two incontrovertible premises he deduced that the Library is total and that its shelves register all the possible combinations of the twenty-odd orthographical symbols (a number which, though extremely vast, is not infinite): in other words, all that is given to express, in all languages. Everything: the minutely detailed history of the future, the archangels' autobiographies, the faithful catalogues of the Library, thousands and thousands of false catalogues, the demonstration of the fallacy of those catalogues, the demonstration of the fallacy of the true catalogue, the Gnostic gospel of Basilides, the commentary on that gospel, the commentary on the commentary on that gospel, the true story of your death, the translation of every book in all languages, the interpolations of every book in all books (Jorge Luis Borges, *The Library of Babel*).[2]

Borges' very short story about a library which contains all works ever written and ever to be written prominently features in scholarly work about world literature.[3] It is not hard to see why, as it neatly represents the present-day challenges of world literature. In 2000, Franco Moretti published "Conjectures on world literature", an article that almost singlehandedly established what is sometimes called world literature studies – and which almost perfectly described the Borgesian problem of the library. Moretti writes: "I think it's time we returned to that old ambition of *Weltliteratur*: after all, the literature around us is now unmistakably a planetary system", a system consisting of "hundreds of languages and literatures" which no one person could read and "no one ever will".[4] The narrator of Borges' short story describes this hex of the library in the very beginning. Having devoted his entire life to the Library, he writes: "…now that my eyes can hardly decipher what I write, I am preparing to die just a few leagues

---

[2] Este pensador observó que todos los libros, por diversos que sean, constan de elementos iguales: el espacio, el punto, la coma, las veintidós letras del alfabeto. También alegó un hecho que todos los viajeros han confirmado: No hay en la vasta Biblioteca, dos libros idénticos. De esas premisas incontrovertibles dedujo que la Biblioteca es total y que sus anaqueles registran todas las posibles combinaciones de los veintitantos símbolos ortográficos (número, aunque vastísimo, no infinito) o sea todo lo que es dable expresar: en todos los idiomas. Todo: la historia minuciosa del porvenir, las autobiografías de los arcángeles, el catálogo fiel de la Biblioteca, miles y miles de catálogos falsos, la demostración de la falacia de esos catálogos, la demostración de la falacia del catálogo verdadero, el evangelio gnóstico de Basilides, el comentario de ese evangelio, el comentario del comentario de ese evangelio, la relación verídica de tu muerte, la versión de cada libro a todas las lenguas, las interpolaciones de cada libro en todos los libros. (Borges, *La biblioteca del Babel* in Borges, 1942; English translation in Borges, 2007).

[3] E.g. Kadir, 2010: 179; Venkat Mani, 2017: 9; Blanco, 2018; Damrosch, 2020: 285. Cf. Jansen, 2018a.

[4] Moretti, 2000: 54–55.

from the hexagon in which I was born."[5] An infinite library, but only a few hexagons of books that one can read in a lifetime. Hence Moretti concluded that "world literature is not an object, it's a *problem*, and a problem that asks for a new critical method".[6] Scholars of world literature should establish "*how*" to tackle this problem – not unlike the "Men of the Library" as Borges envisaged them, who devoted their entire lives to studying "this problem which no conjecture had deciphered".[7] The problem is persistent: if world literature is infinite, as the Library is, how can we study it?

In a way, this dissertation approaches the same challenge through a different version of the Borgesian story. It begins with a narrator who wanders the library and eventually finds a book that contains the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* – for a library that contains all literatures necessarily contains both Homeric epics. The reader-traveller reads her find and then starts wondering: having read this one book from the library of world literature, what can she infer about the library? Are other books different or similar, how, and why? If one were to read another book, which one should it be? What could that other book say about the library and the collection(s) it holds? Is what the traveller found out about the library during her journeys relevant for reading and understanding this one particular book? Should it influence how it is read? And furthermore, does this book need to be recommended should another reader pass by? Is it integral for understanding the nature of the library? Such is the reader's problem envisaged in this dissertation: a limited lifetime of reading, devoted to this one book (or maybe two, three more…), and numerous questions about the library itself envisaged through this one text. In other words, this thesis considers Homeric epic and world literature, their dynamic relationship, mutual conditioning, and productive hermeneutics. If "literature is now a planetary system", it asks, what this means for Homeric poetry? How does Homeric epic inform ideas about *Weltliteratur*? How do different conceptions and theories about world literature influence how the two ancient poems attributed to Homer are read? And if, after all, the library is infinite, why should one choose to read Homer?

Above I described a reader who simply happens upon Homeric epic, quite by chance: increasingly, this is how we encounter Homer, particularly in my generation or among younger readers still, who may chance upon the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* in a poorly attended after-school

---

[5] …ahora que mis ojos casi no pueden descifrar lo que escribo, me preparo a morir a unas pocas leguas del hexágono en que nací.
[6] Moretti, 2000: 55.
[7] "…el problema que ninguna conjetura había descifrado." Borges' Men of the Library essentially found a solution, a philosophical-systemic description of the library, which, interestingly, is not very different from Moretti's own suggestion of "distant reading" (Moretti, 2000: 56).

club, or by following a flimsy thread starting from a video-game or a teen fantasy novel. Still, if we allow for the agency of ghosts, Homer continues to enjoy canonical status: we find huddles of readers gathered around that particular shelf in the library where Homer stands – ghosts from the past, Athenian lawgivers, Byzantine monks, Scottish schoolmistresses, postcolonial poets – recommending the book to each other, for a variety of different, but connected, reasons. Borges, in his story, writes that there exists a book, "which is the formula and perfect compendium of *all the rest*"; one who reads it, becomes "analogous to a god" – or an evil demiurge perhaps? In this respect, the problem of world literature acquires a different relevance, as does the question of Homer's place in the Library. How we think about world literature, what we read, and how we read it, all directly affects how we imagine the world itself, our place in it, and that of other possible worlds and readers. It becomes important, therefore, to rethink how receptions of one particular and historically influential literary achievement, in the case of this thesis Homeric epic, were shaped by and contributed to not just perspectives on world literature but also on the world itself. How you find Homer in the Library, in what company, and with what consequences, is what interests me in this dissertation.

***

Borges' library resembles the world literary system as we imagine it today: massive availability of books, which digitalisation has greatly facilitated; numerous translations into the languages of the world, especially English, the new *lingua franca*; an increasingly decentralised and diversified university and education curricula; the production of literature for a global literary market; and the emergence of global publishing houses, awards, and other institutions. On the side of the recipient, we see a diversified and multicultural readership with different cultural backgrounds, knowledge of different languages, creolisation, and global citizenships. All these changes and conditions, sometimes summarised under the elusive heading of *globalisation*, affect how we think about the world, and specifically about literature and culture. This applies not only to modern literary phenomena, but to pre-modern literatures as well. David Damrosch recently wrote:

> Working frequently in earlier periods, I am concerned about the steady drift of literary studies toward a heavy concentration on the past two centuries, even the past fifty years: just 1 percent of the history of literacy to date. We have become increasingly adept at deconstructing racism,

imperialism, and more recently speciesism while ignoring the creeping *presentism* in much of our work. Yet even to understand the consequences of modern imperialisms, for instance, it is helpful to attend to the many empires that came before them.[8]

Ancient literatures and the old empires that came before, it seems, equally contribute to processes that define contemporary globalisation, imperialism, and racism, yet these aspects are greatly understudied. In this respect, it is urgent to rethink how globalisation affects readings of Homeric poetry, how it influences its contexts of reception, and what Homer's place and role might be in a globalised world. My aim, here, is to addresses precisely the question of presentism in its relation to contemporary cultural, but also social and political questions.

While there is no consensus on what globalisation exactly is and when it first began – questions that can be approached from numerous perspectives such as politics, economics, ecology, history, culture, and indeed literature – I nevertheless think it is important to outline what I take it to mean here, since it plays a central role in my discussion.[9] To this end, I offer a working definition based on influential theorisations of the concept in the field. In the *Blackwell Companion to Globalization*, Roland Robertson and Kathleen E. White speak of two overarching aspects of globalisation: "global consciousness", meaning "a shared sense of the world as a whole", which goes "hand in hand" with "increasing connectivity (sometimes called interconnectedness)".[10] This dissertation is broadly concerned with both aspects of globalisation that Robertson and White single out: with connectivity in as much as Homeric interpretations and scholarship are understood as emerging through, and contributing to, interconnectedness (as for example in travel, migration, intercultural encounters, international political action, etc.); and with global consciousness in as much as Homeric receptions imply a perspective on world literature and, indeed, the world. I also follow Ulrich Beck's definition in *What is globalization?*, where he writes "that *we have been living for a long time in a world society,* in the sense that the notion of closed spaces has become illusory".[11] A world society, for Beck, is "a *world horizon* characterized by multiplicity and non-integration which opens out when it is produced and preserved in communication and action".[12] This dissertation

---

[8] Damrosch, 2020: 9. Emphasis in the original.
[9] Here I use mostly discussions in Ritzer, 2007; Gupta, 2009; Connell and Marsh, 2011; Steger, 2013.
[10] Robertson and White, 2007: 54–66.
[11] Beck, 2000: 10. Emphasis in the original.
[12] Beck, 2000: 10. Emphasis in the original.

follows Beck's understanding of globalisation in as much as it understands Homeric scholarship as precisely such "communication and action" that opens out to a world horizon.

Another important voice in world literature studies – and consequentially for the present discussion – is that of Immanuel Wallerstein. While Wallerstein is critical of the term globalisation, his "world-system theory" nevertheless is relevant for discussions about globalisation. Wallerstein's world-system theory provides a useful tool for describing the global, trans-national accumulation of capital which creates a unified world organised into unequally powerful centres and peripheries.[13] This theory further influenced literary scholars such as Franco Moretti, Itamar Even-Zohar, and Gisèle Sapiro[14] who in literary studies theorised a global, interconnected and unevenly organised world literary system. Part III of this dissertation directly follows their theories by investigating how the early French comparatists and Homeric scholars built similar understandings of the literary system as interconnected and relatable, but also unevenly formed. Besides the basic premise of world-system theory, this dissertation also follows Wallerstein's claim that "globalization", by which he understands the asymmetrical connectivity of the world, "has been happening for 500 years".[15] Taking my cue from Wallerstein, I consider the development of modern literary and Homeric scholarship from the eighteenth century until today as a process that was importantly shaped by different aspects of globalisation, including connectivity, global consciousness, economic inequality, global politics, the emergence of global institutions, etc. While Wallerstein treats the emergence of a world-system from 1500 onwards, I start my discussion in the eighteenth century. This is justified by the fact that academic disciplines, including philology, literary studies, and Homeric studies, which are my main focus of attention, acquired their modern form primarily in the eighteenth century and later.[16] Many historical developments of that period, such as the formation of the modern university, the institutionalisation of classical and vernacular philologies, and the emergence of *Weltliteratur* as a cultural concern shaped the nature of Homeric scholarship, its main questions, and methods. Nevertheless, while I limit my discussion to the past 350 years or so, I still accept Wallerstein's case for a world system whose emergence dates back to circa 1500. Indeed, I even suggest that the readings of Homer that I

---

[13] Wallerstein, 1974, 1991, 2004.

[14] Moretti, 2000, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2013; Even-Zohar, 2008; Sapiro 2009, 2015; Sapiro et. al., 2016; Heilbron and Sapiro, 2019.

[15] Wallerstein, 2000: 251. Cf. Robinson, 2011.

[16] For a general overview of classical philology's institutionalisation in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century see Grafton, 1991; Marchand, 1996, 2009; Most, 1997, 2002. Cf. Grafton et. al., 2010.

consider here emerged into an already established and developing system of the kind that he describes.

While my research engages with different aspects of globalisation, it does not strive to make a contribution specifically to the study of this phenomenon. Rather, I aim primarily to contribute to *world literature studies*[17] and *global classics*.[18] Both these fields engage with questions that are related to globalisation, transnationalism, and their relevance for literature. Scholars of world literature propose that globalisation necessitates a "new critical method", a "new field of inquiry", and a "shift of perspective" in theorising and researching literature. They argue that this new perspective supersedes older, locally limited narratives that focus on national and other literary traditions. They therefore decentralise the older Eurocentric focus of literary disciplines and draw attention to international and intercultural circulation (especially to literary translations and global receptions); to global cultural and economic processes that govern(ed) literary production; and to literature's potential for engaging with worlds "beyond our own place and time".[19] Scholars working in global classics also, though to a lesser extent, propose various ways in which classical studies can embrace other works of world literature or offer a more world-inclusive perspective on various receptions of the ancient world.[20]

Some of the earliest attempts at introducing this shift in literary studies, consciously presented as a new paradigm by scholars of world literature, appeared at the turn of the millennium. In 1999, Pascale Casanova began her analysis of global literary economy in *La République mondiale des lettres* by proposing a "shift of perspective" and a "step away" from

---

[17] An incomplete list of the most important discussions and collected volumes in world literature studies is: Lawall, 1994; Casanova, 1999, 2004, 2005; Pizer, 2000, 2006; Moretti, 2000, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2013; Prendergast, 2001, 2004, 2005, 2014; Damrosch, 2003, 2004, 2009b; Saussy, 2006, 2016; Beecroft, 2008, 2015; Thomsen, 2008; Apter, 2011, 2013; D'haen, 2012; D'haen et. al., 2012; Talvet, 2013; Cheah, 2016; Venkat Mani, 2017; Hawas, 2018; Helgesson and Thomsen, 2019; Burns, 2019; Juvan, 2019.

[18] The term "Global classics" has been most prominently introduced by Jansen, 2018a: 120–126 (cf. Jansen, 2018b). She also provides a short history of this newly coined and still debated term (see Jansen, 2018a: 120). Further to Jansen, Seo (2019) points to the presidential panel at the 2019 SCS conference that was entitled 'Global Classics'; and the Classical Association of Ghana organised a series of conferences on Global Classics and Global Humanism.

[19] Damrosch, 2003: 281.

[20] Over the past two to three decades, different questions related to globalisation became the prevailing focus of attention in other academic disciplines as well. Those working in global or world history, for example, focused on the emergence of world-system(s), on intercultural circulation of materials and ideas, on cultural exchange, and cultural hybridity. Musicologists and art historians have addressed similar questions from their own disciplinary perspectives, mostly in fields such as world music and world art history. For world history see Crossley, 2008; Burke, 2009; Sachsenmaier, 2011; Conrad, 2016; for global history of languages see Ostler, 2005; for world philology see Pollock, 2015; for world music see Stokes, 2004; and for world art history see Onians, 1996, 2006; Summers, 2003; Elkins, 2007; Zijlmans and Van Damme, 2008; Rampley et. al., 2012; Kaufmann et. al., 2015; Newall et. al., 2018.

focusing on a particular literary work towards considering the broader cultural "configuration ([…]) to which all texts belong". That is to say, she focused on the "totality of texts and literary and aesthetic debates with which a particular work of literature enters into relation and resonance".[21] As mentioned above, a year later Franco Moretti suggested that "world literature is not an object", but "a *problem*". Instead of focusing on close reading of particular texts, he proposed to study "devices, themes, tropes – or genres and systems" in order to approach the "world literary system", which he described as "simultaneously *one,* and *unequal*: with a core, and a periphery (and a semiperiphery) that are bound together in a relationship of growing inequality".[22] In the same year, John Pizer discussed Goethe's *Weltliteratur* as a historical harbinger of contemporary "transnationalism", developing "a new field of inquiry" in response to "the globalization of the world economy".[23] This phenomenon, he argued, "implies the collapse of discrete, self-contained, national traditions".[24] Now, needless to say, with the emergence of the new nationalisms, economic protectionism, and the trade wars, statements such as this seem very out of date – a point to which I return below. For now, I continue with the review of the problem of world literature as set out at the turn of the 21st century. In *What is world literature?* (2003), David Damrosch suggested that it is "an elliptical refraction of national literatures" (the focus of research being on transnational circulations and receptions instead of isolated national discourses), "writing that gains in translation" (stressing the importance of translation studies), and "a form of detached engagement with worlds beyond our own place and time"[25] (for which he suggested to read widely "across time" and "across cultures"[26]). More recently, Pheng Cheah stressed the importance of world literature as a normative conception, suggesting it is "a type of world-making activity that enables us to imagine a world"[27] and "an active power in the making of worlds, that is, both a site of processes of worlding and an agent that participates and intervenes in these processes".[28] All these interventions in some way responded to notions of interconnectedness and global consciousness, either by focusing on processes that produce globalisation (such as literary circulation, the literary system, or world-making) or by investigating how literature itself refracts the global (as, for example, Damrosch proposed when he wrote that world literature

---

[21] Casanova, 1999; translation in Casanova, 2004: 3.
[22] Moretti, 2000: 55–56.
[23] Pizer, 2000: 213–214.
[24] Pizer, 2000: 213–214.
[25] Damrosch, 2003: 281.
[26] Damrosch, 2009b: ch. 2 and 3.
[27] Cheah, 2008: 26.
[28] Cheah, 2016: 2.

"is a mode of reading that can be experienced *intensively* with a few works just as effectively as it can be explored *extensively* with a large number"[29]).

Responses to globalisation and transnationalism that shaped discussions in world literature studies appeared also in classical studies. As with the new, transnational perspective in world literature studies, scholars of classical literature also searched for ways of moving away from enclosed narratives and proposed different approaches in which classics could broaden its methods and the range of literary traditions under the purview of the discipline. Two such attempts were Alexander Beecroft's *Authorship and cultural identity in early Greece and China: patterns of literary circulation* (2010)[30] and Wiebke Denecke's *Classical world literatures: Sino-Japanese and Greco-Roman comparisons* (2014). Beecroft suggested that "comparing early Greece and China" enriches "current debates about world literature" by challenging "some of the assumptions and bases of current theories." Such comparison, he argued, "is a good place to reflect on the mapping of cultural power onto political power, and on centripetal and centrifugal tendencies in cosmopolitan literary languages."[31] Wiebke Denecke, starting from the belief that world literature is "a new paradigm […] unlike any other paradigm that has swept over the stage of literature departments in North America over the past half century", proposed a new field of "premodern comparative studies" whose scope she illustrated with a comparison of the "historically unrelated processes" of Sino-Japanese and Greco-Roman receptions.[32] Since ancient literatures did not circulate as easily as modern ones, she argued that pre-modern comparative studies offer a new perspective on "global modernity" and "the 'global' in other disciplines".[33] Operating within classical studies *and* Sinology, both scholars suggested that classics as an academic discipline gains by broadening its disciplinary focus and considering other pre-modern literatures.

Another important field in which questions of world literature and globalisation have been addressed is the study of classical reception, where scholars also argue for a transnational consideration of the cultural and historical contexts of the Greco-Roman tradition. In *Afro-Greeks*: *dialogues between Anglophone Caribbean literature and classics in the twentieth*

---

[29] Damrosch, 2003: 299.

[30] Followed by *An Ecology of World Literature* (2015) which considered both ancient Chinese and Greek literary traditions among others. Speaking about concurrent research in world literature he writes: "I was left searching for a theoretical model that could make sense of things like the relationship between political fragmentation and cultural unity I had found in early Greece and China and that would be useful for constructing an undergraduate world literature course not taking as its premise the value we, as modern readers, add to the texts we read." (Beecroft, 2015: 2)

[31] Beecroft, 2010: 3.

[32] Denecke, 2014: 289–294.

[33] Denecke, 2014: 292.

century (2010), for example, Emily Greenwood focused on receptions of classics in the Caribbean in order "to understand better the distinctiveness of anglophone Caribbean literature" and to "contribute fresh insights to the study of ancient Greece".[34] More recently, Laura Jansen investigated Jorge Luis Borges' attitudes to the classical tradition in *Borges' classics: global encounters with the Graeco-Roman past* (2018), arguing for a "global classics" that "does not render the classical canon moribund" but rather "enables some of the most overstudied classical authors in the canon to thrive once more by revealing them in a light rarely observed before".[35] For Homeric poetry specifically, similar issues were raised in the collected volume *Homer in the twentieth century: between world literature and the Western canon* (2010), edited by Barbara Graziosi and Emily Greenwood. There, the contributors demonstrated that a "vision of Homer as the fountainhead of all Western literature, grand as it is, actually underplays Homer's role in twentieth-century culture", since "Homer was crucial" in bringing a "shift of focus from the Western literary canon to world literature".[36] These interventions, which dealt specifically with ancient Greek and Latin literature and their receptions, promoted a similar change of perspective as scholars operating within world literature studies, in that they too argued for a shift away from localised narratives towards investigations of intercultural circulation, global representativeness, and world-wide receptions.

Considering what has been said about world literature and globalisation, it is reasonable to assume that the processes associated with these concepts also affected how we approach, study, read, and think about Homer. My choice of Homer as the main literary work to be investigated in the context of world literature and globalisation has two main motivations. First, given the fact that Homeric poetry was historically important for the interpretation of world literature and the development of literary studies, it is important to rethink how its receptions were affected by processes of globalisation, how globalisation shaped interpretations and readings of Homer, and how it influenced and reshaped Homer's position in relation to world literature. In line with Graziosi's and Greenwood's argument, this investigation also needs to consider how readings of Homer shaped, promoted, and altered the very processes associated with globalisation. Secondly, focusing primarily on Homer offers a new perspective and outlines an underestimated set of questions and problems for world literature studies and global classics. I outlined that literary scholars discuss globalisation and world literature in order to

---

[34] Greenwood, 2010: 4.
[35] Jansen, 2018a: 125.
[36] Graziosi and Greenwood, 2010: 3–4.

move away from national and local narratives towards considerations of global interconnectedness and literary world horizons. Scholars are asking how literatures travel, how they are translated, how they are received in different cultural contexts, and how they refract the world. This dissertation, however, suggests that literatures also operate through processes of localisation, nationalisation, and delimitation which are equally conditioned by globalisation. Choosing the Homeric epics, works that are often thought of as circulating widely and belonging to numerous cultural contexts, it is possible to focus precisely on the aspects of literary reception that students of global classics and world literature sometimes overlook or aim to deconstruct. Such investigation seems even more pertinent now, when the increasingly globalised world is challenged by new forms of localisation, such as new nationalisms, trade wars, and, after all, the newly emerging importance of local politics, communities, and supply fuelled by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Questions about globalisation and world literature are hence approached differently here: not by focusing on processes of globalisation and transnationalism as the primary field of investigation, but rather by investigating processes of *localisation* as a necessary consequence of globalising pressures. A good theoretical framework for such an investigation can be found in the work of scholars like Anthony Giddens, Roland Robertson, Zygmunt Bauman, and Arjun Appadurai,[37] who explore how modernity and globalisation affect different identity-formations. Indeed, Roland Robertson understands localisation as a necessary process of globalisation, when he writes: "The distinction between the global and the local is becoming very complex and problematic, to the extent that we should now perhaps speak in such terms as the global institutionalization of the life-world and the localization of globality."[38] In a similar manner, Arjun Appadurai researches how new communities and old localisations are constantly articulated in negotiation with transnationalism, diasporic flows, and the virtual media of a globalised world.[39] I find especially useful Anthony Giddens' concepts of "self-identity" and "life politics":

> life politics concerns political issues which flow from processes of self-actualisation in post-traditional contexts, where globalising influences intrude deeply into the reflexive project of the self, and conversely where processes of self-realisation influence global strategies.[40]

---

[37] Giddens, 1991, 2007; Robertson, 1992; Robertson and White, 2002; Robertson and Buhari-Gulmez, 2016; Bauman, 1998, 2000, 2004; Bauman and Raud, 2015; Appadurai, 1996, 2001, 2013.
[38] Robertson, 1992: 52–53.
[39] Appadurai, 1996: 178–199. Cf. Appadurai, 2001.
[40] Giddens, 1991: 215.

Homeric receptions as well can be taken as an example of a "political issue" of "life politics", as defined by Giddens, resulting in a formation of a localised narrative. In this dissertation, I consider how one particular localisation process, that of seeing Homeric epic as a particular work of world literature, responds to globalising influences and actively contributes to them. In other words, I investigate how interpretations of Homeric epic that were influential within the discipline of classics were informed by ideas about world literature and the world-system and, conversely, how these interpretations contributed to the formation of transnationalism and its intellectual apprehension.[41]

What is at stake, then, is the relationship between Homeric poetry and world literature. In considering this issue, I form three research questions in particular: first, how do ideas about world literature and the globalised world affect interpretations of Homer? Secondly, how do readings of Homeric poetry inform our understanding of world literature and assist in the process of world-making? And thirdly, why should anyone interested in world literature choose to focus on Homer? While there are many ways in which these questions may be approached, the course I take here is to scrutinise the development of Homeric studies alongside discussions of world literature,[42] investigating how key scholars in the development of these two academic disciplines (i.e. Homeric studies and world literature studies) reconciled particular readings of Homer with global perspectives on literature. There are two main reasons why my discussion of Homeric epic and world literature focuses on the history of scholarship: first, modern scholarship on both Homer and world literature emerged in a period when a globalising world-system was developing at an increasing pace. Secondly, scholars and intellectuals from the late eighteenth century onward defined the objects, questions, and methods of the disciplines and

---

[41] A handful of cultural historians and literary scholars have paved the path for such an investigation. For example, Benedict Anderson, Ernest Gellner, Eric Hobsbawm, and Joep Leerssen have considered the formation of national identities as an emergence of a local narrative that is produced against the background of broader global or transnational tensions. Most importantly for my own research, Joep Leerssen (2006) has studied nationalism as a mobile entity in the international movement of trends across Europe, demonstrating that localising narratives emerged through international processes. To some extent, similar ideas have been addressed in classical studies, especially in reception studies and work on the history of scholarship (see Güthenke, 2009). Thus, Athena S. Leoussi investigates the use of the classical heritage in different national movements (e.g. Leoussi 1997, 1998; Leoussi and Grosby, 2007), and Constanze Güthenke looks at Hellenism as a trans-national movement (Güthenke, 2008). Neither of these scholars, however, explicitly focuses on localisation as a process of globalisation.

[42] Several scholars discuss how the history of classical scholarship can be approached as a form of reception. Examples include Constanze Güthenke's recent discussion of philology's disciplinary beginnings in *Feeling and Classical Philology: Knowing Antiquity in German Scholarship, 1770–1920* (2020), Katherine Harloe's *Winckelmann and the Invention of Antiquity* (2013), and Joshua Billings' *Genealogy of the Tragic* (2014). Another significant work in this context is Damrosch (2020), who discusses global and local trends in the development of comparative literature. All these works have informed my own investigation. Two older and more general introductions to the history of scholarship are Pfeiffer, 1976; Sandys, 1908. Further bibliography on the history of classical scholarship can be found in Calder and Kramer, 1992; Calder and Smith, 2000; Güthenke, 2015a.

literary interpretations as we have come to know them today. Homeric poetry was predominately mediated through the discipline of classics, which, throughout the period studied in this thesis, had an especially close, and fraught, relationship with the developing study of world literature.

The dissertation is divided into three parts, each discussing a particular approach to understanding classical and world literature that influenced how classical scholarship defined Homeric poetry and its relation to world literature and the world-system. They are; the historical approach, the comparative approach, and the study of literary circulation. I investigate these models not primarily in order to highlight their historical development, but rather because each of these approaches suggests a distinctive understanding of both Homeric poetry and world literature. The organisation of my chapters is therefore not strictly chronological but rather thematic, focusing on those moments in scholarship that were crucial for the development of these approaches. In order to highlight parallels between them, and to demonstrate that scholarship developed as a forcefield within the larger world-system, each section discusses two roughly contemporary scholars, representative of world literature studies and Homeric studies respectively. This dialogic pairing of scholarly discourses is performed with the intention of highlighting how discussions of Homer and of world literature informed each other and in order to establish a hermeneutic platform for investigating their similarities and often concealed premises.

The figures investigated in this dissertation are chosen because of their contributions to Homeric scholarship and the study of world literature. I begin with Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832) as an early practitioner of comparative literature and someone who first theorised the concept of *Weltliteratur*. I then look at his contemporary Friedrich August Wolf (1759–1824) as the founding father of Homeric studies and classical philology. My next pair of case studies is Hutcheson Macaulay Posnett (1855–1927), an important promoter of comparative literature and the comparative approach; and his younger contemporary Milman Parry (1902–1935), one of the most important Homerists of the twentieth century, whose approach to the Homeric question fundamentally involved comparison. I end with Ferdinand Brunetière (1849–1906) and Fernand Baldensperger (1871–1958), two French comparatists who theorised the circulation of texts; and William Ewart Gladstone (1809–1898), who influenced classics by considering the literatures of the ancient Near East, including the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, as directly relevant for Homer. I further investigate how Gladstone's work influenced more recent developments in Homeric scholarship, especially the work of Martin Bernal, Walter Burkert, and Martin L. West. The order of my sections is not strictly

chronological but aims to trace a broad development from historical exemplarity, to wide-ranging global comparison, to circulation between the local and the global.

Before I outline the structure of this study, one further note is needed. My dissertation is entirely devoted to one work of *Ur*-canonised literature, to Homeric epic, and the only other two literary traditions that I consider are South Slavic oral poetry and the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, but both feature mostly in relation to Homer. Likewise, the thesis focuses (almost) exclusively on canonical western scholarship (of which all the discussed authors were also male, white, and belonging the middle or upper social classes). It is also assumed that a careful historical and contextual analysis of their work can reveal some of the attitudes towards world literature that shaped the literary disciplines and consequentially still define contemporary readings of Homer and world literature. Methodologically as well, this dissertation follows well-established (and admittedly also positivistic) methods such as archival research, close reading, and other practices linked to the field of intellectual history. All in all, my dissertation does not argue for a change of focus from local narratives towards global representativeness, neither in its method nor in its content. This, I concede, is contrary to the "new perspective", preoccupation with subaltern voices, or flattening hierarchies advocated by world literature studies and global classics. Nevertheless, literary scholars, historical contexts, and methodology are all carefully chosen. Just as Homer emerges as a privileged field of inquiry through which it becomes possible to focus on various aspects of localisation that appear against the backdrop of globalising pressures, so too can an investigation of canonised scholars give access to those operations that establish localising interpretations, nationalising receptions, and ideas of a unified literary discipline. For if we want to understand different presentisms of literary traditions and scholarship in global and postcolonial worlds, or how local narratives are defined by interconnectedness and transnationalism, we need to turn towards those literary works, histories, and scholars that are perceived as belonging to the historical and literary centre.

Part I, then, discusses the emergence of historical criticism as the methodological foundation of classical philology. By analysing Goethe's discussions of Homer and world literature (Chapter I) and Wolf's Homeric criticism (Chapter II), I aim to cast new light on the parallel emergence of classical philology and world literature. I investigate how Goethe's and Wolf's ideas about world literature and Homer developed in active dialogue with each other

and with ongoing discussions about historicism,[43] universalism, humanism, and nationalism. Chapter I investigates Goethe's reconciliation of Homeric epic, which he saw as a productive aesthetic model, with world literature as a set of practical conditions for circulation. I investigate how his vision of Homer responded to universalism (which he found in nature), to world literature's transnationalism (which he explicitly connected with humanism), and discuss how both were shaped in response to national discourse and as a form of cultural localisation. Chapter II then investigates Wolf's Homeric criticism in the context of Herder's historicism and cultural relativism. Here, historical and cultural localisation becomes a methodological grounding for classical philology. I approach the emergence of Wolf's scholarly method in the context of various globalisation processes such as the concurrent interest in oral literatures, non-European cultures, and the universalisation of academic curricula in Humboldt's university, where classical philology became a defining paradigm.

Part II focuses on the continuing legacy of historicism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. I investigate how literary and Homeric studies were transformed by the introduction of the comparative perspective. Analysing Posnett's comparative project in the context of the British Empire, Chapter III investigates how his reading of world literature and Homer developed in response to political and cultural concerns of the time, but also acted to replicate colonial disregard for economic and political inequality. Posnett's foundational *Comparative literature*, I argue, was directly influenced by the concurrent development of political and economic imperialism and shaped its own anti-conservative and *laissez-faire* agenda. Chapter IV then explores how the comparative perspective was integrated into Homeric studies in the work of Milman Parry who, I demonstrate for the first time here, was aware of Posnett and other early comparatists and was influenced by their work when conducting his field-survey of South Slavic oral poetry in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. This chapter analyses how the development of oral theory, one of the most important contributions to Homeric scholarship in the twentieth century, emerged in a transnational context, as a result of combining the methods and horizons of world literature with Homeric criticism.

Part III investigates approaches to literary research that consider literatures as belonging to a broader (either international or global) systemic entity as defined by Wallerstein, Casanova, and Moretti. Furthermore, it considers how these literary interpretations are

---

[43] I follow Most's definition of historicism as "a mode of academic research into the human past which eschewed grand philosophical schemes in favor of detailed causal analysis of events and processes" and historicization as a "a specific mode of cognitive activity which defines a body of knowledge and in so doing determines that it is constituted in its essential meaning by its temporal structure." (Most, 2016b: 36–37)

informed by international political developments that define the world-system and, conversely, how the understanding of literature acts as a world-making agenda in its own right. Chapter V proposes a new approach to the history of comparative literature by investigating the model proposed by French comparatists before the Second World War. It argues that the early French comparatists, notably Ferdinand Brunetière and Fernand Baldensperger, focused on literary influences as a response to current debates about nationalism and First World War reparations. In Chapter VI, I backtrack to early discussions about the influence of Near Eastern literary traditions, especially the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, on Homeric epic by focusing on the Homeric scholarship of William Ewart Gladstone. This chapter researches the relationship between Gladstone's scholarship and political agendas as a British Prime Minister, especially in the context of the so-called Eastern Question. The chapter thus illuminates how one of the most important recent fields of inquiry in Homeric studies (i.e. the research of Near Eastern influences) developed as an active political programme for world-making in response to (global) British imperialism. I then go on to show that the same approach was subsequently taken up by scholars such as Martin Bernal, Walter Burkert, and Martin L. West, who see the connections between Greece and the Near-East from a postcolonial vantage point.

A topical focus that motivates my research is the relationship between localisation and pressures of globalisation, which dominates discussions in world literature, global history, and other disciplines. In the conclusions of this dissertation, I return to the discussion of contemporary world literature studies and global classics, suggesting that literary scholars interested in globalisation should equally consider how various localisations, both past and present, emerge through interconnectedness of the world-system and are informed by different global horizons. What I argue, in short, is that world literature should be taken not as a process of dissolving localisations, but as an existing condition that governs the very existence of particular and localised readings. If one accepts that the world is globalised as a starting point of investigation, and, in that manner, that literature is itself world literature, there is an argument to be made *for* and not against localisation as an operation guided by the same processes. Localisation of literature and scholarship, including readings of Homer where I find myself now, in Borges' library, can hence be envisaged as a phenomenon that is guided by the same global tensions as the intercultural exchange, cultural hybridity, and global representativeness encountered by other wanderers up and down the aisles of the global library.

PART I: COMPETING MODELS: HISTORICITY AND LITERATURE

Scholarly discussions about world literature usually begin with Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832), mostly because he offered one of the first theorisations of the concept. He also wrote about classical literature as well as the relationship between the two, offering a logical starting point for my own investigation. Chapter I investigates Goethe's reception of Homer, his ideas about world literature, and offers a reading of how the poet reconciled them in his poetic theory and practice. There is, however, another reason why this dissertation starts with Goethe, which is that he corresponded with one of the most important Homeric scholars of his time, Friedrich August Wolf (1759–1824). This allows me to address how developments in Homeric studies influenced the early study of world literature and *vice versa*. To this end, Chapter II turns to Wolf and discusses how Homeric criticism developed in dialogue with concurrent literary and philosophical debates, and how these debates contributed to establishing classical philology as an academic discipline. In order to understand better how discourses about world literature influenced one of the most important readings of Homer in the history of classical scholarship, and, conversely, how Homeric receptions shaped understandings of world literature, Chapters I and II consider these two thinkers together. Part I identifies two particular attitudes towards globalising and localising readings of Homer, which became important in subsequent discussions. As I demonstrate, both Goethe and Wolf considered ideas about interconnectedness as well as historical localisation in developing their theories about world literature and Homeric criticism.

CHAPTER I: *Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, classical literature and world literature*

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's famous definition of *Weltliteratur*[44] comes from Johann Peter Eckermann's (1792–1854) work *Gespräche mit Goethe* (1836).[45] On 31st January 1827, the biographer reported the following Goethe's observation provoked by his reading of a Chinese novel[46]:

> I see more and more that poetry is the universal possession of mankind, revealing itself everywhere, and at all times, in hundreds and hundreds of men. One makes it a little better than another, and swims on the surface a little longer than another – that is all. […] But, really, we Germans are very likely to fall too easily into this pedantic conceit, if we do not look beyond the narrow circle that surrounds us. I therefore like to look around in foreign nations and advise everyone to do the same. National literature will now not mean much; the epoch of world literature is at hand, and everyone must contribute to hasten its approach.[47]

In this short report, the poet famously proclaimed that poetry belongs to all people and announced the arrival of world literature which will succeed national literature. What he meant with the epoch of world literature is further discussed below, but it is clear that he thought it necessary to look beyond the borders of one country. Pointing toward the novel he was reading, Goethe remarked that one should consider literature a universal human phenomenon – thus directly addressing its potential for opening a global horizon. This, however, did not mean that foreign literatures were better or should be blindly appropriated:

---

[44] While Goethe offered the earliest substantial discussions of the problem, he was not the first to coin the term. See Schamoni, 2008; for an older interpretation see Weitz, 1987.

[45] Johann Peter Eckermann accompanied Goethe as an archivist of his notes and manuscripts from 1822 until Goethe's death in 1831 and in 1836 published his memories of that period. Because Goethe assumed a mentoring role and took over Eckermann's intellectual development, sharing with him his work and thoughts, *Gespräche* is an important source for discussing Goethe's conception of world literature, as well as his attitude towards classical literature in that period. Even though we must not treat Eckermann's text as a transparent transcript of Goethe's own thoughts (e.g. Abbé, 1954), especially since he tends to present his mentor in an extremely favourable light (see Damrosch, 2003: 1–36), his conversations, when backed up by other primary evidence such as Goethe's letters, are often a reliable source of information, and an influential source for the reception of Goethe's thought (see Hohlfeld, 1953a; Boyle, 1991, 2000; Damrosch, 2003: 1–36). See also Avital Ronell (1986), who famously approaches Eckermann and his biography from a philosophical and psychoanalytical perspective.

[46] The novel in question has recently been identified as Peter Perring Thoms' translation of *Huajian ji* (*The Flowery Scroll*). Thoms translated it as *Chinese Courtship* (1824). See O'Bell, 2018. For older attempts at identification see Birus, 1995; Purdy, 2014. Sondrup (2015) also discusses Goethe's reception of Chinese literature in the context of *Weltliteratur*.

[47] "Ich sehe immer mehr," fuhr Goethe fort, "daß die Poesie ein Gemeingut der Menschheit ist und daß sie überall und zu allen Zeiten in Hunderten und aber Hunderten von Menschen hervortritt. Einer macht es ein wenig besser als der andere und schwimmt ein wenig länger oben als der andere, das ist alles. […] Aber freilich, wenn wir Deutschen nicht aus dem engen Kreise unserer eigenen Umgebung hinausblicken, so kommen wir gar zu leicht in diesen pedantischen Dünkel. Ich sehe mich daher gerne bei fremden Nationen um und rate jedem, es auch seinerseits zu tun. Nationalliteratur will jetzt nicht viel sagen, die Epoche der Weltliteratur ist an der Zeit, und jeder muß jetzt dazu wirken, diese Epoche zu beschleunigen." (Eckermann, 31. 1. 1827). All quotations from Goethe, Schiller, and Herder in this dissertation are cited according to the standards of *The Goethe Yearbook*.

But, while we thus value what is foreign, we must not bind ourselves to some particular thing, and regard it as a model. We must not give this value to the Chinese, or the Serbian, or Calderón, or the *Nibelungen…*[48]

That literature is truly universal seemed to suggest that there was no particular tradition that should be valued above others, since each and every nation or community contributed to world literature with their own cultural specificities and localities. However, as the poet remarked, there was one exception, which presented a universal model that everyone could follow, and that was literature of the ancient Greeks:

…but if we really need a model, we must always return to the ancient Greeks, in whose works the beauty of mankind is constantly represented. All the rest we must look at only historically, appropriating to ourselves what is good, so far as it goes.[49]

While other literary traditions were "only historical", and therefore to be appropriated selectively, the Greeks who constantly represent "the beauty of mankind" served as a timeless poetic model. For Goethe, it seems, ancient literature presented an exemplum for all local literary traditions. This opens up a whole set of problems and questions: if German, Italian, English, French, Serbian, Chinese, etc., literatures were all part of world literature, how should one describe the poetry of the ancient Greeks – and, in the context of my own investigation, Homeric poetry? What is the relationship between classical literature and world literature? Why should all poets follow the ancient Greeks? And why must we look at all the rest "only historically"?

Goethe never fully answered these questions, but some of his views can be illuminated by considering what kind of relationship he forged with ancient Greek literature, especially Homer, how he perceived its role in his own time, and how he envisaged world literature.[50] Goethe's reception of Homeric poetry was at its most intensive in two periods of his life: his

---

[48] "Aber auch bei solcher Schätzung des Ausländischen dürfen wir nicht bei etwas Besonderem haften bleiben und dieses für musterhaft ansehen wollen. Wir müssen nicht denken, das Chinesische wäre es, oder das Serbische, oder Calderon, oder die Nibelungen…" (Eckermann, 31. 1. 1827)

[49] "…sondern im Bedürfnis von etwas Musterhaftem müssen wir immer zu den alten Griechen zurückgehen, in deren Werken stets der schöne Mensch dargestellt ist. Alles übrige müssen wir nur historisch betrachten und das Gute, so weit es gehen will, uns daraus aneignen." (Eckermann, 31. 1. 1827)

[50] For Goethe's life and work, I primarily consulted the following discussions: Reed, 1980; Boyle, 1991, 2000; Sharpe, 2002; and *Goethe-Handbuch* (Witte et. al., 1996–1998). An excellent collection of primary sources on Goethe's reception of antiquity is Grumach, 1949. For Goethe's relationship with ancient literature and art, see Butler, 1935; Rehm, 1936; Trevelyan, 1941; Valdez, 2014; Robertson, 2017. Finsler (1912) is still useful as a collection of primary sources, even if somewhat outdated in its interpretation. Another discussion that deals with Goethe's reception of Homer specifically is the doctoral dissertation by Vail, 2001.

Italian journey and when he was writing his poem *Achilleis*. The first section of this chapter investigates Goethe's relationship with Homer during those two formative periods, both in relation to his own poetic agendas and to the theories of Friedrich August Wolf, Robert Wood, and Friedrich Schiller.[51] I then proceed by analysing Goethe's understanding of world literature and discuss how he envisaged *Weltliteratur* as an exchange of transnational literary criticism and literary creation, and how he grounded both in specific conception of humanism. In light of the numerous discussions that Goethe's view of world literature has received over the past few decades,[52] my intervention focuses only on those aspects that are relevant for his Homeric reception and not, for example, on the political context of Weimar,[53] other literary works that shaped Goethe's theories,[54] or his own literary realisations of the concept.[55] Through close readings of Goethe's work, I show that he incorporated his experiences of an interconnected world and ideas about national, cultural, and historical localisation into both his Homeric reception and his theories about world literature.

a) Goethe and classical literature

Goethe was always fascinated with ancient Greek art and literature, especially with the Homeric epics. Throughout his life, he engaged with the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* in various ways, both as an artist and as a scholar: for example, he intensively studied the ancient epics,[56] he participated in philological discussions at the time, and reviewed publications in philology.[57]

---

[51] What I do not discuss, however, is the broader aesthetic theory of the *Sturm und Drang* movement and Weimar classicism for which I rely on the discussions of others, e.g. the excellent compendium Glaser and Vajda, 2000. A short introduction to the topic is Zumbusch, 2019; Dönike, 2005: 99–132. Cf. Borchmeyer, 1994; Hamilton, 2016.

[52] The most important contribution to Goethe's understanding of *Weltliteratur* is Strich, 1946 (English translation in 1949). For an evaluation of Strich's work see Powers, 2019. In modern scholarship, Edward Said emphasised the importance of the concept for contemporary literary theory in an introduction to the fiftieth anniversary edition of Auerbach's *Mimesis* (Said, 2003). In world literature studies, Pizer (2000) and Damrosch (2003: 1–36) were the first to offer an extensive treatment of the subject. Several excellent studies followed: Birus, 2000; Hoesel-Uhlig, 2004; Pizer, 2005, 2006, 2012, 2019; D'haen, 2012; Juvan, 2013a, 2013b; Sturm-Trigonakis, 2013; Beebee, 2014; Cha, 2015; Biti, 2016; Cheah, 2016; Venkat Mani, 2017; Hoesel-Uhlig and Zhang, 2018. German scholars focused more on the political and poetic significance of the concept; two outstanding studies in this regard are Koch (2002) and Goßens (2011). Cf. Birus, 1995. One should also not overlook the lucid contribution by Martí Monterde (2011) in Catalan.

[53] For the political context of Goethe's *Weltliteratur* see especially Koch, 2002; cf. Pizer, 2000; Sturm-Trigonakis, 2013. See also Fortmann (2019) for a discussion of the concept's political uses in the early nineteenth century.

[54] See especially Strich (1946) who discussed Goethe's reception of several national literatures and its importance for the development of *Weltliteratur*.

[55] E.g. Rüdiger, 1964; Noyes, 2006; Payne, 2009; Peabody, 2018.

[56] See for example his extensive personal notes on the *Iliad* (WA I 41^1, 266–237) and his essays "Homer noch einmal" (1827; WA I 41^2, 325f.). See also his short physiognomic analysis of a bust of Homer found in Constantinople (1775; WA I 37, 339f.).

[57] E.g. Riedel, 2002. See also his reviews of Robert Wood (WA I 37, 204–206), Thomas Campbell (WA I 42, 452–453), and Gottfried August Bürger's (1747–1794) translation of the *Iliad* (WA I 37, 360–361). The review

Moreover, he translated parts of the poems,[58] and published critical commentaries on selected passages.[59] Most importantly, he utilised Homeric poetry as a source of inspiration for his own literature. Indeed, Homer was an important influence on Goethe from the very beginning of his artistic path. This can be seen in the poem *Künstlers Morgenlied* (1774), which he wrote as a young man, supposedly just a year after he first read both epics in ancient Greek.[60] In the centre of this love poem, which presents a reflection on the nature of poetry packed with Iliadic motives, is Homer's figure:

> I step up to the altar,
> and read, as it is fitting,
> my devotional prayers,
> from sacred Homer.[61]

In these four lines of the fourth stanza, young Goethe outlined the repute of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* as a sacred literary work, a poet's Bible, and as a model for his own poetic strivings. In a manner similar to the self-presentation in the poem, he would continue to cherish Homeric epic as a holy book and use it as a source for his poetry. Regardless of the fact that the two ancient epics influenced the whole of Goethe's opus and intellectual production, however, this chapter does not discuss all of his Homeric receptions. Rather, it focuses on two specific episodes during which the poet's relationship with Homer was most profoundly expressed, tested, and reflected, making it possible to observe how his Homeric receptions were shaped by the experience of travel, foreign landscape and culture, and meditations on the universality of poetry, nature, and the world. This was, first, in the years 1786–1788, when he travelled to Italy, predominantly during his trip to Sicily,[62] and secondly, in the years after he returned to

---

of David Christoph Seybold's (1747-1804) commentary on Homer in *Frankfurter Gelehrte Anzeigen* has also been attributed to Goethe (WA I 37, 200f.).

[58] In 1793, Goethe translated five lines of the *Odyssey* (7.81–85). See WA I 5^2, 203. Later he later translated other passages as well: *Od.* 7.78–131 (see WA I 4, 326f.), *Od.* 8.267–326, 339–346, 351–353, 347–350 (this is the story of Ares and Aphrodite, see WA I 5^2, 385f.), and *Il.* 14.329–351. A thorough analysis of all these translations can be found in Vail, 2001: 208–250.

[59] See e.g. "Versuch, eine Homerische dunkle Stelle zu erklären" (1787), a short commentary on *Od.* 10.81–86 (WA I 42^2, 8f.). In 1794, Goethe even organised weekly readings of Voß' translation of the *Iliad*, which some members followed with the Greek original (see Vail, 2001: 284).

[60] According to Trevelyan, that was in 1773 (Trevelyan, 1941: 51–52).

[61] "Ich trete vor den Altar hin, / Und lese, wie sich's ziemt, / Andacht liturg'scher Lection / Im heiligen Homer." (WA I 2, 178)

[62] The most important work on how the Sicilian journey influenced and changed Goethe's understanding of Homer and literature in general is Trevelyan, 1941: 148–67; Constantine, 1984; Boyle, 1991: 472–78; Valdez, 2014: 162–170. My own investigation here is greatly in dept to these discussions. An overview of Goethe's journey through the island is Dahmer, 2010. See also Parodi and Corradini (2008) and Zapperi (2016), whose work is more historically focused.

Weimar, mostly around the time he was working on *Hermann und Dorothea* (1797) and was preparing to write his *Achilleis* (1797–1798). In trying to understand how and why Homer and the Greeks were of such importance to Goethe, those two specific moments repay detailed consideration.

The first formative moment for Goethe's reception of Homeric poetry was his travel to Sicily in 1787, which he visited during his *grand tour* of Italy. Taking into account that the poet set out on the journey as an escape from a personal and artistic crisis which he was having after the success of *Götz von Berlichingen* (1773) and *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* (1774),[63] it is not at all surprising that this period defined his subsequent poetic ideas and perspectives. When in September 1786 Goethe left Weimar court duties and embarked on a journey south in the hope of rekindling his poetic creativity, he first stopped in Venice and then spent half a year in Rome, where he was mostly preoccupied with architecture and arts, and less with literature.[64] This changed, however, when he reached Naples in early 1787, but even more so when at the end of March he left Naples for Sicily with his friend, the painter Christoph Heinrich Kniep (1755–1825). This expedition, which was not at all that common for the standard *grand tour* of the time,[65] became one of the most formative moments of Goethe's life. He wrote upon his return to the mainland: "The voyage through Sicily is complete and will for me be an indestructible treasure for my whole life".[66] Indeed, during his visit Goethe rediscovered his artistic passion, his poetic aspirations were reanimated, and he sketched the outline of several new projects. Most importantly, his exploration of the island, especially the immediate experience of its nature and landscape, transformed his understanding of Homeric epic and of poetry in general. From now on, he regarded Homeric epic as the most natural, timeless, and universal literary work ever to exist, a conviction that guided his later understanding of classical and world literature.[67]

That Homer would become Goethe's companion throughout his time on the island became apparent from the moment their ship departed Naples. On board, Goethe first sketched the basic outline of the plot for *Torquato Tasso* (1790),[68] but then the boat got caught in a storm and had difficulties reaching Palermo. When at last they safely docked, Goethe felt as if he had

---

[63] Boyle, 1991: 394–397.

[64] This can be observed primarily in his *Italienische Reise* (1816–1817). Cf. Trevelyan, 1941: 121–148.

[65] While some people undoubtedly visited Sicily in the eighteenth century, it was not a major destination on the *grand tour*. See Chaney, 1998: 1–40. A list of British travellers can be found in Ford and Ingamells, 1997.

[66] "Die Reise durch Sicilien ist denn auch glücklich vollbracht und wird mir ein unzerstörlicher Schatz auf mein ganzes Leben bleiben" (To Seidel, 15. 5. 1787; WA II 8, 213).

[67] A good overview of Goethe's perception of nature and antiquity is Schadewaldt, 1963; Reed, 1980: 55–78.

[68] For an analysis of *Tasso* in the context of the Italian journey and Goethe's epic ambitions see Mucignat, 2016.

relived the Odyssean journey, "finding after a troublesome crossing, the gardens of Alcinous on the seashore".[69] The first contact with the Mediterranean island was hence marked by a motif from the *Odyssey*, which would become a constant throughout the following three months of exploration. Not just in memory, however: soon thereafter Homer became Goethe's companion also physically, in the form of a book. When the poet first walked through Palermo's public gardens, he was struck by the surrounding scenery which again evoked images of Scheria. This time, the vision was so powerful that the necessity to read the ancient epic became irresistible:

> But that magic garden had made too deep an impression on me. The inky waves along the northern horizon, their persistent advance upon the indented coastline, even the peculiar smell of the sea in its haze, all conjured up the island of the blessed Phaeacians to my senses and to my memory. I hurried at once to buy myself a Homer and read the canto with great edification, and recited an impromptu translation of it to Kniep...[70]

That Goethe could at once buy himself an edition of Homer is itself impressive and speaks of the importance that Palermo, a city as large as Rome at the time, had in the literary world of the late eighteenth century – a topic to which I return when I discuss Goethe's ideas about *Weltliteratur*. More immediately relevant however, is the apparent congruence between the ancient epic and the surrounding landscape of Palermo's gardens. Goethe would return to the gardens several times while staying in the Sicilian capital to read a "daily portion of the *Odyssey*", and it was there that he first outlined *Nausikaa*, a dramatic interpretation of book six of the epic.[71] In a very literal sense, Sicily and the island of the Phaeacians became one, and the gardens, as he himself remarked, became nothing less than a philological commentary on the ancient epic: "Convinced that I could have no better commentary to the *Odyssey* than just this living environment, I acquired myself a copy."[72] In fact, this relationship between nature and poetry went both ways: not only did the surroundings inspire memories of Homer, but reflections on poetry in turn encouraged Goethe's interests in nature. More precisely,

---

[69] "…wir nach einer beschwerlichen Überfahrt am Ufer des Meeres die Gärten des Alcinous fanden." (To Friedrich Constantin von Stein 17. 4. 1787; WA IV 8, 210)

[70] "Aber der Eindruck jenes Wundergartens war mir zu tief geblieben; die schwaerzlichen Wellen am noerdlichen Horizonte, ihr Anstreben an die Buchtkruemmungen, selbst der eigene Geruch des duenstenden Meeres, das alles rief mir die Insel der seligen Phaeaken in die Sinne sowie ins Gedaechtnis. Ich eilte sogleich, einen Homer zu kaufen, jenen Gesang mit grosser Erbauung zu lesen und eine Übersetzung aus dem Stegreif Kniepen vorzutragen…" (WA I 31, 106)

[71] See Lohmeier, 1975; Görner, 1995; Constantine, 1984.

[72] "Ich hatte mir, überzeugt, daß es für mich keinen bessern Commentar zur Odyssee geben könne, als eben gerade diese lebendige Umgebung, ein Exemplar verschafft…" (WA I 31, 199). In this passage, Goethe recalls the same episode as above.

contemplating the structure of *Nausikaa* motivated his ideas of a primordial plant (*die Urpflanze*) and associated botanical investigations.[73]

Sicilian nature, which held the power to transport Goethe into ancient times and made him rush off to buy an edition of Homer, soon became the poet's primary concern. In contrast with Rome and other places in Italy, ancient remains became less relevant here, even if Goethe visited some of the archaeological sites. One of the first trips he made outside Palermo, for example, was to Valle dell'Oreto. To Goethe's disappointment, the trip was "spoiled" by an "inept" local guide, who "related in detail" the history of the valley where Hannibal supposedly fought a battle. This greatly annoyed the poet, and his irritation only increased when the guide was "astonished that I should spurn classical memories". Rather than listen to ancient events, Goethe was happy inspecting "little stones" and "minerals" "in order to obtain an idea of those eternally classical heights of earthly antiquity (*klassischen Höhen des Erdaltertums*)".[74] Nature has taken over antiquity ("*Erdaltertums*"), and the Sicilian landscape over classical ("*klassischen*") history. This became even more apparent when Goethe and Kniep left Palermo to visit Segesta, Selinunte, and Agrigento, but then decided to skip Syracuse and instead took an inland journey through the island. The very decision for this detour was guided by Goethe's explicit interest in the Sicilian landscape,[75] which was, paradoxically perhaps, inspired by no other influence than Homer. Near Taormina, Goethe sat on an orange-tree branch, glanced at nature, read the *Odyssey*, and pondered the structure of *Nausikaa*. At this moment, the surroundings acted as a direct inspiration both for his poetic creativity and his contemplation

---

[73] For Goethe's work on the *Urpflanze* see e.g. Portman, 1987; Lichtenstern, 1995, 1–26; Seamon, 1998.

[74] Goethe wrote: "The most beautiful spring weather and a gushing fertility conveyed the feeling of a vivifying peace over the whole valley, which the uncouth guide spoiled for me with his learning, recounting in detail how Hannibal once fought a battle here and what great deeds of war took place on this spot. […] He was quite astonished that I should spurn classical memories in a place like this, and of course I was unable to make him understand how such mingling of past and present affected me. I seemed still odder to this escort when I looked in all the shallows, many of which the river leaves quite dry, for little stones, and took along specimens of the various kinds. Again, I was unable to explain to him that the quickest way to understand a mountainous region is to inspect the minerals swept down by the brooks, and that here too the task was to use rubble in order to obtain an idea of those eternally classical heights of earthly antiquity. (Die schönste Frühlingswitterung und eine hervorquellende Fruchtbarkeit verbreitete das Gefühl eines belebenden Friedens über das ganze Tal, welches mir der ungeschickte Führer durch seine Gelehrsamkeit verkümmerte, umständlich erzählend, wie Hannibal hier vormals eine Schlacht geliefert und was für ungeheure Kriegstaten an dieser Stelle geschehen. […] Er verwunderte sich sehr, daß ich das klassische Andenken an so einer Stelle verschmähte, und ich konnte ihm freilich nicht deutlich machen, wie mir bei einer solchen Vermischung des Vergangenen und des Gegenwärtigen zumute sei. Noch wunderlicher erschien ich diesem Begleiter, als ich auf allen seichten Stellen, deren der Fluß gar viele trocken läßt, nach Steinchen suchte und die verschiedenen Arten derselben mit mir forttrug. Ich konnte ihm abermals nicht erklären, daß man sich von einer gebirgigen Gegend nicht schneller einen Begriff machen kann, als wenn man die Gesteinsarten untersucht, die in den Bächen herabgeschoben werden, und daß hier auch die Aufgabe sei, durch Trümmer sich eine Vorstellung von jenen ewig klassischen Höhen des Erdaltertums zu verschaffen.)" (WA I 31, 94–95)

[75] See Trevelyan, 1941, 158.

of the ancient epic: "I felt in a poetic mood on this supremely classical soil…".[76] For Goethe in Sicily, Homer and nature presented an interdependent interest, his focus running back and forth between the landscape and the ancient epic.

As is apparent from all these examples, Homer was consistently present during Goethe's journey through Sicily. The ancient epics informed not only his scholarly and intellectual interests, but also his newly rekindled poetic aspirations. Such resonance between Mediterranean landscape and poetry was not unheard of in other poets of the time and eventually became an influential poetic trope.[77] However, Goethe's poetic ideas were shaped in close relation to theories about the universality of nature to the extent that this relationship acquired an almost mystical dimension.[78] He explicitly connected nature and poetry, seeing in both an analogous creative power that produces the purest work. As the poet wrote shortly after his return from Sicily in a letter to Charlotte von Stein (1742–1827), art and nature followed the same primordial laws of creation:

> This much is certain, the old artists had just as much knowledge of nature and just as certain a notion of what can be imagined and how it must be imagined, as Homer. […] These great works of art are comparable to the great works of nature; they have been created by men according to true and natural laws. Everything arbitrary, imaginary collapses. Here is necessity, here is God.[79]

As nature is generated according to divine plans, so does a great work of art follow the same creative principles, he professed. This idea was undoubtedly influenced by his experience of the island, but also by his closely related botanical interests. As already mentioned, the idea of an *Urpflanze*, an archetype of all plants, was inspired by Palermo's public gardens and, even more importantly, by contemplating the poetic structure of *Nausikaa* – the structure and its creation being here the underlining root of both poetry and plants. Shortly after he returned to Weimar, Goethe wrote *Die Metamorphose der Pflanzen* (1790), in which the archetype of a plant is a leaf on the grounds of which the whole plant is formed, and in an essay entitled "Einfache Nachahmung der Natur, Manier, Styl" (1789), which he wrote while still in Italy, he explicitly connected natural laws with the artistic creation, claiming that the true artist creates

---

[76] "…da ich mich auf dem überclassischen Boden in einer poetischen Stimmung fühlte…" (WA I 31, 201–202)
[77] See especially Güthenke, 2008; Sachers, 2015.
[78] Harrer, 2009.
[79] The original of this letter has not survived, but it was published in *Italienische Reise* (see Richards, 2002: 402): "So viel ist gewiß, die alten Künstler haben eben so große Kenntniß der Natur und einen eben so sichern Begriff von dem was sich vorstellen läßt und wie es vorgestellt werden muß, gehabt, als Homer. […] Diese hohen Kunstwerke sind zugleich als die höchsten Naturwerke von Menschen nach wahren und natürlichen Gesetzen hervorgebracht worden. Alles Willkürliche, Eingebildete fällt zusammen, da ist die Nothwendigkeit, da ist Gott." (WA I 32, 77–78).

according to the same principles as nature. Poetry and nature were thus seen as drawing on one and the same process, bringing to life, through contemplation of the Ur-form, a product that exhibits "the essence of things".[80]

In the background of Goethe's argument for the synonymity of powers that create nature and those that form poetry, a Homeric presence can be identified. This is relevant for the overall discussion of this dissertation in as much as it allows us to see that a particular literary reception was formed by and helped form a theory about the existence of the world. Goethe experienced the landscape of the Mediterranean island by reading Homer, and his own poetic project *Nausikaa* was directly modelled on the *Odyssey*, as I mentioned above. In this respect, one can understand why he referred to Homer as "sacred", "god", and "the One": if Homer created the most natural and the best poetic creation, the *Urform* of all literature as it were, 'he' was to literature the same as a divine creator was to nature and the world. This can be further observed in a letter Goethe sent to Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803) immediately after returning from Sicily, in which the memories of the recent expedition were still very much alive but were now more digested. Much like throughout the journey, Goethe praised the beautiful island and the impact it had on him, but these memories were now underpinned by a new realisation of the significance of Homer and the ancient Greeks:

> As for Homer, the scales have fallen from my eyes. His descriptions, his similes, etc., seem to us poetic and are in fact unspeakably natural – drawn, it is true, with a purity and intensity which frightens. Even the strangest fictitious incidents have a naturalness that I have never felt so much as in the presence of the things described. Let me briefly sum up my thoughts: *they* represented existence, *we* usually the effect; *they* depicted the horror, *we* depict horribly; *they* depicted the pleasing, *we* pleasantly, and so on.[81]

Immediately apparent is the depth of the connection between nature and ancient poetry. Homeric epic, said Goethe, was "unspeakably natural" and the events Homer described had a

---

[80] Goethe's explorations in natural sciences and his understanding of the nature, plans, form, and evolution is treated by e.g. Sherrington, 1949; Nisbet, 1972; Wells, 1978; Glaser, 1986; Seamon and Zajonc, 1998; Tantillo, 2002; Amrine et. al., 2012. These studies do not, however, deal with literature specifically. In this respect, Richards (2002) is one of the most comprehensive studies on Goethe's understanding of nature and the importance of this understanding for his literary production. An older interpretation of Goethe's works in relation to his natural sciences is Wilkinson and Willoughby, 1962; Reed, 1980: 55–78.

[81] "Was den Homer betrifft, ist mir wie eine Decke von den Augen gefallen. Die Beschreibungen, die Gleichnisse etc. kommen uns poetisch vor und sind doch unsäglich natürlich, aber freilich mit einer Reinheit und Innigkeit gezeichnet, vor der man erschrickt. Selbst die sonderbarsten erlogenen Begebenheiten haben eine Natürlichkeit, die ich nie so gefühlt habe als in der Nähe der beschriebenen Gegenstände. Laß mich meinen Gedanken kurz so ausdrücken: *sie* stellten die Existenz dar, *wir* gewöhnlich den Effekt; *sie* schilderten das Fürchterliche, *wir* schildern fürchterlich; *sie* das Angenehme, *wir* angenehm u.s.w." (WA I 31, 238–239)

specific "naturalness" to them, even when they were fabulous or fictitious. He also made it clear that he came to this realisation "in the presence of the things described", a statement that again, as so many times during the travels, collapsed the distance – which was also a historical distance – between Homeric nature and Sicily, equating the island with the world of ancient poetry.[82] Later, in the introduction to *Winckelmann und sein Jahrhundert* (1805) he developed this position by arguing that the ancients always felt completely at home "within the lovely limits of this beautiful world",[83] that they "concentrated on the presence with all mind, inclination, and energy",[84] that "they all adhered to the immediate, the true, the real",[85] and therefore, that "it is not difficult for the like-minded impersonator to eternalise this presence".[86] Reading the letter to Herder alongside the introduction to *Winckelmann* we can see that the poet understood the *Odyssey* as a revelation of the *truth*, at least in terms of its close connection to nature.[87] In fact, this reading of Homer was pointedly ahistorical, since Goethe could see before him what Homer described. It also involved an objectivity which he denied to his contemporaries: while modern poets described only the effects of nature, the ancients represented the things as they were, that is, they represented reality itself.

This approach to Homer was not without precedent. In fact, Goethe himself was inspired by Robert Wood's (1717–1771) *Essay on the original genius and writings of Homer* (1769) which he first read in 1773 when it was translated and published in German,[88] reviewed it for *Frankfurter Gelehrte Anzeigen*,[89] and reread it immediately after returning from Italy.[90] Not unlike Goethe, Robert Wood, a British-Irish politician and traveller who roamed as far as Baalbek and Palmyra and believed he had discovered Troy, argued in the *Essay* that Homer's original genius was owed mostly to his truthfulness to "Nature".[91] Homer was, as Wood argued, "in the great province of Imitation" "the most constant and faithful copier after Nature",[92] because he "took his scenery and landscape from nature, his manners and characters

---

[82] "…only now is *Odyssey* for me a living word. (…ist mir erst die Odyssee ein lebendiges Wort.)" (WA I 31, 239)

[83] "…innerhalb der lieblichen Gränzen der schönen Welt." (WA I 46, 22)

[84] "…mit allem Sinn, aller Neigung, aller Kraft auf die Gegenwart wirkten." (WA I 46, 23)

[85] "Alle hielten sich am Nächsten, Wahren, Wirklichen fest…" (WA I 46, 23)

[86] "…daher es einem gleichgesinnten Darsteller nicht schwer fallen konnte, eine solche Gegenwart zu verewigen." (WA I 46, 23)

[87] Goethe indeed concluded his letter to Herder with the following statement: "…for the first time now, the *Odyssey* is to me a living word. (…nun ist mir erst die *Odyssee* ein lebendiges Wort)." (WA I 31, 239)

[88] See Spencer, 1957. The German translation was entitled *Versuch Über Das Originalgenie Des Homers* (1773).

[89] See WA I 37, 204–206.

[90] For Wood's influence on Goethe see especially Constantine, 1984.

[91] Discussion of Wood's work can be found in Spencer, 1957; Simonsuuri, 1979: 133–142; Butterworth, 1985; Sachs, 2010; McLane and Slatkin, 2011. Cf. Turner, 2014.

[92] Wood, 1776: 5.

from life, his persons and facts (whether fabulous or historical) from tradition…".[93] It followed that Homer's students could deduce from the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* historical facts about place, time, and people due to their faithful representation in the poems. Wood read Homeric epic, especially its geography, chronology, and the "manners" of heroes much like a guidebook, that is, by directly observing the landscape, geography, and people during his own travels. Similarities with Goethe's experience of Sicily, where Homer was a similar traveling companion, are apparent. In *Dichtung und Wahrheit* (1811–1833), for example, Goethe remembered what an impact Wood had had on him and how, with his "continual emphasis on Nature", he had helped him to regard Homer as a "true reflection of a primitive presence".[94] Goethe shared Wood's idea that Homeric poetry was natural precisely because Homer was such a great observer of nature, and that one could experience this by travelling through the Mediterranean. While Wood argued that Homer took his material from the fabulous or historical tradition but was, as far as scenery, landscape, manners, and characters were concerned, the "most faithful copier after Nature", Goethe wrote to Herder that even the fabulous and fictitious events in Homer had a specific naturalness about them; and whereas Wood asserted that Homeric geography and heroic manners could be directly observed in present-day nature, Goethe reported that he discovered Homeric naturalness "in the presence of the things described". Both Wood and Goethe merged ancient epic and the surrounding landscape into one single experience in which Homer acted as a bridge between the past and the present.

There was, however, a difference between how Wood and Goethe perceived Homer. While Wood was an explorer, an archaeologist, a scholar, and a politician, Goethe was first and foremost a poet, experiencing Homer's companionship in Sicily as an artistic aspiration – after all, reinventing himself as a poet was the main objective of his Italian journey. Homeric epic, mediated through the Mediterranean landscape, played a pivotal role in this process. In this respect, new ideas about the true essence of poetry became a poetic standard for Goethe and essentially initiated his poetically productive "classical" period. While still in Italy, but especially when he returned to Weimar, he attempted to realise this newly conceptualised aesthetic ideal. For example, he experimented with different ancient literary forms: in the revised version of *Iphigenie auf Tauris* (first version in 1779) he imitated Euripides' tragedy;[95]

---

[93] Wood, 1776: 294.
[94] "…abgespiegelte Wahrheit einer uralten Gegenwart…" (WA I 28, 145)
[95] See e.g. Billings, 2014: 69–71.

in *Römische Elegien* he imitated love elegy;[96] in *Venezianische Epigramme* the epigram;[97] and with *Alexis und Dora* (1797) he created an idyll. He also experimented with ancient motives and rhythm: with the unfinished *Nausikaa* he wanted to create a tragedy about Odysseus and Nausicaa; another experiment in tragedy left unfinished was *Prometheus*; and in *Reineke Fuchs* (1794) he experimented with the hexameter rhythm. In this period, Goethe also became deeply engaged with Homeric interpretation, not only in a poetic sense as was the case in Sicily, but also in a more scholarly manner. He was regularly reading and studying both epics and published some of his observations. Moreover, he often discussed his ideas with his friends, and there are even indications that he was working on a translation of the *Odyssey*.[98] Among all these activities, however, the quest for natural poetry was most pronounced. If the champion of natural poetry was indeed Homer, it followed that the highest and most natural form of poetic creativity should be *epos*, and so, after he finished his novel *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (1795-1796), he began his quest to create an epic poem. As he wrote in a letter to the philosopher Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi (1749–1832) on the 17th of October 1796: "First of all the novel is done…; moreover, I have thrown myself into epic production with all my strength and I aspire to take this turn also now that my career is about to end".[99]

This marks the second formative moment in Goethe's reception of Homer between roughly 1796 and 1798, when the poet was working on *Hermann und Dorothea* and was making plans for his *Achilleis*. In this period, Goethe tested different ideas about historical localisation, which became a guiding principle in his understanding of ancient and modern poetry – and as I suggest in the second part of this chapter, this further determined his understanding of world literature and literary circulation. At first, he deliberated whether writing an epic was even possible for he had had a bad experience with *Nausikaa*, which he started writing while still in Sicily but left unfinished.[100] In 1795, however, Friedrich August Wolf published *Prolegomena ad Homerum*, in which he argued for what is today known as an analytic perspective on the Homeric question – more on this in Chapter II. Goethe, who was

---

[96] They were written between 1788–1790 and some of them were first published in 1795 in the journal *Die Horen*. For the interpretation of the impact the nature and Sicilian journey had on *Römische Elegien* see Richards, 2002: 398–400.

[97] The epigrams were written in 1790 and some of them first published anonymously in 1796 in *Musen-Almanach*.

[98] For Goethe's preoccupation with Homer in this period see Butler, 1935; Trevelyan, 1941: 189; Boyle, 2000: 517–537. Five lines of his *Odyssey* translation are preserved (WA I 5², 203).

[99] "Denn erstlich ist der Roman nun fertig […]; dann habe ich mich mit allen meinen Kräften auf das epische geworfen und will sehen, am Ende meiner Laufbahn, auch noch um diesen Eckstein herumzukommen..." (To Jacobi 17. 10. 1796; WA IV 12, 232f.)

[100] Boyle assumes Goethe did not finish the play because he lost the motivation after he left the island, and because his thoughts about Frau von Stein that inspired the idea were not suited for the story about Odysseus' arrival in Scheria. See Boyle, 1991: 471, 447.

still very much preoccupied with his ancient companion from the days of his Sicilian journey, was immediately interested, both as a poet and a scholar, recognising a possible solution to his problems. Because Wolf maintained that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were a developing tradition that acquired their present form through a series of different historical periods, this, in Goethe's eyes at least, meant that another ancient epic could still be written. His reasoning was the following: if there was not just one genius Homer, but many *Homeridai*, and if there were many *Iliads* and *Odysseys*, there existed a possibility that he himself might compose an epic poem as well. In short, Goethe started to think of himself as a *Homerid*, which can be seen, for example, in two letters he wrote at the time: first, on the 6th of December he wrote to Johann Heinrich Voß (1751–1826), who had translated both Homeric epics into German and in 1783 had published the first German poem in hexameters entitled *Luise* (1795), itself an important source of inspiration for *Hermann und Dorothea*. He told Voß about an epic poem he was preparing that was indebted to his poetry and Wolf's theories.[101] Then, on the 26th of December 1796, he wrote in similar terms to Wolf personally:

> Possibly I shall soon send to you, rather boldly, the announcement of an epic poem in which I do not conceal how much I owe to the conviction that you impressed on me so firmly. For a long time, I was inclined to venture into this matter, but I always felt overawed by the lofty conception of the unity and indivisibility of the Homeric writings. But now because you have made these works part of a family, it seems less audacious to share in that great society and follow the path which Voß has so beautifully traced for us in his *Luise*.[102]

As can be seen from the letter, Goethe thanked Wolf for his teachings which gave him an opportunity to further explore the world of epic production. The reason why he had not attempted to write an epic poem before was, allegedly, that he was dissuaded by the "unity and indivisibility of the Homeric poems", but with the outline of the developing epic tradition in the *Prolegomena*, Wolf had opened the possibility to become "part of the family" of epic poets. And this was precisely what Goethe meant to achieve with his epic poem *Hermann und Dorothea* (1797).

---

[101] To Voß 6. 12. 1796; WA IV 12, 276.

[102] "Vielleicht sende ich Ihnen bald mit mehrerem Muthe die Ankündigung eines epischen Gedichtes, in der ich nicht verschweige, wieviel ich jener Überzeugung schuldig bin, die Sie mir so fest eingeprägt haben. Schon lange war ich geneigt mich in diesem Fache zu versuchen und immer schreckte mich der hohe Begriff von Einheit und Untheilbarkeit der Homerische Schriften ab, nunmehr da Sie diese herrlichen Werke einer Familie zueignen, so ist die Kühnheit geringer sich in grössere Gesellschafft zu wagen und den Weg zu verfolgen, den uns Voß in seiner Luise so schön gezeigt hat." (To Wolf 26. 12. 1796; WA IV 12, 295)

Goethe conceived *Hermann und Dorothea* as a practical test of Wolf's theories, enabling him to see if an *epos* was still achievable in his own time, and if he could write it. Clearly, he must have had at least some doubts about Wolf's work, because he wrote in the above letter that the ancient epics were "writings (Schriften)" and not an oral tradition as Wolf professed, an uncertainty which testifies to Goethe's need to test the arguments of the *Prolegomena* in practical terms. When *Hermann und Dorothea* was published, he announced that he had successfully completed an epic.[103] The sense of triumph that this implies can be seen in the poem itself, when he pays homage to Wolf:

> Here is to the health of the man who has finally boldly freed us
> from the glorious name *Homeros*, who encourages us to share in the contest!
> For who dared to struggle with gods? And who with the One?
> But now to be a *Homerid*, even if the last, is beautiful.[104]

In these four lines the poet announced his mastery of the epic tradition, identifying himself as the last *Homerid*, who shared in the contest with the greatest of all poets. While "sacred" Homer was still a God and "the One", such a feat was inconceivable, but with Wolf's *Prolegomena*, Goethe could finally compare himself to the ancients. If there was not just one genius Homer, who could create the most natural epic of them all, but many poets and epics in a developing tradition, he could hope to become an heir. For this, he thanked Wolf who allegedly stripped Homer of unreachable ideality and freed the modern writers of the ancient dominance over poetry.

After a short enjoyment of victory, however, Goethe began to doubt his own achievement. This must have been provoked, in part, by many debates about epic poetry he had with Friedrich Schiller (1759–1805)[105] and which they summarised in an essay entitled "Über Epische und Dramatische Dichtung",[106] and by August Wilhelm Schlegel's (1767–1845) review of his work in which the author argued that Goethe produced a modern and not an ancient epic.[107] As a result Goethe sent a letter to Schiller at the very end of 1797 in which he explained how he had been, due to Schlegel's review, rethinking the nature of epic poetry.[108]

---

[103] See also To Schiller 19. 04. 1797; WA IV 12, 89f.
[104] "Erst die Gesundheit des Mannes, der, endlich vom Namen Homeros / Kühn uns befreiend, uns auch ruft in die vollere Bahn. / Denn wer wagte mit Göttern den Kampf? und wer mit dem Einen? / Doch Homeride zu sein, auch nur als letzter, ist schön." (*Hermann und Dorothea*, vv. 27–30; WA I 1, 294). Because the word "Homeride" was not often used at the time, its use directly evoked Wolf and his theories.
[105] E,g, Littlejohns, 1987; Bohm, 2007: 5–19.
[106] Schiller, NA 21.2, 57–59.
[107] See Schlegel's "Hermann und Dorothea" in Schlegel, 1962.
[108] To Schiller 20. 12. 1797; WA IV 13, 379f.

A few days later, he sent another letter, explaining at length why his *Hermann und Dorothea* could not be a true *epos*, and then continued in the same breath that he has to write another poem:

> Finally, I must report a strange task which I have given myself in these considerations, namely, to examine whether there is an epic poem between Hector's death and the departure of the Greeks from the Trojan coast, or not?[109]

Goethe was already thinking about his next project, the *Achilleis*, a poem that would continue the *Iliad* and describe Achilles' love for Polyxena.[110] From the good six hundred lines of the first canto Goethe wrote and sent to Schiller and from his other letters, it is possible to reconstruct some of his plan for the poem. It started right where the *Iliad* ended, that is, with Hector's funeral, during which Achilles contemplates his own death. However, when he meets Polyxena, who was sent to the Achaean camp as a substitute for Helen, he falls in love and decides to marry her, forgetting about his fate. During the wedding, Achilles is killed through the treachery of Odysseus and Diomedes who oppose the peace with Troy that the marriage would bring.[111]

Goethe started writing and intensely studied Homer at the same time, for if he wanted to achieve his project, he had to become a true *Homerid*, that is to say, one of Wolf's many Homers. On the 2nd of May 1798, he wrote to Schiller how convinced he was that both Homeric poems were compiled from an accumulation of rhapsodic performances,[112] and shortly thereafter, on 16th of May 1798 he sent the following: "If I am to produce a poem which is at all worthy to come after the *Iliad*, I must follow the ancients even in those things for which they are criticised; I must even assimilate what is objectionable to me personally."[113] This was an extreme position, but a logical one that followed from Goethe's own endeavours. If he wanted to become a true ancient poet, he had to leave behind his own personal beliefs,

---

[109] "Schließlich muß ich noch von einer sonderbaren Aufgabe melden, die ich mir in diesen Rücksichten gegeben habe, nämlich zu untersuchen: ob zwischen Hektors Tod und der Abfahrt der Griechen von der Trojanischen Küste, noch ein episches Gedicht inne liege, oder nicht?" (To Schiller 23. 12. 1797; WA IV 13, 384–385).

[110] The source for the story was probably *Dictys Cretensis* (Wohlleben, 1990: 51), but one should not exclude the Epic cycle, which was known well before Wolf and which Herder already mentioned in the first *Kritische Wälder* (1796) and in the essay "Ursachen des gesunknen Geschmacks" (1774). The alternative ending of the *Iliad* found in a scholion to *Il.* 24.804 was, to my knowledge, not known to Goethe.

[111] WA I 50, 271–294. For the reconstruction of the story see Schadewaldt, 1963: 301–395; Trevelyan, 1941: 232–234; Constantine, 1984; Dietrich, 1985; Jeßing, 2009; Meid, 2013; Friedrich, 2013.

[112] To Schiller 2. 5. 1798; WA IV 13, 129f.

[113] "Soll mir ein Gedicht gelingen, das sich an die Ilias einigermaßen anschließt; so muß ich den Alten auch darinne folgen worin sie getadelt werden, ja ich muß mir zu eigen machen was mir selbst nicht behagt." (To Schiller 12. 5. 1798; WA IV 13, 140)

convictions, style, and his own poetics, for only that way could he hope to capture the world as the ancients did, that is, in its immediate naturalness and primal existence. He thus had to think, feel, and be like the ancients. Some of these convictions can be observed also in the existing fragment of the *Achilleis* that Goethe sent to Schiller. In what he wrote of the first canto, he imitated the ancient epic in numerous Iliadic reminiscences, a scene on Olympus, by adhering to the original Homeric geography,[114] and even through occasional imitation of Homeric epithets and formulas.[115]

Yet, just four days after the letter mentioned above, he wrote another note to Schiller stating that he was now "more than ever convinced of the unity and indivisibility of the poem [i.e. the *Iliad*]", that nothing could be added or taken from it, that *Achilleis* was a tragic as well as a sentimental subject and hence not epic, that its characters possessed merely personal and individual interests, and that it could thus be regarded only as a modern work.[116] He begged Schiller to advise him whether he should even write the poem or not and Schiller gave a conciliatory answer:

> Since it is certainly true that no other *Iliad* is possible after the *Iliad*, even if there were another Homer and another Greece, I believe I can wish you nothing better than that you should compare your *Achilleis*, as it now exists in your imagination, only with itself, and should seek only the right mood from Homer, without really comparing your work with his.[117]

He continued that it was impossible for a poet to quit his native soil and his own age entirely and that Goethe's work would necessarily remain in between his own conditions and those of classical literature.[118] In fact, Schiller was restating to Goethe what he had already argued for in 1795 in the essay known today as "Über Naive und Sentimentalische Dichtung", namely, that a modern poet could only strive to become a natural poet, but could never fully recreate the ancient poetic ideal.[119] In the essay, Schiller differentiated between the ancients and

---

[114] Constantine, 1984: 105.

[115] Such as "Zeus Kronions" (*Achilleis*, v. 68), "Zeus des Olympiers" (v. 68), "Pallas Athene" (v. 95, 354, 540, 612), or "Zeus kläräugige Tochter Athene" (v. 444).

[116] "Ich bin mehr als jemals von der Einheit und Untheilbarkeit des Gedichts überzeugt…" (To Schiller 16. 5. 1798; WA IV 13, 147)

[117] "Da es wohl seine Richtigkeit hat, daß keine *Ilias* nach der *Ilias* mehr möglich ist, auch wenn es wieder einen Homer und wieder ein Griechenland gäbe, so glaube ich Ihnen nichts Besseres wünschen zu können, als daß Sie Ihre *Achilleis* so wie sie jetzt in Ihrer Imagination existirt, bloß mit sich selbst vergleichen, und bei'm Homer bloß Stimmung suchen, ohne Ihr Geschäft mit seinem eigentlich zu vergleichen." (Schiller to Goethe 18. 5. 1798; NA 30, 467f.)

[118] Schiller to Goethe 18. 5. 1798; NA 30, 467f.

[119] Schiller, NA 20.1, 413–503; English translation in Schiller, 1993. The original essay was published in four parts in Schiller's journal *Die Horen*. The importance of this essay is discussed by Barner, 1993; Fischer, 1994.

moderns as between those that feel "naturally" and those that "feel nature".[120] In his opinion, it was the intrinsic specificity of each period that defined how one related to nature: the Greeks were primordially connected with nature and were not yet "degenerated" by culture, but the moderns were alienated from it through exposure to modern civilisation so that "nature has disappeared from our humanity".[121] This had further consequences also for the poetry produced in either of the periods so that the poet "either *is* nature or he will *seek* it: the former makes for the naïve poet, the latter for the sentimental poet".[122] Schiller argued that the ancient Greeks were naïve for they made "no distinction between what [object] is of itself and what it is through art and human will", while on the other hand, the specific conditions of modernity and its detachment from nature prevented modern poets from successfully realising such poetry, even though they constantly strove to do so. This was the reason why in modern times "poets of this naïve sort are rather out of place" and "are even scarcely possible any more".[123] As Maike Oergel (2006) points out in her analysis of the essay, this was, in fact, an attempt to reconcile the difference between modernity and antiquity in the terms of both an opposition and a succession, a discourse closely linked at the time with the earlier French *Querelle des Anciens et Modernes*.[124] In this respect, Schiller differentiated the moderns from the ancients by arguing that the latter lived a primordial natural life, while moderns did not due to the conditions of modernity. At the same time, it was the very condition of modernity that inspired people to strive for naturalness, and as far as poetry was concerned, modern poets were sentimental precisely because they aspired to be naïve, meaning that they followed ancient poetry as a model. This model was of course ideal and unattainable, but it was nevertheless crucial for the aesthetics of modernity.

So even though Schiller did not dissuade Goethe from writing the *Achilleis*, his conviction that another *Iliad* was impossible discouraged the poet from finishing it. Looking back at the collapse of historical distance between Homer and Sicilian nature, Goethe tried to recreate the naturalness of ancient poetry also poetically, realising by trial and error, and through discussions with Schiller, that the only way to achieve his goal was to assimilate ancient poetics to the point that he had to accept what was to him objectionable – a radical

---

[120] "Sie empfanden natürlich; wir empfinden das Natürliche." (Schiller, NA 20.1, 431)

[121] "…weil die Natur bei uns aus der Menschheit verschwunden ist…" (Schiller, NA 20.1, 430)

[122] "Der Dichter, sagte ich, ist entweder Natur, oder er wird sie suchen. Jenes macht den naiven, dieses den sentimentalischen Dichter." (Schiller, NA 20.1, 436)

[123] "Dichter von dieser naiven Gattung sind in einem künstlichen Weltalter nicht so recht mehr an ihrer Stelle. Auch sind sie in demselben kaum mehr möglich…" (Schiller, NA 20.1, 430) This claim comes directly after a passage from *Il.* 6.224–36 is cited as an example of naïve poetry.

[124] See especially Jauß, 1970; Ferris, 2000; Oergel, 2006, 2012, 2016. The general influence of *Querelle* on the German poetic space is discussed in Billings, 2014: 19–44.

poetic position which led him to abandon the project. Realising that it was impossible to write another *Iliad* and that he would never become a *Homerid* further convinced him of the distance, completeness, and remote exemplarity of Greece and of Homer specifically. This, however, did not change his appreciation of Homeric poetry. As before, he believed that the ancient poems should remain an aesthetic model towards which all poets should strive, which essentially became his own poetic agenda. After he failed with *Achilleis*, he turned to *Helena* (1800), where Greece was "a subordinate theme in a greater poem of subjective self-expression".[125] He then published the above-mentioned *Winckelmann und sein Jahrhundert* (1805) and went on to work on *Faust I* (1808), *Pandora* (1807–1808), *Epimenides* (1815), and *Faust II* (1832). In all these works Goethe utilised Greek literature as a model and source of inspiration, but always remained culturally grounded in his own time and space. He never again attempted to recreate a true Homeric epic, but rather combined Greek influences with his own poetic ideas. Greek literature might have been Goethe's model for lengthy periods of his career, but it remained only a (and only one) model.

The discovery that it was impossible to write another *Iliad* further led Goethe to doubt Wolf's theses, gradually at first and more decidedly later in his life. His opposition to the philologist was along the same lines as his short period of approval discussed above, that is, Goethe criticised Wolf mainly on the basis of his own understanding of the ancient poetry and its relation to the moderns. After accepting that moderns could only strive towards the ideals of Greek poetry and never achieve the same kind of naturalness, Goethe could only disagree with Wolf, not because he took a different view of the Homeric question and the unity of the Homeric poem,[126] but rather on the basis of what Homeric epic represented to modern poets. In this regard, Goethe's and Schiller's project *Xenien*, a compilation of short satirical poems published in 1797 in Schiller's *Musenalmanach*, illustrates his increasingly sceptical reception of the *Prolegomena*, specifically in the two couplets aimed at Wolf both known as *Der Wolfische Homer*. The first couplet reads as follows:

> Seven cities squabbled over which one gave birth to him;
> now that the Wolf tore him apart, let each have a piece. [127]

And the second one reads as:

---

[125] Trevelyan, 1941: 239.

[126] For Goethe's take on the Homeric question see especially Schmidt, 1970; Wohlleben, 1967, 1990, 1996.

[127] "Sieben Städte zankten sich drum, ihn geboren zu haben, / Nun, da der Wolf ihn zerriß, nehme sich jede ihr Stück" (WA 5 I, 281).

With hard-hearted criticism you have killed the Poet,

but the rejuvenated poem lives immortally through you.[128]

The two satirical interventions hint at the productive as well as the destructive potential of Wolf's *Prolegomena*. While Wolf tore Homer apart (a pun on the philologist's name[129]) and critically killed him ('entleibt'), he also "rejuvenated" the poetry, made it "immortal", and available to everyone – to all "the seven cities" at least. For Goethe, the main problem of Wolf's *Prolegomena* was thus not its insistence on the oral transmission of poetry, but his conviction that Homer should be regarded as the product of a prolonged historical evolution. What in his opinion made Homeric poetry so special was its dominant position in modernity and not its history of transmission.

An important theme is coming into focus here, that is, a difference between universal receptivity of Homeric epic and its historically localised transmission. For Goethe, Homer could either aesthetically guide modern world literature or it was developing historically, belonging to different periods and places. That these were the grounds on which he opposed Wolf in the later years of his life can be seen from the following two examples. The first is a poem *Homer wieder Homer* (written in 1821 and published in 1827[130]) in which the poet criticised Wolf and voiced support for his younger critics:

You have in your clever way

freed us from all reverence,

and we asserted too glibly

that the *Iliad* was only a patchwork.

Let no one take offence if we change our mind,

for young men have been able to fire us

to think of him rather as a whole,

to feel him joyfully as a whole.[131]

---

[128] "Mit hartherz'ger Kritik hast du den Dichter entleibet, / Aber unsterblich durch dich lebt das verjüngte Gedicht" (WA 5 I, 243).

[129] See Graziosi, 2002; 51. Cf. Vogt, 2013: 82–84.

[130] See Birus, 2011.

[131] "Scharfsinnig habt ihr, wie ihr seid,
Von aller Verehrung uns befreit,
Und wir bekannten überfrei,
Daß Ilias nur ein Flickwerk sei.

Mög unser Abfall niemand kränken;
Denn Jugend weiß uns zu entzünden,
Daß wir ihn lieber als Ganzes denken,

In a critical escalation of the two epigrams in *Xenien*, Goethe dwelled upon his previous approval of Wolf's theories and his subsequent change of mind. The latter he attributed to a young scholar whom we can identify as Karl Ernst Schubarth (1796–1861), author of *Ideen über Homer und sein Zeitalter* (1821).[132] That Goethe praised this poorly conceived work in defence of the unity of Homeric epic demonstrates that by this time he had largely lost interest in any serious discussion of the Homeric question.[133] He now turned away from historical-critical attempts at a solution towards a more personal enjoyment, which to him was preferable primarily because it was poetically productive.

Another illustration of Goethe's later reception of Wolf can be found in *Gespräche*. On the 19th of April 1824 Wolf visited Goethe on his way to France and the latter organised a grand dinner in his honour. As can be seen from Eckermann's detailed description of the occasion, there was tension between Wolf and the poet. He observed: "Wolf was full of witty sallies, Goethe being constantly his opponent in the pleasantest way. 'I cannot,' said Goethe to me afterwards, 'get on with Wolf, at all, without assuming the character of Mephistopheles. Nothing else brings out his hidden treasures."[134] As usual, Eckermann portrayed Goethe in a favourable light and presented him as having the upper hand in the confrontation.[135] When Wolf departed on the 25th, he also noted Goethe's concern for his health. We do not know whether this is accurate or Eckermann utilised another device to portray the genius of Goethe, though Wolf did indeed die three months later in Marseilles. There is no mention of his death in *Gespräche*, but three years later, on the 1st of February 1827 Goethe was joking about the philologist when speaking about truth and criticism:

> 'In poetry, destructive criticism is not so injurious. Wolf has destroyed Homer (*hat den Homer zerstört*), but he has not been able to injure the poem; for this poem has a miraculous power like the heroes of Valhalla, who hew one another to pieces in the morning, but sit down to dinner with whole limbs at noon.' Goethe was in the best humour, and I was delighted to hear him talk once more on

---

Als Ganzes freudig ihn empfinden." (WA I 3, 159)

[132] For Goethe's reception of Schubarth's work see Wohlleben, 1967; Görner, 1993. For the relationship between Goethe and Schubarth see Hohlfeld, 1953b.

[133] Wohlleben, 1967: 270.

[134] "Wolf gab manchen geistreichen Einfall zum besten; Goethe, in der anmutigsten Laune, spielte immer den Gegner. 'Ich kann mit Wolf nicht anders auskommen,' sagte Goethe mir später, 'als daß ich immer als Mephistopheles gegen ihn agiere. Auch geht er sonst mit seinen inneren Schätzen nicht hervor.'" (Eckermann, 19. 4. 1824)

[135] "Wolf was very great in witty turns and repartees, but nevertheless it seemed to me that Goethe always maintained a certain superiority over him. (Wolf war in witzigen und schlagenden Antworten und Wendungen sehr groß, doch kam es mir vor, als ob Goethe dennoch eine gewisse Superiorität über ihn behauptet hätte.)" (Eckermann, 19. 4. 1824).

such important subjects. 'We will quietly keep to the right way,' said he, 'and let others go; that is the best.'[136]

Goethe thus believed that Wolf, when claiming that "the *Iliad* was just a patchwork", could not harm the power of Homeric poetry. Even if he "killed the poet", Homer would still return like the heroes of Valhalla – a reference to an Old Norse heroic tradition preserved in the *Edda*.[137] The poet was thus not particularly preoccupied with Wolf's claims that Homer might indeed have been "demolished" through oral transmission, but rather asserted that his poetry was resurrected through its reception.

I demonstrated that Goethe, after the *Achilleis*, perceived Homeric poetry as the most natural artistic expression, and even though it was impossible for moderns to write another *Iliad*, the poets should nevertheless strive to achieve its aesthetic ideal. In this respect, it was primarily the modern reception, not its specific historical development that, according to Goethe, was integral to how Homeric poetry should be understood. As he wrote in *Homer wieder Homer*: "*we think* of him rather as a whole, / *we feel* him joyfully as a whole" (emphasis mine), specifically using the first-person plural ("wir ihn denken" and "[wir] ihn empfinden") to stress the communal dimension of Homeric reception. For modern poets, and the poetic community around them, Homeric poetry was important as a source of inspiration and as an aesthetic model in its contemporary reception, while historical transmission, a topic that preoccupied Wolf, was much less important.

This theoretical stance, which Goethe sometimes called "productive criticism" as opposed to "separating (*trennenden*)" or "destructive (*zerstörende*) criticism",[138] put more stress on the recipient of the poem than on the historical context of its production. Goethe believed that the critic would, by choosing the one or the other method, necessarily influence how an understanding of the poem was formed. It was thus better, he argued, that criticism should be productive and not destructive, because only productive criticism could bring out the

---

[136] "'In der Poesie ist die vernichtende Kritik nicht so schädlich. Wolf hat den Homer zerstört, doch dem Gedicht hat er nichts anhaben können; denn dieses Gedicht hat die Wunderkraft wie die Helden Walhallas, die sich des Morgens in Stücke hauen und mittags sich wieder mit heilen Gliedern zu Tische setzen.' Goethe war in der besten Laune, und ich war glücklich, ihn abermals über so bedeutende Dinge reden zu hören. 'Wir wollen uns nur', sagte er, 'im stillen auf dem rechten Wege forthalten und die übrigen gehen lassen; das ist das Beste.'" (Eckermann, 1. 2. 1827)

[137] Valhalla is a mythical Nordic hall ruled by Odin in which heroes fight each other for practice: the ones that die are then resurrected in the evening. That Goethe would refer here to another epic tradition is in itself of importance. As I argue in Chapter II, Wolf knew of other epic traditions in Europe but did not consider them relevant for *Altertumswissenschaft*. Therefore, with his comment about the *Edda*, Goethe might be teasingly pointing to Wolf's narrow disciplinary interests.

[138] For this concept see McKillop, 1932; Wohlleben, 1967. Cf. Wellek, 1955: 223–224.

true nature of poetry.[139] While Goethe spoke of such reception specifically in relation to modern literature and its literary criticism,[140] this differentiation applied equally to the Homeric poems.[141] In the above passage, for example, Goethe wrote that Wolf destroyed (*hat zerstört*)[142] Homer. Furthermore, in a letter he sent to the philologist Heinrich Karl Eichstädt (1771–1848) in 1804, he clearly identified two view-points in Homeric criticism:

> Every poet compounds his work of elements, although, to be sure, not everyone is able to combine them equally well. Yet much also depends on the spectator and his point of view. If he is inclined to separate (*Ist er zur Trennung geneigt*), he will destroy (*zerstört er*) more or less the unity after which the artist strives. If he prefers to connect things, he aids the artist and carries out his intention. […] Even the most sublime works, such as the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad*, must disintegrate before the eyes of the separating (*trennenden*) critic.[143]

It was the method of the critic, which according to Goethe could be either destructive or productive, that determined how a particular poem was to be regarded, either as a unity or as a conglomerate of elements. Much of how a poem was perceived depended "on the spectator and his point of view", and Homeric poetry mattered, claimed Goethe, because it was the most natural poetry through its reception in modernity. No Wolfian separating criticism could thus change the fact that Homeric epic was the model towards which all poets should strive and that it should be perceived productively as an aesthetic ideal.

At the heart of the difference between productive and separating criticism, at least as far as Homer was concerned, there lay another issue, that of historical analysis – and within it, the relationship between historical localisation and transhistorical receptivity. For Goethe, historical analysis was linked to destructive criticism, mostly because it framed the ancient

---

[139] For Goethe's understanding of literary criticism in general see e.g. Berghahn's entry "Kritik" in *Goethe-Handbuch* (1996–1998) and the collected volume *Goethe as a Critic of Literature* (Fink and Baeumer, 1984). The relationship between his criticism and world literature is discussed by Lamping, 2017.

[140] Especially in his review of Manzoni's *Il conte di Carmagnola* (WA I 41.1, 195f.).

[141] But also, for example, to the Bible. In *Dichtung und Wahrheit* Goethe argued against destructive criticism of the Bible (WA I 28, 101f.) and in his conversations with Eckermann he paralleled Biblical criticism with Wolf's criticism (Eckermann, 1. 2. 1827).

[142] Remembering how he first read *Prolegomena* in *Tag- und Jahreshefte als Ergänzung meiner sonstigen Bekenntnisse* (1807–1822), Goethe explicitly wrote that the poems were separated (*sie würden getrennt*) by Wolf with great skill: "…und hier wurden sie mir jedes mit großer Kenntnis, Scharfsinn und Geschicklichkeit getrennt und aus einander gezogen… (…and here they were both separated and pulled apart by great knowledge, ingenuity, and skill…)" (WA I 36, 173).

[143] "Jeder Dichter baut sein Werk aus Elementen zusammen, die freylich der Eine organischer zu verflechten vermag, als der Andere, doch kommt es auch viel auf den Beschauer an, von welcher Maxime dieser ausgeht. Ist er zur Trennung geneigt, so zerstört er mehr oder weniger die Einheit, welche der Künstler zu erringen strebt; mag er lieber verbinden, so hilft er dem Künstler nach und vollendet gleichsam dessen Absicht. […] so fallen die höchsten Kunstwerke, Odyssee und Ilias, vor dem Scharfblick eines trennenden Kritikers auseinander." (To Eichstädt 15.9.1804; WA IV 17, 196f.).

epics as a historically developing tradition and supposedly did not stress their aesthetically ideal nature.[144] Goethe effectively understood the difference between historical analysis and productive aesthetic reception in religious terms, as an opposition between "belief" and "criticism", undoubtedly also under the influence of concurrent developments in Bible studies.[145] For example, in a letter to Georg Friedrich Creuzer (1771–1858),[146] a philologist who proposed that the mythology in Homer and Hesiod was of Eastern origin – a topic to which I return in Chapter VI – Goethe wrote that we, the "post-poets must venerate our old ancestors such as Homer, Hesiod and others as Ur-canonical books; we bow before them as inspired by the Holy Ghost and we do not have the impudence to ask: wherefrom, neither whereto?"[147] The tone was clearly pointed against historical investigation that could endanger the position Ur-canonical books hold for poetic modernity – the word "books (*Bücher*)" being consciously used here in opposition to Wolf's arguments for the oral origin of Homer. For Goethe, Homer mattered as a model, as an Ur-canonical author: his admiration for him was a matter of poetically productive faith rather than historically informed criticism. What Goethe had already proposed as a young man in *Künstlers Morgenlied* thus resurfaced in his letter to Creuzer: Homer and other ancient Greek poets should be read as inspired by the Holy Spirit, they should be regarded as the Bible of poetry, and not as historically determined cultural products. This essentially confirms the interpretation that destructive criticism was in fact historical analysis as practised by Wolf, while productive criticism acknowledged ancient poetry as a fruitful aesthetic model.

On the grounds of my investigation of the two periods that profoundly defined Goethe's reception of Homer, it is possible to draw the following two conclusions. First, Goethe regarded the Homeric epics as a primordial form of poetry and hence the highest aesthetic ideal, stressing their universal and world-wide receptivity. This idea was influenced by a transnational context, that is, his trip to Sicily, where the poet experienced a collapse of historical difference between his immediate surroundings and ancient poetry. In this regard, Homer became a universally and trans-historically productive model for poetry in general. Secondly, Goethe also proposed

---

[144] It has to be admitted, however, that Goethe accepted at least some positive aspects of Wolf's method, most importantly, his textual criticism that had the potential, if used productively, to construct an even more enjoyable and unitary version of the Homeric epics. See WA I 42[2], 453–454.

[145] For how Goethe used "belief" in opposition to "criticism" see Wohlleben, 1967. For Goethe's reception of biblical criticism see the collected volume Anderegg and Kunz, 2005.

[146] For Creuzer's work and his importance for the development of classical philology see Güthenke, 2020: 96–113.

[147] "Wir andern Nachpoeten müssen unserer Altvordern, Homers, Hesiods u.a.m., Verlassenschaft als urkanonische Bücher verehren; als vom heiligen Geist Eingegebenen beugen wir uns vor ihnen und unterstehen uns nicht, zu fragen: woher, noch wohin?" (To Creuzer 1. 10. 1817; WA IV 28, 266).

that Homeric poetry, while representing a model for all poets, was an aesthetic ideal that could never be attained again due to the conditions of modernity. This idea was mostly formed through the poet's attempt to recreate an ancient epic poem and his subsequent failure with *Achilleis*, which reaffirmed the gap between contemporary poetry and the ancient world. Nevertheless, Goethe's experience of the Sicilian Homer was not forgotten, meaning that the ancient epics acquired a status of a productive example for his own poetry. Homer emerged from this process as an ahistorical model for modernity, a position that was clearly formed in opposition to Wolf's historical localisation of Homer. How exactly Goethe understood Homer in relation to modern literature as a whole now requires a discussion of his concept of *Weltliteratur*.

b) Goethe and world literature

Thus far I investigated Goethe's reception of Homer, establishing that his intimate encounter with the ancient epics shaped the poet's overall understanding of ancient and modern poetry. This analysis outlined the main theme of this dissertation, revealing that the poet's reception of Homer was conditioned by different aspects of an increasingly interconnected world such as international travel, and a broadening outlook on literature. In order to establish how his appreciation of Homer influenced, and resonated with, Goethe's arguments about *Weltliteratur*, a concept informed by his meditations on interconnectedness and transnational world-view, I now turn to a later period of his life. Although Goethe was at least indirectly thinking about world literature even earlier,[148] it was roughly between 1827 and his death in 1831 that he was most intensively developing the concept. In order to understand how the poet reconciled his appreciation of the ancient epics with his vision of world literature, and to further scrutinise how his appreciation of one literary work related to general ideas about literature as a "universal possession of mankind" this section focuses on the last years of his life.

A good introduction to Goethe's thinking about world literature is his first mention of the term "Weltliteratur" in a short article published in 1827 in the journal *Über Kunst und Altertum*. In this short text, the poet briefly reviewed Alexandre Duval's *Le Tasse* (1827), a French drama that was, in fact, an adaptation of his *Torquato Tasso*. After translating two passages from the *Journal du Commerce* and *Le Globe*, Goethe offered the following conjecture:

---

[148] Strich, 1946: 13–27; D'haen, 2012: 27–33; Venkat Mani, 2017: 49–90.

> Everywhere one hears and reads about the progress of the human race, about the further prospects for world and human relationships. However that may be on the whole, which it is not my office to investigate and more closely determine, I nevertheless would personally like to make my friends aware that I am convinced a general world literature (*allgemeine Weltliteratur*) is in the process of being constituted, in which an honourable role is reserved for us Germans.[149]

Two aspects of his use of the term "Weltliteratur" can be immediately identified in this short passage. First, the context in which he wrote these words is important in that they come in connection with translating passages from two French reviews of a French adaptation of a German work. In other words, *Tasso* was adapted from the German language into French by Alexander Duval, then two reviews were written in French newspapers, which were afterwards translated and discussed in a German journal by Goethe. The dialectic of an international artistic and intellectual exchange was clearly present. The second aspect that is apparent from the above definition is Goethe's prophecy of a new period that would constitute world literature, an era directly resulting from the "progress of the human race" and "human relations" in which Germany would play an important role alongside other nations.

Not just in the above review, but also in other writings Goethe centred his understanding of *Weltliteratur* around two interrelated but distinct notions. On the one hand, he conceived world literature as grounded in the material and technical conditions of literature at his time, such as the increased circulation of literary works, enhanced communication between "men of letters", new translations, international reception and literary criticism, and international literary production. All these aspects reflected the increasingly interconnected literary world of the early nineteenth century.[150] Goethe himself was an important participant in all these processes. He was in touch with the most important writers and intellectuals in Europe, read widely and published reviews of works he had read, closely followed the reception of his own works abroad, and worked as a translator. Moreover, he was very active in journalism: besides regularly following the French *Le Globe*, Italian *l'Eco*, the British *Edinburgh Review* and *Blackwood's Magazine*, he also edited his own journals *Propyläen* and *Kunst und Altertum* and assisted Schiller with his journal *Die Horen*. Beyond the practicalities of a life devoted to literature, Goethe's world literature also had a normative and humanistic

---

[149] "Überall hört und liest man von dem Vorschreiten des Menschengeschlechts, von den weiteren Aussichten der Welt- und Menschenverhältnisse. Wie es auch im Ganzen hiemit beschaffen sein mag, welches zu untersuchen und näher zu bestimmen nicht meines Amtes ist, will ich doch von meiner Seite meine Freunde aufmerksam machen, daß ich überzeugt sei, es bilde sich eine allgemeine Weltliteratur, worin uns Deutschen eine ehrenvolle Rolle vorbehalten ist." (WA I 41, 265)

[150] This technical side has a long history even before Goethe (e.g. Burke, 1999, 2000) and as we will soon see, Goethe was well aware of this.

force, which rested on his conviction that the literary network could empower nations to learn from and about each other thus achieving mutual cooperation and world peace.[151] This vision of a progressive internationalism represented another aspect of world literature as Goethe understood it, one which was influenced by humanist ideals, the experience of the Napoleonic wars, fear of further international conflict, and the hope for national unification. Like many of his contemporaries Goethe longed to unify German literary production, and he hoped to establish Weimar as one of the centres of the world republic of letters.[152]

These two aspects were distinct in as much as one concerned *Weltliteratur* as the product of a developing world-system, whereas the other emphasised the ethical and normative potential of literature. However, they were also intrinsically related, because Goethe assumed that increased interconnectedness of the world had the capacity to promote international understanding and open a world horizon. In his view, cultural circulation profoundly influenced not just literary criticism and literary production but also the way that people and cultures related to one another. Writers and critics, who read and judged literature produced outside their local and national circles could gain insights that would not otherwise be available. According to Goethe, this was an intrinsically 'pleasant' development, and one that lead to greater insight on everyone's part. This can be seen, for example, in an episode which Eckermann related in the *Gespräche*, describing how his expressed interest in Thomas Carlyle's (1795–1881) study *German Romance* delighted Goethe:

> It is pleasant to see that intercourse is now so close between the French, English, and Germans, that we shall be able to correct one another. This is the great use of a world literature, which will show itself more and more. Carlyle has written a life of Schiller and judged him as it would be difficult for a German to judge him. On the other hand, we are clear about Shakespeare and Byron, and can, perhaps, appreciate their merits better than the English themselves.[153]

One "great use of world literature", believed Goethe, was in the productive relationship between different European nations that it helped to foster. Since critics such as Carlyle – or Goethe himself, of course – could read works from a position that did not belong to the same

---

[151] This two-fold understanding of Goethe's *Weltliteratur* has been discussed by Koch, 2002; Damrosch, 2003: 1–36; Juvan, 2012, 2013b; Martí Monterde, 2011: 113–237.

[152] See e.g. Koch, 2002; Pizer, 2000, 2006: 18–46, 2012; Biti, 2016: 133–76. Cf. Bruford, 1962: 389–431.

[153] "Es ist aber sehr artig, daß wir jetzt, bei dem engen Verkehr zwischen Franzosen, Engländern und Deutschen, in den Fall kommen, uns einander zu korrigieren. Das ist der große Nutzen, der bei einer Weltliteratur herauskommt und der sich immer mehr zeigen wird. Carlyle hat das Leben von Schiller geschrieben und ihn überhaupt so beurteilt, wie ihn nicht leicht ein Deutscher beurteilen wird. Dagegen sind wir über Shakespeare und Byron im klaren und wissen deren Verdienste vielleicht besser zu schätzen als die Engländer selber." (Eckermann, 15. 7. 1827)

localised context as the work they evaluated, they could "judge better" and "appreciate the merits better" than critics from the same national and local context. Furthermore, because reading a foreign literary work was different from reading one's own literary production, such extra-national outlook produced not only better literary judgment but also better literary production. In a draft for an introduction to the German translation of the above-mentioned *Life of Friedrich Schiller* (1825; a German translation was published in 1830), Goethe wrote that the only way "towards a general world literature" is for "nations to learn about their relationships with other nations", so that they "find in the other something attractive and something repellent, something worthy of emulation and something to be avoided."[154] As literary critics, local writers in the network of world literature productively influenced each other by negative and positive example. Both transnational criticism and literary production depended on the circulation and exchange of non-local ideas which allowed readers to better evaluate literary works and writers to accept or reject other traditions as a model for their own poetics. For Goethe, the ultimate goal of such a network was an epoch in which different nations mutually educated each other within the framework of a transnational, world literature.

That literary circulation positively informed literary production and reception was one consequence of this conception of *Weltliteratur*. The other was humanist world-making. Goethe had a specific reason for promoting international exchange and transnationalism in literature, which was that this encouraged international cooperation and world peace. He argued that one's political, aesthetic, and intellectual position improved by engaging with foreign literatures and letters. Such exposure, he suggested, could refine convictions and ideas conditioned by national particularity. More international exchange, for him, meant better mutual recognition, more international cooperation, cultural acceptance, and hence less tension and violence. When Eckermann met the famous French critic Jean-Jacques Ampère (1800–1864) who had written extensively about Goethe's works in the Parisian newspaper *Le Globe*, Goethe explained to his biographer that Paris, a global metropolis "where the best works, both of nature and art, from all the kingdoms of the earth, are open to daily inspection",[155] enabled the development of a non-prejudiced intellectual stance. Ampère was therefore able to surpass his national bias and become "a citizen of the world".[156] Literary exchange, then, did not lead

---

[154] "Denn daraus nur kann endlich nur die allgemeine Weltliteratur entspringen, daß die Nationen die Verhältnisse aller gegen alle kennen lernen und so wird es nicht fehlen daß jede in der Andern etwas Annehmliches und etwas Widerwärtiges, etwas Nachahmenswerthes und etwas zu Meidendes antreffen wird." (WA I 42, 505)

[155] "…wo das Beste aus allen Reichen der Natur und Kunst des ganzen Erdbodens der täglichen Anschauung offen steht…" (Eckermann, 3. 5. 1827)

[156] Goethe said that Ampère "stands indeed so high in culture that the national prejudices, apprehensions, and narrow-mindedness of many of his countrymen lie far behind him and he is far more a citizen of the world in his

only to international literary production, but also to an international worldview, which would refract national and local ideas and essentially establish a more magnanimous world. This can be explicitly seen in a speech with which Goethe *in absentia* addressed the 1828 Congress of Natural Scientists organised by Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835) in Berlin:

> In venturing to announce a European, in fact a universal, world literature, we did not mean merely to say that the different nations get to know each other and each other's productions; for in this sense it has long since been in existence, is propagating itself, and is constantly being added to. No, indeed! The matter is rather this—that living, striving men of letters should learn to know each other, and through their own inclination and similarity of tastes, find the motive for common action.[157]

In this elitist idealism, which applied only to men of letters, and in this case only to European men of letters,[158] there lied an important cosmopolitan and humanist impulse. The epoch of world literature was for Goethe not merely a network of increased communication between writers, but a reciprocal acquaintance between nations, which resulted in finding a shared taste and motivation for common action. It was through this worldview, Goethe hoped, that universal world peace would be achieved.

Cooperation and mutual understanding, however, were not expected to occur just because nations read each other's literatures. Goethe was well aware that literary exchange and familiarity with foreign literatures existed long before his time and could not prevent wars and violence, some of which he experienced when Napoleon's army occupied Weimar in 1806.[159] What mattered, rather, was that the literary network supposedly enabled people to appreciate national specificities. Because the world-system was increasingly interconnected and literature became more transnational, this, according to Goethe's humanist ideal at least, allowed people to understand not just their own national contexts but also other circumstances, encouraging transnational understanding, cooperation, and peace. In a letter to Thomas Carlyle he explained

---

spirit. (Ampère, steht freilich in seiner Bildung so hoch, daß die nationalen Vorurtheile, Apprehensionen und Bornirtheiten vieler seiner Landsleute weit hinter ihm liegen und er seinem Geiste nach weit mehr ein Weltbürger ist.)" (Eckermann, 4. 5. 1827)

[157] "Wenn wir eine europäische, ja eine allgemeine Weltliteratur zu verkündigen gewagt haben, so heißt dieses nicht, daß die verschiedenen Nationen von einander und ihren Erzeugnissen Kenntnis nehmen, denn in diesem Sinne existiert sie schon lange, setzt sich fort und erneuert sich mehr oder weniger. Nein! hier ist vielmehr davon die Rede, daß die lebendigen und strebenden Literatoren einander kennenlernen und durch Neigung und Gemeinsinn sich veranlaßt finden, gesellschaftlich zu wirken." (WA II 13, 449)

[158] For critical evaluations of Goethe's Eurocentrism and *Weltliteratur* see Damrosch, 2002: 12 – 14; Juvan, 2013b; Cha, 2015; Chanda, 2015; Biti, 2016: 133–76; Cheah, 2016: 38–45.

[159] E.g. Seibt, 2008: 7–38.

how this interplay between national particularities and the universal shaping of literature through international network resulted in a less violent world:

> One must learn to note the special characteristics of every nation and take them for granted in order to meet each nation on its own ground. For the characteristics of a nation are like its language or its coinage, they facilitate intercourse and even make it possible in the first place. The most certain way to achieve universal tolerance is to leave untouched what is peculiar to each man or group, remembering that all that is best in the world is the property of all mankind.[160]

According to Goethe, local and national characteristics had to be part of any international exchange that would encourage tolerance. So, in order for universal peace to be achieved, or at least the number of conflicts and wars decreased,[161] local qualities had to be "left untouched", that is, recognised and accepted. In world literature, universal understanding was achieved not by the mere universalisation of literatures, but rather through universal recognition of "what is peculiar to each man" and "meeting each nation on its own ground". The international exchange of ideas and its reshaping of partial and parochial worldviews hence depended upon the recognition of particular local contexts.

Such an understanding of world literature promoted the interdependence of literature's national specificities and its universal characteristics. While these localities enter the universal sphere through a wider literary network, Goethe argued, they nevertheless remain particular, specific, and locally defined. *Weltliteratur* was thus not about unifying literary production. In fact, Goethe was wary of the negative aspects of universalisation and generalisation.[162] When talking about the popular influence of the Parisian theatre and its harm to the dramatic production elsewhere, he explicitly warned of the unwanted "consequences of advancing world literature" that resulted from the cultural dominance of a few literary centres.[163] Literature that was exclusively general and universal was not what *Weltliteratur* really stood for and could not have positive consequences for world-peace. In order for different nations to learn from each other, it was necessary for the national and the local *not* to be suppressed by the pressure of universalisation. World literature was not simply unified and universal, but permeated both the

---

[160] "Die Besonderheiten einer jeden muß man kennenlernen, um sie ihr zu lassen, um gerade dadurch mit ihr zu verkehren: denn die Eigenheiten einer Nation sind wie ihre Sprache und ihre Münzsorten, sie erleichtern den Verkehr, ja sie machen ihn erst vollkommen möglich. Eine wahrhaft allgemeine Duldung wird am sichersten erreicht, wenn man das Besondere der einzelnen Menschen und Völkerschaften auf sich beruhen läßt, bei der Überzeugung jedoch festhält, daß das wahrhaft Verdienstliche sich dadurch auszeichnet, daß es der ganzen Menschheit angehört." (To Carlyle 20. 7. 1827; WA IV 43, 266)

[161] See WA I 41^2, 306.

[162] See e.g. Pizer 2000, 2006: 18–46, 2012; Damrosch, 2002: 12 – 14.

[163] To Zelter, 4. 3. 1829; WA IV 46, 186.

local and the trans-local levels: it transcended borders, the poets reached out of their immediate environment, and learned from each other. Then, improving their local literary production, they sent it back into the world. The national and the local were reshaped by the extra- and transnational, the one was embedded in the other.

On the basis of this analysis, it can be concluded that Goethe's concept of world literature does not amount to a canon of outstanding texts, nor with the totality of everything ever written. In fact, it could be argued that his *Weltliteratur* was no specific body of literature at all.[164] Goethe's understanding of the term was characterised by two aspects, that is, by the transnational literary network in which he participated and by the humanist vision of universal tolerance, essentially a world-making agenda. Both these aspects were connected in as much as literary circulation created the conditions for world peace – and both were closely related to what I described in the introduction to this dissertation as interconnectedness and global consciousness. In this respect, world literature was for Goethe a promise of a new epoch in which nations would learn from each other and subsequently reach mutual understanding and peace. This, in fact, resembled his ideas about "productive criticism" where the stress was on readers' reception and the significance literature had for artists and society. In world literature as well, the recipients in the literary network were important for determining which works of literature entered into the exchange, what role they would play in this network, and how national partisanship would be challenged and redefined. Theoretically at least, world literature as Goethe understood it did not prescribe which literatures become part of international circulation, nor did it legislate what literature should be, at least in aesthetic terms, in order to become world literature. Because *Weltliteratur* was primarily a technical condition, the aesthetic nature of a specific work of art could not determine its capacity to become world literature. Indeed, it could not, since literatures entered universal circulation by containing and expressing local traits. As I argued, Goethe opposed a blanket universalisation and centralisation of culture and insisted that literatures should express "what is peculiar to each man or group", which, in theory at least, meant that all literatures, regardless of their aesthetic properties, could transcend their local context, become part of literary exchange, and therefore participate in world literature.

---

[164] See the excellent discussion in Hoesel-Uhlig, 2004.

c) Homer and Weltliteratur*?*

This leads me to the main question of the present investigation and hence to the overall theme of this dissertation: what was the relationship between classical literature and world literature for Goethe? Or in other words, how did he relate a paradigmatic literary tradition to the model of a de-localised republic of world literature? I argued that the poet understood classical literature and Homeric poetry as an aesthetic model for modernity, which he established through an ahistorical perspective, and then went on to suggest that he perceived world literature primarily as a historically contingent and not an aesthetic concept, which also meant that no single body of literary work could be regarded as referential. In this respect, Goethe's *Weltliteratur* and his appreciation of Homeric poetry seem irreconcilable. Nevertheless, as mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, Goethe did not think this was so. Here, again, is what he said about the topic to his biographer on the 31st of January 1827:

> I see more and more, that poetry is the universal possession of mankind, revealing itself everywhere, and at all times, in hundreds and hundreds of men. One makes it a little better than another, and swims on the surface a little longer than another – that is all. […] But, really, we Germans are very likely to fall too easily into this pedantic conceit, if we do not look beyond the narrow circle that surrounds us. I therefore like to look around in foreign nations and advise everyone to do the same. National literature will now not mean much; the epoch of world literature is at hand, and everyone must contribute to hasten its approach. But, while we thus value what is foreign, we must not bind ourselves to some particular thing, and regard it as a model. We must not give this value to the Chinese, or the Serbian, or Calderón, or the *Nibelungen*, but if we really need a model, we must always return to the ancient Greeks, in whose works the beauty of mankind is constantly represented. All the rest we must look at only historically, appropriating to ourselves what is good, so far as it goes.[165]

This statement reflects what I argued throughout this chapter: first, it testifies to Goethe's conviction that poetry was omni-present, that all local communities had their own literature,

---

[165] "Ich sehe immer mehr," fuhr Goethe fort, "daß die Poesie ein Gemeingut der Menschheit ist und daß sie überall und zu allen Zeiten in Hunderten und aber Hunderten von Menschen hervortritt. Einer macht es ein wenig besser als der andere und schwimmt ein wenig länger oben als der andere, das ist alles. […] Aber freilich, wenn wir Deutschen nicht ans dem engen Kreise unserer eigenen Umgebung hinausblicken, so kommen wir gar zu leicht in diesen pedantischen Dünkel. Ich sehe mich daher gerne bei fremden Nationen um und rate jedem, es auch seinerseits zu tun. Nationalliteratur will jetzt nicht viel sagen, die Epoche der Weltliteratur ist an der Zeit, und jeder muß jetzt dazu wirken, diese Epoche zu beschleunigen. Aber auch bei solcher Schätzung des Ausländischen dürfen wir nicht bei etwas Besonderem haften bleiben und dieses für musterhaft ansehen wollen. Wir müssen nicht denken, das Chinesische wäre es, oder das Serbische, oder Calderon, oder die Nibelungen sondern im Bedürfnis von etwas Musterhaftem müssen wir immer zu den alten Griechen zurückgehen, in deren Werken stets der schöne Mensch dargestellt ist. Alles übrige müssen wir nur historisch betrachten und das Gute, so weit es gehen will, uns daraus aneignen." (Eckermann, 31. 1. 1827)

and that in the oncoming epoch of world literature, nations were to look beyond their literary borders. The contingent aspect of world literature is apparent in this passage as well, as Goethe stressed that none of the foreign literary traditions should be regarded as a paradigm, outlining his conviction that world literature was not an aesthetic category. On the other hand, it is clear that this did not apply to classical literature, because the ancient Greeks remained an aesthetic model to which "we must always return".[166] Indeed, Goethe's appreciation of ancient poetry did not change with his theorisations about world literature, allowing the poet to position classical literature as the only possible literary ideal for world literature. He accepted other literatures as relevant within the literary network but maintained that ancient Greek literature should always be regarded as exemplary.

Ancient and world literature thus formed a dynamic pair that was constitutive of literary production and reception as Goethe understood them. The nature of this relationship was shaped by his views on historical progress, historical change, and ahistorical exemplarity. Goethe was of course not alone in attempting to understand how modernity as a period defined by historical progress could be reconciled with classicism and its ideal, ahistorical concepts. I already discussed that his thinking here paralleled Schiller's "Über Naive und Sentimentalische Dichtung", but there were also other philosophical treatments of the subject at the time, for example, Friedrich Schlegel's (1772–1829) account of *Universalpoesie*, most famously expressed in his *Athenæums-Fragmente* (1798), Johann Gottlieb Fichte's (1762–1814) *Wissenschaftslehre*, first articulated in an essay entitled "Eigne Meditationen über Elementarphilosophie" (1793) and subsequently elaborated in a series of lectures entitled *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo* (1796–1799), as well as Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling's (1775–1854) and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's (1770–1831) philosophical systems of German idealism.[167] It has been suggested that it is possible to read these complex

---

[166] This is apparent also from another episode in which Goethe described his advice to the painter Johann Heinrich Meyer (1760–1832): "Germany itself stands so high in every discipline, that we can scarcely survey all it has done; and now we must be Greeks and Latins, and English and French into the bargain. Not content with this, some have the madness of pointing to the East also; and surely this is enough to confuse a young man's head! I have, by way of consolation, shown him [i.e. Meyer] my colossal Juno, as a token that he had best stick to the Greeks, and find consolation there. (Deutschland selbst steht in allen Fächern so hoch, daß wir kaum alles übersehen können, und nun sollen wir noch Griechen und Lateiner sein, und Engländer und Franzosen dazu! Ja obendrein hat man die Verrücktheit, auch nach dem Orient zu weisen, und da muß denn ein junger Mensch ganz konfus werden. Ich habe ihm zum Trost meine kolossale Juno gezeigt, als ein Symbol, daß er bei den Griechen verharren und dort Beruhigung finden möge.)" (Eckermann, 15. 2. 1824)

[167] A good discussion of the problem of historicity and antiquity in the work of Schiller, Schlegel, Schelling, and Hegel is Billings, 2014. For philosophy and historicism see e.g. Meinecke, 1936 (English version in Meinecke, 1972); Nohl, 1970; Iggers, 1983; Kelley, 2003; Oergel, 2006; Beiser, 2011. For historicity and Goethe specifically see Meinecke, 1936: 445–584; Korff, 1923–1957; Burgard, 1991; Weber, 1997; Oergel, 2006: 153–280; Buschmeier, 2008a: 203–221.

philosophical systems as a response to the relationship between antiquity and modernity, that is, antiquity, which was constitutive of the values of modernity, and modernity, the identity of which was established through an opposition to antiquity.[168] According to this interpretation, these philosophers thematised antiquity and modernity in a dialectic relationship, the latter being regarded as a historical successor to the first and, at the same time, a regression from its primordial naturalness and ideality. This produced a similar opposition inside modernity as well: because modernity was constituted through its relationship to antiquity there arose a dialectic relationship between, on the one hand, its own sense of progress and, on the other, its idealistic perception of antiquity.[169]

While there are too few indications to conclude that Goethe developed his ideas about world literature with the concept of historical relativity in mind – at the time an important philosophical position that I further discuss in Chapter II – some of them seem to follow from his own observation that national particularities in literature should be "taken for granted, in order to meet each nation on its own ground",[170] and from his assertion that with the exception of the ancient Greeks, "all the rest we must look at only historically".[171] What seems certain is that Goethe understood the value of Greek literature as absolute and free of the contingencies of history. On the basis of the analysis performed in this chapter, I propose that Goethe's idea of *Weltliteratur* and, specifically, its incorporation of ancient literature, hinges on a productive tension between modern historicity and ancient Homeric exemplarity – not unlike the systems of the philosophers cited above. This I propose for two reasons: first, because the poet perceived ancient literature as an ahistorical ideal that could never be recreated by modern poets, not even by Goethe himself. And secondly, because a similar tension can be observed in his understanding of world literature, as based both on the validity of local character and the universal exemplarity of classical literature. Goethe therefore envisaged two interconnected dialectics between ancient and world literature and within world literature itself. World literature included the local characteristics of diverse nations, groups of people, and their time and space, but the universalising scope of the concept was in fact best represented by classical literature. Goethe thus connected the dialectic instability of world literature back to the primary

---

[168] A good introduction to this topic is the discussion of modern and ancient tragedy by Billings (2014: 105–132), who also provides the most important bibliography on the topic.

[169] See especially Oergel, 2006. Joshua Billings comes to similar conclusions about how these thinkers saw tragedy: "The conceptions of tragedy that emerged in the 1790s are animated by the question of the place of ancient literature in a philosophical modernity that saw itself as radically different from previous moments in time." (Billings, 2014: 5).

[170] See above: To Carlyle 20. 7. 1827; WA IV 43, 266f.

[171] See above: Eckermann, 31. 1. 1827.

differentiation between the classical and the modern: if modernity was indeed a regression from antiquity, it was at the same time its continuation through an inherited aesthetic model that made antiquity single and unified, and hence classical, in the first place. The historically contingent conditions of modernity were thus merged with the ahistorical aesthetic ideals of antiquity in a dialectically productive synthesis – productive because the moderns were encouraged to follow the Greeks even though they could never achieve the same aesthetic and universal excellence. Essentially this meant that classical literature became the foundation of world literature's universality and hence its ahistorical and normative model.

By imposing an ahistorical aesthetic ideal as the universal model for world literature, however, Goethe subsumed the aesthetic particularity of world literature to the universal, ahistorical, and classical aesthetics, even if in a dialectically productive relationship. I already mentioned that his understanding of the literary network mostly included educated "men of letters" and that this network existed mainly among European nations, primarily Germany, England, France, and Italy. As some scholars have suggested, Goethe's restriction of world literature and his Eurocentric understanding of the literary system can be explained with reference to the historical circumstances of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, when European literature was, at least from Goethe's perspective, a very close approximation to "universal, world literature".[172] In this regard, it is also possible to speculate why Goethe placed such emphasis on classical literature being the aesthetic ideal for world literature. During his lifetime at least, classical literature was crucial for literary production in Italy, France, England, Germany, and Spain. In Germany in particular the aftershocks of the *Querelle* were still keenly felt (as mentioned above), and classical philology acquired an important educational status (a topic I discuss further in Chapter II). Meanwhile, numerous translations of ancient works continued to appear across Europe,[173] and classical literature and arts continued to act as a source of inspiration for contemporary literary works.[174] Editions of

[172] See especially Birus, 1995, 2000; Pizer, 2000: 217–218, 2006: 18–46, 2012; D'haen, 2012: 27–33. Not everyone agrees, however: see Juvan, 2013; Cha, 2015; Chanda, 2015; Biti, 2016: 133–76; Cheah, 2016: 38–45. For a more nuanced and positive evaluation of Goethe's Eurocentrism and world literature see Longxi, 2014; Pizer, 2019; Venkat Mani, 2017: 49–90.

[173] A collection of translations from Greek and Latin is available in Cummings and Gillespie, 2009. See also the collected volume Lianeri and Zajko, 2008; Rebenich et. al. 2010.

[174] This is, of course, a rather general claim, as is, in fact, the claim that European literature was a close approximation to world literature at the time of Goethe. Nevertheless, it is hard to dispute the fact that classical literature remained an important influence on scholarship, literary criticism, and new literary production in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. See e.g. Highet (1949), or the two companions to classical reception by Hardwick and Stray (2013) and Gildenhard et. al. (2017). Billings (2014) offers a concise overview of the importance of the *Querelle*, translations, philology, and intellectual discussions for *Sturm und Drang* (see Billings, 2014: 19–44, 59–71).

classical works circulated widely (see above, on the availability of the *Odyssey* in Sicily), so that classical literature could serve as a concrete manifestation of what a universal literature might look like in practice, in the sense of being "universal" to all communities, or at least to those that Goethe considered relevant in the literary network within which he moved.

This is not to say that Goethe did not acknowledge non-European, or better, "non-central" literary traditions. Indeed, the poet's reading of Hafez and his influence on *West–östlicher Divan* (1819) is well known,[175] as is his reception of Serbian oral poetry, Chinese novels, and Arabic and Persian poetry.[176] Nevertheless, Goethe was much less sympathetic toward other ancient literatures, especially those that he saw as challenging classical standards. For example, he believed that literatures such as ancient Chinese, Indian, and Egyptian should be viewed only as "curiosities", since "they will do little for our moral and aesthetic education" – or at least so he wrote in one of his maxims.[177] But his ambiguous relationship with "non-central" literatures is most apparent in his dealings with South Slavic traditional poetry, which he mentioned also in the above meditation on *Weltliteratur* alongside the *Nibelungenlied*, Chinese novels, and Calderón de la Barca.[178] Goethe is well known to have produced one of the first translations of a South Slavic oral poem, adapting the poem *Hasanaginica* as "Klaggesang von der edlen Frauen des Asan Aga" which Herder then published in his folksong collection in 1778.[179] Later, in an article "Serbische Lieder" (1825), he spoke relatively fondly of South Slavic oral poetry, which he connected – not unlike Herder – with national sentiment. Nonetheless, Goethe was talking favourably only about Serbian "love" poetry, by which he meant poems traditionally performed by women[180] – *Hasanaginica* being one such example. His opinion of epic poetry was much less favourable: he characterised it as "superstitiously barbaric" and very unlike ancient Greek *epos*. In a review of Vuk Stefanović Karadžić's (1787–1864) collection of South Slavic oral poems translated by Talvj – a pseudonym of Therese Albertine Luise von Jakob Robinson (1797–1870) – and published as *Volkslieder der Serben* (1825–1826),[181] he was even clearer that South Slavic epic poetry was very different from Greek epic or Ossian. According to him, its heroes were "monstrous", "the tender love-poems

---

[175] E.g. Shamel, 2013.
[176] E.g. Mommsen, 1988.
[177] "Chinesische, Indische, Ägyptische Altertümer sind immer nur Curiositäten; es ist sehr wohl gethan, sich und die Welt damit bekannt zu machen; zu sittlicher und ästhetischer Bildung aber werden sie uns wenig fruchten" (WA I 42, 201); cf. Pizer, 2000: 217; Cha, 2015.
[178] For Goethe's reception of South Slavic poetry see especially Perišić, 1968; Mojašević, 2014. Cf. Ćurčin, 1932; Himstedt-Vaid, 2004; Bošković-Stulli, 2008.
[179] Isaković, 1975.
[180] For songs performed by women and the classification of South Slavic oral poetry see Vidan, 2003: 12–31.
[181] Pribić, 1969.

of the greatest beauty have something strange, and the heroic poems […] always keep a certain distance from us",[182] all this because "Serbian conditions, customs, religion, mode of thinking and commerce are so far away from us",[183] and because their nation is "hard, rough, stubborn; even the best family relationships soon dissolve into hate and partisanship."[184] His criticism of the epic *Kraljević Marko* in both above-mentioned articles, was grounded in an unfavourable comparison with Homer and the Greeks. In South Slavic oral poetry, the poet appreciated only those poems that expressed what he believed was primordial sentimentality, but he strongly rejected the epic tradition because it did not comply with his ideals of classical poetry.

Goethe's ahistorical understanding of classical literature and his scorn for some non-central literary traditions had consequences for the idea of world literature. Even though his *Weltliteratur* was a contingent category and, at least in theory, allowed any national and local literature a place in transnational literary circulation, the role of classical literature as an ahistorical model imposed specific aesthetic values and ultimately even geographical restrictions.[185] This meant that the universality of world literature, which in principle allowed for the recognition of diverse local traditions, was determined by a very specific aesthetic model, namely, that of ancient Greek poetry. This model was framed as binding for all central nations in the European republic of letters and was, for Goethe at least, available to everyone. As a result, his dialectic reconciliation of the particular and the universal in world literature became subordinated to a specific aesthetic ideal. Literatures that were not in direct aesthetic opposition to classical antiquity were allowed to enter the literary system, but the guiding aesthetic principle remained classical. In this respect, the world of world literature became a world shaped by and modelled on ancient Greek poetry, and especially Homer.

---

[182] "…denn selbst die zarten Liebesgedichte von der größten Schönheit haben etwas Fremdes, und die Heldengedichte […] halten sich von uns immer in einer gewissen Entfernung." (WA I 42, 253)

[183] "…stehen die serbischen Zustände, Sitten, Religion, Denk- und Handels-Weise so weit von uns ab…" (WA I 42, 251)

[184] "…hart, rauh, widerborstig; selbst die besten Familienverhältnisse lösen sich gar bald in Haß und Parteyung auf." (WA I 42, 251)

[185] See Cheah, 2016: 38–45.

CHAPTER II: *Friedrich August Wolf, Johann Gottfried Herder, and historicity*

In *Prolegomena ad Homerum*, published in 1795, Friedrich August Wolf proposed three influential ideas about Homeric poetry: first, he argued that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* emerged in an illiterate society; secondly, he suggested that they were first written down under Pisistratus and were further modified in their subsequent written transmission; finally, he maintained that narrative unity was imposed on the poems in later times, especially in the Hellenistic period. According to Wolf, traces of this process could still be observed in moments of awkwardness or contradiction in the transmitted text of the poems.[186] All these arguments, which were centred around the idea that "Homer" could not have had any knowledge of writing, accused prior critics of reading ahistorically by which Wolf meant that they "read Homer and Callimachus and Virgil and Nonnus and Milton in one and the same spirit, and do not strive to weigh in reading and work out what each author's age allows".[187] As he further explained:

> …they take it very ill when the god of poets is thought to have been ignorant of the very ABC of the sciences, when those who possess almost all of them in our day still do not dare to compose *Iliads*.[188]

Wolf invited his readers to consider the following question: if epic poetry was a universal and ahistorical literary phenomenon, how was it possible that with all the technical advancements of modernity, no one had managed to compose another *Iliad*? Two interrelated assumptions can be recognised behind this question: first, Wolf clearly differentiated between antiquity and modernity as between periods that could or could not "compose *Iliads*". Secondly, he distinguished between ahistorical and historical readings in such a way that the former interprets everything "in one and the same spirit", while the other respects "what each author's

---

[186] For Wolf's life and work I primarily consulted Fuhrmann, 1959; Horstmann, 1978; Bolter, 1980; Grafton, 1981, 1983, 1991: 214–243, 1999; Lanza, 1981; Riedel, 1995; Wohlleben; 1996; Krischer, 1996; Neschke-Hentschke, 1990; Buschmeier, 2008b; Maufroy, 2011; Harloe, 2013; and the two collected volumes Ebert and Zimmermann, 1989; Tessitore and Cerasuolo, 1997. A translation of the *Prolegomena* with an excellent introductory study is Wolf, 1985. Other important documents with accompanying studies and bibliography on Wolf can be found in Markner and Veltri, 1999.

[187] Wolf, 1985: 72. "…qui Homerum et Callimachum et Virgilium et Nonnum et Miltonum eodem animo legunt, nec, quid uniuscuiusque aetas ferat…" (Wolf, 1795: xliii).

[188] Wolf, 1985: 72. "…sed iidem aegerrime ferunt, deum poëtarum rudem fuisse credi in ipsis elementis doctrinarum, quas qui nostro tempore prope cunctas complectuntur, Iliadas tamen pangere non audent." (Wolf, 1795: xliii)

age allows". It is in this context, as I intend to demonstrate in this chapter, that one can read the whole of the *Prolegomena*.

In Chapter I, I argued that Goethe hoped to do precisely what the above statement said no modern poet would dare, that is, compose another *Iliad* – perhaps also because he felt provoked by statements such as this. In the background of this attempt was his flirtation with Wolf's historical understanding of Homer, in which the ancient epics could take a different literary form in modernity – so, at least, he wished to become part of the tradition as a modern *Homerid*. His ambition to create another *Iliad* reflects not only his own very personal poetic struggle, but also illustrates the significance that *Prolegomena ad Homerum* had for German literati at the time. At a very basic level, everyone was suddenly discussing if Homer was literate and whether his poems represented a poetically meaningful whole: the general public became invested in the Homeric question.[189] However, it was not the Homeric question so much as Wolf's historical criticism that transformed German literary culture and literary scholarship. This was possible because Wolf published the *Prolegomena* at a time when German intellectuals had already been extensively rethinking the nature of history, historicity, and historical interpretation for more than two decades, introducing a new outlook on culture and literature known as historicism.[190] This theory treated literatures and cultures as historically and culturally localised, which further encouraged different degrees of cultural and historical relativity and pluralism. Indeed, some of Goethe's closest colleagues, such as for example, Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835), Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803), Johann Gottfried Eichhorn (1752–1827), and Goethe himself, were heavily engaged in discussing these issues. My prime concern in this chapter is thus not a philological evaluation of Wolf's theses, but rather the intellectual framework within which he developed the idea that Homeric poetry emerged from a historically contingent literary tradition. As I argue, the *Prolegomena* owed much to earlier discussions about historicism and shared many methodological and philosophical convictions with them.

Besides Giambattista Vico[191] whom Wolf discovered after publishing *Prolegomena*,[192] the rise of historicism in the eighteenth century can be linked to Macpherson, his "translations"

---

[189] Volkmann, 1874: 97–181; Wohlleben, 1990: 197–211; Krischer, 1996: 171–80; Wolf, 1985: 26–35.

[190] A good introduction to the development of historicism and its importance for classical reception is Billings, 2014: 23–44; Most, 2011, 2016b. A short overview of historicism in literary studies is Leerssen, 2004b. General literature on historicism and philosophy of history is extensive, but some of the major works on the topic that consider developments before Hegel include: Meinecke, 1936; Nohl, 1970; Iggers, 1983; Kelley, 2003; Oergel, 2006; Macintyre et. al., 2011; Beiser, 2011. Cf. Baumstark et. al., 2016.

[191] E.g. Leerssen, 2006: 23–35; 2010b. Cf. Bergel, 1968.

[192] See "Giambattista Vico über den Homer" (1807; in Wolf, 1869: 1157–1166).

of Ossian, and the subsequent discussions about its historical genuineness.[193] Johann Gottfried Herder was one of the first German scholars to draw attention to the importance of these discussions for literary research in *Auszug aus einem Briefwechsel über Ossian und die Lieder alter Völker* (1773),[194] but even more importantly, he was the first to postulate an unbridgeable gap between antiquity and modernity.[195] In Chapter I, I mentioned that Schiller reconciled the difference between antiquity and modernity and proposed that Goethe applied similar reasoning in his theorisation of *Weltliteratur*. Such antithetical understanding of the two historical periods, however, was first introduced by Herder, most famously in his essay "Shakespeare" (1773) in which he compared Shakespeare with the ancient Greek tragedians.[196] By praising the English playwright for "inventing his own drama"[197] and not imitating the Greeks, he highlighted a hermeneutic gap between ancient and modern tragedy and asserted that he himself was "closer to Shakespeare than to the Greeks",[198] since he still lived "in the last days of an age" that understood him.[199] With this essay, Herder established an important claim, namely, that modern and ancient tragedies belong to specific historical contexts and that critical evaluations of modern literature should not therefore be grounded in classical aesthetic norms.

Wolf met Herder for the first time only after publishing his *Prolegomena*,[200] an encounter which led to a rather complicated relationship.[201] Moreover, some of Herder's texts discussed in this chapter were published after 1795. Nevertheless, it was Herder's historical and hermeneutic outlook on literature that established the intellectual grounds on which Wolf developed his Homeric criticism. This is especially relevant in light of recent work on the history of classical scholarship, notably Constanze Güthenke's *Feeling and classical philology* (2020) which identifies "historical distance" as one of the crucial devices in philology's "disciplinary project".[202] This chapter looks at how Wolf grounded his theoretical and methodological claims in a similar historical philosophy as Herder. For both, recognising a historical gap between antiquity and modernity was of defining methodological importance. I

---

[193] E.g. Leerssen, 2004a: 331–50; 2004b: 221–43.

[194] See Gaskill, 2003; Schellenberg, 2012; Zuckert, 2019: 223–248. For the reception of Ossian in general see the collected volume Gaskill, 2004.

[195] E.g. Oergel, 2006: 19–28; Gjesdal, 2017a: 138–143.

[196] Herder, Bd. 5, 208–231. A good analysis of the essay is in Billings, 2014: 53–59. For the importance of this essay for historicity see also Belhalfaoui, 1987; Burgard, 1991; Oergel, 2006: 19–29; Gjesdal, 2017c.

[197] "…sein Drama zu erfinden…" (Herder, Bd. 5, 217).

[198] "…ich bin Shakespeare näher als dem Griechen." (Herder, Bd. 5, 219)

[199] "…ich noch im Ablaufe der Zeit lebte, wo ich ihn begreifen konnte…" (Herder, Bd. 5, 231).

[200] Körte, 1833: 282–288.

[201] See e.g. the analysis in Wagner, 1960: 220–243; Harloe, 2013: 138–144.

[202] See e.g. Güthenke, 2020: 15–18, 194–200.

then go on to consider how this informed, even if implicitly, Wolf's views of world literature as an aesthetically non-normative, historically conditioned, but at the same time also pedagogically paradigmatic concept. This way, Chapter II argues that Wolf's reading of Homer established historical localisation as a paradigm in Homeric studies; that Wolf assisted in positioning classical philology as a universal and trans-local academic discipline; and it analyses those aspects of internationalisation and world literature that directly conditioned historical literary criticism as a form of localisation.

Some further comments are required before I begin discussing Herder's and Wolf's thoughts on Homer. In the introduction to the English translation of the *Prolegomena ad Homerum*, Anthony Grafton, Glenn W. Most, and James E. G. Zetzel highlight the importance of German Biblical criticism, especially that of Johann Gottfried Eichhorn (1752–1827), for Wolf's methodology.[203] While there is no doubt that Eichhorn was an important influence on Wolf, Herder is arguably the ultimate source of inspiration that allowed Eichhorn and Wolf to share and develop their ideas. Indeed, Eichhorn and Herder were good friends, spent time together discussing the Old Testament, shared similar views about Scripture, and were seen by contemporaries such as Goethe,[204] as promoting the same historical outlook on the Bible. Even though their relationship has not yet been thoroughly researched, at least some researchers of Biblical criticism recognise in Herder an important influence on Eichhorn's work.[205] So, while there is no doubt that Eichhorn influenced Wolf, Herder provided the basis on which a historical investigation of both the Bible (Eichhorn) and Homer (Wolf) could be attempted. It is therefore beneficial for the present discussion to examine Herder's thoughts on Homer, also as a way of contextualising the dialogue between Eichhorn and Wolf, and indeed Wolf and Goethe.

a) Johann Gottfried Herder and the historicity of Homeric poetry

Johann Gottfried Herder was one of the first philosophers to take seriously the historical disparity between ancient and modern literatures, but he was also one of the earliest thinkers to consider how a philosophy of historicism might influence literary scholarship and modern receptions of Homer.[206] In this respect, his literary investigation of the Homeric epics was an

---

[203] See introduction to Wolf, 1985: 18–26. Grafton also pointed to the importance of Biblical criticism for Wolf in his earlier writings. See Grafton, 1981, 1983, 1991: 214–243. Cf. Most, 2016a: 935.

[204] It should be noted that Goethe read Eichhorn's work and though that he approached the Bible in the same way as Wolf approached Homer. See his letter to Schiller 19. 4. 1797 (WA II 12, 89f.).

[205] Marino, 1994. Cf. Childs, 1979: 35; Legaspi, 2010: 155–169.

[206] Herder's Homeric scholarship is not well known, but there are some good studies on the topic. See Wagner, 1960; Nünlist, 1971: 35–66; Schwinge, 1999; Santini, 2013.

early attempt at historical criticism of ancient poetry. Two works in particular are representative of this project: "Von der Ode" (1765), an outline of a study on the ode that Herder never completed, and "Versuch einer Geschichte der lyrischen Dichtkunst" (1766), a discussion of the origins of poetic creation. Both essays are generally considered to be his first attempts at a historical study of poetry as well as introducing, albeit in fragmentary form, some of the philosophical concepts he was to develop throughout his life, among which ideas about cultural and historical localisation and relativity of literatures are the most important for my own investigation.[207] These two essays contain Herder's earliest thoughts on Homer, ancient Greek literature, and its relation to other literary traditions, revealing how historicism positioned Homer in relation to world literature. They also form a kernel of the philosopher's Homeric studies which he later developed in a series of other articles such as "Homer, ein Günstling der Zeit" (1795)[208] and "Homer und Ossian" (1795). Because these publications were written after *Prolegomena* was published, this section focuses primarily on Herder's early study of the ode and the origins of poetry. My aim with this analysis is to establish that a historical reasoning about the ancient epics formed a localised outlook on world literature; and that such reasoning related to relativistic, anti-universal, anti-classical, and nationalistic agendas.

Herder openly campaigned for a historical method in literary criticism, including Homeric studies, in "Versuch einer Geschichte der lyrischen Dichtkunst" (1766). There he established the investigation of poetic origins as the most important part of history "from which, in the end, everything is derived".[209] The aim was to understand the nature of poetry and its development, but Herder's goal was not to establish when, where, and how poetry actually began. Rather, he analysed and evaluated different methodologies for tackling such questions. The result was a systematic analysis of the hermeneutics of ancient literature, which started from the question of how a modern researcher could hope to grasp the historically distant origins of poetry. His first answer was in line with contemporary developments in philology and history:[210] he proposed that origins should be researched by studying textual

---

[207] For the context of both essays see the commentary in Herder, 1992: 242–253, 261–268; Sauder, 2002; Gjesdal, 2015: 59–65.

[208] Katherine Harloe examines Wolf's reaction to Herder's essay "Homer, a Child of Time" and argues that Wolf was more critical of Herder's speculative methodology than his conclusions, and rather unjustly attacked him solely from the perspective of his *Prolegomena*. As she writes: "Wolf's response to Herder was an exercise in dissociation: his attempt to extricate his own name from Herder's arguments" (Harloe, 2013, 144).

[209] "…aus welchem sich nachher Alles herleitet." (Herder, Bd. 32, 86)

[210] As, for example, practiced by Johann Joachim Winckelmann or Christian Gottlob Heyne (1729–1812). See e.g. Harloe, 2013. For a more general overview of the scholarship at the time see Pfeiffer, 1976: 167–172.

"reports".[211] According to Herder, however, such research was beset by two difficulties: first, writing did not yet exist at the time that poetry first appeared so that all written evidence was belated. Secondly, even the "conjectures of a later day"[212] were "lost", "fragmented", "full of difficulties", "contradictions", "incomplete", "hard to recognise, still harder to make use of",[213] and were not to be "accepted without examination".[214] In this connection, Herder offered an example, which he thought was paradigmatic of the state of affairs; Homeric poetry. He wrote that "*even* Homer", one of the oldest surviving poets,

> did not yet write, but he sang, and the tradition, the sole and pitiful means of continuity then known, had already shouted itself hoarse by the time the remains of its tale were given written form.[215]

According to Herder, Homeric poetry perfectly represented his two challenges to research into the origins of literature: first, it originated in a historical period before the emergence of writing, so that historically contemporaneous evidence could not yet exist, and second, even the later evidence that survived was in such a poor state of preservation that it should be, in Herder's words, "regarded as surprising that the diligence of scholars of antiquity has gone so far that something is yet known of certain centuries."[216] This is important because Wolf justified his historical investigation with similar assumptions, arguing that Homeric poetry first appeared in a pre-literate society and that later evidence was scarce and fragmentary.

On such grounds, Herder suggested that literary criticism should approach older poetic manifestations differently from, for example, modern literature. This amounted to elevating the historic and hermeneutic gap between the researcher and the literary phenomenon to the status of a major research problem. Herder was convinced that contemporary scholarship failed in this regard, and he outlined three common fallacies in dealing with literary origins: first, taking reports as contemporaneous to the origins of poetry; secondly, inventing an origin on the basis of later aesthetic theories; and thirdly, attributing to an origin an ahistorical or divine nature that defied all examination. In the previous chapter, I demonstrated that Goethe perceived

---

[211] "…Nachrichten…" (Herder, Bd. 32, 88).

[212] "…Vermuthungen einer spätern Zeit…" (Herder, Bd. 32, 89).

[213] "…voll Schwierigkeiten und Widersprüche sind, daß viele wegen der Unvollständigkeit und Entfernung schwer zu erkennen, und noch schwerer anzuwenden sind…" (Herder, Bd. 32, 88).

[214] "…und ohne Prüfung sie angenommen…" (Herder, Bd. 32, 89).

[215] "Selbst Homer schrieb noch nicht, sondern er sang, und die Tradition, das einzige und elende Mittel der damaligen Fortpflanzung, hatte sich schon heiser geschrien, ehe man die Überbleibsel ihrer Sage schriftlich aufnahm." (Herder, Bd. 32, 88)

[216] "…darüber wird man sich wundern, daß der Fleiß der Alterthumsforscher es so weit hat bringen können, daß man von gewissen Jahrhunderten noch etwas weiß." (Herder, Bd. 32, 88)

ancient Greek literature, especially Homeric epics, as an ahistorical and aesthetic ideal and as an Ur-canonical book that should not be studied historically. Herder opposed such reasoning on the grounds that ahistorical and universal concepts of poetry neglected the hermeneutic and historical distance between text and scholar. He wrote in the "Versuch einer Geschichte der lyrischen Dichtkunst" that ancient poetries were falsely interpreted as an idealisation of contemporary aesthetic theory so that thinkers found "perfection in the wrong place" by which they presumed "to know the ancients",[217] and that such a procedure amounted to grafting personal values onto a culturally and historically specific situation.

Although generally applicable, Herder's arguments were pointed specifically against ahistorical aesthetic appreciations of Homeric poetry, suggesting that Homer was falsely regarded as the first poet and thus elevated to the status of an aesthetic ideal. Conversely, Herder perceived Homeric epic as developing through specific historical stages, belonging first to an oral community, being subsequently written down, and only then acquiring the status of a poetic model in antiquity. In this regard, it is worth inspecting a longer passage of the essay:

> In the same vein it has been erroneous to regard Homer as the first poet, and to have thus regarded his perfection as almost superhuman. Certainly, Homer is the most ancient of poets whose works have come down to us; certainly a few of those who are dated before him are doubtful, or came after his day; certainly he later came to be almost the single source from which his successors drew, the great original source from which great historians, comic and tragic poets, philosophers, and whatever else one wishes, came to be: I concede that he was the first to bring an epic whole to completion; that he was the only one meriting posterity; I concede all; nevertheless, this contradicts all evidence that he was the first, since he himself in his Odyssey names singers, since the names of so many poets and the contents of their writings are known, since there were so many epic poets, yes, poets and poetesses, who have celebrated the siege of Troy.[218]

Like Goethe, Herder acknowledged the exceptional status of Homeric poetry in modernity, with Homer "the most ancient of poets" whose works survived and became an important

---

[217] "…am unrechten Orte findet man Vollkommenheiten; […] und so glaubt man die Alten zu kennen." (Herder, Bd. 32, 91–92)

[218] "Eben so hat man sich geirret, wenn man den Homer für den ersten Dichter gehalten, und seine Vollkommenheit also beinahe für übermenschlich gehalten hat. Freilich ist Homer der älteste Dichter, dessen Schriften uns übrig geblieben sind, freilich sind einige von denen, die man vor ihm nennt, ungewiß, oder später als er, freilich ist er nachher fast die einzige Quelle gewesen, aus welcher seine Nachfolger geschöpft haben; das große Original, aus dem große Geschichtschreiber, komische und tragische Dichter, Weltweisen und was man nur mehr will, entstanden sind: ich gebe es zu, daß er der erste gewesen, der ein episches Ganzes zu Ende gebracht; daß er der einzige gewesen, der die Nachwelt verdiente: ich gebe Alles zu; allein das widerspricht allen Nachrichten, daß er der Erste gewesen; da er selbst Sänger in seiner Odyssee anführt, da von so vielen Dichtern die Namen und die Materie ihrer Schriften bekannt sind, da so viel epische Dichter, und zwar Dichter und Dichterinnen sind, die die Belagerung Trojens besungen haben." (Herder, Bd. 32, 98)

influence on later developments in poetry. Nevertheless, he also maintained: first, that Homeric epic was in its essence historical (as all other poetic traditions were); secondly, that it developed in a specific historical context, that is, in an illiterate society in which there were many poets and poetesses who sang about Troy; and thirdly, that only later were both epics written down. He described this historical transmission of the Homeric tradition even more explicitly in the foreword to the second volume of the folk-song collection *Volkslieder* (1778) where he wrote that Homer's "rhapsodies remained not in bookstores or on the rags of our paper, but in the ear and in the heart of living singers and listeners, from whom they were assembled late, and at last, lavished with glosses and prejudices, came to us."[219] Herder believed that Homer was not the first singer, which was in his opinion a frequent fallacy in research on the origins of poetry, and that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* "came to us" through a long process of cultural productions, transmissions, and receptions. Even though Homeric epic was passed down to modernity because it was, presumably, the best poetry that the Greek literary tradition produced, it was nevertheless a product of a certain historical period, social context, and had its own historical development.

Thus far, I demonstrated that a differentiation between ancient and modern literature was an important premise of Herder's historicism. His philosophy, however, had additional agendas, expressed in the form of anti-universalism, anti-classicism, and national justification. This can be observed in his earliest work on literature entitled "Von der Ode" (1765). In the fragments of this incomplete study, Herder framed his work as an alternative to Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten's (1714–1762) general aesthetics,[220] noting that he did not aim to contribute to a general aesthetic theory of the ode but would rather examine "every mode of poetry and every art".[221] Rather than treat the ode as a single and universal phenomenon, the aim of his study was to provide a holistic account of the development of the ode as it manifested itself differently across cultures and times, and to study "the odes of various peoples, ages, and

---

[219] "Seine Rhapsodien blieben nicht in Buchläden und auf den Lumpen unsres Papiers, sondern im Ohr und im Herzen lebendiger Sänger und Hörer, aus denen sie spät gesammlet wurden und zuletzt, überhäuft mit Glossen und Vorurtheilen, zu uns kamen." (Herder, Bd. 25, 314)

[220] Herder, Bd. 32, 82. Baumgarten was known for his book *Aesthetica* (1750; in Baumgarten, 2000), which was the work that gave the name to the discipline. There, Baumgarten proposed a general theory of aesthetics as the study of the beautiful, arts, and sensible cognition.

[221] "Man sollte indessen, meiner Meinung nach, bei diesem Gebäude nicht von oben, sondern unten anfangen; und die erste wichtigste Grundlage nicht vergessen; das *Schöne* jeder Gedichtart, jeder Kunst *philosophisch* vollkommen zu bestimmen. Nun aber will ein Jeder das Ganze bauen; er denkt nur immer an den Kranz des Gipsels, und vergißt, daß auch ein Original, das Grundsteine legt, seinen Namen daraus verewigen kann." (Herder, Bd. 32, 83)

languages, in order to find in them the major concepts of the odic character".[222] The underlying conviction was that literary traditions depended upon the cultural and historical contexts in which they emerged, and therefore formed differently with different people, nations, languages, periods, and cultures. Even though Herder never completed his study of the ode, he took up and further developed some of his own arguments in the famous *Von der Veränderung des Geschmacks* (1766). In this piece, he argued that what is considered "true, beautiful, good, pleasant for good reasons can be regarded by another as false, ugly, bad, unpleasant for equally good reasons, so that truth, beauty, and moral value is a phantom that appears to each person in another way, in another shape".[223] Even though Herder connected this argument with various naturalistic claims, such as the influence of race, biology, and climate, he was clear that all cultures should be recognised, respected, and appreciated because all people "are our fellow brothers, and their history is the history of our nature".[224] On the basis of this analysis, we can conclude that the ideas about literature and literary taste that Herder was developing between 1765 and 1766 were aimed against a universal and culturally hegemonic aesthetics, promoting instead cultural, historic, and aesthetic relativity as its alternative.

And yet, he promoted this pluralistic and relativistic understanding with a particular agenda in mind, which was influenced by nationalist ideas about contemporary literary production. Since Herder believed that general aesthetic theories were based mostly on Greek and Latin literatures (something he inherited from the *Querelle*[225]), his anti-universal stance was often accompanied by various degrees of anti-classicism, and nationalism. This can be observed, for example, in his claim that Greek literature and art expressed a beauty that was specific to ancient culture and was therefore fundamentally different from modern beauty:

> If it is a fact that the Greek perception of beauty differs from our own in the realm of art, so many misbegotten endeavours ought at last to instruct us that it differs even more in the forms of poetry, and most of all in the ode.[226]

---

[222] "Bestimmen die Oden verschiedener Völker, Zeitalter und Sprachen, um ihnen die Hauptbegriffe des Oden-charakters zu finden." (Herder, Bd. 32, 84)

[223] "…was ich mit Gründen für wahr, für schön, für gut, für angenehm halte, ebenfalls aus Gründen von einem Andern für falsch, für häßlich, für böse, für un angenehm angesehen werden kann: so ist Wahrheit, Schönheit und moralischer Werth ein Phantom, das jedem auf eine andre Art, in einer andern Gestalt erscheint." (Herder, Bd. 32, 18–19)

[224] "…sind sie unsere Mitbrüder, und ihre Geschichte ist die Geschichte unserer Natur." (Herder, Bd. 32, 20. Cf. Sikka, 2011: 1–11).

[225] See Zuckert, 2019: 55–84.

[226] "Wenn schon in der Kunst sich die Griechische Empfindungsart des Schönen von der unsrigen unterschied: so sollten uns endlich so viele mißgerathene Versuche belehren, daß sie sich in den Gedichtarten noch mehr, und in der Ode am meisten unterscheidet." (Herder, Bd. 32, 65)

Herder believed that ancient poetry, and ancient arts, were archaic aesthetic expressions which could not yield norms for modern poets and artists, primarily because the aesthetics of antiquity and that of modernity differed fundamentally. While Goethe and Schiller argued that antiquity was to be imitated, even though it could never be recreated, Herder suggested that the divide between the periods presented an opportunity to develop a specifically modern aesthetic.[227] If ancient arts and aesthetics depended upon the cultural and historical circumstances of antiquity, then modernity had to produce different art, poetry, and aesthetic theories that would express the conditions of modern culture.

It followed that literary models were not to be found in ancient literature, or indeed in literatures of any other culture or period, but rather in "one's own" material, which in the case of Germany meant "Nordic" folklore.[228] Herder wrote:

> Let us draw our humans in accordance with our faces, without calling on poetic colouring from a foreign region of the compass. - To the mythological fictions of the Jews, the Greeks, and the Romans may be added perhaps as appendices the giants of the Spaniards, the witches of the Italians, the dragons of the Chinese, the elephants of the Indians, the fairies of the French, and the knights of the British. A German's Metamorphoses ought not to be Ovidian, any more than Aeneas became Homer's hero. - Shakespeare's works and the Nordic Edda, the songs of the bards and skalds[229] must shape our poetry; perhaps then we too would have original odes, without needing to prove their worth by means of their antiquity.[230]

Herder proposed that Germans as "Nordic" people should not seek inspiration in literatures that do not belong to the same cultural and historical context. As he wrote: "let us draw our humans in accordance with our faces". He was critical of literary appropriations of classical and Biblical themes and questioned what the Germans could possibly adopt from other cultures. Underlying this statement was a conviction that ancient literature belonged to a different period and culture in the same manner as "the dragons of the Chinese" and "the

---

[227] See Zuckert, 2019: 130–134.

[228] Ossian, whom Herder called "the northern Homer", was a prominent figure in his literary criticism. Herder interpreted his poetry as a counterweight to Mediterranean Homer, which represented a specific expression of the Northern European spirit. See Gaskill, 2003; Schellenberg, 2012; Gjesdal, 2015, 2017c; Zuckert, 2019: 223–248.

[229] By "Bards and Skalds" Herder usually referred to Old Norse, Celtic, Gaelic (sometimes also Ossianic), but also, and important for this context, Germanic traditions.

[230] "Laßt uns unsere Menschen nach unserm Gesicht malen, ohne Poetische Farben aus einem fremden Himmelsstrich zu holen. – Zum Mythologischen Roman der Juden, Griechen und Römer gehören vielleicht als Anhänge die Riesen der Spanier, Hexen der Italiener, die Drachen der Chineser, Elephanten der Indianer, die Feen der Franzosen und Ritter der Britten. Metamorphosen eines Deutschen sollten nicht Ovidisch seyn; so wenig als der Held Homers Aeneas wurde. – Shakespears Schriften und die Nordische Edda, der Barden und Skaldrer Gesänge müßen unsere Poesie bestimmen: vielleicht würden wir alsdenn auch Originalstücke von Oden haben, ohne daß sie durch eine Antike Stellung sich einen Werth geben dörfen." (Herder, Bd. 32, 69)

elephants of the Indians", which hardly anyone in Herder's Europe claimed as their aesthetic model. This historical and cultural conditioning of literature is further apparent in a remarkable aspect of the passage, Herder's ironic collation of Biblical, ancient European, Chinese, and Indian literatures. He stressed their cultural independence from the Germans, suggesting that ancient Greek and Roman literature was historically and culturally as autonomous, secluded, and diverse from that of modern Germany as Chinese and Indian literatures. This was a claim which hardly any German intellectual would have accepted in 1765 – while many of them would have accepted the model character of Greek and Roman literature and art. Even the cosmopolitan Goethe remarked that one should not search for models in Chinese novels,[231] and mocked artists who had "the madness of pointing also to the East".[232] For Herder, flattening existing hierarchies between literary traditions was a means not of broadening the range of acceptable models but of narrowing it further: Germans should look for the roots in their own "Nordic" mythology, rather than imitate the ancients.

From the very beginning, therefore, Herder's philosophy of literature promoted cultural and historical relativity for specifically nationalist reasons.[233] In other words, analysis of Herder's early Homeric scholarship revealed that historical and cultural localisation opened the doors to anti-classicism and aesthetic non-normativity; and at the same time encouraged delimitation and 'embordering' of literary traditions. While it is true that his relativistic philosophy enabled him to appreciate, for example, Egyptian sculpture (in contrast to Winckelmann[234]) or folk poetries of various cultures around Europe,[235] at the same time, he used it to remove other cultures from the supposed literary and mythological roots of the German people.[236] Without entering into ongoing debates about Herder's nationalism,[237] no-one will contest the claim that at least some of Herder's literary historicism was motivated by the search for an authentically German national literature – as apparent, for example, in his *Fragmente: über die neuere deutsche Literatur* (1766), *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (1784–1791), or *Briefe zur Beförderung der Humanität* (1793–1797).[238]

---

[231] Eckermann, 31. 1. 1827.
[232] Eckermann, 15. 2. 1824.
[233] E.g. Leerssen, 2010b: 97–102.
[234] See Harloe, 2013: 231–232.
[235] See Gaskill, 2003; Sikka, 2011; Noyes, 2015. Cf. introductory studies in Bohlman, 2017.
[236] Wilson, 1973: 819–35.
[237] A good introduction to Herder's nationalism in relation to his literary and comparative project is in Damrosch, 2020: 17–23. For Herder's position on nationalism in general see especially Spencer, 2012; Arnold et. al., 2009. Cf. Schmidt, 1956: 407; Wilson, 1973; Barnard, 2003; Eggel et. al., 2007; Patten, 2010.
[238] See especially the collected volume Barnard, 2003. Cf. Irmscher, 1994; Menges, 2009; Koepke, 2009; Piirimäe, 2015.

Herder therefore criticised "unfounded" imitations of other cultures, most of all the "French".[239] For the same reason he assumed an anti-classical stance, one very different from Goethe's appreciation of ancient literature. Herder's anti-classicism[240] and anti-universal philosophy[241] as well as his cultural and historical relativism were, sometimes implicitly, at other times explicitly, motivated also by a search for the true German spirit.

To reiterate, three interconnected aspects can be identified in the analysis of Herder's Homeric criticism: historicity of Homeric poetry, its dependence on historical and cultural context, and mutual independence of cultures, periods, and literary aesthetics, resulting in an opposition to classicism. These were the main ideas that Herder promoted in his dealings with Homer. However, similar thoughts were expressed in his other writings about literature and history that were better known to the German public at the time. I now outline briefly how Herder's reflections on Homeric poetry were related to his anthropological philosophy, historicism, and hermeneutics – disciplines, for which Herder is often credited as the harbinger of later academic developments.[242]

First, Herder's anthropology (or philosophical anthropology) is still a subject of numerous debates, but in general scholars agree that he advocated a form of cultural relativism, at least to a certain degree.[243] Even though he believed in certain general humanist values, as for example freedom, the abolition of slavery, and tolerance, he argued that people around the world belonged to different cultural contexts, were imbedded in them, and should thus be recognised and appreciated as such. This was precisely one of the reasons why Herder, at least politically, criticised the Enlightenment and later the Jacobin project.[244] Of prime concern for the present discussion, however, is his anthropological understanding of languages, expressed, for example, in *Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache* (1774).[245] Herder's philosophy of language was seminal in claiming that languages did not have a divine origin and were not universal, but were intrinsically connected with human concepts and sensations and thus expressed specific values – a thesis that Wolf, for example, followed in his linguistic analysis

---

[239] Isaiah Berlin famously proposed that Herder's philosophy was pointed against the French enlightenment (Berlin, 2013: 208–300; for an analysis of his arguments see Yack, 2013). In this respect, Herder was often critical of French aesthetics and literature (see Oergel, 2006: 52; Norton, 2009). A more nuanced evaluation of Herder's complicated relationship with French literature is Damrosch, 2020: 17–23.
[240] E.g. Kelletat, 1984: 37; Zuckert, 2019: 134–136.
[241] See Sikka, 2011; Noyes, 2015.
[242] Forster, 2010: 9–50; Gjesdal, 2017b.
[243] See Sikka, 2011: 97–102; Waldow and DeSouza, 2017.
[244] Berlin, 2013: 208–300.
[245] See Forster, 2010: 55–90.

of words that supposedly have the same meaning as "writing".[246] Furthermore, in *Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache*, but also in writings such as *Briefe zu Beförderung der Humanität* (1793–1797) and *Kritische Wälder* (1796), Herder applied similar reasoning also to literature and the arts, claiming that all cultural expressions depended on human experiences, ideas, and beliefs.[247] As I argued above, his early Homeric studies were indebted to such cultural relativism, which the philosopher continued to express in his later writings on Homer as well.[248]

Second, and closely connected to Herder's understanding of cultural relativity, was his insistence on historical relativity.[249] Not only did he argue that human expressions vary between different cultures and that no specific culture possesses universal aesthetic norms, he applied the same reasoning to his understanding of historical periods, and specifically, to his conceptualisation of antiquity. This can first be seen in the aforementioned fragments "Von der Ode" where he argued that the ode's "varied manifestations" developed independently in different cultures and at different historical stages so that all odic phenomena expressed a particular "sensibility", "character", and "rhythm", characteristics which emerged from the historical and geographical contexts of a given society. On that basis Herder proposed that the known odes belonged to four different periods and cultures: the "Eastern", "ancient Greek", "Roman", and "Northern", by which he meant primarily modern. A much more influential publication in which he identified similar stages of humanity's historical and cultural progression in the arts, culture, morality, philosophy, and epistemology was *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit* (1774). In this work, the philosopher argued that humanity and culture developed historically, that their nature depended on historical circumstance, and that one should therefore view cultures in their social and historical context.[250] As with cultural relativity, Herder argued that there was no ideal period which should be valued above the others.

---

[246] For an overview of Herder's philosophy of language see Forster, 2010. For the historical context see e.g. DeSouza, 2012. Fox (2003) offers a good analysis of Herder's philosophy of language and his understanding of the nation.

[247] E.g. Forster, 2010: 91–130; Spencer, 2012: 68–128.

[248] For example, in "Homer und Ossian" he argued that Homer's and Ossian's epics both expressed different cultural and geographical sensibilities so that "[Homer] is a purely *epic poet*, whereas Ossian is, if you will, a *lyric-epic poet*. (Er [Homer] ist ein rein *epischer*, Ossian ist, wenn man so will, ein *lyrisch-epischer* Dichter.)" (Herder, Bd. 18, 454)

[249] E.g. Knodt, 1996; Noyes, 2015.

[250] Evrigenis and Pellerin, 2004, xxi–xxxiv.

Third, on the basis of his understanding of aesthetic, historical, and cultural relativity, Herder developed a specific theory of interpretation or philosophical hermeneutics.[251] If cultures were fundamentally different and each had its own intellectual and artistic expressions, this meant that specific theories of interpretation were needed for each of them. As Herder argued, interpreters should strive to understand all phenomena, especially in literature and the arts, in their socio-historical context, so as not to fall into fallacious transpositions of their own values onto the object of study. To this end, they had to, first, overcome their own cultural and historical constraints and prejudices, and secondly, utilise something Herder called "Einfühlung", a process of philosophical-philological enquiry through which a particular time or culture was to be understood.[252] He also suggested, that interpretations of literature or other written materials should not take the meaning of the words for granted, but should reflect on what words mean in their own cultural and historical context. In this respect, Herder's main contribution was the claim that hermeneutics should not focus only on the text or artistic object, but also on the subjective conditions that shape its understanding as a whole.[253] Similar arguments guided his Homeric criticism, expressed perhaps most clearly in his analysis of fallacious interpretations discussed above. Rather than following general aesthetic theories or transposing current concepts onto the ancient epics, the interpreter was to understand Homeric poetry in its cultural and historical context, leaving behind her own convictions about poetry. With this preparatory investigation of Herder's Homeric reception in mind, I now turn to Friedrich August Wolf, and to one of the most influential texts in Homeric scholarship, his *Prolegomena ad Homerum*.

b) Friedrich August Wolf and the historicity of Homeric poetry

Friedrich August Wolf published *Prolegomena ad Homerum* in 1795, three decades after Herder first introduced his historical criticism, which was by then widely recognised.[254] At first glance, Wolf's seminal work did not share much with Herder's writings. It was published in Latin, the style was academic and rigorous – as opposed to Herder's embellished and poetic writing[255] – its structure was meticulously organised, and, unlike Herder's speculative and imaginative interpretations, Wolf built his arguments about the Homeric epics methodically from scrutinising ancient *testimonia* and *scholia*, in a way that demonstrated exceptional

---

[251] For Herder's hermeneutics see Gjesdal, 2017a, 2017b. Cf. Irmscher, 2009; Deiters, 2010.
[252] Herz, 1997; Harloe, 2013: 208–211.
[253] E.g. Gjesdal, 2015.
[254] See e.g. Leventhal, 1994; Oergel, 2006; Arnold et. al., 2009; Billings, 2014.
[255] Adler, 2009a.

control of the material and scholarly discussions. In terms of content, he famously proposed that the Homeric poems were composed in the 10th century BC, before the Greeks acquired a writing system, and were eventually written down in 6th-century Athens. It followed that the epics were not composed by a single author and did not have the same artistic unity as modern poetry. Their current appearance was mostly the result of the editorial work of Alexandrian critics, who were not interested in reconstructing the original form, but what they believed was the best version. All in all, Wolf suggested that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* had a long and complicated transmission history, so that their present status must be the result of modifications introduced by different redactors through time. While these were among his most influential theses about Homer, I argue that it was primarily Wolf's methodological, hermeneutic, and philosophical outlook that determined the further course of literary production, and scholarship. In order to demonstrate this, I first outline Wolf's historicist understanding of Homeric poetry and its implications for his hermeneutic reasoning. I then tease out some of his less explicit views on localisation, historical independence, and the cultural autonomy of literary traditions. Investigating these topics is crucial for determining how Wolf's historical criticism of Homer acted to localise literary tradition more generally.

Wolf's starting position was the troublesome question of where the Homeric epics had originated, an interest he shared with Herder's investigations of lyric poetry and the ode. Like Herder, Wolf identified two major obstacles to researching the origins of literature, that is, the belatedness of extant reports and their fragmentary nature. Wolf therefore started by considering available manuscripts and other evidence, concluding that the extant materials were insufficient "to restore Homer's work to the genuine, pure form which first poured from his divine lips",[256] since they all came substantially after the time when both epics first took shape. Much more systematically than Herder, Wolf also suggested that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* began forming in a period before the emergence of writing and therefore must have been oral in origin. Chapters 12 to 21 of *Prolegomena* were devoted to proving that the writing system could not yet have existed at the time Homeric poetry first emerged, and chapters 22 to 32 to the investigation of the oral rhapsodic culture in which early epic poetry thrived.

Besides the belatedness of written reports, the other issue that Wolf addressed was their unreliability. This was a major focus of his attention and explains why *Prolegomena* could

---

[256] Wolf, 1985: 45–46. "…ut poëta nobis ex his fontibus ad veritatem et integritatem textus, primum divino eius ore fusi, redigi nequeat,…" (Wolf, 1795, vi).

become a seminal work in textual criticism.[257] Even though Wolf meant to write a second part in which he would "deal with the principles on which the emendation of Homer rests",[258] he was explicit that all manuscripts as well as all other sources needed to be critically inspected and interpreted. This did not apply only to manuscripts of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* on the basis of which he would produce his critical editions, but also to all other written documents about Homeric poetry and its historical context, such as *scholia*, *testimonia*, works of grammarians, lexicographers, and other poets. He wrote: "a great many things from the writings of those critics have been passed down, as it were, from hand to hand, different ones arriving in different times, and the oldest of all arriving in part in the most recent times",[259] so that critical investigation of these "obscure reports and uncertain traces of transmitted events",[260] as he called them, was indispensable.

By proving that the ancient evidence for the Homeric text was of a later historical period and that it was fragmentary and unreliable, Wolf created a historical and hermeneutic gap between the modern researcher and Homeric literature. The question arose of what Homeric poetry is if it emerged in a period preceding writing, of which no evidence is readily available – or in his own words: "what, then, will it mean to restore these poems to their original lustre and genuine beauty?"[261] Wolf's answer was "a historical investigation".[262] If the origins of Homeric epic were multiform and malleable, it was possible to understand the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* as traditions that developed in line with historical circumstances. In this respect, Wolf directly applied a historicist reasoning to Homeric epic – very much like Herder did for lyric poetry or humanity in general – arguing that both epics existed as literary traditions progressing through various historical stages. His solution to the hermeneutic gap was to consider both epics dependent on material and historical conditions, each specific period contributing to the shaping of the literary tradition – and as I suggested in the previous chapter, Goethe recognised this attempt and used it in order to position himself at the very end of this development. Wolf's approach is most apparent in how he outlined his study in the introduction:

---

[257] Bolter even says that "the *Prolegomena* is at any rate not an essay in literary criticism but one in textual criticism" (Bolter, 1980: 95). For Wolf's influence on the development of textual criticism see also Timpanaro, 2005: 58–74; Harloe, 2016. Cf. Grafton, 1991: 214–243.

[258] Wolf, 1985: 57. "…posterior in causis, quibus Homerica emendatio nitatur…" (Wolf, 1795: xxiv).

[259] Wolf, 1985: 56. "Quum vero plurima ex illorum Criticorum commentariis, tanquam per manus tradita, alia in alias aetates, vetustissima partim in novissimas, devenerint…" (Wolf, 1795: xx).

[260] Wolf, 1985: 70. "…obscuram famam et incerta rerum traditarum vestigia…" (Wolf, 1795: xl).

[261] Wolf, 1985: 70. "…his Carminibus pristinum nitorem et germanam formam suam restituere?" (Wolf, 1795: xxxix)

[262] Wolf, 1985: 45. "…historicam exquirendam…" (Wolf, 1795: v).

> Hence, when I have dealt with the condition of the vulgate text and the need to reform it, I shall give the outlines of an inquiry, by which the internal critical history of these poems may be brought down to our own time through six ages of uneven length and character.[263]

Wolf identified six periods in the history of Homeric epic: from the "origins, that is, from the time of the refined poetry of the Ionians (around 950 B.C.) to Pisistratus, to whom the ancients ascribe the arrangement of the two corpora"; from him to "Zenodotus, who was the first of the grammarians" and thus marked the beginning of Homeric criticism properly speaking; from "Zenodotus to Apion"; from Apion to "Longinus and Porphyry"; from them to "the man responsible for the first edition, Demetrius Chalcondyles of Athens"; and finally the latest period down to "the last three centuries, during which Homer has occupied in diverse ways the wits of scholars and the workshops of printers".[264] Even though Wolf's discussion breaks off in the middle of the third stage,[265] it is clear that he understood the ancient epics as developing in discreet historical phases, from their origins in oral culture, to being written down and edited for the first time, to being refined by the grammarians and transmitted through manuscripts, until finally entering academic discussion and print culture.

In connection with this model, Wolf accepted and promoted a specific hermeneutic methodology,[266] and an understanding of literature as historically localised. He argued that literature had to be interpreted in its historical context, that is to say, as a product of its age. When discussing the "origins of writing", for example, he wrote that we have to "examine the natures of ancient monuments more profoundly and to judge each event by the mental and moral habits of its time and place, while keeping the strictest law of history".[267] Notice Wolf's appeal to the 'strictest law of history' (*severissima lex historiae*): because Homeric epic, the origin of writing, and the spirit of the time were all related, scholars *had to* investigate the historical context on the basis of which the poems could be understood. To do so was not

---

[263] Wolf, 1985: 57. "Igitur quum vulgatae scripturae conditionem et eius reformandae necessitatem attigero, primas lineas dabo disquisitionis, qua per *sex aetates* disparis intervalli et ingenii interior historia critica horum Carminum ad nostrum usque tempus deducatur." (Wolf, 1795: xxii)

[264] Wolf, 1985: 57–58. Cf. Wolf, 1795: xxii-xxiii.

[265] See footnote b in Wolf, 1985: 57.

[266] Wolf developed his theory of interpretation in the posthumously published *Vorlesungen über die Enzyklopädie der Altertumswissenschaft* (1832), which is now known as one of the fist works of "philosophical hermeneutics", mostly due to Friedrich Schleiermacher's (1768–1834) influential academy addresses of 1829 ("Ueber den Begriff der Hermeneutik, mit Bezug auf F. A. Wolfs Andeutungen und Asts Lehrbuch"), in which he credited Wolf and classicist Georg Anton Friedrich Ast (1778–1841) as his two main influences. See Palmer, 1972: 75–83; Neschke-Hentschke, 1997; Buschmeier, 2008a: 84–98.

[267] Wolf, 1985: 71. "Iam ingenia vetustorum monumentorum altius inspicere coepimus, servataque severissima lege historiae, […] rem ex temporis ac loci sui rationibus et moribus iudicare." (Wolf, 1795: lxi)

optional, nor was it a matter of paying lip service. Wolf explained the formidable preparatory research that the 'law of history' required of the law-abiding critic:

> by mastering and criticising the variant readings and technical rules offered by the grammatical books and *scholia*, we are summoned into old times, times more ancient than those of many ancient writers, and, as it were, into the company of those learned critics, whose judgments and teachings once nourished the young Cicero, Virgil, and Horace.[268]

Wolf's criticism was grounded in the 'mastery' of variant readings and technical rules, but the aim was to be 'summoned into old times' which alone could give poetic texts their meaning, not as an ahistorical aesthetic ideal, but as the stuff that 'nourished' writers like Cicero, Virgil and Horace and hence the literary tradition as a whole. Like Herder, Wolf recognised that ahistorical readings imposed modern aesthetic categories on ancient poetry. I have already mentioned that he ridiculed those scholars who rejected the oral origin of Homer but could not explain why no modern poet was able to write an *Iliad*, implying that they imposed their own aesthetic convictions on the ancient epics. Even more explicitly, however, when explaining why Alexandrian critics had to be judged in the spirit of their own time, he warned against "aesthetic judgment", "by which we model the critics of that period to match the modern rules of the art". As an antidote he offered "critical judgment" grounded in historicism.[269]

This position was close to Herder's hermeneutics as expressed, for example, in his concept of "Einfühlung", as Katherine Harloe has demonstrated. Harloe shows that Wolf's ideas about conjecture and speculation align much more closely with Herder's "Einfühlung" than the rationalistic philology of his teacher Christian Gottlob Heyne (1729–1812).[270] As she points out, Wolf used imaginative speculations (grounded in informed guesses) in order to reconstruct the "spirit" of an age of which evidence was particularly scarce. This is most apparent in his analysis of oral culture, the part of *Prolegomena* which was, as I noted above, closest to Herder. "Where history is silent or mumbles", he wrote, "in this earliest period, in which the origins of the Homeric text must be sought, we have only the faintest

---

[268] Wolf, 1985: 55–56. "…quod variarum lectionum et canonum technicorum, quos libri grammatici et Scholia praebent, conquisitione et censura in vêtus et plerisque antiquis scriptoribus antiquius aevum ac quasi in societatem vocamur doctissimorum Criticorum, quorum iudicia et praeceptiones, quibus olim Ciceronis, Virgilii, Horatii adolescentia alebatur…" (Wolf, 1795: xx).

[269] Wolf, 1985: 157–58. "At this point we must thoroughly abolish the opinion by which we model the critics of that period to match the modern rules of the art. (Penitus hic nobis tollenda est opinio, qua Criticos illius aetatis ad hanc novae artis formulam fingimus.)" (Wolf, 1795: clxxiii). Cf. Wolf, 1795: clxxiv: "In short, this whole art arose rather from what our fellow countrymen call aesthetic judgment than from critical judgment… (Denique omnis haec ars profecta est potius ab aesthetico, quod nostrates vocant, quam critico iudicio…)."

[270] Harloe, 2013: 205–43.

illumination",[271] so that "the whole field of argument suddenly changes, historical evidence practically vanishes, and conjecture and inference tremblingly take its place".[272] Apparent in this passage is Wolf's need for a historical reconstruction even of a period which allowed only for (informed) "conjecture and inference": without such historical context, he believed, literary criticism would necessarily fall victim to ahistorical fallacies. Furthermore, in his analysis of Homeric words with the supposed meaning "writing", Wolf was clear that each "word (*vocabulum*)" "has its own history, which depends not on utterances (*vocibus*) and expressions (*locutionibus*)[273] but on the condition of the times and customs", so that "investigations" of literary phenomena "cannot be completed on the basis of words alone."[274] Like Herder, Wolf suggested that each linguistic and historic analysis must consider the meaning of words in a broader cultural context.

The second implication of Wolf's method, although much less apparent and only present indirectly in his insistence that the epics depend upon the historical and material conditions of their time, was a view of Homeric poetry as historically and culturally localised. When Wolf argued that "those who possess almost all of [the literary skills] in our day still do not dare to compose *Iliads*", he concurrently hinted also that the oral nature of Homeric poetry could not be recreated in a literate society. Only an oral society could produce oral poetry. Hellenism produced aesthetic editing, and the modern period produced scholarly editing or modern adaptations. Wolf's criticism implied that each intervention in the Homeric tradition had to be specific to its time and could not exist outside it – much as Herder argued that each previous manifestation of literature and art expressed the historical conditions of a certain period and therefore could not be, and should not be, recreated in modernity.

My analysis of Wolf's approach to Homer has revealed clear parallels with Herder's philosophy. Not only did Herder pre-empt Wolf's ideas about the historical development of Homeric poetry, he also promoted a view of cultural history which Wolf used extensively in order to develop his own history of the Homeric text. This became especially apparent in the

---

[271] Wolf, 1985: 70. "…et, ubi historia tacet vel mussitat […]. In hac enim prima aetate, in qua Homerici textus origins quaerendae sunt, vix tenue lumen habemus." (Wolf, 1795: xl)

[272] Wolf, 1985: 114. "In hac repente omnis campus disputationis mutatur, evanescunt ferme vestigia historica, et in locum eorum trepide succedit coniectura et ratiocinatio…" (Wolf, 1795: cix).

[273] In Wolf's insistence to differentiate between the word as a linguistic entity (sign, *vocabulum*, which Wolf often used to point out words in manuscripts) and its utterances (that is, its use), one can recognise another influence of Herder, for Herder argued that the interpreter needs to reconstruct the meaning of a word by investigating its usage in context.

[274] Wolf, 1985: 74. "…potestate vocabulorum, quorum cuique sua quaedam historia est, quae non ex ipsis vocibus et locutionibus, sed ex temporum et morum aliunde cognita conditione pendet. Illae quidem talem quaestionem ad exitum non adducunt." (Wolf, 1795: vi)

way that Wolf perceived Homeric epic as a tradition developing through specific historical stages, but also in how he recognised a hermeneutic and historical gap between modern researcher and ancient poetry. Wolf believed that Homeric phenomena should be interpreted as products of their age, that the historical context of the ancient evidence, and even individual words, *must* always be considered, and that each historical manifestation remains historically particular and therefore unrepeatable. All this confirms that Wolf wrote his *Prolegomena* with a broadly Herderian outlook in mind and developed his Homeric criticism as a strand of historical criticism. The Homeric criticism he advocated was hence a form of historically and culturally localised reading. This is important for the overall argument of this thesis because it demonstrates that Wolf's localising philology emerged in dialogue with other debates about world literature and was stimulated by theories of cultural pluralism. As I suggest in the next section, this had one further implication, namely, that Wolf promoted an understanding of world literature in which classical literature took a place of honour.

c) Wolf and Herder on classical and world literature

Herder and Wolf both believed that a historical perspective was crucial for interpreting ancient literature. This had further consequences for how they understood the relationship between classical literature, especially Homer, and other literary traditions of the world. I argued that Herder saw cultural production as pertaining to various nations and periods and that he understood each literary tradition as culturally and historically conditioned. On this view, literature could only be autonomous and localised, that is to say, non-universal. In other words, Herder implied a view of the literatures of the world, even if he never used the term "Weltliteratur", as a plurality of autonomous literary phenomena.[275] He understood the literary system as consisting of various traditions which fall under the term "literature", but in fact represent diverse and independent cultural realities. His study of the ode is a clear example: in that essay, he suggested that a proper investigation of the topic had to take into account extant odes from all different times and cultures so that a general theory of the ode was to be an encapsulation of all its particular expositions. Herder expressed similar ideas also in his work on the folk-song, especially in the two collections entitled *Volkslieder* (1778–1779).[276] The project of collecting and publishing those folksongs which best expressed national and local

---

[275] For Herder's ideas about literature in general and his notions of world literature see specifically Kelletat, 1984; Koch, 2002: 83–116; Gillies, 1933; Menges, 2009; Mayo, 1969; Robertson, 2015. A more recent interventions are Moser, 2018; Damrosch, 2020: 17–23.

[276] Gaskill, 2003; Heinz, 2014; Dembeck, 2017. In this respect see also Herder's preceding study *Alte Volkslieder* (1774).

characteristics was in many ways the epitome of how Herder envisaged world literature:[277] poems that were seen as embodying the essence of the local spirit were grouped together in order to represent the nature of folk-literature as a category. In this respect, Herder's understanding of world literature as the totality of particular and autonomous traditions differed radically from Goethe's theory of an interconnected and interdependent network of literary circulations and influences shaped on classical models.[278]

Wolf's literary criticism rested on similar assumptions, although they were much less apparent due to his consistent focus on classical literature and his devotion to philological criticism. For Wolf too, a fundamentally historicist orientation provided the impetus for treating poetry as a culturally localised phenomenon. He expressed this understanding, for example, in his study of modern literary traditions in their original languages, for he read widely also in French, Italian, Dutch, English, and Spanish.[279] Two of his early texts suggested that literary traditions should be approached independently of other traditions and should be judged only in their own respective cultural and literary contexts. In *Ist Homer auch übersetzbar?* (1784), Wolf discussed recent translations of Homer into German, repeatedly complaining about anachronisms;[280] and *Geschichte der Römischen Litteratur* (1787) cast "Roman literature" as a culturally independent national tradition.[281] A similar view permeated *Prolegomena*, in which Homeric poetry appeared not as a universal model for other literatures, but as a specific and independent literary tradition.

Occasionally, Wolf wrote more explicitly about the cultural relativity and mutual independence of literary traditions. This can be most clearly observed in his use of comparative material. While not a method he deemed sufficiently scientific to commend itself for frequent use, he nevertheless sometimes compared literary traditions. His use of parallels between the Old Testament and Homer is a relatively well researched example.[282] In transposing material from, primarily, Eichhorn's Biblical criticism to classical literature, Wolf understood both contexts as sharing a similar historical development but still treated them as culturally

---

[277] Another concept is important for Herder's understanding of world literature, that of *Humanität*. See Menges, 2009: 205–209. For Herder's *Humanität* in general see e.g. Irmscher, 1994; Barnard, 2003; Adler, 2009b.
[278] Moser (2018) offers an intriguing interpretation of Herder's and Goethe's concept of world literature, arguing that they developed their ideas about national and world literature in mutual dialogue and that they responded to problems of cultural and literary localism and universalism. This closely parallels my own arguments about Goethe's and Wolf's understanding of Homer and world literature. See also Koch, 2002: 107–16; Biti, 2016: 133–156. Cf. Gillies, 1933.
[279] Körte, 1833: 17–18; Lanza, 1981: 531.
[280] Cf. Wohlleben, 1996.
[281] Cf. García and Marizzi, 2009.
[282] E.g. Grafton, 1981, 1983, 1991: 214–243, 1999.

independent. Furthermore, in *Prolegomena* he used comparisons in order to support his conjectures about the nature of oral poetry:

> And yet we find approximately similar classes of men among other peoples as well: among the Hebrews, what they call *the schools of the prophets*; then again, more akin to us, *the bards, the skalds, the Druids*.[283] […] Come then, let us use comparisons with similar things to reconstruct the method of rhapsodic teaching, obscured as it is by the shadows of antiquity.[284]

Wolf makes up for the lack of evidence concerning oral Greek epic by adducing comparative material from other cultures and traditions. He does so in a way that suggests Greek oral society was culturally independent and localised: if ancient Greeks had rhapsodes, Hebrews had prophets, and Germanic tribes had druids, this meant that these traditions belonged to culturally distinct and unrelated contexts, even if they performed poetry in similar social conditions. When one takes Wolf's comparative work alongside his recognition of other modern literatures and his anti-universalism, it is possible to conclude that he, like Herder, perceived world literature as a plurality of distinct and locally contingent literary traditions, Homeric poetry being only one autonomous strand among a much larger group that included the Old Testament, Ossianic poetry, Latin literature, and modern German literature among others.

While the basic premise was thus similar for both Herder and Wolf, they nonetheless conceived the relationship between classical and world literature differently. Herder brought to the issue his fundamentally national and anti-classical agenda. Wolf, by contrast, framed *Altertumswissenschaft* as the flagship discipline for a new system of higher education.[285] His role in the establishment of classical philology as a scholarly discipline is a complex subject that touches, among other things, upon the rise of the seminar as a pedagogical form,[286] his role as a Professor of Philology and Pedagogy at the University of Halle,[287] and his contributions to Wilhelm von Humboldt's school reforms and the establishment of the University of Berlin in 1809, where Wolf was invited to take the position of professor.[288] Constanze Güthenke

---

[283] The mention of bards and skalds in this context recalls Herder.

[284] Wolf, 1985: 109–10. Emphasis in the original. "Atqui tales fere ordines hominum in aliis quoque populis reperimus, apud Hebraeos *scholas*, quas dicunt, *Prophetarum*, tum cognatiores nobis *Bardos*, *Scaldros*, *Druidas*. […] Age igitur, rhapsodicae διδασκαλίας modum, antiquitatis tenebris obscuratum, similium rerum comparatione eruamus." (Wolf, 1795: cii)

[285] See Bommel, 2015a: 64–93, 2015b. Cf. Leventhal, 1986: 243–60.

[286] Güthenke, 2020, 48–71. Cf. Clark, 2006: 141–182; Spoerhase and Dehrmann, 2011; Wellmon, 2015.

[287] Bolter, 1980; Neschke-Hentschke, 1997; Harloe, 2013: 205–192.

[288] See especially the introduction to Humboldt, 1990; Fuhrmann, 1959; Horstmann, 1987; Marchand, 1996: 24–31; Most, 1997; Bommel, 2015a: 64–93, 2015b. A good recent review of Humboldt's reforms is Tenorth, 2018. See also the discussion of *Buildung* and its relevance for Wolf in Güthenke, 2020: 33–47, 109–113 (cf. Güthenke, 2010, 2015b).

(2020) has recently argued that "the neohumanism of Humboldt's generation focused on the individual and their *Bildung*, a preoccupation that is echoed in the self-understanding of the developing discipline of classical scholarship: both the broader neohumanism and its institutional articulation elaborate a vision of antiquity as a coherent, organic self…".[289] While the concept of *Bildung*, the rise of the seminar, university reform, etc., all impacted the institutionalisation of classics as a discipline, they are much too complex to be discussed here in detail. Instead, I turn to Wolf's *Darstellung der Alterthumswissenschaft* (1807), a text that profoundly influenced Humboldt and was seminal for the establishment of classical philology as an independent academic discipline.[290] Tellingly, Wolf dedicated it to Goethe. By considering this influential work, I explore how Wolf fashioned a vision of antiquity as a coherent and organic self – precisely the aspect that Güthenke identifies as formative for the self-perception and the development of the discipline.

In *Darstellung*, Wolf set out to define classical philology in two fundamental ways: first, he outlined the discipline's object of research as the literature, culture, "languages, arts, and sciences, manners, character, and way of thinking" of ancient Greeks and Romans,[291] with particular emphasis on literature and the arts. Secondly, he defined the method of *Altertumswissenschaft* as "philosophical-historical".[292] *Altertumswissenschaft*, for Wolf, was the historical study of Greek and Roman antiquity, meaning, that the "works which were passed down to us, their content and spirit" should be understood in the broader context of the cultural, linguistic, artistic, scientific, and religious life of the ancients.[293] In this connection Wolf also asserted that *Altertumswissenschaft* did not concern itself with timeless aesthetic models:

> The true expert of antiquity must not so much study the model character for later genres of individual writers and their works as engage in a purely historical investigation, which encompasses the phenomena in their organic development…[294]

Because the focus of the discipline was on a particular historical context, in Wolf's definition at least, this meant that its objects were to be grasped in their historical particularity and not in

---

[289] Güthenke, 2020: 5. See also the discussion of Wolf in Güthenke, 2020: 109–113.

[290] Grafton, 1981; Marchand 1996: 19–24; Harloe, 2013: 193–202; Bommel, 2015a: 64–93, 2015b.

[291] "…ihren Sprachen, Künsten u. Wissensch[aften], Sitten, Charakter u. Denkungsart…" (In Markner and Veltri, 1999: 51.) The extract comes from a fragment of the *Darstellung* written by Wolf as early as 1785. In the final published version, he expresses similar ideas.

[292] "…philosophisch-historisch[en]…" (Wolf, 1807: 5).

[293] Wolf, 1807: 30.

[294] "Allein der Gesichtspunkt von Seiten der Classicität einzelner Schriftsteller und Werke ihrer Gattung darf bei dem eigentlichen Alterthumskenner viel weniger vorwalten als der rein historische, der die Erscheinungen in ihrer organischen Entwickelung aufnimmt…" (Wolf, 1807: 109).

their universal applicability. In this respect, *Darstellung der Alterthumswissenschaft* takes up the emphasis on historical analysis that we already saw in *Prolegomena*. I already discussed this method in the previous section, so I now turn to Wolf's definition of *Altertumswissenschaft*'s object of study.

It is a well-known story that upon arriving in Göttingen to begin his studies in 1777, Wolf insisted that he be matriculated as a 'Student of Philology', then an inexistent faculty.[295] This insistence on classical antiquity, which manifested itself in Wolf's scholarly focus on *just* Greek and Roman antiquity, was apparent also in how he envisaged classical studies in relation to other literary traditions and their respective philologies. This can be seen, for example, in his lack of interest in South Slavic oral poetry. We do not know for certain that Wolf knew the above-mentioned translation by Talvj or Herder's *Volkslieder* collections, but we do know that he was acquainted with the tradition and its 'similarity' to Homeric epic, for he was aware of it through his communication with Jernej Kopitar[296] (1780–1844), a censor in Vienna. In several letters that Kopitar sent to Wolf, he mentioned the South Slavic tradition and pointed out where translations could be found. Kopitar mentioned Karadžić's collection in particular, and advised Wolf that "today there is no better match for your Homeric 'Homerids' than in Serbia and Bosnia".[297] Wolf was uninterested: his outlook on world literature was less cosmopolitan than Herder's or Goethe's and he was not concerned with bringing other literatures into the ambit of *Altertumswissenschaft*.

In his *Darstellung* as well, Wolf recognised several non-Greek and non-Roman ancient "cultures" such as Egyptian, Hebrew, Persian, Arabic, "Oriental", and even "Asiatic" and "African" – all of which reflect his general comparative interests discussed above. Nevertheless, he gave several reasons why these traditions, even if ancient, should not be considered part of *Altertumswissenschaft*. Two reasons seemed to him decisive for rejecting the contribution of these cultural contexts to classical studies. The first was that they lacked the historical evidence that made them worth analysing.[298] The second was that these cultures

---

[295] While Wolf was not the first to enter a university as a student of philology (see Harloe, 2013: 194, and references therein), the story nevertheless reflects his devotion to philology and foreshadows his later interest in the discipline.

[296] Also known as Bartholomäus Kopitar.

[297] Letters are published in Vasmer, 1938: 113.

[298] Sufficiency of material was important for Wolf, because he believed that a true scientific discipline should have enough evidence to enable a systematic study, but that claim was also mixed with his convictions that abundancy of sources assists in education and general advancement of knowledge (see Fragment 1 for the *Darstellung* in Markner and Veltri, 1999: 52). In his opinion, Graeco-Roman antiquity barely had enough material for such a study, but other ancient traditions clearly did not. Speaking about other ancient cultures he wrote: "…the extremely small number of works that survive is what scares us away from all such peoples, which at most allows for a basic understanding of their languages, but does not for a more intimate consideration of their spiritual

did not produce "literature" – as I argue in Chapter VI, both reasons would soon be put in doubt by new archaeological discoveries. Wolf did not disparage other literary traditions, at least not on aesthetic grounds. While he was convinced that other ancient traditions were less developed in comparison to that of the Greeks on purely historical grounds he also maintained that one should acknowledge these traditions in their own context, that is, "one should not be afraid to see the people of the Orient valued less here than they deserve".[299] They were deserving of their own academic disciplines as well: "Thus, such fragments or literatures still hidden in book-dungeons, and even more so those of the distant people of Asia, should be left altogether to the Orientalists, who again divide themselves in different fields."[300] Wolf's arguments for why *Altertumswissenschaft* should focus specifically on ancient Greece and Rome were first and foremost disciplinary, meaning that the discipline needed to limit its material and establish "borders (Grenzen)",[301] a term Wolf consistently used when talking about the object of its study. As he wrote in the concluding passages of the *Darstellung*: "Imagined as a whole, our antiquity is, as it were, a world enclosed in itself".[302]

Nevertheless, Wolf's argumentation is characterised by a certain ambiguity between historical criticism and disciplinary delimitation. While he promoted historical criticism as a reason for abandoning aesthetic universalism, he also used it to justify scientific objectivity and, on that basis, delimit the scope of *Altertumswissenschaft*. On the one hand, historicism enabled scholars to perceive classical literature as only one literary tradition among others, and classical philology as a discipline among other disciplines such as, for example, "Orientalistik".[303] On the other hand, both the discipline and antiquity as its object acquire privileged status precisely on the basis of this definition. Wolf wrote the following in a

---

organisation and all their peculiarities. (…schreckt uns noch bei allen solchen Völkern die äusserst geringe Zahl übrig gebliebener Werke zurück, die höchstens ein nothdürftiges Verstehen ihrer Sprachen, aber kein innigeres Auffassen ihrer geistigen Organisation und ganzen Eigenthümlichkeit gestatten.)" (Wolf, 1807: 18)

[299] "Man fürchte nicht, die Völker des Orients hier unter ihr Verdienst geschätzt zu sehen." (Wolf, 1807: 18)

[300] "Es werden demnach dergleichen entweder fragmentarische oder in Bücher-Kerkern annoch versteckte Litteraturen, und weit mehr jene der entferntesten Völker Asiens, gänzlich den Orientalisten überlassen, die selbst sich wieder in mehrere Klassen theilen." (Wolf, 1807: 19)

[301] He used the same term also when arguing that "Asian" and "African" cultures fall outside the discipline's "boundaries (Grenzen)" because these cultures were "not cultivated in literature (litterarisch nicht cultivirte)" (Wolf, 1807: 18–19).

[302] "Unser Alterthum ist, als ein Ganzes gedacht, gleichsam eine in sich geschlossene Welt". Wolf expressed similar ideas in *Einleitung in die Alterthumswissenschaft* (1807): "If we want to maintain one homogeneous whole in the study of antiquity, then we should take only Greeks and Roman and exclude the rest. (Wenn wir nun ein homogenes Ganze in der Alterthumskunde erhalten wollen, so dürfen wir nur Griechen und Römer nehmen und müssen die übrigen davon ausschliessen.)" (Wolf, 1839: 14). For a discussion of this limitation see Güthenke, 2020: 109–113.

[303] Wolf uses the word when saying that Asian cultures should be left to "Orientalisten" (Wolf, 1807: 19).

fragment from his Halle period (probably in 1785), which contains preparatory material for the *Darstellung*:

> Among all ancient peoples, it is from the Greeks and Romans that the learned culture of the modern world proceeded a few centuries ago, and it is their literature that all learning, if it is thorough and comprehensive, still follows. Their languages are among the most perfect that we know, and they have left behind linguistic masterpieces of various kinds that will forever remain models of good taste and objects of admiration to the greatest experts. Moreover, the Greeks and Romans raised a great many arts to a level of perfection which moderns, hindered as they are by political and other circumstances, will never again attain. Finally, the Greeks and Romans are the peoples through whose writings and other monuments the greater part of the history of ancient times is known, and without whom we would be entirely deprived of the most interesting information about the progress of humanity towards culture. Indeed, one is aware in their case of an altogether higher degree of moral greatness than one finds in the peoples who imitated them.[304]

The ancient Greeks and Romans are envisaged here as the root of all thorough and comprehensive learning, their literature as the best and hence a model to all subsequent poets, and their works of art of such high standard that no modern, "hindered by political and other circumstances", could recreate them. Wolf comes close here to what Goethe conceded after his failed attempt of writing an *Achilleis* and gives us fascinating insight into the ambiguities that characterised his notion of *Altertumswissenschaft*. Whether Wolf adopted this paradoxical position later in his life, especially under the influence of Humboldt,[305] or whether (as seems more likely) his views were contradictory from the very beginning[306] is not decisive for the present discussion. It is in any case clear that he struggled with the innate paradox of an anti-

---

[304] "Unter allen alten Völkern sind die Griechen u. Römer diejenigen, von denen die gelehrte Bildung der neurn Welt vor einigen Jahrh[underten] ausgegangen ist, u. an deren Litteratur sich noch immer alle Gelehrsamkeit, wenn sie gründl[ich] u. vollständig ist, anschließt; deren Sprachen unter die vollkommensten gehören, die wir kennen, u. die in diesen sprach[lichen] Meisterstücken in mancherlei Gattungen der Schreibart hinterlaßen haben, auf immer die Muster des guten Geschmacks u. die Bewunderung der grösten Kenner bleiben werden; die ferner mehrere Künste zu einer Vollkommenheit erhoben haben, zu der die Neuern, durch polit[ische] u. andere Ursachen gehindert, sie niemals wieder bringen können: Gr[iechen] u. Römer sind es endl[ich], durch deren Schriften u. andre Denkmäler wir mit dem grösten Theil der Geschichte älterer Zeiten bekannt werden, u. ohne welche wir die interessantesten Nachrichten über Fortgang der Menschheit zur Kultur ganz entbehren würden; ja man bemerkt bei ihnen im Ganzen selbst eine höhern Grad von *moral[ischer] Größe*, als bei den Völkern, die sich nach ihnen gebildet haben." (In Markner and Veltri, 1999: 52). See also the discussion in Harloe, 2013: 193–202.
[305] In a series of papers, Grafton (1981, 1991: 214–243, 1999) proposed that Wolf gradually abandoned the comparative potential of his philology – which, as I argued here, was closely connected with an anti-aesthetic stance.
[306] See Harloe (2013: 196–198), who argued that Wolf's philology always included this double nature.

aesthetic and anti-universalising historical criticism based on a special appreciation of the Greeks and Romans.[307]

Altertumswissenschaft as conceived both in *Prolegomena* and in *Darstellung der Alterthumswissenschaft* thus exhibits a tension between historical and cultural relativism and a tendency to extol the universal value of Graeco-Roman culture, especially in an educational context. Selective evaluation in pedagogical settings comes into conflict with a scientific impartiality that negates aesthetic judgment. Contemplating this conundrum brings us also closer to understanding how Wolf conceived the relationship between classical and world literature, where, on the one hand, classical literature was conceived as one literary tradition among other traditions of the world, and on the other, as a disciplinary 'embordering' of world literature that established classics as a paradigm for all philologies.[308] By singling out one tradition for its paradigmatic value, Wolf rejected both world literature's universality and its plurality. *Darstellung* made *Prolegomena* the epitome of literary scholarship, the way in which one should approach any other literary tradition. This also meant that classical philology became the primary field in which one should be trained to read and interpret literature of any kind. In practice, the way in which Wolf conceived his classical seminar influenced the emergence of other philological seminars, including the seminar for 'Germanistik' and other national languages.[309] At a more conceptual level, his work was influential for the methodology of other national philologies, as I demonstrate in Chapters IV and V, from the work of the brothers Grimm in German to that of Gaston Paris in the Romance languages. Wolf positioned historicism, as paradigmatically displayed in *Prolegomena*, as the hermeneutic model that came to define literary scholarship in general. His reading of Homer and even *just* Homer, provided the hermeneutic key with which to unlock all of world literature.

---

[307] Constanze Güthenke (2020) has devoted a whole monograph to discussing how this ambivalent position of scholarship between *Bildung* and scientific specialisation presented the basis of philology in its early development. Focusing on the language of emotion, she writes about Wolf: "In Wolf's *Darstellung der Alterthumswissenschaft* (orig. 1807), one of the key founding treatises of professionalized classical scholarship, a similar logic is at play, including the desire to imagine the object of study in terms of a living human form. While he justifies the study of any foreign peoples or cultures on the basis of our natural interest and sympathy (*Theilnahme*) in fellow human beings, it is, first of all, the richness, quantity, and quality of material that singles out Greek civilization. The overall aim is to make antiquity in its important relations and characteristics once more a *belebtes Ganzes*, a unity come alive." (Güthenke, 2020: 50)

[308] This could also be described as an educational paradox, with, on the one hand, 'unbiased research' as the aim of a classical education ("unprejudiced research") and on the other an admiration of classical literature as paradigmatic ("classical dogmatism"). See Fuhrmann, 1959: 188 (n.3); Horstmann, 1978: 55; Harloe, 2013: 201–202. Such tensions can still be observed in contemporary scholarship (see Goldhill, 2017; Postclassicisms collective, 2019: 6–7).

[309] Rüegg, 2004: 420–458 gives a short overview; more thorough discussions are available in the collected volume Fürbeth et. al., 2013.

Conclusions to Part I

In part I, I investigated two different approaches to reading Homeric poetry in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Germany. One promoted the ahistorical exemplarity of Homeric epic, the other its historical situatedness. Goethe regarded ancient poetry as an ahistorical ideal that is aesthetically normative for modernity, while Wolf understood the ancient epics as historically contingent and non-normative traditions. Each thinker proposed a different reading of the ancient poems within the wider context of world literature, either ascribing to them universal validity, or seeing them as an expression of a particular historical context and cultural localisation. The two approaches developed in close mutual entanglement, and neither was free from tensions and contradictions. Glenn Most reads Goethe's visiting Halle in 1805 and listening to Wolf's lectures hidden behind a curtain as the poet wanting to maintain "a free space for poetry against the claims to hegemony of a new, scientific scholarship".[310] He concludes: "Yet one cannot help but sense that by this time [i.e. 1807] the German intellectual world had started to be split into separate, competing enclaves: the Homer of the poets and the Homer of the professors was no longer the same."[311] This was undoubtedly true: as I demonstrated in Chapters I and II, Goethe and Wolf did approach Homer differently, as a source of poetic creativity on the one hand, and as the object of close philological examination on the other. However, the curtain between the poet and the philologist was less of an impermeable wall and more of a *Türvorhang*. As I argued throughout Part I, Goethe developed his ideas in an active dialogue with Wolf, and Wolf was aware of contemporary poetic endeavours, engaging with them in his writings. Nor was it just through productive communication that the curtain parted. The poet and the philologist were concerned with similar questions and formed ideas that were not just complementary but also overlapped. Goethe argued that Homeric poetry was a normative aesthetic model for modernity but was at the same time preoccupied with the historical, cultural, and national particularity of literatures. His solution was to position Homer as an ordering presence in world literature, imposing universal principles onto a plurality of localities and traditions. Wolf's philology painted a similar (and similarly paradoxical) picture, but from the other side of the curtain. He approached the Homeric epics as a historical phenomenon, emphasising their cultural contingency. At the same time he universalised Homer in a manner reminiscent of Goethe by ascribing a paradigmatic status to *Altertumswissenschaft*, and to Homer as its defining object.

---

[310] Most, 2004: 505.
[311] Most, 2004: 505.

While the poet and the philologist stood on different sides of the curtain, they frequently looked across to the other side. More than that, the cultural-historical approach of Wolf and Goethe's universalising reading conditioned each other, and together were integral to the rise of both Homeric philology and world literature as mutually defining enterprises. World literature as a horizon of interconnected traditions emerged alongside philology as the study of those traditions. The two represented interdependent, mutually conditioning aspects of literature.

PART II: CONSIDERING SOCIETY: COMPARISONS AND LITERATURE

In Part I, I distinguished two conceptions of how classical literature relates to world literature, identifying the one championed by Goethe as ahistorical and normative, and the other advanced by Herder and Wolf as historical and particular. Part II further analyses how a historical understanding of classical literature overcomes its insistence on particularity and delimitation by acknowledging literature's hermeneutic potential for *comparability*. To this end, I focus on the Homeric readings that are defined by conceptions of literature as comparable. Here too, I organise my argument by focusing on two key figures who, I hope to demonstrate, benefit from being discussed in relation to each other. In Chapter III, I evaluate the methodology of Hutcheson Macaulay Posnett (1855–1927), a classical scholar and comparatist, who in 1886 published the influential *Comparative Literature*, a monograph still cited today as a foundation for the establishment of comparative literature as an academic field in its own right. I discuss how he recognised literature's potential for comparability by insisting on its socio-historical relativity, and how his outlook on classical, national, and world literature was influenced by the imperial politics of the British Empire. In Chapter IV, I discuss comparability of Homeric poetry specifically. By focusing on the life and work of Milman Parry (1902–1935) and by considering some previously unknown archival materials that I discovered for the first time, I suggest that Parry radically changed the landscape of Homeric studies by introducing a comparative method very similar to that of Posnett. In order to address how the introduction of comparisons impacted readings and interpretations of Homeric epic and world literature, I investigate two of the most important scholars in comparative literature and classics respectively, scholars who devoted themselves fully to the study of comparative material. This way, Part II analyses how a global outlook on literature can be formed by acknowledging literature's cultural and historical localisation, and further argues that comparisons in literary studies and Homeric scholarship negotiated between localisation and the world horizon.

CHAPTER III: *Hutcheson Macaulay Posnett and the comparative approach*

The second half of the nineteenth century saw a renaissance for the comparative approach in various scholarly disciplines. In British academia especially, scholars were experimenting with different comparisons as a response to contemporary political issues, particularly to the changing relationship between the colonies and the Empire. Comparative approaches to literature were no exception. As Baidik Bhattacharya recently argued, colonialism greatly determined the "new disciplinary field called literature and a set of methodological devices under the generic name of comparatism".[312] In order to shed further light on the murky beginnings of early comparative literature, I explore one such comparative project, that of Hutcheson Macaulay Posnett (1855–1927), a jurist, classicist, and one of the earliest scholars in comparative literature, who in 1886 published a monograph fully devoted to a comparative study of literatures entitled *Comparative Literature*. This I do in order to outline a development in literary studies, which through comparison strived to approach literature in its global representativeness, but nevertheless acknowledged literature's localisation by building upon methods and ideas of historical criticism and philology described in Chapter II.

Hutcheson Macaulay Posnett was born near Belfast, Ireland, and educated at Trinity College, Dublin, where he worked as a tutor from 1877 to 1882, at the time Charles Stewart Parnell (1846–1891) was fighting for Home Rule. In 1885, he was appointed to a chair of Classics and English literature at the University of Auckland, at the time still University of New Zealand located on the outskirts of the Empire. He lectured there until 1890, when he proposed to the University Council that his duties be reduced (probably due to increasing academic workload) and his pay increased significantly, which the Council declined.[313] As a result, he resigned and opened a law firm south of Dublin. In 1892 he applied for the chair of Classics at University College London, but his application was not particularly competitive, and the committee appointed A. E. Housman instead.[314] Apart from an occasional publication of a translated poem he stayed away from literary debates thereafter, but he continued commenting on political happenings in various newspapers. The only exception was when he felt compelled to protect his name as the one and only father of comparative literature, which he did in 1901 by publishing a paper entitled "The science of comparative literature" in which

---

[312] Bhattacharya, 2016. Cf. Bhattacharya, 2018; Behdad, 2018.
[313] Sinclair, 1983: 34–6. See also Posnett's application in UCL Appl. Classics 1892. UCL Special Collections, Archives, Rare Books and Records.
[314] Naiditch, 1988: 4–12, 164. A good summary of Posnett's life and work is in Leerssen, 2010a; Damrosch, 2020: 30–48.

he briefly summarised his own inaugural role in defining, indeed creating, the field.[315] As I argue in this chapter, Posnett developed a very specific, (semi)peripheral approach to studying literature, which he proposed as an alternative to prevailing forms of literary criticism. His work on literature was importantly shaped by the concurrent political debates concerning the British Empire, fuelled predominantly by changes in its imperial politics. My purpose here is to investigate how this political and colonial context shaped and influenced his comparative project, not least by considering some of the little-known political articles he produced for various newspapers and journals.[316]

While Posnett's political stance was much too fluid to be pinpointed precisely with respect to different political parties and actors in British politics, he declared himself a "moderate Liberal"[317] and shared many convictions with the *laissez-faire* liberals.[318] For example, he understood the Australian federation as a way towards "some higher and wider imperial system",[319] while warning about unequal representation of local minorities in a federation – a position informed by his experience of New Zealand. At the same time, he opposed Chamberlain's conservative Imperial Federation League,[320] especially his proposals for the implementation of federal tariffs, as dangerous for the free market and the future of the colonies.[321] He also promoted Irish federalism against Unionists (as well as Separatists and Devolutionists), but as with the colonies, he again opposed conservative federalism and was, in fact, sympathetic toward Home Rule.[322] At various points he suggested an abolition or reformation of the House of Lords,[323] and he believed that Ireland and the colonies should play a major role in the reformation of the British Empire.[324] Posnett's peripheral position not only shaped his political stance, but also influenced his understanding of literature and literary systems. He believed that all literatures should be seen as culturally and historically relative, he maintained that the literary system should not be centralised, he opposed universal and

---

[315] Posnett, 1973: 183–206. This paper greatly influenced the later reception of *Comparative Literature*.

[316] Leerssen was the first to point to the existence of several Posnett's journalistic publications in a footnote (Leerssen, 2010a: 116). While he did not deal with any of the material and identified only a portion of publications, his work led me to research this topic further.

[317] Posnett, 1913a (October 14): 5.

[318] Occasionally, he even actively participated in political life, for example, when he publicly defended Parnell's Homer Rule Bill: see Posnett, 1906b: 654; Posnett, 1910 (January 6).

[319] Posnett, 1901b: 988.

[320] See Posnett, 1901b.

[321] Posnett's arguments were not merely political and economic, but also disclosed the racial pride that permeated the Imperial Federation League. For example, he argued that the proposed tariffs threat the people "not as colonists but as foreigners" (Posnett, 1901b: 389) and that they will benefit only the "landowners of Great Britain" (Posnett, 1901b: 388).

[322] See Posnett, 1883a (January 30), 1883b (February 16), 1906a, 1913a (October 14), 1914 (July 29).

[323] See his work *Hereditary Lords* (1894) and Posnett, 1906b.

[324] See Posnett, 1901b, 1906b.

centralising literary models, and he criticised literatures produced for a universal audience. His *Comparative Literature* was structured so as to devote equal attention to various literatures around the world (mostly those that had a British colonial past) and he was arguably more critical of European than, for example, of Chinese or Indian literature.[325] In this respect, Posnett consistently opposed idealising and nationalistic convictions in literary criticism.

Although this description paints a rather positive picture of a democratic, supportive, and broadminded figure, Posnett's stance was in fact more complex and multi-layered. While his objection to imperial federalism was certainly anti-nationalistic, his main concern was the future of free trade in such a federation.[326] Even philosophically he was a great supporter of Mill's liberalism, which is apparent from both his *The historical method in ethics, jurisprudence, and political economy* (1882) and *The Ricardian theory of rent* (1884), and from the focus of his Auckland lectures for example.[327] And while his liberal philosophy indeed influenced some of his more progressive understandings of politics and literature, it also displayed a darker face of liberalism, apparent mostly, as I shall demonstrate at the end of the chapter, in his disregard for power relations in the Empire.

Before Posnett's work is discussed further, one final remark ought to be made regarding the reception of *Comparative Literature* – which is far more often cited than read. Posnett is considered as the author of the first comparative literature study in the English language,[328] he (incorrectly) went down in history as the scholar who coined the English term "comparative literature",[329] and is sometimes regarded as influential for the development of early comparative literature in America – a topic to which I return in the next chapter.[330] Furthermore, he is credited as well as criticised for introducing Spencerian evolutionary naturalism to literary studies.[331] Sometimes, he is criticised as a colonial researcher,[332] while others praise him for his wide and democratic outlook on literatures of the world.[333] His

---

[325] E.g. During, 2004: 314.
[326] Posnett, 1906b, 1901b.
[327] Blyth, 2006: 3–21.
[328] For example, the French comparatist Paul van Tieghem (1871–1948), who in 1931 published the first overview of comparative literature, *La littérature comparée*, placed Posnett at the very beginning of the discipline's development (Van Tieghem, 1931: 33). I discuss this work in Chapter V.
[329] See Bassnett, 1993: 12–30; Leerssen, 1984: 60–63.
[330] See Moriarty, 1972; Underwood, 2013: 116–124.
[331] This is still a prevailing interpretation (e.g. Pizer, 1961; Lightman, 2010), mostly as a consequence of the fact that *Comparative Literature* was published in an *International Scientific Series*, a series with an aim to disseminate Spencerian evolution. Nevertheless, in *Comparative Literature* Posnett never mentioned Spencer and such claims are mostly based on the mere similarity of his and Maine's evolutionary theories to Spencer – an argument, which is, as has been argued, greatly exaggerated (see Bock, 1974).
[332] See Leerssen, 1984: 60–63, 2010, 2015.
[333] See Damrosch, 2006, 2009; Melas, 2007: 19–26; Nicholls, 2018. Recently, Damrosch provided a more nuanced view on Posnett (see Damrosch, 2020: 30–48; Leerssen, 2019).

monograph, however, was not really influential for the discipline's development, but rather remained the necessary footnote of all literature reviews. Simon During goes as far as writing: "Looking back, perhaps what is most remarkable about Posnett's book is how little relation it bears to comparative literature as we have come to know it. Rarely can a founding text have left so few traces on the field it helped inaugurate".[334]

It seems to me that both the celebrations of Posnett as a founding father and the claim that his work left no trace at all are in need of correction. As I argue in this chapter, Posnett introduced a model of understanding and researching literature, which is, despite During's claims, characteristic of many discussions even today. In *Comparative Literature*, he instigated a specific historical-comparative approach for understanding literature, insisting that literatures should be regarded in the context of their particular social and historical reality. He also promoted a concept of historical, social, and aesthetic relativity of literatures regarding each literary manifestation as a particular and localised cultural and historical phenomenon, not unlike Wolf or Herder discussed in Part I. But while Herder and Wolf maintained that literary traditions are autonomous and independent, Posnett positioned comparison at the centre of his research methodology, foregrounding literature's comparative potential. In this regard, Posnett enabled an alternative to the prevailing national literary criticism and opened literary studies to various traditions around the world, without imposing a particular aesthetic determination. *Comparative Literature* therefore helped to promote the view that all literatures deserve scholarly attention, are aesthetically relative, and at the same time are hermeneutically comparable in nature. Interests in cultural comparisons, however, were often motivated by preoccupation with the imperial and colonial future of the British Empire, and it was precisely this context that importantly shaped the subsequent development of comparative literature.

a) The historical-comparative method and the relativity of literature

In 1882, while Posnett was still lecturing at Trinity College, Dublin, he published *The historical method in ethics, jurisprudence, and political economy*, a pamphlet dealing not with literature, but with law and ethics. The treatise already reflected some foundational ideas Posnett later developed in *Comparative Literature*, so before his concept of literature and literary research is inspected, it might be beneficial to inspect his ideas about social sciences in general. In *The historical method*, Posnett analysed political economy and jurisprudence and proposed "the

---

[334] During, 2004: 315.

best method" for researching the "relation of the Individual to Society".[335] Discussing how different methodologies of researching ethics, law, and politics developed throughout time and in different cultures, he proposed his own historical-comparative method for social sciences, based, however, on "the most precise historical method" of Sir Henry James Sumner Maine (1822–1888), "The master of Trinity Hall, Cambridge" to whom he dedicated his work.[336]

Sir Henry James Sumner Maine influenced Posnett in two ways: first, in the choice of subject matter for his work, which was the social development of people, their customs, and laws through stages of social development from "primitive", "village community" and "feudalism" to the contemporary system of "rent";[337] and secondly, he directly informed Posnett's methodology of researching ancient societies by using a historical-comparative method. Maine's theory of comparative law was itself innovative precisely because it combined a historical method with a comparative approach.[338] He proposed that comparative jurisprudence should follow the trends in comparative philology and comparative mythology, because comparisons are an essential part of the "Historical Method".[339] A short passage clearly demonstrates how Maine understood this historical-comparative research:

> We take a number of contemporary facts, ideas, and customs, and we infer the past form of those facts, ideas, and customs not only from historical records of that past form, but from examples of it which have not yet died out of the world, and are still to be found in it. When in truth we have to some extent succeeded in freeing ourselves from that limited conception of the world and mankind, beyond which the most civilised societies and (I will add) some of the greatest thinkers do not always rise; when we gain something like an adequate idea of the vastness and variety of the phenomena of human society; when in particular we have learned not to exclude from our view of earth and man those great and unexplored regions which we vaguely term the East, we find it to be not wholly a conceit or a paradox to say that the distinction between the Present and the Past disappears.[340]

Maine's reasoning was the following: by comparing past ideas of Western societies with ideas of ('more primitive') societies in the parts of the world where they still existed, new insights

---

[335] Posnett, 1882: v.
[336] For the life and work of Sumner Maine see Mantena, 2010; and the edited volume Diamond, 1991. Cf. Orenstein, 1968; Bock, 1974; Hutton, 2000; Jolly, 2006; Hensley, 2016: 50 –63. A study of Maine's jurisprudence is Cocks (1988) who also offers a short overview of its relation to sociology and anthropology.
[337] For example, in *Village-Communities in East and West* (1871) Maine clearly interpreted the development of law as a progressive process from kinship-based, primitive societies to civil societies governed contractually. For a short overview of Maine's theories see Orenstein, 1968.
[338] Maine, 1871: 3–4.
[339] Maine, 1871: 9.
[340] Maine, 1871: 6–7.

could be gained about ancient Western societies. Present law is governed contractually, but past European societies were not so governed. In order to get a clear picture of what kind of jurisprudence past societies had, he argued, they could be compared to other, mostly "Eastern", societies that were still at a lower stage of social development, comparable to that of ancient societies. The same applied to mutual comparisons of ancient societies, since knowledge of one particular society could be used to improve the knowledge about another, if both were comparable with regard to their stage of social development.[341]

In *The historical method* Posnett argued for a similar, yet more subtle method of comparative research. First and foremost, he made clear that "truths of Social and Individual relations" were in fact "Relative Truths".[342] This meant that there was no "Absolute" that would unite these relative truths and no general "Nature" from which they could have evolved – an important perspective he later adopted in *Comparative Literature* as well. Rather, Posnett argued that each social phenomenon was produced in specific cultural and historical circumstances and was completely "true" in relation to its socio-historical context. To do justice to these "relative truths", researchers should use historical-comparative method, highlighting the historical and cultural specificities of each researched social phenomena. By comparing geographically and historically diverse groups of people, their specific historical and social conditions were thought to become apparent. This way, a researcher would be able to deduce social characteristics of each society and its historical context respectively – as well as accentuate the fact that there were no universal morals, law, or politics.

In the treatise, Posnett was of course speaking mostly about ethics, jurisprudence, and political systems, which were in his time – also due to the developments in anthropology and the beginnings of the Empire's indirect rule[343] – perceived as specific to different cultures and historical periods. Being a classicist by formation, however, he hinted that not just law, but all social phenomena, including literature, were characterised by similar cultural and historical relativity. As he wrote: "A human being alone, without Language, without *Literature*, without Religion, without Morality, without Law strip man of the associations he owes to society...".[344] Indeed, after seemingly resolving the question of ethics, jurisprudence and politics, Posnett decided to apply his new methodology to other scholarly fields, specifically to the study of literature. The earliest document that confirms this intention was the letter he sent to Trinity

---

[341] For Maine's comparative method see Orenstein, 1968; Hamza, 2005; Jolly, 2006. For the recent revaluation of Maine's though see Mantena, 2010.
[342] Posnett, 1882: 4.
[343] See specifically Mantena, 2010: 148–178.
[344] Posnett, 1882: 18. Emphasis mine.

College, Dublin, and published on the 18th of February 1884, urging colleagues "of Oriental or Occidental literatures" to inform him of any clan poetry that exhibited traces of connecting "dance, song, melody, and mimetic actions", such as that of the Greeks. He also made it clear that the material was needed for a "comparative literature" project.[345]

This project turned out to be Posnett's most renowned work, *Comparative Literature*, an attempt to establish literary criticism as a scientific discipline by introducing "scientific methodology" of social sciences to the study of literature. Posnett's understanding of literature was clearly influenced by his interest in jurisdiction and politics: since laws, ethics, customs, and politics were at the time already perceived as particular to every nation or culture – something the British Empire has experienced throughout its colonialist history – so too must literatures have been an expression of a particular culture and its period. In *Comparative Literature*, Posnett asserted that literatures were conditioned by social and geographical context in which they were produced, that they expressed "the feelings and thoughts of men and women on physical nature, on animal life, on their own social communion, on their individual existence",[346] and were always a direct reflection of "action, thought, and speech peculiar to the particular place and particular times at which they appear".[347] Literary phenomena were thus doubly bound to the time and place of their production: first by the fact that they were always products of specific geographical, cultural, and social context; and second, by the fact that all literatures in some way expressed their immediate time, space, nature, and society in, as it were, the content of the work.

As with social phenomena in general, for Posnett 'literature' was not an absolute and singular phenomenon but should be understood as a plural and relative social artefact: there is not just *one* literature, there are *many* literature*s*. He argued that the term "literature", as used by most critics, implied "generalization" and was an "abstract unity unconditioned by time and space", which made it appear as a single, ahistorical, and spatially unified concept.[348] This "intrinsic investigation" of literature in literary criticism:

> fostered the deadly theories that literature is essentially an imitation of masterpieces, that its ideals
> are not progressive but permanent, that they have no dependence on particular conditions of human
> character, on the nature of that social instrument language, on circumscribed spheres of time and
> place.[349]

---

[345] Posnett, 1884a (February 23). For the discussion of this letter see Leerssen, 2015: 206.
[346] Posnett, 1886: 21.
[347] Posnett, 1886: 7.
[348] Posnett, 1886: 7.
[349] Posnett, 1886: 7.

In Posnett's opinion, such criticism was inaugurated by nationalistic tensions that introduced the idea of literature's ideal artistic status and its independence from social and historical circumstances. As he argued, the term literature was a relatively recent invention produced by "national writings such as those of England and France," but was constructed as a way to conceal "national authorship," to express "the idea of a definite national growth",[350] and to obscure the "times when national language and ideas could not exist".[351] It was literary criticism mixed with nationalistic tensions that obscured literature's relative nature and conceived it as a single, unified, and ideal concept, which remained the same throughout different times and spaces. In the next two sections, I further analyse Posnett's political interest in contradicting such literary criticism as well as his critique of literary models, but for the purpose of the present discussion it is important to notice that Posnett opposed prevailing literary criticism on methodological grounds. If literatures were relative in relation to socio-historical contexts, this meant that the methodology of literary science should be adapted as well, just as social science had to adjust its methodology in order to grasp the relativity of different social phenomena.

In order to demonstrate that literatures essentially depended "upon conditions of social life",[352] Posnett argued, true literary science should utilise a strict scientific method represented by "historical reflection" and "repeated comparisons".[353] In so doing, he directly applied the methodology developed in *The historical method* to the study of literatures:

> The central point of these [i.e. scientific] studies is the relation of the individual to the group. In the orderly changes through which this relation has parsed, as revealed by the comparison of literatures belonging to different social states, we find our main reasons for treating literature as capable of scientific explanation.[354]

As other relative social phenomena so too did different literatures express different cultural and historical characteristics. While cultural specificities depended on each society, it was historical development that could be observed in all cultures. Following Maine's theory of social evolution, Posnett suggested that literatures had to express the development of different social stages "from communal to individual life", that is, they had to evolve from "clan

---

[350] Posnett, 1886: 6.
[351] Posnett, 1886: 9.
[352] Posnett, 1886: 18.
[353] Posnett, 1886: 7.
[354] Posnett, 1886: 86. Emphasis mine.

literatures", to "city commonwealths", "world", to "national literature".[355] He believed that law, religion, and literature all sprang from small clan communities, small circles of kinship in which "rude poetry" primarily expressed brotherhood. Gradually, the feeling of personality widened as societies progressed into a feudalist stage, where priority was given to more individualised heroism. From feudalism, a new kind of communal life appeared, that of city commonwealths in which individualism and collective character were expressed in dramatic production. Then societies evolved into monarchies in which individuality became more pronounced and imitation became the primary drive of literary production. This stage of development produced world literature, arising in cosmopolitan and transregional settings characteristic of, for example, the Hellenistic or Roman world – both of which I discuss further below. The final stage of this development was national literature in which groups of people completely abandoned their kinships and formed a nation. Only by comparing different and similar communities of people and their literatures, Posnett argued, could it be learned which the universal characteristics of a particular social stage were, what was specific to the period, how the literatures differed culturally and geographically, and what analogies could be observed between different cultures. In other words, the comparative approach would acknowledge and highlight the specificity and relativity of each literary manifestation in its historical and social context.

Several different aspects of Posnett's *Comparative Literature* originated directly in such understanding. Posnett regarded each literary milieu as unique and aesthetically independent from literatures in other socio-historical contexts and, on the grounds of such understanding, also criticised literary criticism which imposed singular and universal aesthetic criteria on all literatures of the world. In his opinion, comparisons were more convenient for literary research precisely because they recognised specificities and differences and treated literatures as essentially relative. In this regard, Posnett considered literatures to be specific and embedded into their socio-historical context – similarly as Herder and Wolf before him – but at the same time also as comparable. Even though Posnett had specific ideas about how literature was to be compared, which were most apparent in his rightfully criticised theory of literary evolution, he nevertheless insisted that literary studies should focus on comparisons in order to highlight literature's multiform nature. This meant that all literary traditions became comparable universally so that the transnational and transhistorical outlook on the world literary system was to be achieved through its localised interpretation. For the general argument

---

[355] Posnett, 1886: 20.

of the dissertation, this is relevant in as much as Posnett advanced a world-encompassing reading by outlining comparability as an essential feature of literary reception grounded in national, cultural, and historical localisation. In what follows, I analyse how such aesthetically relative understanding of literature influenced Posnett's ideas about national literature (his preferred literary-system model), his critique of universalisation and world literature, and his understanding of classical literature. As I demonstrate, all these traits form a comparative model of understanding literatures as localised and aesthetically relative, but nevertheless as hermeneutically relating to the universality of world literature.

b) National literature: cosmopolitanism and provincialism

In Posnett's model of evolution, national literature was the highest stage of literary development and at the same time was his preferred model of literary production and circulation. If above I discussed how he perceived the nature of literature *per se*, I am now going to examine his understanding of the literary system, his critique of centralisation, and connect both with his political stance. To this end, this part deals with Posnett's understanding of the British literary system and the British Empire.

According to Posnett, national literature developed as a result of society's progression towards individuality and resulted in complete dissolving of kinship and brotherhood. Social kinship was in modern times replaced by "ties of locality":

> The word 'natio' points to kinship and a body of kinsmen as the primary idea and fact marked by 'nationality'. 'Nation,' like dêmos, carries us back to the groups of kinsmen in which social communion all the world over is found to begin. But the 'nations' of modern Europe have left these little groups so far behind that their culture has either forgotten the nationality of common kinship, or learned to treat it as an ideal splendidly false. Old ideas of common descent have been weakened in European progress by many causes. As the barbarian invaders settled down, ties of communal brotherhood tended to be displaced by ties of locality.[356]

Already in *The historical method* Posnett argued that a nation is a fusion of different barbarous groups into a group of people with a single language and shared land.[357] In this he followed Maine's argument that societies develop from kinship-based to contractual law, as well as Edward August Freeman's (1823–1892) understanding of the nation as a language-based

---

[356] Posnett, 1886: 340.
[357] Posnett, 1886: 16–17.

identity.[358] In *Comparative Literature*, he further argued that the idea of a nation was created by groups of people who were not in any specific communal connection besides sharing land. The main characteristic of a nation is geographical, and all other claims about shared kinship, history, etc., should be treated as ideological constructs.[359] When nations hence tried to justify their nationality in earlier clan-, city-commonwealth-, and world-culture mentalities they were making a fallacy in treating nationality "as an ideal splendidly false".[360]

Such an understanding can be linked back to Posnett's critique of national literary criticism. According to Posnett, national criticism promoted a centralised and universalised, but also false understanding of literature in order to foster the idea of a nation's superiority. His critique can be most clearly observed in his assessment of the French literary system and in his objections to Matthew Arnold's support for such a system. As he argued, monarchic France centralised its literary production through the French Academy, enforcing the aesthetic ideals of the literary centre on the literary production of the whole state and rejecting literature that would not meet the standards of the academy. As examples, Posnett listed the Academy's rejection of Racine, Voltaire, and D'Alembert,[361] which in his opinion reflects how the French nation subordinated its literary production to Paris. Such a system supposedly failed to acknowledge the specificities of non-central, peripheral literary manifestations or, as he termed them, the nation's "provincialisms".[362] Posnett's promotion of the relativity of literature was of course in direct opposition to such a system: he argued that literatures should be evaluated in the context of their own local specificities. National literary criticism, on the other hand, established a set of central literary norms and at the same time fostered theories that such standards were universal and timeless. In such national criticism, Posnett saw a dangerous adversary to his own understanding of literatures.

This is even more apparent in his disapproval of Matthew Arnold (1822–1888) and his proposal for what Posnett considered as a "transference of the French centralism into the life of English literature".[363] In *The literary influence of academies* (1864)[364] for example, Arnold indeed argued that England lacked an institution like the French Academy which could produce

---

[358] See specifically Freeman's *Comparative Politics* (1873). For a discussion of Maine's and Freeman's understanding of nationality see Hutton, 2000. Freeman's work was another important influence on Posnett's comparative project as well as his political preference for federalism: see Leerssen, 1984: 60–3, 2015.
[359] In this regard, David Damrosch is quite right to see in Posnett the predecessor of Benedict Anderson (Damrosch, 2016: 105).
[360] Posnett, 1886: 340.
[361] See Posnett, 1886: 344.
[362] Posnett, 1886: 345.
[363] Posnett, 1886: 344.
[364] In Arnold, 1883. Cf. Templeman, 1946.

a "centre of correct information, correct judgment, correct taste" for the whole nation.[365] Since England had no authority to guarantee the correct and dismiss the erroneous, "a note of provinciality" [366] permeated its literature. Arnold believed that this provinciality hindered English literature from becoming the best in the world and proposed to centralise literary production through a force of control, which would abolish all provincialisms – or at least this is Posnett's hostile reading of Arnold's project. In fact, Arnold's centralising vision depended directly on his understanding of world literature. In several essays, he understood world literature as the 'best that is known and thought in the world': for example, in the preface to the *Selected poems of William Wordsworth* – an essay Posnett referred to in *Comparative Literature* – Arnold (misleadingly) agreed with "the ideal of Goethe" that all the "civilised nations" formed "one great confederation, bound to a joint action and working towards a common result",[367] which served as a "tribunal, free from all suspicion of national and provincial partiality, putting a stamp on the best things, and recommending them for general honour and acceptance."[368] Since these judgments were "honest verdicts" and nationally impartial, writers were further encouraged to develop internationally accepted literary norms. As Arnold wrote: confederation tells "us which of our supposed successes are really, in the judgment of the great impartial world, and not in our own private judgment only, successes, and which are not".[369] Moreover, such an idea of the competitive literary system was closely related to Arnold's vision of literary criticism. In his opinion, critics needed to be well acquainted with international literature so that they could lose their own national bias, "propagate the best that is known and thought in the world",[370] and determine which literatures are worthy of international acclaim and which are too provincial and have to be set aside. Such was precisely his aim in discussing world literature in the introductory essay to the *Selected Poems of William Wordsworth*: positioning Wordsworth in an international literary canon as one of the best poets, just after "Dante, Shakespeare, Molière, Milton, Goethe" and above "Voltaire, Dryden, Pope, Lessing, Schiller".[371]

Arnold's appropriation of Goethe's world literature is at least partly problematic, especially when compared to the discussion of *Weltliteratur* in Chapter I. His understanding was not directed into the future, as Goethe's was, but rather represented the past literary canon.

---

[365] Arnold, 1883: 50.
[366] Arnold, 1883: 50.
[367] Arnold, 1922: 3.
[368] Arnold, 1922: 3.
[369] Arnold, 1922: 3–4.
[370] Arnold, 1883: 34.
[371] Arnold, 1922: 21.

While for Goethe world literature was primarily a condition of literary circulation as well as an epoch of mutual cooperation in which (at least theoretically) all literatures were welcome, Arnold grounded his idea of world literature in a centrally organised literary canon in which literatures were competing to become the best. Furthermore, in this system literary critics (such as Arnold himself) were entrusted with the mission of deciding and promoting what was best in the world as well as bracketing what was more provincial and less important.[372] Arnold's understanding reflected two characteristics: first, nationalistic tendencies in seeing different national literatures as competing in the international canon formation in order to surpass other nations; and second, a centralised understanding of the literary system in which norms were established in the literary centre (or as Pascale Casanova would say, by the "Greenwich Meridian of literature"[373]) and subsequently imposed on other peripheral and provincial literatures.

Posnett's *Comparative Literature* was directed precisely against such nationalistic, idealistic, and centralising notions of literature. Arnold's ahistorical and Eurocentric understanding of the literary system, in which a centrally governed European consortium[374] promoted their literary norms as universal, was radically different from Posnett's, whose ideas, I contend, remain far more productive, particularly in the current context of world literature and globalisation. Unlike Arnold, Posnett insisted that "provincial" literary manifestations should be acknowledged on their own terms, that national literature should not exclude any literary manifestation that was part of the nation, regardless of how provincial it might be, and should not impose central literary norms. Such was, in his opinion, the true nature of English literature. As he wrote: "Provincial language as well as spirit have found a ready place in the literature of England", for its literary system blended "local and central elements of national life without losing national unity in local distinctions".[375] Posnett saw English literature as local and unified at the same time, that is to say, it was nationally unified but kept its local and provincial distinctions. His preferred model of literary system therefore combined peripheral and provincial specificities with more universal, national tensions. As in his discussion of literature's relativity, Posnett again negotiated between the influence of historical and cultural locality and the emergence of trans-local entities.

---

[372] See Simpson, 1979: 121–122.

[373] Casanova, 2004: 1–6.

[374] That Arnold understood the literary competition as worthy only of Indo-Europeans can be deduced from his *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), in which he argued that it was the Indo-European race that constituted "civilised nations" and subsequently the "great confederation" of nations. See McInturff, 2003: 224–36; Young, 1995: 53–84.

[375] Posnett, 1886: 345.

Such an understanding of the British literary system clearly reflected Posnett's personal experiences and his political views on the Empire, which speaks of the influence world-making policies had on theories about world literature and on the development of literary studies. Regarding the Irish question, Posnett proclaimed himself a "national imperialist", supported both Home Rule and Irish federalism, and opposed both the Unionists and the Separatists. A similar anti-centralist and anti-separatist position also characterised his support for colonial federalism. As he wrote: "National Imperialism, the mean between the two extremes of centralism and separation, contains the solution of both the Irish and the Colonial problems of Imperial union...".[376] Posnett's ideas about the national literary system reflected this position, for he believed that all literatures of the Empire, regardless of their provincial status, should be acknowledged as part of national literature and given an equal status. Since a "nation" is nothing more than an idealised perception of people who share common language and land, so too their literatures should not be subsumed under some arbitrary standard – such as that of Paris or, indeed, London, whose "flavour has been sometimes too strong in English literature".[377] His proposed national literary system was thus a union of different literatures, none censored, each recognised on its own terms, and together forming one great international federation. Considering that the British Empire had spread around the globe and measured more than 10 million square miles, Posnett's claim that English literature should accept all of its provincial manifestations acquired an additional global perspective: after all, in *Comparative Literature* Posnett dealt with literatures of India, China, with Hebrew and Arabic poetry, and with native American poetry, literatures pertaining to geographical areas that at one time or another experienced some form of the Empire's meddling. In such a literary federation, each tradition would maintain its peripheral localities and the literary centres would need to accept them as such.

Establishing comparative literature as a scientific discipline in literary research can thus be seen as Posnett's attempt to counterbalance ahistorical, idealising, and centralising literary criticism. His *Comparative Literature* project was developed in order to stress literature's historical, cultural, and social localisation and highlight its aesthetic relativity. In Posnett's view, there was no *one* universal literature, but *many* different literatures, belonging to different socio-historical contexts. The literary system could therefore not depend on one literary canon and one set of central literary norms but was a conglomerate of provincial literary traditions

---

[376] Posnett, 1906b: 647.
[377] Posnett, 1886: 345.

and of specific socio-historical literary expressions. Each such tradition maintained its peripheral localities and the literary centres accepted them as such. Furthermore, as has been argued in the first section of this chapter, the only method that could highlight these specificities in a scientific manner, avoiding any nationalistic, idealistic, and centralistic ideological misinterpretation, was, according to Posnett, a historical-comparative approach. Nevertheless, Posnett was not critical only of nationalisms and centralisation, but also of literatures produced for a global market and of classical literary models – both are discussed in the next section.

c) World literature and classical literature

I briefly mentioned above that Posnett envisaged the evolution of literature from clan groups to city commonwealths and to the world of disparate modern nations – the latter being the final stage in the literary evolution and, at least in the case of the British Empire, also Posnett's preferred literary-system model. I also discussed his critique of centralisation, which represented a threat to the literatures of the Empire. Posnett was not only disputing universalising nationalisms, he was equally wary of globalisation:

> But, however deeply national literature may be indebted to an international exchange of ideas, however splendid may be the conception of universal principles in literary production and criticism, the true makers of national literature are the actions and thoughts of the nation itself; the place of these can never be taken by the sympathies of a cultured class too wide to be national, or those of a central academy too refined to be provincial.[378]

A threat to the literary system is posed not only by central academies but also by a "cultured class too wide to be national". Posnett insisted that literatures emerge from particular socio-historical milieux and are embedded in them. In globalisation, that is, in world literature, as in literary centralisation, he recognised similar problems of disappearing cultural and historical particularities. If literature's nature primarily depended on the culture and period in which it was produced, Posnett saw in globalisation an opposing process of literary production that is void of any local specificities. These ideas were expressed most clearly in his critique of world and classical literature.

Before I consider his critiques, however, one point needs some further clarification. Above I briefly indicated that Posnett, following Maine, perceived literature as developing

---

[378] Posnett, 1886: 345. Emphasis mine.

"from communal to individual life" and progressing from "clan literatures", to "city commonwealths", to "world", and to "national literature". *Comparative Literature* has sections devoted to each stage in the evolution of literature and it is striking that world literature precedes the formation of national literature – a peculiarity that many researchers have noted.[379] Posnett was indeed not clear about how he imagined the transition from world literature to national literature, but I would suggest an interpretation that both national and cosmopolitan states are the endpoints of literary evolution, the result of complete individualisation of society. This is especially apparent from Posnett's claims that the unbearable situation of Roman world literature – to be discussed in a moment – was resolved with the barbarian reintroduction of "the devotion of men to men".[380] "Barbarian" clan literature thus completed and restarted an important stage in the literary evolution in Europe, which subsequently developed to feudal and, with the rise of European city-states, city commonwealth literatures. In fact, one of Posnett's passages about literary evolution confirms this understanding: "We therefore adopt, with a modification hereafter to be noticed, the gradual expansion of social life, from clan to city, from city to nation, from both of these to cosmopolitan humanity, as the proper order of our studies in comparative literature."[381]

For Posnett, world literature was, as all other stages in the literary evolution, a product of a specific social and historical circumstances in which a group of people lived. It was produced either by "religious cosmopolitanism" (also "world religion") through the "social bonds of creed" as with "Hebrews and Arabs"; or it was produced by "political cosmopolitanism" (also "world culture") built upon "an ideal of human unity within a circle of common culture whose peace is secured by centralised force and whose character is intensely individual", as in the Alexandrian empire or "Rome".[382] In both cases, the worldwide spreading of a particular culture or religion universalised all social phenomena. Because societies were no longer connected through kinship but only through an "enlarged sphere of social action" and "centralised force", they were subjected to the forces of universalisation, centralisation, and unification. The main characteristic of world literature was thus its "severance from defined social groups – the universalising of literature".[383] World literatures were no longer connected to a particular community, but rather were produced for individual members of the

---

[379] See Damrosch, 2006: 106. Cf. Damrosch, 2014: 42.
[380] Posnett, 1886: 267.
[381] Posnett, 1886: 86.
[382] Posnett, 1886: 235–36.
[383] Posnett, 1886: 236.

general public and such works would have to be universal enough to be acceptable for as many individuals as possible.

According to Posnett, this is why three features were characteristic of world literature: first, since world literature evolved from clan or commonwealth literature, it leaned on its preceding kinship mentality, but at the same time universalised it. As such, world literature *imitated* its "early models" (such as "Moses" or "Homer") and raised them "above old restrictions of place and time", adapting them for a broader, universal public.[384] Second and following from the first was "the reflective and critical spirit" of world literature in which "language" became "the primary study of the literary artist".[385] Because religions and empires expanded beyond their "old restrictions of space and time", languages came under attack by the newly "conquered" cultures and societies devoted special attention to the study of their primary, classical language. Posnett found such tendencies in Hebrew study of the sacred texts, Arabic study of its classical texts, studies of Sanskrit in India, and literary criticism in the ancient library of Alexandria. Third, world literature was preoccupied with the "aesthetic appreciation of physical nature and its relations to man".[386] Posnett believed that this preoccupation with nature was a direct consequence of the new individuality "as distinct from all social ties".[387]

Seeing how critical Posnett was of literary models, the first characteristic of world literature requires some further discussion. Posnett believed that classical models were formed as a tension between social individualisation and universalisations of culture or religion. The beginnings of imitation could be observed in Alexandrian and Roman empires and all European states after the fall of Rome were, in this regard, their heirs, institutionalising a classical Greek and Latin literature as a universal literary model. In connection with what has already been said about literary criticism, Posnett believed classical models were promoted by critics as ahistorical and universal ideals, independent of social and historical circumstances. "Greek criticism", the "imitative workmanship"[388] of the Romans, and all subsequent literary critics mistakenly understood literature as a singular, unified phenomenon. They hence treated classical literature as its best representation, encouraging authors to imitate classical literature and literary critics to evaluate literature by its standards. For Posnett, such an understanding of literature was a perilous ideology, one that disregarded literatures' primary attachment to their

---

[384] Posnett, 1886: 236.
[385] Posnett, 1886: 236.
[386] Posnett, 1886: 238.
[387] Posnett, 1886: 239.
[388] Posnett, 1886: 10.

time and culture and the relativity in relation to it. The same goes for classical literature and all literary models which were, as Posnett argued, constructed by literary critics in order to assist in cosmopolitan dissemination of literature – not unlike how national literary criticism assisted in constructing the concept of nation.

It is not hard to see why Posnett was dismissive of world literature and literary globalisation. Not only was world literature, like literary academies, governed centrally; it was deliberately produced in order to appeal to a dispersed literary elite, a "cultured class too wide to be national".[389] In order to become universally recognised and globally accessible, he felt, it had to eradicate all historical and cultural specificities, a result that was achieved mainly through imitation of particular classical models (whether Greek, Arabic, or Chinese). World literature was therefore void of any real content and any true cultural or historical characteristics – in other words, it completely disregarded and eradicated any kind of literary localisation. Posnett's primary example for such literature was that of the Roman empire in which individuals were isolated from the immediate community and their "social existence" was maintained only through "the fact of common government": it was a society of an "isolating individual culture", "limited sympathies and unlimited selfishness" without any "genuine sense of human brotherhood", "a microcosm too small and selfish".[390] In such a system, writers and poets could merely become "a flock of mockingbirds", producing nothing but a Greek "imitative toy" and leaving behind the "fountains of true literary inspiration – popular life and the life of nature". As he concluded, the situation in imperial Rome was "such as must destroy any literature".[391]

I argued that Posnett believed all literatures were socially and historically conditioned and localised, expressing specific geographical, cultural, historical, and social features. His critical investigation of world literature originated in just such an understanding. Since world literature did not convey specific cultural and social characteristics, but on the contrary, even strived to eliminate them (mostly through imitation of classical models), Posnett rejected both world literature and the concept of classical literature as dubious. His dismissal of world literature was, however, not merely a critical evaluation of a historical stage in literature's development, but also a warning against globalising tendencies in his own time. In this regard I agree with Damrosch that for Posnett "cosmopolitanism in his day did not entail a general free circulation around the globe, but instead the imposition outward of a major power's values

---

[389] Posnett, 1886: 345.
[390] Posnett, 1886: 266–268.
[391] Posnett, 1886: 266–268.

and influence" and that he "attacked neoclassical literary values along with French cosmopolitanism, and for comparable reasons. If nations are not essential unities, neither are human beings, and there can be no single set of literary norms governing the artistic productions of differing groups."[392] In his political articles, Posnett recognised such "imposition outward of a major power's values and influence" in the Imperial Federation League, whose political programme included developing infrastructure and taking control over economic management in the colonies.[393] The same is true for his understanding of the literary system. According to Posnett, literatures expressed and should express the characteristic of their culture and time, and this was precisely the reason why they were, as social phenomena, also relative. This was the only true nature of literature and any other claim must have been motivated by either nationalist or expansionist cosmopolitan aspirations.

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

In this chapter I argued that Posnett was conscious of various literatures belonging to different cultures and periods and wholeheartedly argued for their aesthetic relativity. On these grounds, he opposed nationalism and centralism in literary criticism as well as global universalisation of classical norms. He also argued that literatures should not be subjected to centralised, European literary evaluation, but rather mutually compared with special attention to their geographical and temporal dimension. It was precisely this comparative aspect that enabled Posnett to perceive literatures as on the one hand embedded in a specific cultural and historical milieu, but also as hermeneutically relating to literature's universality, or more specifically, to the plurality of literary traditions. Cross-cultural and cross-temporal comparisons were, in this regard, an essential methodological trait of literary research, one that resulted in a relatively democratic and worldwide outlook on literatures, quite unusual for literary scholars of his time. Even today, rarely any academic work considers Chinese, Indian, Arabic, Greek, Latin, Hebrew, native American, Russian, French, English, German, Persian, Italian, and Spanish literatures together.

In fact, Posnett's ideas about literature's aesthetic relativity were deeply connected to his political stance. In a 1901 article on the Chinese play *Tale of the Pipa*[394] (an article which, at least to my knowledge, has never been quoted in current discussions of Posnett's work) he wrote:

---

[392] Damrosch, 2006: 105–6.
[393] E.g. Porter, 1999; Green, 1999.
[394] Posnett referred to the play as "Pi-Pa-Ko, or, San-Pou-Tsong" (modern romanization: *Pípa jì*).

And I too confess a moral purpose in presenting this Chinese play to the British public. Next to the supreme duty of finding and fearlessly uttering the highest truths attainable in our age – the duty shared in common by men of science and men of letters – I know no nobler work for the literary man than to aid the diffusion of international goodwill by helping to spread a sympathetic knowledge of the literatures of the world. Has not a new mine of sympathy with the East been opened up since Sanskrit became a study of Western scholars? Is not the study of Russian masterpieces by Englishmen, of English masterpieces by Russians, certain to aid the humane progress of both nations and of the race? Through the humanity of this Chinese play, then, I appeal to the humanity of the British nation. In an hour of provocation let us not be tempted to forget that this [sic] ancient Chinese people are no 'barbarians.' Let us not forget that they too have had their provocation, and let us resolutely refuse to add to the wrongs of the Opium Trade and to the intrigues of political and religious Tartuffes some high-handed injustice which when it is too late we may repent.[395]

Two aspects of this passage nicely capture what has been argued in this chapter: first, Posnett expressed a humanistic respect for various literary traditions of the world, not unlike that of Goethe. Englishmen should learn of Russian literature and *vice versa*, they should study the "East", they should study Chinese plays, all in order to aid the "diffusion of international goodwill" and escape the prejudices of imagining every foreign culture as "barbarous". But there is also a second facet of the passage, Posnett's clear motivation in the immediate political happenings and the contemporary Boxer Uprising in China. A particular political stance that Posnett assumed regarding the role of the British Empire in China was thus directly reflected in his decision to discuss this ancient Chinese play. Indeed, Posnett's sympathetic opinion about the peripheral cultures of the British Empire – as he exclaimed, "in an hour of provocation let us not be tempted to forget that this ancient Chinese people are no 'barbarians'" – were influenced by his own position in the Empire.

But this comparative understanding of literature also had its dark side. At the same time that Posnett advocated a global outlook on various literatures of the world, he developed this idea with an utter disregard for power relations and structures, overlooking that the world literary system is, as Moretti would say, "simultaneously *one*, and *unequal*".[396] This is most apparent in Posnett's *laissez-faire* liberalism and his appropriation of Maine's evolutionary theory, envisaging literature as dependent on a society's progression from the clan mentality towards individualism. Maine's comparative approach in studying law and jurisprudence was

---

[395] Posnett, 1901a: 319–20.
[396] Moretti, 2000: 55–56.

in fact developed with a specific political goal in mind, one concerned with the organisation and future of the British Empire in India after the 1857 Rebellion. Stressing the presupposed difference between the traditional, especially Indian, and modern societies, Maine opposed universalist and centralist politics in the name of cultural pluralism, but mostly in order to theoretically pave the path for the implementation of Indirect Rule, as Karuna Mantena has persuasively demonstrated.[397] By demonstrating that Western law is inherently inconsistent with the premodern law of other cultures, he assisted in establishing a new approach to imperial control through native institutions – a colonial agenda he helped develop during his years of service as a Law Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council in India, where he actively participated in the codification of imperial law in the crucial years after the war, from 1862 to 1869.[398]

While Posnett learnt from Maine to reject the imperial expansionism and to promote Home Rule, he remained sworn to economic liberalism, valuing free trade above all else, even as a mean through which the colonies could become emancipated. Posnett believed free market was the ultimate goal of all people and therefore firmly supported the existence of the British Empire as an economic federation. Here again, Posnett transmitted his political and economic ideology to the study of literature. Like Maine, he believed that the highest form in the social evolution was individual, private property and hence envisaged literature as dependent of the society's evolutionary progression from clan mentality towards individualism, which made his social stages deeply evaluative. This essentially fostered ideas in which Europe achieved its evolutionary peak, while other parts of the world were lagging behind, offering material for comparative research of older social strata in the West. In this regard, Posnett equated Eastern cultures with Western pre-modern societies, his notions of culture and ethnicity remained undiscussed and unreflective; nevertheless, due to his pronounced aesthetic relativism and his admiration for "provincial literatures," Posnett wasn't openly evaluative, and he often regarded non-European literatures more favourably than Western ones. What his theory of literature lacked was the recognition that literatures have different power relations and that these relations need to be acknowledged in literary research. Far from overcoming these power imbalances, Posnett's insistence on aesthetic relativity concealed their existence.

Taking together both Posnett the Mainean student, and Posnett the advocate for Irish Home Rule and England's overseas colonies, the picture reveals the constructive but also risky

---

[397] Mantena, 2010. See also Dewey, 1991.
[398] Mantena, 2010: 67–69.

nature of his literary science. If Posnett was an economic liberal, opposing liberal imperialism and supporting a unified Empire exclusively in the name of free trade, he was also a literary pluralist, disputing central and universal literary criticism in the name of literary evolution. He clearly proposed that literatures should be evaluated on the grounds of their cultural context, not by universal aesthetic criteria, and that different literary manifestations around the globe should all be seriously considered in literary studies. In this way, he highlighted literature's hermeneutic potential for comparability, crossing the limits of culturally and historically particular literary traditions and, without having to admit to universal aesthetic norms, relating them to the plurality of literatures around the world – this aspect of the comparative method is stressed even more explicitly in the next chapter, where I discuss how Milman Parry handed the challenge of world literature to Homeric studies. At the same time, Posnett's comparative approach, closely related to his evolutionary theory, displayed a disregard for different power relations in a free-market economy. In highlighting literatures' comparative potential, he indeed demanded that various literary traditions should be studied together, but what he overlooked was that comparisons, like the compared literatures themselves, are always embedded in structures of power, such as that of British imperial hegemony. His positivistic perception of literary science prevented him from realising that comparisons express social-power structures and that it is important not only to recognise literatures, but equally to determine their relation to the centres of authority and control. It is precisely this unequal literary system that I further discuss in Part III. Before the model of literature's relatability is inspected in more detail however, I turn to a similar comparative project in Homeric scholarship, that of Milman Parry.

CHAPTER IV: Milman Parry and the comparison of oral traditions

Milman Parry (1902–1935) was one of the most influential classicists in the twentieth century: he so decisively revolutionised Homeric scholarship that it is now almost impossible to speak about Homer without mentioning the philologist. This is due to his influential thesis on the traditional and oral genesis of the ancient epics. Based on his findings that epithets and other formulas often have only one form (or a very reduced set of options) in each metrical position for expressing a certain idea, he concluded that such a poetic style must have developed traditionally, or orally, by being passed down from generation to generation of singers. On these grounds he proposed that all epithets, formulaic constructions, and fixed metaphors were only dependent on metrical form and were thus void of any additional meaning in their narrative context, a thesis which significantly shaped all subsequent discussions on Homer.[399] Parry's work, however, also had wider consequences for other disciplines and helped to redefine our understanding of oral poetry around the world, a topic that I address in this chapter. His death at the age of 33 prevented him from seeing the impact that his ideas had on literary scholarship,[400] but his successors were equally responsible for the inheritance of Parry's revolution and developed the intellectual potential of his work: most importantly, his student and assistant Albert Lord (1912–1991), who in 1960 published the influential monograph *The Singer of Tales*, and his son Adam Milman Parry (1928–1971), who in 1971 published the collected papers of his father.

Parry was first trained at the Department of Classics at the University of California, Berkeley, where he started his degree in 1919 and completed his master's programme in 1923. In 1924, now married to Marian Parry and with a child,[401] he moved to Paris to continue his studies on Homer at the Sorbonne – studies which Marian initially funded from her inheritance.[402] While his first intention was to work with the famous Homerist Victor Bérard (1864–1931), his proposal was rejected and instead he studied under Aimé Puech (1860–1940) and the linguist Antoine Meillet (1866–1936).[403] His time in Paris came to an end in 1928 when

---

[399] For a short introduction to the interpretive challenges introduced by Parry see Graziosi and Haubold, 2005:48–56.
[400] On the complicated topic of Parry's death see the excellent paper by Reece, 2019.
[401] An unwanted pregnancy about which he reportedly said to his wife: "That's the beginning of the baby and the end of me." *Interview with Marian Parry (December 3, 1981)*, f. 10, *Uncatalogued papers*. Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature. Harvard University.
[402] Marian later complained that she had never been credited for initially financing Milman's doctorate. *Interview with Marian Parry (December 3, 1981)*, f. 13, Uncatalogued papers. Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature. Harvard University.
[403] For Parry's time in Paris see De Vet, 2005.

he finished his major and minor doctoral *thèses* and published both in the same year.[404] After returning to the United States, he first taught at Drake University in Iowa – a position given to Parry thanks to an intervention by George Miller Calhoun (1886–1942), a professor at Berkeley who knew Parry's work[405] – and then moved to Harvard University in 1929, where he acted as a tutor in Greek and Latin and later became an Assistant Professor. The period after his return from Paris was, at least academically, his most productive: the Paris theses not being readily accessible, he first summarised his findings in two papers published in *Transactions of the American Philological Association* in 1928 and 1929[406] and later developed them further in two longer articles published in *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* in 1930 and 1932.[407] In the summer of 1933, he first visited the Balkans for a month-long exploratory trip, where he also improved his Serbo-Croatian. While he was interested in South Slavic poetry long before his first trip to what was then the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, seeing the *guslars* in action shaped his scholarly development in a decisive manner. Upon returning to America, he published a paper entitled "Whole formulaic verses in Greek and Southslavic poetry" (1933), highlighting the potentials of field-work research on the living South Slavic oral tradition for understanding Homeric style and poetry. His growing interest resulted in an application to the American Council of Learned Societies and Harvard University for funding, which allowed him to take more than a year-long research leave and move, with his whole family, to Dubrovnik to record the *guslars* in action. It was this research trip, together with the previous exploratory one, that cemented Parry's celebrity and legendary status in his academic *Nachleben*.

In Chapter III, I discussed how Hutcheson Macaulay Posnett's peripheral position in the British Empire shaped his understanding of world literature, allowing him to conceptualise a world of many classical and world literatures. In this chapter, I consider how ideas about literature's comparability influenced Homeric studies. Could there be multiple classical literatures? How can classical studies approach such plurality and comparability of literatures? And what image of world literature does such scholarship enable? These questions are approached by considering Milman Parry's life, scholarship, and influence. Although Parry is mostly known for his ground-breaking theory of orality, the purpose of this chapter is not to

---

[404] It was the standard of the French academic system of that time that in order to obtain the degree of »Docteur-ès-Lettres«, two theses had to be written, one published as a book.

[405] Reece, 2019: 131 (note 11). Reece refers to the interview with Marian Parry in *Uncatalogued papers*. Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature. Harvard University.

[406] Those were "The Homeric Gloss: A Study in Word-sense" (1928) and "The Distinctive Character of Enjambement In Homeric Verse" (1929).

[407] Those were "Studies in the Epic Technique of Oral Verse-Making. I. Homer and Homeric Style" (1930) and "Studies in the Epic Technique of Oral Verse-Making. II. The Homeric Language as the Language of an Oral Poetry" (1932).

discuss his findings, but rather to explore the methodology behind his research, how that methodology was conceived, and what its influence on classics and literary studies was, and continues to be. In other words, I intend to analyse the intellectual background of Parry's comparative project as well as the broader implications of his approach for the understanding of world literature. I argue that it is fruitful to think about his work and the scholarship promoted by his comparative ambitions in relation to Posnett, also because, as I demonstrate by analysing unknown archival material I uncovered for the first time,[408] Parry studied Posnett's work and promoted cognate ideas about world and classical literature. Chapter IV hence investigates an influential understanding of the ancient epics as oral tradition, looking at how this theory drew upon ideas of historical and cultural localisation discussed in Chapters I and II, and highlights the potential for a global perspective on oral literatures through the comparative methodology outlined in Chapter III.

a) Parry's historical-comparative method and the comparability of Homeric poetry

Above I suggested that the topic of this chapter is Milman Parry's methodology. It is, however, impossible completely to distinguish between his methodology and his arguments about Homeric and South Slavic poetry, since they were necessarily conditioned by each other. In general, scholars distinguish between two phases in Parry's work. The first originates in his doctoral research on Homeric language; the second is centred around his interests in South Slavic poetry and related field-work.[409] This change of focus is sometimes characterised as a transition from an understanding of Homeric epics as *traditional*, that is, composed of epithets and formulaic expressions, to an understanding of epics as *oral*, that is, composed and transmitted orally in an illiterate society. Indeed, Parry alone hinted at such development of his thought in a well-known passage:

---

[408] This chapter introduces three important collections of archival documents that were not previously discussed or used by researchers. First, there are several personal papers belonging to Milman Parry, Marian Parry, and Adam Milman Parry that were recently obtained by the Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature at Harvard University (see *Uncatalogued papers*. Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature. Harvard University). Second, a set of documents belonging to Sterling Dow (1903–1995), a professor of classical archaeology at Harvard University, who in the sixties and again in the eighties worked on Milman Parry as a Homerist and then on his mysterious suicide (see *Papers of Sterling Dow*. Harvard University Archives. Accession 13132. Box 36). Third set of documents is another collection of Parry's personal papers, which were not known to have existed and which I discovered 'hidden' in the personal archive of Albert Lord in a leather satchel (see *Papers of Albert Bates Lord*. Harvard University Archives. Accession 2018.170. Box 18). I give their description in the second section of this chapter.

[409] See introduction to Parry, 1971: ix–lxii; Lord, 1948; Foley, 1985; Sale, 1996; Mitchell and Nagy, 2000; Haubold, 2007.

My first studies were on the style of the Homeric poems and led me to understand that so highly formulaic a style could be only traditional. I failed, however, at the time to understand as fully as I should have that a style such as that of Homer must not only be traditional but also must be oral.[410]

A year before his death, Parry retrospectively distinguished between what he believed were the two major findings of his research: his work on Homeric style and the study of oral culture. What is less often stressed, however, is that this change of perspective was linked to changes in his research methodology, which progressed from the historical treatment of literatures characteristic of classical studies – such as that of Wolf discussed in Chapter II – to historical comparisons – not unlike those of Posnett. As I argue here, this second approach was radically novel in classical studies, but also greatly shaped subsequent perceptions not just of classical but of world literature.

Parry's early work was innovative in argument, but much less so in methodology. In his two doctoral *thèses* and the papers published subsequently, he followed a reasoning similar to what I identified in Part I as historical criticism. In this regard, there were several classical scholars that influenced Parry's work, among them Friedrich August Wolf, whose influence he acknowledged several times.[411] Such historical orientation need not be understood as a direct influence of Wolf however, but as a general trend prevalent in classical studies as well as the Parisian academy of the time.[412] This becomes clear in *L'Épithète traditionnelle dans Homere: L'Essai sur un probleme de style Homerique* (1928), in which Parry described his method in detail. At the very beginning, he quoted the following passage from Joseph Ernest Renan's (1823–1892) *L'Avenir de la Science* (1890):[413]

'How can we grasp the physiognomy and the originality of a primitive literature, unless we enter into the personal and moral life of the people who made it; unless we place ourselves at the point of humanity which was theirs, so that we see and feel as they saw and felt; unless we watch them live, or better, unless for a moment we live with them?'[414]

In Renan's passage, Parry recognised a relatively clear description of his own method.

---

[410] Parry, 1971: 439.
[411] Parry, 1971: 268, 375.
[412] E.g. Sirinelli, 1988.
[413] On historicity in *L'Avenir de la Science* see Petit, 2005. There is an extensive body of literature dealing with Renan's theology and historicism. For this chapter, I primarily consulted Priest, 2015a, 2015b; Leonard, 2012: 1–16, 105–138. Cf. Mallete, 2005; Roe, 2017: 16–50. A good introduction to Renan's work in general is Lee, 1996.
[414] "'Comment saisir la physionomie et l'originalité des littératures primitives', écrit Ernest Renan, 'si on ne pénètre la vie morale et intime de la nation, si on ne se place au point même de l'humanité qu'elle occupa, afin de voir et de sentir comme elle, si on ne la regarde vivre, ou plutôt si on ne vit un instant avec elle?'" (Parry, 1928: 1).

Stressing that "this is the central idea which we propose to develop in this volume", he limited his own discussion to Homeric style and epithets but maintained that the methodology used would be that of Renan.[415] Throughout his work, he stressed that the Homeric poems were produced in a specific society, culture, and historical period and that their interpretation should consider the community in which they were produced. He argued, for example, that literature was best understood by the performer and the audience, who were connected through a shared communication channel, itself dependent upon historical and social circumstances.[416] He further suggested that the role of scholarship was to understand this context and then explicate the meaning of the poems accordingly. Parry accepted that the majority of ancient ideas will "remain incomprehensible",[417] but he nevertheless maintained that "philological criticism of Homer is only of value to the extent that it succeeds in reconstructing that community of thought through which the poet made himself understood to those who heard him sing".[418]

While there was nothing specifically Renanian about Parry's criticism, the opening quotation nevertheless remains telling for his understanding of the project. Renan, who was an important representative of historical criticism in France, became most renowned for his work *Vie de Jésus* published in 1863.[419] Following the tradition of historical and Biblical criticism, he treated the New Testament as a historical text and reconstructed the life of Christ by considering its social context. Discussing his teachings in the light of the community in which he lived, he became extremely famous for arguing that Jesus was merely a historical person who did not perform miracles and was in fact Aryan.[420] Renan's work became an overnight success, selling thousands of copies, being translated into several languages, and inciting an extensive polemic about the nature of religion, morals, historical, and textual criticism. By opening his thesis with a quote by the famous French philosopher and historian, Parry hoped to inherit some of his fame and controversy. The massage, in this regard, was clear: if Renan shattered the image of Jesus as God and showed that he was a mere historical person, Parry would do the same for Homer, shake him from his position as a poetic genius, and demonstrate that his poems were traditional and popular. Both scholars would approach their texts in light of the societies that produced them, both would understand their researched subjects as historical figures, and both would argue that historical facts contradict common (often

---

[415] Parry, 1971: 2.
[416] Parry, 1971: 2.
[417] Parry, 1971: 2.
[418] Parry, 1971: 3.
[419] See Priest, 2014.
[420] On Renan's antisemitism see Davies, 1975; Leonard, 2012: 105–138; Rose, 2013; Priest, 2015b.

ahistorical) opinion. What Renan was for Jesus, the young philologist hoped to be for Homer, revealing the God of poetry as an illiterate man of one particular historical community.

Parry's early work was guided primarily by his belief in historical criticism, but the growing interest in other literary traditions resulted in changes to his research methodology which gradually became more comparative in scope. This shift occurred around the time Parry left Paris and arrived at Harvard in 1930. Among the material recently acquired by the Milman Parry Archive at Harvard University[421] there are 17 folios of lecture-notes entitled "The influence of Horace on English Literature", which Parry first gave in 1930/31 probably for the course "Livy, Horace, Plautus, and Terence".[422] Furthermore, among the newly identified documents (for which see the next section), I also discovered three typewritten folios with a list of literature entitled "Some books on the Classical Influence in English Literature".[423] This list and the lectures all reflect Parry's early comparative interests, specifically comparisons of ancient texts with English literature, scholarly receptions in literary criticism, and translations of ancient authors.

Some of these interests spilled over into Parry's publications, as can be seen in "The traditional metaphor in Homer" (1933). This was also the first publication in which Parry explicitly compared different literatures, Greek and English, calling it a "comparative approach". While the argument was built upon his earlier work on the metaphor,[424] the method used was very different from that of his previous scholarship. In order to demonstrate that metaphors in Homer had a common and fixed meaning, Parry compared the Homeric epics with English Augustan poets, who, as he argued, used metaphors in a way similar to Homer, "with less thought for what they said and more for the sake of their correctness."[425] He therefore compared the two poetic styles with the intention of giving a "faint notion"[426] of how students were to properly understand the poetic style "not in itself", but as part of a particular "society" and its "state of mind".[427] By comparing ancient epic with English poets of the eighteenth

---

[421] Elmer, 2011a.

[422] These notes were donated to the archive wrapped in an (almost destroyed) envelope entitled Latin – B, which suggests the notes were prepared for this course. Thematically, however, his lectures were closer to the topic of another course (offered also to students of comparative literature), named "The classical influence in English literature: epic and lyric poetry" and organised by Lionel Denis Peterkin. Parry's later interest in the topic could suggest that he intended to take over the course after it was discontinued in the following year. These documents also raise questions about his possible connections with the Department of Comparative Literature. See *Harvard University Catalogue* for the relevant years.

[423] See Parry's papers in *Papers of Albert Bates Lord*. Harvard University Archives. Accession 2018.170. Box 18.

[424] E.g. "The Homeric metaphor as a traditional poetic device" (1931).

[425] Parry, 1971: 368.

[426] Parry, 1971: 370.

[427] Parry, 1971: 370.

century he hoped to demonstrate that modern literary criticism (which was crucially determined by Aristotle[428] – another opinion he shared with Posnett) should stand corrected:

> …the example of fixed diction in English poetry should have shown him [i.e. the reader] that what the words and phrases lost in meaning they had gained in the kind of charm which pleased the poet and his hearers. As the fixed diction of the Augustan age can only be understood as the expression of a whole way of life which we may call the proper, so Homer's traditional diction is the work of a way of life which we may call the heroic […]. To give form to this heroic cast of thought they [i.e. the Greeks] had the old tales that had come down in time, and they had a rhythm in which to tell them, and words and phrases with which to tell them.[429]

The comparative approach depended on understanding poetry in light of its social and historical context and was meant to make a new contribution to Homeric style and the use of metaphors in both ancient poems. In this respect, additional historical knowledge could be gained by comparative exegesis with English literature. Because scholars showed that the eighteenth-century poets used fixed metaphors due to a specific social and aesthetic mindset, similar reasoning could be tested against the Homeric material, proving that Greeks used a fixed metaphoric and formulaic language to an even greater extent.

This was one of Parry's early attempts at literary comparison in which he had not yet tackled the question of oral composition and transmission. The above described shift from formularity to orality happened mainly in the summer of 1933 when Parry went to Dalmatia for the first time. The first publication dealing with the preliminary material he gathered in the Balkans was his paper "Whole formulaic verses in Greek and Southslavic heroic song", which he published after returning from a one-month field-trip. He described his research as a "comparative study"[430] and wrote: "I shall follow a method which makes use of more than one poetry that I may show how, by starting from the form, we can surely use one poetry for the understanding of another".[431] Comparability was therefore again constructed as an improvement over historical criticism. Focusing on poetry's form, he argued that all "works of the world's literature" could be divided into two groups; "the one part of literature is oral, the other written".[432] This form was, as he maintained, directly conditioned by the socio-historical context of oral and literate societies and thereby necessitated that the socio-historical context

---

[428] See especially the relevant passages in his article "The traditional metaphor in Homer" (1933).
[429] Parry, 1971: 374.
[430] Parry, 1971: 378.
[431] Parry, 1971: 379.
[432] Parry, 1971: 377.

and its influence on verbal art be the main topic of research. The reasoning behind his comparison of oral traditions can be most clearly observed in a passage from his Yugoslavian notes known as *Ćor Huso*:[433]

> The purpose of the present collection of oral texts has then been made not with the thought of adding to the already vast collections of that poetry, but of obtaining evidence on the basis of which could be drawn a series of generalities applicable to all oral poetries; which would allow me, in the case of a poetry for which there was not enough evidence outside the poems themselves of the way in which they were made, to say whether that poetry was oral or was not, and how it should be understood if it was oral. In other words the study of the Southslavic poetry was meant to provide me an exact knowledge of the characteristics of oral style, in the hope that when such characteristics were known exactly, their presence or absence could definitely be ascertained in other poetries, and those many large and small ways in which the one oral poetry differed from written poetry for its understanding could be carried over to the Homeric poems.[434]

Parry's Yugoslavian project had a clear comparative agenda, which was not to advance the knowledge of any particular tradition but rather extend the understanding of oral poetry itself. Using this method on Homer, he proposed that the Homeric epics were, as any other literature, a direct product of a particular social context, that of ancient Greek society. By studying its style (which he did in his doctoral theses), it could be ascertained that they were traditional in nature, but this alone did not support the conclusion that Greek society was oral, because the poems remained the only historical evidence (or as he wrote: "there was not enough evidence outside the poems themselves"). This limitation could be, in Parry's opinion, overcome by observing other poetic traditions that showed a similar traditional form. South Slavic poetry was such a tradition, but it could have been replaced by another – in fact, before deciding to go to Yugoslavia, Parry intended to study Kyrgyz poetry.[435] Parry first deduced that the traditional style of South Slavic poetry was similar to that of Homer and then, because the poetic tradition was still alive, observed that the style itself was directly conditioned by the oral culture of the society. As a result, he could conclude that Homeric poetry must have been produced in an oral society and was also oral. The main idea of the comparative project was therefore a conviction that such and similar *comparanda* could be used in order to gain further insight into any ancient

---

[433] Parry chose the title of his notes after the singer Ćor Huso Husein from Kolašin, who was a legendary teacher of many singers (Lord, 1991: 67). The name "Ćor" means one-eyed and hints towards the story that he was a blind singer (Foley, 2002: 9). Many scholars tried to locate this singer (Schmaus, 1938), but Foley (2007) later argued that he was, in fact, a mythical figure.

[434] Parry, 1971: 440. I here cite the notes as published in Parry's collected papers. Original notes are, however, more substantial. See *Ćor Huso*. Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature. Harvard University.

[435] Lord, 1948: 36.

poetry and its society.

Such comparative methodology grounded in historical criticism was quite reminiscent of the method Posnett proposed in *Comparative Literature*, which helps further explain the underlining convictions about world literature that guided Parry to adopt a comparative stance. As can be seen in one of his last publications, the address to the Overseers of Harvard College delivered in May 1934 and published in the *Harvard Alumni Bulletin* as "The historical method in literary criticism" (1936), he advocated a similar anti-universalising and anti-classicising approach as Posnett. In fact, the address was a hymn to historical criticism[436] and its political promise to warn against misuses of literature for ideological, nationalistic, and racists purposes.[437] Clearly enough, Parry saw the potential of historical criticism as an objection to ahistorical ideologies and misinterpretations. In Chapter III, I analysed Posnett's discontent with literary critics who understood literature idealistically in order to promote specific national assumptions. Parry too believed that the historical method and its comparative agenda could serve to prevent such troubling interpretations of literature. While he was mostly concerned with how ahistorical interpretations might affect Homeric scholarship and readings of ancient literature, his address provides us with testimony that his critical programme was in fact broader, more political, and directly concerned with the climate of the times in the pre-World War II era.[438]

With such a comparative approach to classical literature, and Homer, 'the most classical of the classics', Parry highlighted the hermeneutic potential for *comparability* of ancient literatures. He argued that the oral formation of poetry and its style could be better understood by researching a different literary tradition, which could consequentially enrich the scholar's interpretations of the Homeric texts, their style, composition, and transmission. What he demonstrated, however, was much more than the similar nature of both epic traditions. He showed that classical literature could be hermeneutically open to comparisons, that it could be compared to other traditions, and that this comparative work could amend traditional and prevailing scholarly assumptions – especially ahistorical, classicising, and universal readings, all of which could be potentially ridden with ideologies Parry rejected. In other words, literature and literary traditions, at least those Parry was interested in, were comparable without regard to their scholarly tradition, evaluation, and canonicity. This, even if not openly promoted,

---

[436] Just like Posnett, Parry located the beginnings of this method in Bacon's *De augmentis scientarium*. See Posnett, 1882: 111.

[437] Or as he wrote, "nationality – for which they [i.e. the critics] exploit race – and class" (Parry, 1971: 412).

[438] Schein, 2015: 122–23.

enabled an understanding of classical literature as comparable and hence multiform.

b) Parry's predecessors, successors, and the challenge of world literature

I demonstrated that Parry's change from philological historicism to historical-comparative methodology happened around the time he arrived in Cambridge, Massachusetts. In this section, I further discuss the consequences of this methodological shift for the development of Homeric scholarship and for interpretations of Homer in general, for which I consider Parry's writings in the intellectual and academic context of his time. In this investigation, I am guided by Parry's personal papers that I discovered in the archives of Harvard University.[439] The existence of these documents was previously unknown because they were stored in Harvard University's main archives together with Albert Lord's unclassified personal possessions. I discuss them here for the first time.

Among these papers there was a handwritten list of literature. The exact nature and purpose of this list is not completely certain, but it is quite probable that it presented a collection of scholarly studies that Parry would use for an introduction to a monograph he was working on – this much I could deduce from the context in which I found the two relevant folios.[440] Luckily, the content of this document is more straightforward for it contains a bibliography of academic publications, among them Alexander Baumgartner's (1841–1910) *Geschichte der Weltliteratur* (1897–1911), Franz Boas's (1858–1942) *Primitive art* (1927), Oskar Walzel's (1864–1944) *Handbuch der Literaturwissenschaft* (1923–1941), and most importantly, Paul Louis Betz's (1861–1904) *La littérature comparée: essai bibliographique* (1904), Francis Barton Gummere's (1855–1919) *The beginnings of poetry* (1901) and Posnett's *Comparative Literature*. It is immediately apparent that Parry listed publications that were influential for comparative literature. I already outlined the importance of Posnett's work in the previous chapter, and in Chapter V, I discuss the disciplinary renown of Paul Louis Betz's *La littérature comparée*, a biographical compendium with an even more influential introduction by Joseph Texte (1865–1900). To some of the other works I return in this section, but all in all, it is clear from this document that Parry followed publications in comparative literature, knew of Posnett,

---

[439] See Parry's papers in *Papers of Albert Bates Lord*. Harvard University Archives. Accession 2018.170. Box 18. Box 18 contains Lord's unclassified personal possessions such as empty envelopes, empty tapes, some books, etc. The leather satchel in Box 18 contain notes for Parry's unpublished monograph, several notes and drafts for his unpublished and published articles, poems (some possibly Marian's), short stories, a translation of several lines of the *Iliad*, and other translations.

[440] Parry was most probably collecting material for a book entitled *A Handbook of Homeric Style*, possibly to be written in two volumes. Among the papers, I found a collection of notes for the book and a detailed index with chapters and their short description.

and was acquainted with the developments in the discipline concurrent with his own work in classics.

In the previous section I argued that Parry understood literature as embedded in society and its times and that he compared different poetic traditions belonging to similar socio-historical contexts with the intention to gain further insights into the Homeric society. In this respect, the heritage of comparative literature is apparent. For example, Posnett proposed a similar comparative approach, suggesting that the socio-historical stage of a particular society produced a specific type of literature. This kind of comparatism and anti-universalism allowed him to conceptualise a world in which classical and world literatures could be seen as plural and multiform. The same could be observed in Parry's conceptualisation of different literatures in his own practice. For example, he approached South Slavic oral poetry as just one tradition among many others and he did not limit himself to it exclusively. As he wrote, his goal was not to gather new material for the sake of the tradition itself but to deduce from it the general traits applicable to all oral traditions around the world. His references and applications to *Beowulf* and *Kalevala*, as well as Finnish, Russian, Afghan, Berber, and Kyrgyz oral traditions attest to his acceptance of various oral literatures as valid *comparanda* to ancient Homeric poetry.[441] That Parry chose to visit Dubrovnik and learn Serbo-Croatian must be explained largely in terms of practicality: the place was most accessible to him.[442] His methodology would have allowed him to choose among many other traditions he knew about. That the noun-epithet formula and the concept of formulaic economy fit Homeric and South-Slavic epic particularly well, in relationship to other oral poetry traditions is a momentous, but fortuitous fact.[443] His fieldwork also promoted the idea that literature should be researched in relation to its socio-historical context and this permitted him to evade some of the aesthetic judgments so eagerly promoted by other literary critics. Early reception of Parry's work is demonstrative of this, for many believed that "Homer's genius" came under attack when compared to the products of illiterate poets.[444] Posnett, or at least his way of reading literature, was an important influence on the philologist's proposal for a comparative study.

Nevertheless, the rationale behind the study of South Slavic poetry was also tightly linked to field-work, anthropology, and folklore studies. Already as an undergraduate at

---

[441] See Parry, 1971: xxxiv.
[442] As Lord wrote: "…he chose the Yugoslav field because in those days it was the most accessible of the still living oral epics…" (Lord, 1948: 36).
[443] Budelmann and Haubold, 2008.
[444] E.g. Shorey, 1928: 305–6; Combellack, 1959: 193–208; Dimock, 1963: 40–57.

Berkeley, Parry took extensive courses in English,[445] possibly with one of the first comparatists in America, Charles Mills Gayley (1858–1932), who was also interested in folklore studies.[446] Furthermore, it has been suggested that another Berkeley professor, the anthropologist Alfred Louis Kroeber (1976–1960) influenced his interest in anthropology,[447] but there were other fieldworkers who were integral in shaping both Parry's understanding of oral literature and his methodology of research as well. The philologist himself hinted at this when he credited Antoine Meillet and Matija Murko (1861–1952) for his new understanding of Homeric epics as oral poetry.[448] Meillet, one of Parry's doctoral supervisors, was a comparative linguist, interested in Slavic languages, and closely connected to Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913).[449] Although he was not an anthropologist, he counted fieldwork as an important part of his research. Matija Murko, a linguist and Professor of Slavic languages in Prague, to whom I return in the next section, also promoted field-work in his research on South Slavic poetry.[450]

It is important to note, however, that Parry began thinking about his comparative project only after he returned from Paris. In this regard, I suggest that discussions about the nature of oral, folk, and popular poetry current in American academic circles at the time, especially in folklore studies and comparative literature, were important to his intellectual formation. This is further relevant in light of the archival documents described above, in which Parry listed Francis Barton Gummere, who was educated at Harvard's Department of English, a leading

---

[445] The list of courses Parry took at Berkely can be found in the Archive of the Office of the Registrar, Berkeley University. They were first brought to attention by García (2001: 60). A copy of the transcript is available also among the newly acquired papers in the Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature (see *Uncatalogued papers*. Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature. Harvard University).

[446] Parry might have been interested in this course because of Gayley's work *Classic Myths in English Literature* (1902), which was one of the first contacts he had with the ancient culture (see *Papers of Sterling Dow*. Harvard University Archives. Accession 13132. Box 36). However, Gayley also published a handbook entitled *Methods and Materials of Literary Criticism: the Bases in Aesthetics and Poetics* (1899), very popular among undergraduate students at the time, in which a chapter was devoted to explaining comparative literature as "the general theory of literary evolution". In the chapter, the discipline was characterised as an investigation of literary evolution with specific focus on socio-historical context of literature and some key questions were highlighted, such as the question of form in the evolution of literature, social conditions of literary production, and the laws of literary evolution. In this overview, Posnett was discussed as a key researcher in the field of literary comparisons. In 1920, when Parry started his undergraduate studies at Berkeley, Gayley published his second textbook entitled *Methods and Materials of Literary Criticism: Lyric, Epic and Allied Forms of Poetry* (1920) in which he devoted a lengthy discussion to the communal origins of poetry, the evolution of epic poetry, and how both were related to the Homeric question. In this work as well, Posnett was presented as a key figure in the comparative study of epic poetry, alongside Chadwicks, Mackenzie, and Gummere, whom I also discuss in this chapter. Furthermore, Gayley was also interested in the influences of classical literature on English literature just like Parry. See also Gayley (1903) for his understanding of comparative literature.

[447] García, 2001: 58–84. Cf. Cantilena, 1998. García even speculated that Parry might have come into contact with students of Émil Durkheim in Paris. Importantly, Kroeber was also the student of Franz Boas whose work Parry apparently read. De Vet (2018) speculates about Marcel Mauss' influence on Parry's project.

[448] Parry, 1971: 436.

[449] Swiggers, 1985: 181–95; Lamberterie, 2001: 409–421.

[450] Garbrah, 2000; Murko, 1951a, 1951b.

institution for folklore research: under the baton of George Lyman Kittredge (1860–1941) in the early thirties that department educated a generation of scholars now referred to as the "Harvard folklorists".[451] Furthermore, Parry's acquaintance with two of the most famous Harvard-school folklorists, John Lomax and his son Alan, also testifies to his acquaintance with the school.[452] John Lomax, who also studied with Kittredge, was a collector of cowboy and blues songs and a founder of the Texas Folklore Society. His field-work in many ways resembled that of Parry: for one thing, he studied oral tradition by recording singers; for another, his project had an archival scope and ambition; and, last but not least, he used similar recording technologies which (like Parry was later to do in Bosnia) he powered through his car battery.[453]

It was not just the method of field-work and recording, however, but also theories about oral tradition, folk literature, and the ballad that in many ways informed Parry's theses about Homeric and South Slavic poetry. This can be indirectly observed in his paper "Whole formulaic verses in Greek and Southslavic heroic song" (1933), where he described oral literature as "primitive", "popular", "natural",[454] and "heroic", hence using terms that reflected contemporary debates in anthropology and folklore. In the paper, Parry argued that oral literature was "primitive" because it was produced in a community in which writing was not widespread. The same was maintained, for example, in *The Evolution of Literature* (1911) by Alastair S. Mackenzie (1870–1934), a colleague of Edward Kennard Rand (1871–1945), head of the classics department at Harvard in the thirties, in which he conceptualised literary research "as simply one of the subdivisions of anthropology".[455] Heavily indebted to Posnett's *Comparative Literature*, Mackenzie saw the historical and comparative approaches as two specific methods and credited the Irish scholar for combining both in his research.[456] Importantly, he distinguished between "primitive", "barbaric", "autocratic", and "democratic" phases of literary development, defining primitiveness simply as "the state of a social group

---

[451] Rudy, 2004. Cf. Wilgus, 1959; Zumwalt, 1988; Clements, 1988.

[452] Parry probably knew both Alan and John Lomax, since Alan studied in Harvard for a year in 1931. In the same year, John also visited Harvard. E.g. Szwed, 2010.

[453] This method of recording was used already in 1933, a year before Parry (see Bulger, 2006: 11).

[454] Parry picked up the idea of "naturalness" from Marcel Jousse (1886–1961), an anthropologist and theologian interested in mimicry and orality whose work the American philologist knew from Paris. Parry used the term to describe the fact that only formulas and phrases which were "most easily remembered and most easily grouped together" were passed down from one singer to another, which meant that oral poetry was produced in the most "natural way" (Jousse, 1925). Cf. Sienaert, 1990; Sienaert et. al., 2016; Saussy, 2016: 33–41. Jousse's importance for Parry's theory is discussed by Saussy, 2016: 41–51.

[455] Mackenzie, 1911: 2.

[456] Moriarty, 1972, 1973.

that shows the simplest or least organised structure",[457] orality being one of its characteristics, the other being its mimetic, un-metaphoric nature. Even though he did not characterise the Homeric epics as "primitive", one of the specific genres of "primitive societies" was "traditional epic poetry".[458] This was, however, just one of many uses of the term "primitive" in anthropology and folklore studies, but one which closely resembled Parry's own use. Another example was the term "popular", by which the philologist conveyed the idea that formulaic and traditional poetic form must have been produced by generations of bards in the same community. Taking into account the archival document mentioned above, it is possible to connect the term "popular" to Gummere's theories about the "popular ballad".[459] In *The beginning of poetry* (1901) and other publications such as the *Popular ballad* (1907),[460] Gummere advocated an understanding of the ballad as popular poetry, with which he described a specific stage of an illiterate society when literature expressed communal character and was transmitted orally – a theory very similar to Posnett's views, to which Gummere referred on several occasions.

In the context of anthropological, folklore, and comparative research of the time, it becomes clear how Parry, a classical scholar, heavily invested in close reading of texts, pursued the idea of field-work research in rural areas of Yugoslavia. Some scholars went so far as to suggest that his research was part of Harvard's folkloristic tradition.[461] This may go, in fact, too far, since Parry's methodology differed from most folklorists of the time, even if the prevailing folkloristic method was comparative to some extent and even if that comparative aspect might indeed have been of interest to Parry. While he recognised that comparisons have their own scholarly tradition, he was particularly cautious as to what could be compared and on what grounds. How his approach differed from other scholars discussed above can be seen in his critique of *The Growth of Literature* (1932–1940)[462] by Hector Munro Chadwick (1870–1947) and Nora Kershaw Chadwick (1891–1972), in which they argued that all early epic poetries were "heroic" in nature. Parry rejected their reasoning:

---

[457] Mackenzie, 1911: 20.
[458] Mackenzie, 1911: 155.
[459] Moriarty, 1972.
[460] Another influential paper on the topic was Gummere, 1903.
[461] Bynum, 1974, 1979.
[462] In Parry's lifetime, only the first volume was published, but it was this volume that focused on the ancient Greek material. See Chadwick and Chadwick, 1923.

> The poetry is heroic only because it is created by people who are living in a certain way and so have a certain outlook on life, and our understanding of the heroic will come only as we learn what that way of living is, and grasp that outlook.[463]

His example was the motif of cattle-lifting, a common theme in various ancient traditions of poetry, which according to the philologist could not have been a shared motif simply because literature was at a certain stage in its development, but because it reflected the way in which a people lived. In other words, he was convinced that the social and historical context in which a literature was produced remained the main criterion for literary comparison or interpretation, the rest being only "cultural" differences.[464] In this respect, his main interest was literature's oral or written "form" which could be approached historically across different literary traditions, and not the comparisons of different cultural expressions or even just motives.

This difference becomes even more apparent when considering the disciplinary history behind folkloristics. The earliest examples of the comparative method in folklore studies can be traced back to the Grimm brothers, Jacob Ludwig Karl Grimm (1785–1863) and Wilhelm Carl Grimm (1786–1859)[465] – with whom Francis James Child (1825–1896), the first Harvard folklorist and Gummere's and Kittredge's mentor, studied – as well as its subsequent culmination in the still prevalent Finnish comparative method initiated by Julius Krohn (1835–1888) and Kaarle Krohn (1863–1933).[466] This tradition was perhaps most clearly represented by another student of Kittredge, Stith Thompson (1885–1976) who, grounding himself in the research done by the Finnish folklorists, developed the renowned *Aarne–Thompson classification system* in which he listed different motifs and narratives from various folktales around the world. These comparisons, however, were not the same as Parry's since they did not focus on literatures produced under similar social and historical contexts, but rather analysed the distribution of different motifs and narratives around the world. In Homeric studies this kind of research has its own antecedent in Denys Lionel Page's (1908–1978) *Folktales in Homer's Odyssey* (1973), a work which did not focus on the comparison of poetry's performative context or style, but on narratives from different literary traditions.

A useful explanation which succinctly describes the difference between these two approaches can be found in Gregory Nagy's description of the difference between synchronic, diachronic, and historical perspective:

---

[463] Parry, 1971: 376.
[464] Parry, 1971: 377.
[465] Leerssen, 2010b: 23–35.
[466] Dundes, 1986.

It is a mistake to equate *diachronic* with *historical* as is often done. Diachrony refers to the potential for evolution *in a structure*, whereas history is not restricted to phenomena that are structurally predictable.[467]

The difference between diachrony and history lies in the explanation of a particular phenomenon, which either does or does not rely on a system (sometimes also referred to as structure or model). This distinction goes back to Ferdinand de Saussure's *langue* and *parole*, the latter being a systemic representation of the language, the former its practical use in speech – since diachrony and synchrony can be applied only to the understanding of the language as a system.[468] According to this model, folklorists were prevailingly diachronic (mimicking the method of historical linguistics) precisely because they understood the spread of forms and plots as a diffusion of patterns in a system. On the other hand, Parry's work was primarily historical because it concerned itself with traditions in their specific social context. He argued that the style, production, and transmission of poetry depended on the historical circumstances and against the argument that traditions themselves belong to a particular system of dissemination. His work was hence ultimately closer methodologically to that of Posnett, Wolf, or Herder than to that of Harvard folklorists, for all that they also had a demonstrable influence on his work – and at a crucial moment in his intellectual development.

Parry himself was aware of the hereditary differences of his comparative project, a fact he used to his own benefit. While he flirted with anthropologists and folklorists in his field-work and comparative interpretations, he remained sworn to the historicist tradition of classical philology. In "The traditional metaphor in Homer" he wrote the following about his research on Homeric style:

Indeed, the Greeks were not the men to carry the historical method of criticism to any such point. For that there had to come a new world which did not know the old by birthright but which, seeking rules of art for itself in times past reasoned much about that art, and more and more closely. In literary criticism generally this was the growth of the historical spirit. In Homeric criticism it was first the growing scorn for Homer's art in the sixteenth and seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Italy, France, and England; then the period of Wolf and his followers who, however much they may have failed to grasp the meaning of what they did find, left no doubt that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were not such poems as we would ever write, or as Virgil and Dante and Milton wrote; and lastly

---

[467] Nagy, 1994: 21 (note 18). Cf. Nagy, 2017: §4.
[468] See Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics* (1916; in Saussure, 1983). Cf. De Vet, 2005.

of our own days in which, through a study of the oral poetries of peoples outside our own civilization, we have grasped the idea of traditional poetry.[469]

Parry recognised that his comparative attempts combined two rather different approaches to literature: first, the "historical method of criticism", one so crucially determined by Wolf that Parry even repeated his claim that "modern poets do not dare to compose *Iliads*",[470] and second, the comparisons of "the oral poetries of peoples outside our own civilization", something which he could observe in anthropological and folkloristic scholarship of his time. Parry's own and ground-breaking idea was to combine both approaches and ground the loose, diachronic comparative approach with the solid historical tradition of classical studies.

This was a crucial move for Homeric studies and classics, not only for the interpretation of the ancient epics, but for the development of the discipline and its perception of world literature. By merging comparisons with the traditional method on which classical philology was established and institutionalised, Parry essentially handed the challenge of world literature to the students of classics. Contrary to Wolf, who argued that classical literature should be understood *only* out of its immediate historical reality, Parry demonstrated that better historical interpretations could be acquired by looking at other literary traditions. He believed Homeric studies benefited from being comparative because comparisons helped scholars become better readers of Homer.[471] Homeric epic was, as he believed, comparable in nature and classical scholarship should accordingly reorganise itself to consider other literary outputs. If scholarship benefited from comparisons with other traditions, these traditions should become of interest to Homerists and classicists. Scholars should therefore not be interested only in Homer, ancient Greek literature, culture, and history, but also in South Slavic, Kyrgyz, English, Native American, French, Finnish, Russian, Afghan, Berber, Japanese, Chinese, Korean, African, South Pacific, Hispanic, Basque, Hebrew, and numerous other literatures and cultures.[472] In Parry's scholarship, world literature for the first time wholeheartedly entered the institution of Homeric studies, bringing with it not only its interests, but also posing new

---

[469] Parry, 1971: 375.

[470] Wolf, 1985: 72. Compare Parry's claim "*Iliad* and *Odyssey* were not such poems as we would ever write, or as Virgil and Dante and Milton wrote" with Wolf's: "For the method of those who read Homer and Callimachus and Virgil and Nonnus and Milton in one and the same spirit, and do not strive to weigh in reading and work out what each author's age allows, has not yet entirely been done away with. […]; but they take it very ill when the god of poets is thought to have been ignorant of the very ABC of the sciences, when those who possess almost all of them in our day still do not dare to compose *Iliads*."

[471] Haubold, 2007.

[472] As demonstrated by John Miles Foley, Gregory Nagy, and other scholars gathered around the *Oral tradition* journal.

questions and issues.[473]

This pioneering Homeric scholarship provided a methodological foundation for Parry's successors to further develop the field and bring world literature to classics and its intellectual community. Over the decades following the philologist's death, scholars at Harvard (and elsewhere) carried on his scholarly tradition and developed his ideas further. Perhaps most important in this respect was Albert Lord, Parry's assistant during his year-long stay in former Yugoslavia. Lord symbolically 'completed' the work of his teacher in his doctoral thesis, subsequently published as *The singer of tales*, in which he dealt with Homeric poetry, South Slavic poetry, and Medieval English epics. Over the course of his life, Lord became an important researcher of oral poetry, with interests encompassing numerous traditions around the world. In other fields and departments too scholars were using Parry's work to demonstrate how comparative their departmental literatures could be: Francis Peabody Magoun, Jr. (1895–1979) as early as 1953 applied his reasoning to Anglo-Saxon epic poetry, especially *Beowulf*, and demonstrated its oral origins.[474] The years after the publication of Lord's *Singer of Tales* in 1960 and Parry's collected papers in 1971 saw a true renaissance in literary studies. Scholars of various fields became interested in his work and began to discuss the oral character of their departmental literatures as well as its comparability.[475] The influence was such that the vast scholarship inspired by Parry's tradition became known as oral-formulaic theory or simply oral theory, sometimes described as a specific discipline in literary studies.[476]

The posthumous success of Parry's comparative approach and the general recognition of classical literature as comparable with other literatures confronted Homeric and classical studies with some important questions. As mentioned in the introduction, David Damrosch argued that transcultural and transhistorical comparisons of literature (that is, "reading across time" and "reading across cultures") are the best way to approach world literature and the vastness of its material.[477] Parry's work and its legacy, which discussed classical literatures in transcultural comparisons, was an important step towards such an inclusive and global outlook. In this regard, the philologist and his successors convincingly demonstrated that Homeric poetry lived in dialogue with other literatures of the world, that Greco-Roman literature was

---

[473] E.g. Foley, 2005.
[474] Magoun, 1953.
[475] For an overview of scholarship on oral literature up to 1985 see Foley, 1985.
[476] See Finnegan, 1988, 1990; Foley, 1991; Ong, 1991; Thomas, 1992; Nagy, 2001; Elmer, 2011b. It is sometimes referred to as a branch of comparative literature (Guillén, 1993: 173–79). On the influence of Parry's theory for neo-analysis, see Kullmann, 1984; Clark, 1986; Willcock, 1997; Finkelberg, 2003; Burgess, 2006.
[477] Damrosch, 2009b. For orality and world literature specifically, see Levine and Venkat Mani, 2013; Levine, 2013; Saussy, 2015, 2016.

hermeneutically open for comparisons, and crucially, that comparisons enabled classical scholars to engage with literatures of different historical, geographical, and cultural provenance. Furthermore, as Parry's and Posnett's projects demonstrated, comparisons also had a broad potential to correct nationally, culturally, or historically biased outlooks, by influencing and correcting normative readings of literature and readings that advanced dangerous world-making programmes. When comparability (or even just its possibility) becomes part of the discipline's horizon, a reader of classical literature simultaneously becomes a potential reader of other world literatures. The comparative approach in classics therefore engages with the questions concerning world literature: what deserves a Homerist's attention, what should be compared, on what grounds, and how? How inclusive is a comparison, how exclusive is it, to what extent is it transcultural? What should not be compared and why? And what kind of world literature do comparisons enable? I address some of these issues in the next section.

c) Parry's dynamic periphery and many worlds of oral literature

Precisely because of his subtle anti-classicism and his unorthodox flirtation with comparative literature, anthropology, folkloristics, and field-work, Parry was, in his lifetime and shortly thereafter at least, perceived as marginal to mainstream academia, while his theses about Homer were seen as peripheral to better established Homeric criticism.[478] This can be observed, for example, in Victor Bérard's rejection of his doctoral proposal;[479] in the initial ignorance of his scholarship outside Harvard[480] or even within the University;[481] in later critiques of his work;[482] and in the work on Homer by his teachers George Calhoun[483] or Maurice Croiset (1846–1935). Parry's move to the study of South Slavic oral tradition marked an important shift in the peripherality of the position he occupied, both personally and academically. This can be observed on several levels, some of which I discuss further below, but one of the most apparent changes in Parry's life was his new economic and cultural position in society. Indeed, in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the Parry family was abundantly supported by the American

---

[478] A very clear and concise overview of the initial critical reaction to Parry's work can be found in Edmunds, 2019: 3–4 (note 12).
[479] Parry, 1971: xxiii.
[480] Parry, 1971: xxiii.
[481] E.g. *Interview with Marian Parry (December 3, 1981)*, f. 24, *Uncatalogued papers*. Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature. Harvard University.
[482] E.g. Combellack, 1959.
[483] Parry even responded to his work on the Homeric metaphor in an article "About winged words" (1937). See also Calhoun, 1933.

Council of Learned Societies and Harvard University.[484] In a privately conducted interview, many years after the death of her husband, Parry's wife Marian remembered the situation as follows:

> And I kept thinking all this money would have taken care of so many – oh the poverty there was so terrible. […]. I thought, all that money would have taken care of all these children. […]. … and Milman could not get over, he said, he couldn't, he said, 'You are the most democratic person I have ever come across.' And he wouldn't understand why I felt the way I did about people. He didn't really like people very much.[485]

Marian certainly became aware of the sudden change in their financial and social standing as the family moved to their new year-long home in Dubrovnik where they were foreigners, but rich; and not only rich, but also politically and culturally uninvolved observers. In some ways at least, her life-situation made her a more susceptible observer of the world: born Tannhauser, she was of Jewish origin, which according to her testimony meant that she was not welcome in some houses in Cambridge, was often asked embarrassing questions, and was generally resented for her Jewishness;[486] but her gender role was important as well, especially when considering her narrative about Milman's rather traditional views on motherhood.[487] In this respect at least, Marian was a much better critic of the situation in which she found herself. Speaking about Milman's future academic plans, going to the Soviet Republic and into one of the Arabic-speaking countries, she said:

> … I think this is a very unrealistic approach to knowing people. Because, well, you can't understand people just coming for a year and seeing how they live and – it's more complicated than that.[488]

---

[484] Reece (2019: 134) cites the "Report of the Senior Delegate of the Association to the American Council of Learned Societies" (Hendrickson, 1935).

[485] *Interview with Marian Parry (December 3, 1981)*, f. 21, *Uncatalogued papers*. Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature. Harvard University. The interview was conducted by Pamela Newhouse.

[486] E.g. *Interview with Marian Parry (December 3, 1981)*, f. 27–30, *Uncatalogued papers*. Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature. Harvard University. For example, she said: "But at Cambridge, was the worst place that we could possibly have gone to. […] But they were so absolutely, there was so much of unpleasantness about this and this put me into a position that I didn't know how to deal with. Because I was taught that if anyone said anything unpleasant about Jewish people that I should make a comment about it." *Interview with Marian Parry (December 3, 1981)*, f. 27, *Uncatalogued papers*. Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature. Harvard University.

[487] E.g. *Interview with Marian Parry (December 3–4, 1981)*, f. 20–21, 45–46, *Uncatalogued papers*. Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature. Harvard University. She said about her role: "Yes, well, that was all I was doing was making a home for him to be comfortable in." *Interview with Marian Parry (December 5, 1981)*, f. 77, *Uncatalogued papers*. Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature.

[488] *Interview with Marian Parry (December 4, 1981)*, f. 37, *Uncatalogued papers*. Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature. Harvard University.

And later:

> I think Milman was utterly mistaken because people, all human beings, even animals are very complicated; anything that's alive is complicated, and you don't get to know people. It's a patronizing attitude that you can spend three or four months with them and you will understand their culture…[489]

While Marian's words about her husband need to be taken *cum grano salis*, for their relationship was notoriously complicated,[490] there are two aspects in which her comment was right, especially when considering the broader context of what she was saying. First, "just coming for a year and seeing how they live" was, in fact, a good description of Parry's research plan: going to Yugoslavia for fourteen months, recording every *guslar* he could find, have others prepare transcriptions, and then leave to study the material comfortably at home, extracting the information needed to understand the oral culture and making inference about the oral character of the Homeric epics. Secondly, Marian's comments were even more far-reaching and, to an extent, considered the whole of anthropology. Arguing that it is "patronising" and "mistaken" to pretend to understand people by spending "three or four months" with them, she highlighted the very crux of anthropological field-work, which later became so central to the discipline's self-reflection.[491]

For Parry, however, this economic and social shift was of crucial importance for the success of the project, especially for obtaining recordings of singers. Vuk Stefanović Karadžić (1787–1864), an early collector of *guslar* songs – mentioned already in Chapter I – had previously complained of the money required to pay *guslars* to perform songs, a significant problem due to his slender means.[492] Parry was well aware of this and requested a large portion of his funding to be reserved precisely for these purposes, that is, for creating a performance "spirit". In the application for his "Project for a study of Jugoslavian popular oral poetry" he wrote:

> …it is necessary to keep them [bards and the audience] in spirits with wine, rakija, Turkish coffee, and cigarettes. On a fairly lavish entertainment depends in no small measure the prestige of the recorder and the willingness of the singers to give their best efforts. The material for the

---

[489] *Interview with Marian Parry (December 4, 1981)*, f. 39, *Uncatalogued papers*. Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature. Harvard University.
[490] See Reece, 2019.
[491] For example, this later became a central though in structuralist anthropology. See Hawkes, 1977: 17–18.
[492] Karadžić, 1824: vii–xvii. In this regard, Karadžić thanked his patron Prince Miloš Obrenović (1780?–1860).

entertainment is itself not costly, coffee, wine, or rakija costing only a few cents a glass; but it must be given to many in large quantities. Also the pay is small, varying from fifty cents to a dollar for a day's dictating or an evening's singing, but it must be paid to each singer....[493]

Discussions have been written about the possibility of obtaining inauthentic material through this sort of research methods, paying *guslars* to play longer and to produce songs according to the expectations.[494] Leaving these complications aside, though, the fact that Parry's research was made possible because of the new financial position is unquestionable. In other words, his position in society shifted and he became a dominant observer of the foreign culture, one wealthy enough to buy drinks for the whole *kafana*, an especially flamboyant way of showing one's status in the region.

Another way in which Parry was an outside observer can be gleaned from his relationship with his local interpreter and assistant Nikola Vujnović.[495] Parry often praised the significant and irreplaceable role Nikola had in collecting performances, finding and interviewing *guslars*, organising field-trips, taking care of bargaining, preparing and transcribing recordings, and navigating the area. His knowledge of the people, customs, and culture, his mastery of the language, and the fact that he himself was a singer well acquainted with the tradition were crucial factors for the realisation of the plan. As Parry wrote, his role was decisive for the success of the project:

> I have engaged as my assistant Nikola Vujnović, who worked for me last year. He gives his entire time to me. While in the field he helps with the apparatus, notes down the text of songs, instructs the singers at the microphone, and most important, carries on dialogue with them before the microphone for the prose discs, either eliciting from them the information which I have instructed him to obtain, or leading them to the telling of some tale or narrative. Between trips, at Dubrovnik, he works with the transcribing machine. He is the only person I have who can do this work. […] His own value to me as a source of information on the life and language of the country people cannot be exaggerated. While traveling he is with me at every moment; while at Dubrovnik he works from seven in the morning to ten or eleven at night.[496]

---

[493] *Project for a study of Jugoslavian popular oral poetry*, f. 8, Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature. Harvard University.

[494] Dimock, 1963; Finnegan, 1988; Ranković, 2012; Danek, 2012.

[495] Again, Marian was a better observer of the situation and she said: "Milman couldn't have gotten along without Nikola." *Interview with Marian Parry (December 4, 1981)*, f. 32, *Uncatalogued papers*. Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature. Harvard University.

[496] *Report on work in Jugoslavia (June 18 - October 19)*, f. 1–2, Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature. Harvard University.

Claiming that Nikola was the most integral for the final collection would not be an exaggeration.[497] Yet Parry's relationship with him, while friendly, reflected the position he had among the local inhabitants. In his application for funding, Parry requested 1000 dollars to be counted towards Nikola's salary and expenses, clarifying this with the following words: "I paid him 60 dinars a day, which were his wages as a stone-mason; this is about, 1.30".[498] He later reported that he managed to reduce these expenses by 25%, because Nikola was living in the same house as the Parry family – all that for working from "seven in the morning to ten or eleven at night".[499] Indeed, Parry's own work testified of the superior intellectual position he constructed by silencing the local voice.[500] For example, in his application for additional funds, he justified the costs for laborious transcriptions, typing,[501] and organisation of the material (the latter was performed by the young Albert Lord) so that he could spend his "own time as profitably as may be for my own knowledge",[502] namely, interpreting the material and conducting 'real' academic and intellectual work.

The shift from periphery to the dominance of observer was not merely economic, academic, and cultural, but was, perhaps most importantly, guided by Parry's understanding of South Slavic literature, of its scholarly tradition, and of world and classical literature in general. As I argued in this chapter, his research on South Slavic poetry was motivated by his interests in Homeric style, where Homeric and *guslar* traditions were perceived as comparable, but also autonomous and embedded in their immediate historical and social contexts – in this respect, orality acted as the very epitome of historical and cultural localisation. In its comparability, the poetry of *guslars* could serve as a window into the ancient world of the Greeks. This guided Parry's focus on the oral style of the poetry, performance contexts, composition, historical transmission, and local dissemination across dialect boundaries, all issues that were directly applicable to the classics. His genuine interest in the oral traditions of the *guslars* should not be downplayed, however, in spite of his own claims that "it was least of all for the material itself that I planned the study".[503] Rather, as I argue, his research was guided by the general

---

[497] Cf. Foley, 2004; Ranković, 2012; Danek, 2012.

[498] *Project for a study of Jugoslavian popular oral poetry*, f. 9, Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature. Harvard University.

[499] *Report on work in Jugoslavia (October 20, 1934 - March 24, 1935)*, f. 1–2, Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature. Harvard University.

[500] Such silencing of the local voice was indeed characteristic for the general relationship towards local guides and interpreters during the nineteenth and early twentieth century. See Mairs and Muratov, 2015.

[501] The payment of the typists, interestingly, also demonstrated a huge gender pay-gap he created between a male and a female typist.

[502] *Report on work in Jugoslavia (June 18 - October 19)*, f. 13, Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature. Harvard University.

[503] Parry, 1971: 339.

assumptions about world literature and its comparative nature. The suppression and rejection of both scholarship and some of the poems was hence primarily motivated by stressing literature's comparability and consequentially disregarding its political role and transnational circulation. As I argue, this could be observed on three levels: first, in what Parry expected from the gathered material, which guided its evaluation, selection, and interpretation; second, in his suppression of local scholarship on South Slavic oral poetry; and third, in his general understanding of world literature's comparability.

In former Yugoslavia, Parry was interested in what he believed was authentic oral tradition. His relationship with one of the first *guslars* he met, Milovan Vojičić, reflects this especially well. Vojičić, a literate bard, provided Parry with some two hundred songs, many of them only in written form.[504] Among them was the *Song to Milman Parry*, which he sent in a letter in 1933 after Parry had already left Dalmatia.[505] It was accompanied by a letter in which Vojičić thanked Parry for the payment of the books he sent and the gift of 50 dinars (less than a dollar) with which he "immediately bought flour for the children" – whether true or not, this undoubtedly played to the kind of sensibility Marian displayed. This gratitude well reflects the difference in social and economic position I described above, but what is more interesting is that the song itself described Parry's role in Yugoslavia through the dynamic relationship between the *guslars* and the academic observer. In the song, the poet first compared Milman to a heroic "grey falcon-bird (*soko tica siva*)", who came to the country over the ocean from what was presented as a mythical place, America. From the beginning, a clear symbolic difference was established between the real country of the *guslars* and the mythical land of the philologist – the image of which was emphasised by massive migrations to the United States at the time.[506] In a style reminiscent of the Iliadic catalogue of ships, the bard then described the scholar's path around the country in two fictional concentric circles, collecting material and bringing the poetry to international acclaim. Starting in Dubrovnik and Split, the poetic Parry travels across Croatia and Slavonia to Serbia, stopping in Belgrade for a day, proceeding to Bosnia and Sarajevo through Šumadija, and then, most importantly to Herzegovina and its

---

[504] Talam, 2015.

[505] Original title Vojičić gave to the song is "Posvećeno Profesoru Universiteta Milman-u Parry-u (Dedicated to Professor Milman Parry)" and the song is dated September 20th, 1933 when Parry already left Dubrovnik. I was not able to deduce for certain if the song was sung to Parry and subsequently sent in a letter or only written. It could be that Vojičić composed the poem in performance on the request, because Murko described a similar experience in *La poésie populaire épique en Yougoslavie au début du xx siècle*: "Many simple singers told me that they could recount in a poem my meeting with them, and I received a poem of this type from a blind singer from Dalmatia." (Murko, 1929: 25. Cf. Ziolkowski, 2013: 195) The text was printed and translated by Lord (Lord, 1960: 272–75). See also interpretations of the song in Graziosi, 2007: 120–142; Ziolkowski, 2013: 187–206.

[506] E.g. Roucek, 1935.

main cities Mostar and Stolac – which was not at all the path Parry took.[507] Here his second, and poetically more important journey starts, in the form of a smaller concentric circle around the Eastern part of Herzegovina. According to the poem, poetic Parry spent the longest period ("three days") in Vojičić's home town Nevesinje, the "wondrous" city with "glorious history" and "heroic sons",[508] moving on to Gacko, Bileća, Trebinje, and returning to Dubrovnik.

By emphasising the Serbian part of Herzegovina, Vojičić created a very specific poetic geography around which Parry, the mythical eagle, would circle as the falcon does around its prey. Yugoslavia, in this respect, was the country or poetry and the Serbian part of Herzegovina the main centre for the tradition. In the poem the difference between Croatian, Bosnian, and Serbian singers was clearly outlined, by which it is possible to understand also why Vojičić's geography concentrated on the Eastern part of Herzegovina mostly inhabited by Serbians.[509] While he recognised and credited all the traditions, he also constructed the poem so as to focus the attention on his local context, and, importantly, on himself. Different levels of artistic and social powers were hence reflected in this geography: the modern world where Parry came from, Yugoslavia as the land of heroic poetry, and its centre, Eastern Herzegovina with Nevesinje. Parry himself was of course the central figure to whom the song was dedicated, but Vojičić himself was described as the person from whom the philologist gathered most of the songs,[510] and he addressed Parry with the request to bring glory to him and other singers. Parry was thus the great hero who would, like a falcon, scan the country from his elevated position in a couple of days, buy "songbooks (*pjesmarice*)", record songs, and then take off to bring glory to the tradition. The interplay between the different social and cultural contexts was not embedded only in the song's narrative but also in its meta-narrative discourse. Hoping that the singer himself would become part of the "pride awaiting the professor there" in "the beloved

---

[507] There are many other factual errors in the poem, for example, that Parry travelled with Saturnalia or that he stayed in the Hotel Imperial (these were pointed out to me by prof. Robert Kanigel who is preparing a monograph on Parry). They are used, however, in order to socially and symbolically elevate Parry's status (for example, Hotel Imperial was the most luxury hotel in Dubrovnik and the same goes for Hotel Vilson in Mostar). Such use of the poetic devices is characteristic of the whole poem.

[508] "Divno Nevesinje", "istriju slavnu", "junačkih svojijeh sinova". Lord, 1960: 274. Cf. *Posvećeno Profesoru Universiteta Milman-u Parry-u. PN111*. Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature. Harvard University.

[509] The author even makes this explicit in the poem. Talking about Gacko he wrote: "Jer tu mnogo imade pjesama, / A i dosta srpskije' guslara (For here are many songs / and also many Serbian guslars)". See Lord, 1960: 274. Cf. *Posvećeno Profesoru Universiteta Milman-u Parry-u. PN111*. Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature. Harvard University.

[510] "Tu najviše sastavi pjesama / Od guslara Voj'čić Milovana (Here he gathers the most songs / from the guslar Milovan Voj'čić)". Lord, 1960: 274. Cf. *Posvećeno Profesoru Universiteta Milman-u Parry-u. PN111*. Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature. Harvard University. Lord translates "Tu" as "There", but a better and more literate translation would be "here". Vojičić uses the articles "tu" through the poem, but then concludes it with "tamo (there)" to refer to America.

homeland America",[511] the poem itself signified that it was a product of an intervention from a radically different society, that it was created for a different audience, and belonged to a different culture. The poem simultaneously described the different roles Parry and the *guslars* had in Yugoslavia and made it clear that it would not have existed had the literature not responded to such international and inter-social contacts and relationships.

What Parry thought of the poem is not attested but his interpretation of another song by Vojičić, *Pogibija Franje Ferdinanda i svetski rat 1914 godine* (*The Death of Franz Ferdinand and the world war of 1914*), might reflect his attitude towards such 'contemporary' oral poetry. Not composed for a special occasion but circulating around in both written and oral form (Vojičić gave it to Parry written on paper),[512] it described the events leading to the First World War, the assassination of Franz Ferdinand by Gavrilo Princip in 1914, and the beginnings of the war. In fact, Vojičić gave him transcriptions of several other poems about the First World War and it is my estimate that around a third of all songs Parry collected were dealing with such "modern" themes.[513] Parry's interpretation of this poem, and, consequently, all examples that he called "new poems" was rather dismissive. He believed *Pogibija Franje Ferdinanda* was a typical modern creation which "made the poor attempt to adapt the old heroic songs to modern events", that it was "poetically negligible", and useful only as "a document of the popular thought" – with the exception of the opening motif of the two crows which he liked because it was traditional.[514] His dismissal was motivated by an understanding of literature as pertaining to a culturally autonomous society, because this "new poem" dealt with the contemporary problem of international relationships, namely, the question of the national formation of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia from the hegemony of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Like the poem dedicated to the philologist, its theme was centred around national and local identities, their positions of power within the newly established state, as well as the political relations with surrounding nations.

While Parry acknowledged these struggles and accepted that there were several poetic traditions in the region and several local dialects – something which Vojičić so clearly addressed in the *Song to Milman Parry* – his scholarly vision was primarily shaped by the image of an ancient Greece in which a communal and autonomous Pan-Hellenic mentality was,

---

[511] "Profesora tamo čeka dika / Domovina dična Amerika". See Lord, 1960: 275. Cf. *Posvećeno Profesoru Universiteta Milman-u Parry-u. PN111*. Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature. Harvard University.
[512] See *Ćor Huso* (p. 1.4). Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature. Harvard University. This part of the manuscript was not published in Parry, 1971.
[513] See the catalogue in Kay, 1995.
[514] See *Ćor Huso* (p. 1.4–1.6). Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature. Harvard University.

in spite of the many local dialects and entities, well established. The Homeric epics were a perfect representation of such a poetic tradition: they combined various dialects but circulated among members of a single cultural community and expressed their shared traditional values.[515] A similar reasoning also motivated his dismissal of "new songs" among the *guslars*:

> A popular poetry rises to greatness only in the measure that it shows a full understanding of the life which is portrayed or symbolized in its verses (and then, of course, only as that life itself is admirable), and it is the very possibility of an oral poetry by its very nature of doing this which explains the high quality of so much of it. But when the civilized world, with complexities which can only be grasped by the educated mind as we understand it, encroaches upon the earlier life, the result is naivety of different degrees.[516]

This passage reflects many of Parry's presumptions about the nature of oral traditions: first of all, fluidity between oral and literate poetry was historically impossible and an aesthetically pleasing composition was either one or the other, any mixture of the two was necessarily of inferior value. On a more theoretical level, however, Parry argued for an idea which Goody and Watt later described as an "oral mindset",[517] the fact that an oral society could only "fully understand" their immediate way of life and was far from apprehending the life of an "educated mind as we understand it". Parry acknowledged the possibility of modern fluidity between the literate or oral spheres but thought that any admixture would necessarily produce "naïve" results of "different degrees". His famous differentiation between oral and literate poetry was therefore motivated by an understanding of literature as historically and socially defined, itself the result of a historical method by which a tradition should be understood as localised in its immediate society. According to this binary system, the intersection between oral and written poetry would necessarily reflect a form of intercultural contact to be dismissed from the researcher's horizon.

Parry's disinterest in respect to international and political aspects of South Slavic poetry not only guided his interpretation of the material but also his disregard of past and contemporary local scholarship on the topic. I already mentioned his claims that it was Matija Murko who inspired the young philologist to pursue South Slavic poetry. Indeed, there is no doubt that he sparked Parry's interest in the poetry of the Balkans, but his scholarly impact was

---

[515] This was, at least, what Parry believed. See, for example, his paper on "The Traces of the Digamma in Ionic and Lesbian Greek" (1934) dealing with the question of dialects as well as the relevant passages in both his doctoral theses.
[516] Parry, 1971: 441.
[517] Goody and Watt, 1963; Goody, 1975.

not sustained. With the exception of *La poésie populaire épique en Yougoslavie au début du xx siècle* (1929),[518] Parry was probably unaware of Murko's numerous publications about the topic in several languages and there is no evidence that they ever met or even talked outside the *soutenance*. It should also be noted that Parry was probably unaware that Murko made around 370 wax cylinder recordings in 1930 and 1931 and already published some of his findings.[519] Albert Lord was the first at Harvard seriously to consider Murko's work, having written to him just before his death in 1952 and subsequently obtaining some of his publications from Vladimir Murko (1906–1986), the linguist's son, whom he met when he visited Ljubljana.[520] The following note written by Lord which I found among his correspondence with Vladimir is telling in this regard:

> While Murko noted some of the same things that Parry did, Murko's lessons were not learned by scholars in other disciplines. Homerists did not read Murko, because he was not a classicist, but they were soon to read Parry.[521]

It was not just that classicists and Homerists did not read Murko, a fact indicated by Lord's own attempt to obtain the works of Murko even after his death, Parry himself was not particularly interested in the work done by others before him – not interested, that is, as far as fieldwork went; he did of course recognise previous figures in the history of Homeric scholarship, as I pointed out above. While he was aware that some scholarship on the topic existed (besides Murko, he certainly knew of Karadžić[522] and Luka Marjanović[523]), he mostly used their work as collections of primary material, ignoring their interpretations. Had he been interested, he would have discovered that several scholars and collectors had already made speculations about the oral nature of the Homeric epics[524] and that collecting folkloric literature in the Balkans had its own political and nationalistic agenda, specifically in the context of the

---

[518] Parry, 1971: 361. Parry cited Murko's publication first in the "Studies in the Epic Technique of Oral Verse-Making. II. The Homeric Language as the Language of an Oral Poetry" (1932).

[519] This can be seen in Parry's proposal for funding of the project, where he mentioned only Murko's early work. See *Project for a study of Jugoslavian popular oral poetry*, f. 4, Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature. Harvard University. I have dealt with the topic of Murko's relationship and communication with Parry and Lord in more detail in Zabel, 2020.

[520] See his correspondence with Vladimir Murko in *Papers of Albert Bates Lord*. Harvard University Archives. Accession 2018.170. Cf. Zabel, 2020.

[521] *Papers of Albert Bates Lord*. Harvard University Archives. Accession 2018.170.

[522] See Parry, 1971: 379, 391, 446, 471.

[523] See *Ćor Huso* (p. 1.16–1.17). Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature. Harvard University

[524] Gantar, 1981. Cf. Tate, 2011a, 2011b; Gantar, 1969 (although not strictly only on Parry's forerunners as the paper in Slovenian).

Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.[525]

The reason why the scholarship of other collectors was of little interest to Parry had to do with his perception of world literature itself. Just as the poetry addressing questions of international relations was merely "a document of the popular thought", so too local scholarship was overly concerned with national questions which had nothing to do with his research and was contrary to his understanding of literature.[526] The issue of political and nationalist motivations in the collection of the Balkan folk traditions is far too complex to be dealt with here in any detail. Suffice to say that the majority of collectors were primarily interested in defining Slavic nationalities, which could support their political agendas for new political movements and formations.[527] Popular poetry played an important role in defining the local dialects and establishing the number of languages and, therefore, of the nationalities that existed or, more precisely, were declared to exist. The true national language would be the basis for new nation-building, assignment of nationality, and political organising in the area. In this respect, the *Song to Milman Parry* and the aims of local academic scholarship were more in line than is perhaps immediately obvious – and it seems that Parry had little time for either.

One clear example of Parry's lack of interest in the topic is his treatment of the work of Vuk Karadžić, who is still seen as the founding father of the Serbian nation and the language's chief reformer (this was, in fact, his main motivation for collecting folk-songs).[528] Not only was Parry not interested, he believed that these political agendas were at odds with true scholarship. In *Ćor Huso*, he wrote a telling, almost poetic passage about this issue, when he described the so-called "guslar competitions" which were often connected with nationalist gatherings. Hearing of one such poet in Gacko, a place where he recorded several songs, he wrote:

> Thus at Gacko, half an hour after my first arrival in the place, I was told of Ilija Vuković, shown his
> postcard, and listened to an admiring account of the cash value of his costume and the hitherto
> unheard of ornateness of his *gusle*. Even as the very communities which produced the finest songs

[525] Čubelić, 1961; Bošnjak, 2002; Zelenka, 2012; Talam, 2015.
[526] In his proposal for the project he even rejected the existence of local scholarship by saying that: "Through a strange indifference the literary interests of the Jugoslavian élite are turned toward western Europe, and the insufficient scholarship of the country has aroused little interest." See *Project for a study of Jugoslavian popular oral poetry*, f. 4, Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature. Harvard University.
[527] Literature on the topic is extensive and the most thorough studies are produced primarily in Slavic languages (e.g. Jež, 2016). For a general overview of the topic see the excellent and influential study on the Slavic national movements by Hans Kohn (Kohn, 1953). Cf. Hobsbawm, 1990. A more recent overview is the collected volume Cornis-Pope and Neubauer (2004).
[528] See the entry Karadžić, Vuk Stefanović in *Encyclopedia of Romantic Nationalism in Europe* (Leerssen, 2018). A good introduction to the life and work of Karadžić in the English language is Wilson, 1970. A popular introduction to Karadžić in Serbian is Popović, 1964.

[…] utterly fail to have any idea of what are the true poetical values of the singing, so they are unable to understand that the simple lines of the older *gusle* with its simplified stylization of the goat's head is a finer thing than a *gusle* which bears upon it the carved head of the ancient kings and heroes, the sovereign, and Vuk Karadzic.[529]

The passage reveals Parry's knowledge of the role Karadžić had in the history of the country and his importance for the people he visited. It also hints at the reasons behind his exclusion of Karadžić's scholarship. The father of the nation, immortalised on the head of an instrument which belonged to singers who called themselves "national guslars (*narodni guslari*)", and who "represent one of the final stages in the disappearance of the tradition of oral song", according to Parry,[530] was symbolically presiding over the competitions "held under conditions which from any critical point of view must be considered the worst possible". These conditions, of course, were primarily political:

They are public affairs and their organization is due to those political elements in the community which are precisely most closely in contact with the newer cultural and social points of view, and the farthest removed from the older life which produced the poems as a natural thing, and likewise understood them naturally. The critical point of view, on the other hand, of the completely sophisticated person of education, which carefully tries to reconstruct for its judgement the older point of view must obviously be a rare enough thing even in the most highly educated communities.[531]

While this passage is strikingly similar to Goethe, it at the same time expresses a further comparative aspect, that is, the fact that the idea of natural oral poetry[532] was used as the epitome of cultural localisation on the grounds of which different localised traditions could be compared. Politics and "naturalness" were, just like literacy and orality, in irreconcilable opposition. An oral tradition could not be political because it was formed naturally and in an ancient, autonomous, apolitical community. Furthermore, the paragraph specifically highlights the role scholarship (i.e. "critical point of view") and scholars (i.e. "completely sophisticated persons of education") should have in approaching traditional poetry. Researchers, Parry believed, should try to reconstruct the older point of view, the "genuine tradition", "the poetry as it exists naturally", and not be guided by questions of national agendas, political

---

[529] Parry, 1971: 449.
[530] Parry, 1971: 448.
[531] Parry, 1971: 448.
[532] Parry got most of his theories about naturalness from Marcel Jousse (1886–1961). See also the reference about Jousse above.

organisations, and international relations. According to Parry, oral poetry had nothing to do with the nationality, politics, and internationality which were the primary concern for the Slavic scholars working on the tradition. Just as he dismissed poems that did not deal with "proper", traditional themes, so too he ignored the scholarship that was not comparatively applicable to classical studies. At least in his efforts to discover the true nature of Homeric style, the importance of the existing scholarship on South Slavic poetry was, to his mind, negligible – although, in truth, as I mentioned, South Slavic scholars had discussed it to a greater and more rigorous extent than he admitted.

Both Parry's interpretation of the material and his rejection of local scholarship were guided by a specific understanding of classical and world literature. As I argued in this chapter, comparisons between Homer and South Slavic poetry were grounded in historical criticism, and in the comparative potential of classical literature. This essentially allowed Parry and his students to consider various culturally and historically diverse literary traditions. While comparability prompted scholars to address questions of world literature's universality, it also disregarded some of the ways in which literatures relate in the literary system. In the previous chapter, I discussed how Posnett aimed his comparative project against universalist agendas and stressed the relativity of literatures, but also failed to recognise that different traditions mutually relate and occupy different positions of power. Similar traits were apparent in Parry's approach to South Slavic poetry. For example, Parry studied *guslars* as a way of understanding what he believed were 'ancient habits' and an 'ancient way of life', both directly applicable to Homer and the ancient Greeks. Even more importantly, he understood both traditions of poetry as culturally and historically localised: while *guslars* and, still more, local researchers were greatly interested in national formations, international politics, and other questions raised by the changing power relations in the area, Parry's vision of the tradition was guided by Homeric comparability, and he insisted that the real poetry of the *guslars* was unconcerned with literary relations and broader political issues. There hence existed a clear difference between Vojičić's local horizon, which made him attentive to inequalities and different positions of power between himself, his tradition, Yugoslavia, and the foreign philologist; and Parry's shifting periphery by which he disregarded the national and political aspects of South Slavic poetry in order to support his Homeric theses. In this respect, the work of Milman Parry was marked by the double nature of stressing literature's comparability: on the one hand, it opened Homeric scholarship to various culturally and historically diverse literary traditions and introduced world literature to classical studies; and on the other, it concealed and suppressed the different and unequal relations literatures assume in the literary system.

Conclusions to Part II

Part II addressed the question of literary *comparability* as a way to overcome historical and local delimitations of literature while acknowledging its aesthetic anti-universalism and non-normativity. Posnett argued for a relativistic framing for the social study of literature, and Parry made the case for a comparative, folkloristic, and anthropological broadening of Homeric studies. In this thesis, I identified their comparative projects as hermeneutically open and even anti-classical.

Comparability, in the work of Posnett and Parry, turned out to be a device for literary localisation, because it conceived literary traditions as belonging to and expressing a particular socio-historical context. At the same time, it also became an instrument for disciplinary decentralisation, because it handed the challenge of world literature to literary studies in general and to Homeric scholarship in particular. I also proposed that this double nature defined later developments, demonstrating that Parry's and Lord's research spearheaded a whole tradition of comparative research of oral literatures. In comparative literature as in Homeric scholarship, this discourse continues to define current academic work. Haun Saussy, for example, uses similar language as Posnett and Parry when identifying "world literature" as the "common denominator" or the "*tertium comparationis*" of comparative literature. He writes: "World literature would thus be the discovery of a common denominator that was there all along – an analytically and necessarily true statement that brings us new knowledge only to the degree that it redirects our attention. This is of course an enterprise worth pursuing, since attention always needs to be redirected, the great enemy of truth may not be error, but myopia or distraction."[533] In the pursuit for the literary global, the common denominator redirects disciplinary attention and corrects scholarly myopia, which is a clear parallel to Posnett's understanding of social development as *tertium comparationis*, Parry's identification of common denominator in oral form, and the hermeneutic receptiveness of both projects.

On the other hand, Part II also argued that such comparative endeavours overlook – and in fact even repress – an important aspect of literary research, that is, literature's *relatability* and its belonging to the unevenly formed literary system. Both scholars discussed above succumbed to the hermeneutic pressure of comparability by which they failed to recognise connections, relations, and inequalities between traditions: Posnett by overlooking the colonial justification of his own methodology; and Parry by neglecting his social, cultural, and scholarly status in the Balkans, as well as local attempts at self-definition in relation to him, or using *him*

---

[533] Saussy, 2011: 61–62.

as a *tertium comparationis*. In this respect, the need to culturally and historically localise literary traditions as unrelated and delimited was a necessary precondition of their scholarly work. Comparisons and common denominators, it seems, require a certain grounding of what is compared, a certain localisation, as well as a certain detachment and distance between *comparanda*. But as Goethe already hinted in his discussion of *Weltliteratur*, literatures and traditions also come together, either historically or in their disciplinary and institutional reception. How literatures relate and connect in a broader system of literary and scholarly circulations is the topic I investigate in Part III.

PART III: CONSIDERING CONNECTIONS: INFLUENCES AND LITERATURE

In Part II, I discussed literary comparisons and argued that they are important in crossing traditional disciplinary boundaries and in recognising literature's potential for global comparability, but they do not directly address different relations and connections between literatures, societies, and cultures. In Part III, I discuss another possible way of perceiving literature, not in its comparability but in its *relatability*. I consider two academic and scholarly traditions that built precisely on such understanding of literature: early French comparative literature or *la littérature comparée* and those Homeric scholars who were interested in literatures of the ancient Near East, specifically the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. Even though these intellectual traditions were unaware of each other, both classical scholars and the French comparatists posed similar questions, discussed literary influences and the literary network, and formed comparable views on classical, national, and world literatures. By thinking about literatures as interconnected and related, they advanced the idea that literary traditions assume different and unequal positions of power in this network – an aspect of world literature which the comparative approach was prone to overlooking, as I have argued.

In Chapter V, I make the case that the early French comparatists were instrumental in understanding world literature as consisting of centres and peripheries. Even if their theories were heavily criticised after the Second World War, which established the still prevailing narrative of their contribution to the history of comparative literature, French scholars such as Ferdinand Brunetière (1849–1906), Joseph Texte (1865–1900), Fernand Baldensperger (1871–1958), and Paul van Tieghem (1871–1948) recognised the challenge that an uneven distribution of literary influence posed to literary studies – though, admittedly, they also used this for their own nationalist and political aims. While Homer does not feature explicitly in Chapter V, this chapter investigates some of the important assumptions and political undertones that mark discussions on literary influences and literary network. Looking at the emergence of this model of reading in its historical context is important for understanding how similar ideas played out in past and present Homeric scholarship. Chapter VI then turns to Homeric studies and investigates William Ewart Gladstone's (1809–1898) response to the discovery of the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. I make the case that Gladstone addressed similar questions as the French comparatists in his dealings with Homer: he assumed the existence of literary influences, formed ideas about the literary systems, and even used the same methodology in order to promote his own convictions about ancient literatures. Moreover, his preoccupation with the

so-called Eastern Question, an international political crisis concerned with the Ottoman Empire, further reveals that ancient literary influences presented a platform for world-making. His reading of Homer and *Gilgamesh* passed into the twentieth century, encouraging scholars to question contemporary society, academic politics, and other world-views by considering the relationship between ancient cultures. As with the historical and comparative approach to literature which I discussed in Part I and II, so too discussions about the literary system mediate between localisations and interconnectedness of literature in various ways. Part III thus considers how Homeric epic can be understood as a connected literary tradition that belongs to a wider, transcultural literary system. At the heart of such readings is the idea that localised literatures assume more or less influential positions and come together in numerous contemporary receptions. These receptions, I argue, are always mediated through certain world-views and world-making agendas, which act as a universal organising principle of nationally, culturally, or historically defined traditions.

CHAPTER V:* La littérature comparée, *literary influences, and the literary system

Comparative literature has many mythical beginnings, two of which were considered in Chapter I and Chapter III when discussing the works of Johann Wolfgang Goethe and Hutcheson Macaulay Posnett.[534] The third such beginning of comparative literature, which is discussed in this chapter, is the institutionalisation of the discipline at the French university, seen today as a predecessor of programmes in the United States – mostly because several scholars trained in this tradition emigrated to the United States during the Second World War.[535] As was the case with Goethe and Posnett, the French tradition of comparative literature developed its own model of literary research and its own understanding of world literature. What was the nature of this model and what were some of its consequences for ideology, politics, and world-making is the topic of Chapter V. This is intended as a counterpart of one of the most important developments in the study of Homeric epic, namely, its relationship to the *Epic of Gilgamesh*.

The payoff of such investigation is twofold. First, *la littérature comparée* instigated an influential understanding of literature as inter-connected and belonging to a broader system of literary circulations. As I argue here, the French comparatists speculated that literatures not only belong to a literary system, but also that this system forms literary centres that are primarily influential and literary peripheries that are primarily influenced – an understanding that was greatly different from Goethe's humanist *Weltliteratur*. In order to better understand similar premises in classical scholarship, it is beneficial to investigate how comparative literature constructed the concept of the literary system. On the basis of such preliminary investigation, important political and historical assumptions can be identified, even if they are less explicit in Homeric scholarship than in comparative literature. Secondly, the model of literary studies proposed by the French comparatists of the early twentieth century provides a new reading of the history of comparative literature. As I argue, these early scholars were not as irrelevant as they are portrayed in contemporary overviews of the discipline. In fact, they investigated views on world literature that are relevant even today, some of which I highlighted in the introduction to the thesis when discussing Wallerstein's world-system theory and Moretti's world literary system. In order to demonstrate that their model of literary research was also important for understanding world literature and Homeric epic, some of the traditional

---

[534] Some mythical beginning, such as Hugó Meltzl von Lomnitz's establishment of the mulitlingual comparative journal *Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum* or the extremely important literary theory of the Russian Formalists are not discussed in this thesis. E.g. Damrosch, 2006, 2020: 12–49; Tihanov, 2019.
[535] Such as Erich Auerbach (1892–1957), Leo Spitzer (1887–1960), or René Wellek (1903–1995). See e.g. Damrosch et. al., 2009: xiii.

and still prevailing claims about the history of the discipline need to be reconsidered. This chapter first tackles the traditional presentation of the development of comparative literature as an academic field and then investigates how two important comparatists, Ferdinand Brunetière and Fernand Baldensperger, envisaged the methods and topics of *la littérature comparée*.

a) Deconstructing the narrative of the history of comparative literature

Writing about the beginnings of comparative literature as an academic discipline, one quickly notices the lack of research on the topic – especially when compared to a much better researched history of other literary disciplines, including classical scholarship.[536] This is not to say that comparative literature does not reflect on its history or discuss its position as an academic and literary discipline. On the contrary, permanent reflection of theoretical and methodological positions is sometimes seen as its intrinsic disciplinary trait:

> In the roughly one hundred years that constitute its official life-span, Comparative Literature has been extremely self-conscious and […] has yielded to an almost pathological urge for examining itself and questioning fate.[537]

To speak of comparative literature, it seems, is to speak of its nature, methods, futures, and pasts. It is therefore rather surprising to find that countless reflections on the discipline reduce its early history to a few repetitive phrases, dealing – if at all – only with the discipline's history after the Second World War and even then almost exclusively in the United States. Ferdinand Brunetière, Joseph Texte, Fernand Baldensperger, and Paul van Tieghem are just some of the early scholars whose work is now mostly reduced to a brief footnote.[538]

---

[536] Herzog, 1983. I have also provided a short literary review of works on classical scholarship in the introduction.
[537] Weisstein, 1984: 167.
[538] The only extensive and thorough discussion of the discipline's history in general is David Darmosch's recent publication *Comparing the Literatures: Literary Studies in a Global Age* (2020), but it does not consider French comparatists in particular. In this respect, Weisstein's appendix to his handbook *Comparative literature and literary theory: survey and introduction* (1974) remains one of the most available resources in the English language. The other extensive and well written history of the early discipline that considers the developments in France is Antoni Martí Monterde's *Un somni europeu: Història intel·lectual de la Literatura Comparada* (2011) written in Catalan. While French academics, not surprisingly, cherish the memories of *la littérature comparée* and its history more, the majority of French publications dealing with the topic consists of the so called "handbooks", a form of referential overviews of the discipline accompanied by a short and often superficial historical presentation. The most recent such publication is Bernard Franco's *La littérature comparée: Histoire, domaines, méthodes* (2016), preceded by Yves Chevrel's *La littérature comparée* (1988), a renowned work with numerous reprints. The history of early comparative literature seems to be more important in other national contexts, as for example in Eastern Europe, among South Slavic nations, in China, and, as seen above, in Catalonia. In this respect, it is interesting to note that it was the Slovenian comparatist Anton Ocvirk (1907–1980),

As far as comparative literature in France is considered, the lack of in-depth research on the discipline's history is apparent also in the repeating presentation of its early developments from the beginning of the twentieth century up to the Second World War. Traditionally, scholars stress two aspects that defined the discipline in its early decades in France: the pronounced interest in literary influences and the admiration of historical positivism.[539] Both have indeed been promoted by French comparatists in their endeavour to establish *la littérature comparée* as an independent academic field. For example, Joseph Texte, who was in 1896 appointed to the first chair for comparative literature in France at the University of Lyon, provided one such influential explanation. In the introduction to the bibliographical compendium by Louis Paul Betz (1861–1904), published in 1900 under the title *La littérature comparée: essai bibliographique* (a work which endeavoured to list all important publications in the field of comparative literature – and which Parry knew), he distinguished four main topics of the discipline: theoretical questions and general problems; the study of popular literature or folkloristic comparisons; comparative study of modern literatures; and the study of general literature (*la littérature générale*, as Texte translated Goethe's term *Weltliteratur*). The most important aspect of comparative literature was, for Texte, the study of literary influences and of general literature, that is, "the study of direct loans from one author by another" and "the examination of influences on an author, a school, or an entire nation".[540] Even though Texte's definition was quite diverse and inclusive, his preferences clearly lay in the study of literary influences between literatures of various nations. More important, by insisting that *la littérature comparée* should focus on literary influences, the French comparatists introduced a specific way of approaching and interpreting literature, one which considered connections and relations between various literary traditions.

Soon thereafter, the focus on literary influences became the main position of French comparatists, establishing literary relatability as the main topic of the discipline. Interest in international influences was repeatedly expressed by all its major representatives. Here are some examples in a chronological order, which I give in order to demonstrate how prevailing this position was: in the same year as Texte's essay was published, Ferdinand Brunetière dispelled the folkloristic approach as mere study of parallels and stressed the importance of

---

who in 1936 wrote one of the first book-length discussions of comparative literature's history (see Ocvirk, 1936. Cf. Juvan, 2012: 177–182).

[539] Such repetitive interpretation of the French comparative literature can be seen in, for example, Fokkema, 1982; Kinghorn, 1982; Weisstein, 1974; Guillén, 1993; Bassnett, 1993, 2006; Dev, 1993; Gillespie, 1996; Mourão, 2000; Damrosch, 2009a; Brown, 2013; Cao, 2013; Domínguez et. al., 2015.

[540] …l'étude des emprunts directs faits par tel écrivain à tel autre… l'examen des influences subies par un écrivain, par une école, par une nation entière… (Texte, 1900: xxii).

historical influences – a topic I discuss in the next section; moreover, in the introduction to the first issue of the *Revue de littérature comparée*, Fernand Baldensperger, who alongside Paul Hazard (1878–1944) founded the journal in 1921 (and to whom I also return in this chapter), insisted that the discipline should focus only on a factual encounter between literatures;[541] Paul van Tieghem, professor of comparative literature at the Sorbonne, in his overview of the discipline explicitly promoted "binary relations (*rapports binaires*)" between various authors, literatures or ideas;[542] Marius-François Guyard (1921–2011) argued the same in his handbook *La littérature comparée* (1951);[543] and in the introduction to the same handbook, Jean-Marie Carré (1887–1958) famously exclaimed: "La littérature comparée n'est pas la comparaison littéraire".[544] That "comparative literature is not literary comparison" but rather focuses on historic international literary influences seems to have been the prevailing characterisation of the early French comparative endeavours.

The other and closely related disciplinary trait continuously ascribed to comparative literature's academic birth was its blatant positivism and its historical scientism. This trend was powered by the positivistic orientation of the French academy more generally, the spreading influence of Hippolyte Taine (1828–1893), and the philosophy of Auguste Comte (1798–1857).[545] In the above-mentioned introductory article to *Revue de littérature comparée*, Fernand Baldensperger praised Texte for being one of the first scholars in the field to promote a scientific methodology, focusing on secondary documents such as diaries, newspapers, testimonies, and scholarly works in order to establish the time and nature of the researched literary influence.[546] In 1931, exactly ten years after Baldensperger's introductory essay, Paul van Tieghem wrote the first systematic and methodological overview of the discipline entitled *La littérature comparée*. Speaking of literary comparisons, he wrote:

> But when it comes to literary works, it is possible to assume that the *comparison* consists of juxtaposing books, types, scenes, and analogous passages, taken from various literatures in order to record the differences and similarities, without any other interest than curiosity, aesthetic satisfaction [...]. The comparison thus practiced is a very interesting exercise and very useful in

---

[541] Baldensperger, 1921. This essay was regarded as the first publication that defined comparative literature with regard to methodology (see for example Carré's introduction in Guyard, 1951: 5 (note 3). Cf. Damrosch et al., 2009: 159).

[542] Van Tieghem, 1931: 176.

[543] Guyard, 1951.

[544] Carré's introduction in Guyard, 1951: 5.

[545] That positivism influenced comparative literature is not surprising, since it impacted almost all academic disciplines and intellectual discourses at the time. See e.g. Simon, 1972; Feichtinger et. al., 2018. For the influence of positivism on comparative literature specifically see Trousson, 1965; Bassnett, 2006.

[546] Baldensperger, 1921: 25.

forming taste and thought, but it has no historical value […]. The characteristic of true comparative literature, on the contrary, like that of all historical science is to embrace a great number of possible facts of different origins in order to explain each of them; to broaden the basis of knowledge so as to discover the causes of as many effects as possible. In brief, the word *comparative* should be void of all its aesthetic value and get a scientific one; and the recording of the analogies and differences offered by two or more books, scenes, subjects, or passages from various languages, is only the necessary point of departure for discovering an influence, a loan, etc., and consequently to partly explain one work by another.[547]

As is apparent from the passage, van Tieghem restated the (by that time well-established) differentiation between analogies and literary influences. At the same time, he also substantiated it with another important aspect, that of historical scientism and positivism. While analogies were purely aesthetic, he stated, only literary influences could be researched scientifically. In his model of the discipline, aesthetic evaluation, which allowed for various types of comparison, obstructed its scientific orientation, the role of which was to prove the existence of an influence, imitation, literary circulation, or the transfer of, for example, an idea, genre, or style as a historical event. As many French comparatists insisted for decades after van Tieghem's publication, comparative literature was first and foremost a historical and scientific discipline, identifying how authors and literatures of different nations influenced each other.[548]

Literary influences and a positivist methodology defined *la littérature comparée* as the two main characteristics of an independent discipline. Such definitions indeed served their initial purpose of establishing the discipline at French universities, which became officially recognised when the University of Lyon (in 1896), the Sorbonne (in 1910), the University of Strasbourg (1919), the Collège de France (in 1925), and the University of Lille (in 1930) opened chairs, courses, and programmes of comparative literature. Nevertheless, such definitions were also the reason why nowadays the discipline's early history is mostly swept

---

[547] "Mais quand il s'agit d'oeuvres littéraires, on peut croire que la comparaison consiste à juxtaposer des livres, des types, des scènes, des pages analogues, empruntés à diverses littératurés, pour en constater les différences et les ressemblances, sans autre but qu'un intérêt de curiosité, une satisfaction esthétique […]. La comparaison ainsi pratiquée est un exercice fort intéressant et très utile pour former le goût et la réflexion, mais qui n'a aucune valeur historique […]. Au contraire, le caractère de la vraie littérature comparée, comme celui de toute science historique, est d'embrasser le plus grand nombre possible de faits différents d'origine, pour mieux expliquer chacun d'eux; d'élargir les bases de la connaissance afin de trouver les causes du plus grand nombre possible d'effects. Bref, le mot comparé doit être vidé de toute valeur esthétique, et recevoir une valeur scientifique; et la constatation des analogies et des différences qu'offrent deux ou plusieurs livres, scènes, sujets ou pages de langues diverses, n'est que le point de départ nécessaire qui permet de découvrir une influence, un emprunt, etc., et par suite d'expliquer partiellement une oeuvre par une autre." (Van Tieghem, 1931: 20–21)

[548] The work of most important French comparatists such as Marius-François Guyard, Jean-Marie Carré, André-Michel Rousseau, Claude Pichois, Pierre Brunel, and Yves Chevrel all perceived comparative literature as a historical discipline.

under the rug, consequentially concealing its role in underlining the importance of literary relations. René Wellek's (1903–1995) essay "The crisis of Comparative Literature" (1958), sometimes described as a manifesto of comparative literature in the United States, is a paradigmatic example of how the American comparative literature became known as the saner and more cosmopolitan alternative to the French model. The paper was emblematically delivered as a keynote of the first – or better, second[549] – *International Congress of Comparative Literature* in 1958, in which Wellek criticised the French comparatists for their focus on "sources and influences", "antiquarianism", and their "nineteenth-century positivistic factualism".[550] For this, he gave several reasons which directly followed from his own understanding of literary criticism, advanced most famously in *Theory of literature* (co-written with Austin Warren and published in 1948):[551] for example, he stressed his belief in the totality of literary works which had to first be understood as works of art, rather than focusing on just those parts that were presumably the source or the effect of an influence; he preferred literary studies to deal with great works of literature as opposed to secondary sources, "second-rate writers, translations, travel books, 'intermediaries'";[552] and finally, he believed literary criticism should be an essential part of literary history since "literary scholarship is not concerned with inert facts, but with values and qualities".[553] These objections, which were in line with the school of New Criticism prevailing at the time (even though Wellek's position within the movement is a complicated issue[554]), were clearly proposing close-reading, hermeneutics, literary interpretation, and literary theory instead of the historical positivism and secondary sources.

While Wellek's objections here and in other essays and lectures[555] were mostly methodological and theoretical, they also had a broader political significance. In an honorary address to the American Comparative Literature Association's meeting in 1965 entitled

---

[549] American scholars describe this meeting, which took place at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, as the first. In their opinion, the previous congress in Venice does not count as it was a gathering of "mostly Europeans" (Balakian, 1994: 81).

[550] In Wellek, 1963: 285.

[551] Wellek and Warren, 1949. He further developed his theory in two collections of essays *Concepts of Criticism* (1963) and *Discriminations: Further Concepts of Criticism* (1970a). For Wellek's life and work see Bucco, 1981; Lawall, 1988, 1999; Wellek, 1988; Kennedy, 1996; Holquist, 2010.

[552] In Wellek, 1963: 284.

[553] In Wellek, 1963: 291. Wellek belived that every literary discipline needs to define its own object, which for his literary criticism was the idea of "literariness". The influence of Roman Jakobson (1896–1982) is clearly seen in this respect. Wellek, however, also advanced Jakobson's theory by stressing the importance of values and qualities. Both aspects of his theory are in "The Crisis of Comparative Literature" presented as differing from the French comparatists.

[554] Lawall, 1988; Holquist, 2010.

[555] Most importantly in "The Crisis of Comparative Literature", "Comparative Literature Today", and "The Name and Nature of Comparative Literature" (In Wellek, 1963, 1970a).

"Comparative Literature today" and in a later paper entitled "The name and nature of Comparative Literature" (1970), Wellek complained that his arguments were misunderstood, that his aim was not to attack French literary studies, and that he did not intend to promote American cultural imperialism by negating the importance of national literatures. Born as a Czech in Vienna in 1903 and at first a member of the Prague linguistic circle, he was well acquainted with the happenings in European literary scholarship, including comparative literature as defined in France, which he knew much better than what he presented in his schematic outlook.[556] Precisely because of this, he was wary of the "fervent nationalism" practiced by the early scholars who saw France as the main actor of the literary world – political agendas, which I discuss in a moment. While Wellek approved of their "good patriotism", and their role in resisting racism, antisemitism, totalitarianism, Nazism, and Fascism during the world wars, he did not overlook the pronounced desire of scholars "to accumulate credits for one's nation by proving as many influences as possible on other nations or, more subtly, by proving that one's own nation has assimilated and 'understood' a foreign master more fully than any other."[557] This straightforward national pride, the desire to "prove" national superiority, and to enthrone one's literature on the pedestal of world literature went against all of Wellek's beliefs in universal criticism, universal aesthetics, and the universal value of humanism.[558]

Wellek's arguments, in fact, reflected the general opinion of the American comparatists in the fifties, sixties, and later. The narrative that literary influences and historical positivism were only a clumsy beginning of comparative literature was promoted by other post-war comparatists in the United States, who contributed to the process of forging the prevailing narrative of the discipline's development. This prevailing presentation concealed the relevance of the early comparatists' literary model, which, I argue, is important for understanding how world literature and the literary system operate. Henry H. H. Remak (1916–2009), for example, whose definition of comparative literature proposed in 1961 was influential for decades thereafter, understood the American and the "French school" as an opposition;[559] Claudio Guillén (1924–2007) devoted several chapters in *The Challenge of Comparative Literature*

---

[556] As he admitted himself, his own work also used the method of the French comparatists, as for example in archival research of Kant's influence on Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–1834), published as *Immanuel Kant in England 1793–1838* (Wellek, 1931).

[557] Wellek, 1959: 150.

[558] As expressed, for example, in his claim that academics should not be "accredited specialist[s] in Chaucer, in Shakespeare, and in Milton", but rather "professors of Literature" (Wellek and Warren, 1949: 290).

[559] Remak, 1971: 3–57. His paper was also influential in establishing the idea that the French comparatists presented a "French school".

(1993) to criticising the positivist approach of *la littérature comparée* and its Eurocentric vision of literature; and Ulrich Weisstein's (1925–2014) presentation of the discipline's history was no different.[560] What is common to these and other post-war comparatists in the United States is that they criticised the old comparative literature precisely for its positivism and prevailing focus on the European circulations.[561] Even if this methodological and, in fact, ideological contradiction between "cultural nationalism" and "cosmopolitan humanism"[562] was to some extent exaggerated by later generations, it was the arguments of Wellek and other above-mentioned scholars that established the still prevailing discourse about *la littérature comparée* as a positivistic, pedantic, narrow-minded, nationalistic, and outdated discipline.[563] Intentional or not, this narrative about the discipline's development further determined subsequent receptions in the United States as well as other discourses around the world, and is by and large still unchallenged today.[564]

In dealing with the early French comparatists, this chapter aims to reassess the stereotypes about the French comparatists and its post-war critics. The reading of the discipline's history I propose here opens up a new understanding of *la littérature comparée* in which the early disciplinary history is taken seriously as a product of its social and political context. As I argue, considering French comparative literature from the late nineteenth century to the Second World War is on the one hand crucial for understanding the later developments of comparative literature, and on the other hand highlights an important model of literary research – which, as I suggest in Chapter VI, is influential in Homeric scholarship as well, where it offers an important corrective to approaches based on orality as the point of comparison. This is not to say that the above-presented critiques of the French comparatists are not justified or should be disregarded. Quite the contrary, I even present my own criticism of the early developments of the discipline. Nevertheless, I suggest that the post-war critics contributed to creating a blind spot in the discipline's history which overlooked one important aspect, namely, that the French comparatists consciously, explicitly, and methodologically

---

[560] Weisstein, 1974. See also Douwe Fokkema's (1931–2011) similar position in Fokkema, 1982.

[561] There were, of course, other comparatists in the United States that argued for the French model of comparative literature as, for example, Warner Paul Friedrich or François Jost. It should be stress that some of the French comparatists also taught at American universities as, for example, Fernand Baldensperger. There were of course also German philologists and comparatists who emigrated to the United States before the Second World War, most notably Leo Spitzer (1887–1960) and Erich Auerbach (1892–1957), but they did not engage in the polemic about the French comparatists.

[562] Damrosch et al., 2009: 162.

[563] In France, for example, one of the most important scholars to advance similar critiques was René Étiemble (1909–2002). See Étiemble, 1963.

[564] E.g. Saussy, 2011.

theorised literature as forming a connected and international organism which is unevenly formed. The French founders of *la littérature comparée* might indeed have been pedantic, antiquarian, narrowly focused, nationalistic, deeply Eurocentric, and may have promoted their own national literature as the most important actor in the literary exchange. Nevertheless, they made an important contribution to literary studies by postulating that literatures belong to an interconnected system and that different actors in this system assume different positions of power. This reading of literature, I argue, is essential for understanding how one can approach world literature and its interconnectedness and how one understands its role in the world-system.

b) Ferdinand Brunetière and Gaston Paris: two models of literary circulation

Some scholars claim that comparative literature was born in Paris in 1900, more specifically, at the famous *Exposition Universelle* during which an academic international congress devoted to the comparative method in historical sciences took place. In between 'more important' subjects such as comparative law or comparative politics, one panel was devoted also to "comparative literary history". According to the legend, at this convention *la littérature comparée* was formalised as an independent field of literary studies. This is not to say that the discipline, in its infancy, did not exist before or that it suddenly emerged in 1900 as a full grown, recognised, and methodologically defined field – as I said, this was just one of its many beginnings. Nevertheless, the reason why scholars refer to this event as the birth of comparative literature (besides the mythical appeal of the year 1900 and the Paris Exhibition) is that Ferdinand Brunetière (1849–1906), a member of the French Academy, Joseph Texte's mentor, and the main protagonist of the panel, defined comparative literature in opposition to more traditional ways in which literary studies used comparisons. Not coincidentally, the honorary president of the panel was the famous French medievalist Gaston Paris (1839–1903) who the following day issued a reply to Brunetière's lecture and argued precisely for the criticised comparative method. The confrontation of the two views thus directed some scholars to place the official beginnings of *la littérature comparée* at the time of this conference.[565]

The way in which past comparatists saw this historical moment was heavily influenced by the two 'defining' characteristics as described in the introduction. They pointed out the obvious difference between the two protagonists: their preference for either literary influences

---

[565] Among others, this idea was proposed by Fernand Baldensperger, Paul van Tieghem, Renato Poggioli, René Wellek, Ulrich Weisstein, Claudio Guillén, and Susan Bassnett. For a discussion of comparative literature at the Paris Exhibition see Martí Monterde, 2011: 412–427.

or literary analogies,[566] for either modern literatures or folklore, for either European internationalism or nationally understood diffusionism, etc.[567] As I argue in this chapter, Brunetière's and Paris' different views on literary comparisons were motivated also by their perceptions of world and European literature. While Gaston Paris built on the premises of the German school of folklore studies, seeing literary traditions as sharing similar patterns in different nations and cultures, Brunetière understood literature as a larger systemic entity, formed of successive historical phases and defined by influential traditions. This, however, had nothing to do with a simple dismissal of analogues, as is sometimes argued, but rather with the fact that literary parallels had no place in Brunetière's theoretical conception of literature. Theorising literatures as *relatable* and as connected, he dismissed the use of comparison between traditions that had no historical contact – which the later comparatists pronounced even further by emphasising historical evidence and positivist historical research. Perceiving literatures as interconnected and relatable was therefore different from the historical, historical-comparative, diffusionist, and folklorist models discussed in Parts I and II. Looking more closely at the discussion between Brunetière and Paris, it is hence possible to observe that concepts of European and transnational literary circulation, which are important in contemporary attempts to understand world literature and the literary system, included agendas for national and historical localisation.

In the lecture presented at the *Exposition* and entitled "La littérature européenne", Brunetière postulated two premises about comparative literature, both framed as an alternative to national literary studies and folklorist comparisons. According to the first premise, comparatists should be primarily interested in *belles-lettres* as opposed to the "songs and popular tales, moral tales, fairy tales, and bedtime stories".[568] The second claim, not unrelated to the first, was the limiting of comparative scope exclusively to historically identifiable international circulations. Both these claims were pointed out by Brunetière at the beginning of his essay by asking whether comparative literature should consider "the poems of Thou-Fou and Li-Tai-pe [i.e. Du Fu and Li Bai] as well as those of Pindar and Sappho?"[569] This question,

---

[566] Among modern comparatists, this was stressed by Weisstein, 1974: 175; Bassnett, 1998: 24. See also Poggioli, 1943.
[567] E.g. Bloch, 1985; Gumbrecht, 1986; Boulard, 2000; Bähler, 2002; Bähler, 2004b; Loué, 2003; DiVanna, 2008: 63–84. For Gaston Paris as a philologist and medievalist see Compagnon 1997; Bähler, 2004a; DiVanna, 2008, Kim, 2012, and the collected volume Zink, 2004. A good overview of the academic culture in which Brunetière and Paris operated is Ringer, 1991.
[568] "…les *Chants* et les *Contes populaires*, contes moraux, contes de fées, conte de nourrices…" (Brunetière, 1900a: 327)
[569] "…littérature comparée doit envelopper, au même titre que celles de Pindare et de Sapho, les poésies de Thou-Fou et de Li-Taï-pé?" (Brunetière, 1900a: 327). This introduction could have been also written after the lecture,

as I explain in a moment, indirectly addressed Gaston Paris and his preferred use of distant comparisons between various cultures around the world. The solution proposed by Brunetière was more restrictive:

> In a certain respect the poetry of Thou-Fou and Li-Tai-pe […] is entirely in the line of Anacreon and Horace, Parny and Béranger, closer to ours and to our western way of thinking than the Hindu *Puranas*, which are gigantic and immoderate poems, strange and almost foolish to us. But on the contrary, we easily see the nature of the difficulty if, in order to have a pretext or a field for fertile comparison, we need a certain continuity of communications and intercourse, of reciprocal action, of kinship, between the objects we compare.[570]

In the passage, a critique of diffusionist comparison of story-patterns, the main focus of tracing the historical development of medieval and folk literature, can be recognised. As Brunetière argued, even if the traditions that were historically not in contact are similar in some respect, their comparison is not "fertile" and should not be considered by comparative literature. In this respect, similarity between works was irrelevant as the given example suggested: the two great Chinese poets shared more similarity with the Greek, Roman, and French poets than one of the main sources for Indo-European literary traditions, understood by some diffusionists as the source of ancient and medieval literary traditions.[571] Talking in a clearly orientalising manner about the history and literature of these "faraway and mysterious civilisations", Brunetière suggested that traditions which had "few points of contact with ours, consequently offer very few possibilities of comparison".[572] While these traditions might have something in common, they were not in any direct historical contact (or at least this is what he believed) and hence their comparison would serve no purpose for the history of European literature – a position very different from Parry's hermeneutical challenge of world literature, for example.

Instead of "coincidental" parallels or analogues between literature, the basis of comparatist's scholarly interest lay in the "continuity of communications and intercourse", the

---

since it was published only in the *Revue des deux mondes* and not in the official proceedings of the conference. Nevertheless, it expressed the same idea as the lecture itself (see Brunetière, 1900b).

[570] "En un certain sens les poésies de Thou-Fou et de Li-Taï-pé, sont tout à fait dans le goût d'Anacréon et d'Horace, de Parny, de Béranger, plus voisines des nôtres, et de nos habitudes occidentales d'esprit, que ces poèmes gigantesques et démesurés, étranges et presque fous pour nous, qui sont les Pouranas indous. Mais, en revanche, et, pour qu'il y ait prétexte ou matière à comparaison vraiment féconde, s'il faut une certaine continuité de communications ou d'échanges, et d'action réciproque, de parentage ou de cousinage, entre les objets que l'on compare, on voit bien la nature de la difficulté." (Brunetière, 1900a: 327)

[571] Paris outlined in his response one of the possible origins of *fabliaux* as follows: "These tales come from India, from where they passed through various channels to other countries. (Ces contes viennent de l'Inde, d'où ils ont passé par diverses voies dans les autres pays.)" (Paris, 1900: 40)

[572] "… n'ayant ainsi que peu de points de contact avec elles, n'offrissent conséquemment avec elles que peu de points de comparaison." (Brunetière, 1900a: 327)

"reciprocal actions", and direct literary influences between nations and literatures. The existence of a historically proven literary link was hence crucial for Brunetière's understanding of the discipline. For Brunetière:

> the studies of comparative literature are related only to that which is comparable. If it happened that such-and-such a literature was self-contained, let us say, in its own borders, and having never escaped them, it did not participate in that current of exchange which is the first condition of an international literature, it is evident that such a collection would be of great interest in itself, but such a literature would not pertain to the history of European literature.[573]

In the first two parts of this dissertation I showed that the model of world literature proposed by Herder and Wolf (who approached literatures in their socio-historical context) opened the possibility for historical comparisons as envisaged by Posnett and Parry. In the passage above, Brunetière argued for a completely different understanding of literature, which focused on the system of international influences instead of theorising literature as belonging to an enclosed cultural and historical space. His justification for the research of a particular literary tradition became its connection with other traditions: the fact that a literary work influenced other works or was itself influenced, and that works in some way circulated across national and cultural borders. While the idea that literatures were closely intertwined rather than independent was not particularly novel – a similar view already featured in Goethe's understanding of world literature – what was rather unorthodox was the fact that literary influences became a decisive criterion in literary and academic evaluation. In other words, only historically guaranteed literary influences and circulations were to be considered as proper objects of comparison.

Such definition of the discipline greatly facilitated its subsequent Eurocentric development and its primary focus on few national traditions: French, English, German, and Italian literature. Importantly, this focus was justified methodologically as an intrinsic disciplinary trait of *littérature comparée*, not only because Brunetière insisted on studying historical links between literatures – there are of course many other connected literatures – but because his methodology included an identification of the most influential actors in these international relations. Regarding European literature, he wrote:

---

[573] …que la littérature comparée ne s'attachera dans ses recherches qu'à ce qui est comparable. S'il arrivait en effet, qu'une littérature quelconque se fût contenue, pour ainsi dire, dans ses propres frontières, et ne les ayant jamais débordées, n'eût donc ainsi jamais participé à ce courant d'échanges qui est la première condition d'une littérature internationale, il est évident que les productions en pourraient bien avoir leur très grand intérêt en soi, mais une telle littérature n'appartiendrait pas à l'histoire de la littérature européenne (Brunetière, 1900b: 17).

> What method will we use? To decide, let us form a hypothesis, and ideally postulate the existence
> of a single European literature whose particular or national literatures will become, in the history
> of our modern Europe, only local and successive manifestations.[574]

Describing European literature as "one" but consisting of "local manifestations", Brunetière postulated a theory in which different traditions were integral to the understanding of the development of the broader literary field through history – mostly because these local manifestations were, as he believed, the most influential. He argued that European literature progressed through various historical stages which were local and pertained to one national literature only, but to which each of these national traditions contributed by being the most important and most influential in a given historical period. "Artistic quality", one of the reasons Brunetière dismissed folklore, became the cornerstone for understanding literature as an interconnected system of literary works in which the artistic centres influenced other local milieux in the system. Evaluation of literature hence rested on the influence that a specific national tradition, author, or literary work had on other literatures, genres, styles or nations.

Brunetière illustrated this with a schematised historical timeline of European literature, beginning with the Italian "renaissance", followed by the Spanish "baroque", French "classicism", English eighteenth-century literature, and German "romanticism", the influence of which, according to Brunetière, lasted until 1870 and even longer.[575] The fact that these national traditions were chosen as "local manifestations" representative of the whole of European literature was justified by their (supposed) historical influence on other literatures in Europe. For example, he argued that in the period from 1450 to 1600 the Italian renaissance was the only source of imitation; that the Spanish were the first to "free their originality from the imitation of Italians";[576] that the French were "the inspiration and the regulator of European literature";[577] and that German romanticism decisively influenced France, England, Italy, Spain, and the United States. Other national traditions were mostly understood as passive receivers, as being literary inactive, or as producing unimportant and self-contained works. Such was, for example, the literature of "the extreme North", as he named Russian literature and literatures of Scandinavian nations, which failed to offer well determined "national

---

[574] "Quelle méthode y emploierons-nous donc? Pour le décider, faisons une hypothèse, et posons idéalement l'existence d'une littéraiure européenne, dont les littératures particulières ou nationales ne seraient, dans l'histoire de notre moderne Europe, que des manifestations locales et successives." (Brunetière, 1900b: 10)

[575] Brunetière, 1900b: 18–33.

[576] "…la première libéré son originalité de l'imitation de l'italien…" (Brunetière, 1900b: 19)

[577] "…l'inspiratrice ou la régulatrice de la littérature européenne." (Brunetière, 1900b: 21).

characters".[578] According to Brunetière, research in comparative literature was supposed to be limited to only those literatures that were important for understanding the system of European literature, which in practice meant only five European literatures.

The proposed model of literary investigation which focused on literature's *relatability* clearly differed from other contemporary approaches, especially from classical philology, national philologies, and diffusionism discussed in the previous chapters. To a large extent, Gaston Paris embodied all of these trends: he was a mediaevalist who studied in Bonn[579] and Göttingen and was well acquainted with the works of German philologists and their methods. For example, the influence of Herder's historicism as well as Wolf's and Karl Lachmann's (1793–1851) textual criticism on Paris is well attested,[580] as is the influence of the comparative method of the brothers Grimm.[581] Parts of this heritage can be observed also in his response at the *Exposition*, in which he argued precisely against those aspects Brunetière identified as defining features of comparative literature – which comes as no surprise, since Brunetière consciously built his understanding of literature as an alternative to the older academic tradition. In his short talk, Paris claimed that comparative literature should consider not just European *belles-lettres*, but "literature of the whole world, from the works of Egyptian literature to today's novels and poems",[582] and not only "in France and Italy" but "among the Arabs, among the Hindus", and among the "people who are not of Indo-European races."[583] If the discipline should include all literatures of the world, he continued, it could not shy away from literatures that seemed historically unconnected and incomparable, insisting that "folklore, mythography, and comparative mythology"[584] were relevant.

This was, of course, the positive aspect of the comparative approach I identified in Part II: stressing literature's hermeneutic possibility for comparisons. At the same time, though, Paris was an advocate of nationally-informed literary studies which would focus on medieval literature as a focal point for identifying the earliest beginnings of the French nation. For

---

[578] "…les caractères «nationaux» ne m'en semblent pas encore assez determines." (Brunetière, 1900b: 27)

[579] In Bonn, he studied with the famous Romance philologist Friedrich Christian Diez (1794–1876). See Gumbrecht, 1986.

[580] See Bähler, 2004a: 511–513; DiVanna, 2008: 45–47.

[581] Gumbrecht, 1986; Ménard, 2005.

[582] "La littérature du monde entier, depuis les oeuvres de la littérature Égyptienne jusqu'aux romans et aux poèmes d'aujourd'hui." (Paris, 1900: 39)

[583] "…en France, en Italie, chez les Arabes, chez les Hindous, chez les peuples même qui ne sont pas de race indo-européenne." (Paris, 1900: 40)

[584] He wrote: "It is also a new science that concerns folklore, mythography, and comparative mythology, and is of considerable interest for the history of the human spirit. (Elle est aussi une science nouvelle qui touche au folk-lore, à la mythographie et à la mythologie comparée, el dont l'intérêt est considérable pour l'histoire de l'esprit humain.)" (Paris, 1900: 39)

example, his work on Carolingian poetry or on the *Chanson de Roland* was deeply preoccupied with finding the mythical origins of the nation, which he believed was embedded in the medieval epics.[585] Methodologically as well, he furthered the textual criticism in which he was educated with a positivistic approach to Romance philology in order to distinguish it from its German origins.[586] What Paris inherited from the German romantics, therefore, was seeing literary traditions as independent phenomena, expressing the essence of the national spirit. The comparative approach he proposed was grounded in the understanding that patterns might indeed diffuse across the world, but that cultures, nations, and literatures are nevertheless autonomous. In this respect, his comparative proposal was similar to the comparisons as practiced by Herder or Wolf and included presuppositions of cultural and national autonomy assumed by Posnett and Parry. This is not to say, however, that Paris was an ardent nationalist and that Brunetière was not or that Brunetière's work was any less problematic. The latter was a Catholic conservative, a supporter of anti-Dreyfusards (even if he did not himself identify as one[587]), and a nationalist, who believed that the French people constitute a historical and cultural entity and that the future should build upon these roots.[588] The difference between the two thinkers was in the way in which they understood the world and nations in it: Paris tried to define the nation from within by searching for its mystical roots in its supposedly autonomous medieval history, while Brunetière accepted that traditions are in flux and hence defined the nation as a defence against foreign, non-French, and anti-Catholic pressures.[589] These positions of nationalism clearly reflected the differences in the approach of each scholar to literary studies.

The clash of opinions between the two great French academics in 1900 centred around two specific outlooks on world literature. If Gaston Paris' tradition-based historical research focused on traditions as autonomous and self-contained and his comparative approach did not stress the immediate connections between different traditions, Brunetière advanced precisely those aspects of the literary world that scholars such as Paris neglected: connections between literary traditions, internationalism, circulations, and most importantly, the inequality of literary influences and of literary currency in the world-system. He postulated an understanding

---

[585] E.g. Gumbrecht, 1986; Bähler, 2002.

[586] For how Gaston Paris' method differed from other literary and philological trends see Bloch, 1985; Bähler, 2004b; Chevalier and Bergounioux, 2004; Gasparini, 2004; Gumbrecht, 2004; DiVanna, 2008; Kim, 2012.

[587] For Brunetière's position on the Dreyfus affair see his work *Après le Procès* (1898); cf. Compagnon, 1997; Netter, 1993; Jennings, 2000.

[588] See Jennings, 2000; Bähler, 2002; Shurts, 2013. Cf. Shurts, 2017: 53–60.

[589] See especially the analysis of Brunetière's nationalism in Jennings (2000) and the comparison of his and Gaston Paris' nationalism in Bähler (2002).

of literature (mostly European literature to be precise) as essentially relatable, connected, and forming an asymmetrically unified system. In his words, comparative literature dealt with a phenomenon that is "one" with "local and successive manifestations", which were – and this was crucial for his understanding of literature – unevenly present throughout history. According to Brunetière, all renaissance literatures were renaissance, but Italian literature was more renaissance than the others, all romantic literatures were romantic, but German literature was the source of Romanticism, and so on. Literature, as he understood it, pertained to one big network of literary influences and exchanges, but some literatures were simply more present and more influential, occupied central positions, and influenced the majority of other literary milieux. Considering how Brunetière conceived comparative literature, the dismissal of analogues hence seems not to act merely as a device for disciplinary self-defining, but also incorporates a different outlook on (world) literature. Brunetière's talk hence established an emerging trend of *la littérature comparée*, which in the following decades gained momentum and became recognised as an important literary discipline.

c) Fernand Baldensperger and comparative literature in wartime

In the previous section, I argued that French comparative literature promoted a specific model of (world) literature in which literary traditions were understood as connected and related, but at the same time essentially unequal. Literatures are not influential only historically, however, but assume different positions of power simultaneously as well, regardless of them belonging to a different time and place. In chapter III, I already discussed the cultural continuity of traditions as well as Posnett's criticism of national appropriations of classical and medieval literatures. The aim of this section is to further investigate how literatures assume different positions of power in modern societies, in which they can be coded as symbolic representations of contemporary nations, cultures, ideologies, or power-structures. As I argue, such a conception of world literature was often used for various academic, theoretical, and even political agendas and is crucial for understanding how the idea of the ancient literary system informs and shapes contemporary debates in Homeric scholarship – which I discuss in Chapter VI. In order to analyse how French comparative literature approached literary traditions as representative of contemporary social movements and ascribed different symbolic power to them, this section discusses the political and ideological foregrounding of the discipline in its early days.

I look at how one of the most important comparatists of the first half of the twentieth century, Fernand Baldensperger, responded to challenges facing Europe during and after the

First World War and how he proposed that *la littérature comparée* could re-establish the world which was in need of intellectual rethinking and reordering. That such an investigation would focus on Baldensperger seems justified by the fact that he was one of the most influential comparatists in the period from 1900 until his death in 1958,[590] and is sometimes referred to as (another) 'father' of comparative literature. His first academic position was at the University of Nancy,[591] but in 1900 he succeeded Joseph Texte at the University of Lyon and thus became the second academic in France to hold a chair in comparative literature.[592] Besides the establishment of the *Revue de littérature comparée* with Paul Hazard in 1921, Baldensperger's biggest contribution to the discipline was his study *Goethe en France: étude de littérature comparée* (1904), in which he analysed various influences on the poet by reconstructing the historical and intellectual context of his time – a context in which France, of course, played an important role.[593] Methodologically, his work was important because it introduced the systematic study of secondary sources as well as general philosophical and scientific ideas. Upon publication, it became a model for all subsequent comparative endeavours in France for several decades thereafter. This work therefore established an official model for comparatists to follow, but at the same time also positioned Baldensperger as a comparatist who adhered to both historical positivism and to international literary influences as the main defining features of *la littérature comparée*.[594]

Although his comparative research focused on the history of literature, Baldensperger actively responded to the challenges of both world wars in his writings. The investigation of his comparative project in its political context that I undertake in this section reveals that the comparatist's political and world-making programme informed his literary interpretation and *vice versa*, that his ideas about literature informed his vision of the world. This is relevant for the overall argument of this dissertation because it shows that reading literary traditions as interconnected directly relates to strategies for (re)organisation of the literary system and the

---

[590] For Baldensperger's life and work see Bataillon, 1958; Harvitt, 1958; Christophe, 1986; Dubar, 2000; Martí Monterde, 2011, 2016b. See also Baldensperger's own memoirs entitled *Une vie parmi d'autres* (1940). For some time, he also lectured at Harvard University, when Albert Lord was still a graduate student. Lord even mentions the comparatist in his work *Epic singers and oral tradition* (Lord, 1991: 5).

[591] There he was first a tutor of the English and afterwards *maître de conférences* (assistant professor) of German literature. Although there was no comparative literature programme in Nancy at the time, Baldensperger had a comparative approach outright from the beginning of his career. This can be, for example, observed in his work on Gottfried Keller published at the time (Baldensperger, 1899).

[592] Martí Monterde, 2017.

[593] As he wrote in the introduction: "Goethe has received a lot from France. (Goethe a beaucoup reçu de la France.)" (Baldensperger, 1904: 6)

[594] In his theoretical work about comparative literature as well, Baldensperger recognised both characteristic as defining features of the discipline – as for example, in his influential introductory essay to the first issue of *Revue de littérature comparée* entitled "Littérature comparée: le mot et la chose" (1921), which I mentioned above.

world-system. That Baldensperger would relate his academic work to the political situation is not surprising since he was active in the military, in intelligence, in diplomacy, and in international politics. Before the Western front was opened, he participated in diplomatic missions to China, Japan, and America. In the first years of the war, he was called to the front in Alsace and Lorraine, fighting in the battles of Chipotte, Woëvre, and the famous Verdun, for which he earned the *Légion d'Honneur* and *Croix du Guerre*. After his service, most of which he spent as an intelligence officer due to his knowledge of German and other languages, Baldensperger re-embarked on the diplomatic path and went to Scandinavia, but also, and importantly, to Columbia University. There he was a visiting professor and a representative of the French army from 1917 to 1919, a visit that coincided with the United States joining the Allies in 1917. Even after the war he remained politically active and worked in the League of Nations, for which he later presided over the affiliated International Committee on Modern Literary History (*Commission Internationale d'Histoire Littéraire Moderne*).[595] What is important in all this is Baldensperger's belief that comparative literature could help in shaping the future of Europe and the world, proving that even a historical discipline could have its own contemporary agenda.

This can be most clearly observed in how Baldensperger perceived the role of comparative literature in forming a new world order in the times after the First World War. In 1918, only a few months before the two Armistices were signed, Baldensperger was still at Columbia University and published a paper entitled "Prophesying in time of war" in which he foresaw two possible scenarios for the world after the end of the war:

> Large complexes of nations will arise, by conquest, annexation or accord, out of a war which marks the passing from the national group to a more comprehensive one; or, to the contrary, smaller communities, bound by a tie of association, will again have their turn after a war where "bigness" played its last game.[596]

This passage could be read as expressing a general tension between local and transnational identities, that is to say, the contradicting pressures of localisation and transnationalism, which accompanied the nearing end of the war. Either the breakdown of Europe and local isolation, or cosmopolitan formation of transnational entities, achieved by annexation and accord of smaller local communities could be established as the new political picture. Of course,

---

[595] See Newman, 2013: 56.
[596] Baldensperger, 1918: 113.

comparative literature, which often positioned itself in opposition to national literary studies and nationalism, was perfectly suited to assist in the latter project. Even if not expressed straightforwardly in this article, Baldensperger was clearly championing a future of "large complexes of nations", a position he expressed in several other publications[597] as well as in his participation in the League of Nations mentioned above.

But Baldensperger also had a more personal agenda in writing these words. It reflected his preoccupation with Alsace-Lorraine, the comparatist's country of birth, which is located on the border between France and Germany. In the same year as his essay, 1918, Alsace-Lorraine declared independence as a Soviet republic and was shortly thereafter occupied by the French army and later annexed by the Treaty of Versailles – which also explains the comparatist's foreshadowing of "annexation".[598] Baldensperger's preoccupation with Alsace-Lorraine reveals that his political stance and his academic decisions were closely connected. When offered a professorship in comparative literature at the University of Strasbourg after the end of the war, he immediately returned from New York and resigned his academic position at the Faculté des lettres de Paris. As Antoni Martí Monterde argued, the fact that Baldensperger accepted this position was in itself a highly political statement: Strasbourg, the capital of Alsace, was for a long time an object of dispute between Germany and France, being seized by Prussia in 1870 during the Franco-Prussian wars and annexed to France in the aftermath of the First World War by the Treaty of Versailles.[599] The establishment of a new French university was a clear attempt to exert political control and cultural assimilation over the newly acquired German-speaking territory.[600] Baldensperger seized the opportunity to assist in re-establishing French culture there, a deed he would later describe as a "service to Alsace".[601] This reveals how closely connected his academic programme was to his political vision of the world and its national redefining, and further underlines that ideas about world literature can possess world-making tensions.

The changes in post-war Europe not only guided Baldensperger's career decisions, but also informed his proposal for the future of the discipline, which he envisaged as an important contributor to organising the new world. A year after the above-mentioned article was read at Columbia and when the war was officially over, Baldensperger published a discussion

---

[597] E.g. Baldensperger 1919a, 1919b, 1919c, 1922, 1934.
[598] For Alsace-Lorraine and its post-war annexation to France see especially Carrol, 2018; cf. Kramer, 1997.
[599] Martí Monterde, 2016b.
[600] A brief overview of the inauguration ceremony programme and addresses confirms this interpretation. The accompanying *Fêtes d'inauguration* were, interestingly, compiled by Baldensperger (see Baldensperger, 1920).
[601] Baldensperger, 1940: 311–33.

addressing the nature of comparative literature and its mission entitled "Où nous en sommes: examen de conscience d'un 'comparatiste'", in which he directly equated the war with the discipline. As he wrote: "…the great war was, in fact, a vast struggle of comparative literature in action."[602] This essay could be read as a post-war manifesto for defining the discipline's role in an emerging Europe because it argued that "the spiritual map of the world after the war" has to be readdressed in order to see "if it changed and how".[603] It seems that after the 11th November 1918, Baldensperger predicted a new role for the literary discipline he helped inaugurate. Because struggles of the war were very similar to the struggles of comparative literature, the literary discipline could help find an answer to the pressing question of Europe's post-war reparations.

Indeed, Baldensperger had his own solution for the concurrent state of affairs. Hints of it were encountered already in his paper delivered at Columbia, in which he expressed his fears for local isolations and instead promoted international connections. In "Où nous en sommes" he again argued that the world fosters "intellectual exchanges between people", but further proposed that the existence of international contacts *alone* did not prevent an expansionist mentality and the general brutality of war:

> We are, no doubt, less inclined to think now than about ten years ago that literary cosmopolitanism was a harbinger of international harmony by the simple play of intellectual exchanges. Nor has the entanglement of financial interests or commercial connections maintained the peace of the world automatically…[604]

Baldensperger pointed his criticism against cosmopolitanism, trust in which was shattered by the war, as he believed. The old claim that mere exchange of ideas would bring peace, prosperity, and equality to all nations – maintained, among others, by Goethe[605] as seen in Chapter I – had failed. As Baldensperger argued, intellectuals had fostered ideas of mutual cooperation between nations for decades, but it helped nothing in preventing the

---

[602] "…la grande guerre avait été, en somme, une vaste lutte de littérature comparée en action." (Baldensperger, 1919b: 265)

[603] "Il est essentiel aussi de voir si, dans la carte spirituelle du monde après la guerre, notre position relative s'est modifiée, et dans quel sens." (Baldensperger, 1919b: 271)

[604] "Aussi sommes-nous, sans doute, moins enclins qu'il y a une dizaine d'années à penser que le cosmopolitisme littéraire était, par le simple jeu des échanges intellectuels, générateur de bonne entente internationale. Pas plus que l'emmêlement des intérêts financiers ou des relations commerciales n'a, automatiquement, maintenu la paix du monde…" (Baldensperger, 1919b: 271)

[605] Baldensperger of course knew Goethe's work exceptionally well. In 1950, he explicitly mentioned "World Literature" when writing about his "debt to Goethe", writing that Goethe "distinctly restricted the valid scope of 'Weltliteratur' to whatever had been permeated with the spirit of old Greece", while world literature is a "broad universe, nevertheless – one in which America has its place" (Baldensperger, 1950: 19).

bloodthirstiness, brutality, and expansionism, presumably because cosmopolitanism could not recognise the changing power relations in the imperialist world-system. What was needed for recuperation was a new world order, one that could maintain peace and prosperity, which Baldensperger found in the model of *la littérature comparée*. In this respect, understanding of (world) literature as an internationally connected system in which dominant and passive traditions were clearly defined proved useful for addressing the war and its aftermath. He emphasised that any new government would need to recognise that the world-system is not only interconnected but at the same time also defined by unequal and continuously changing power relations. Comparative literature as an academic discipline recognised both the connections ant the positions of influence and control (an aspect of world literature that Goethe's cosmopolitanism or Posnett's and Parry's promotion of cultural and historical comparability disregarded). This was also the reason why *la littérature comparée* was perfectly suited to lead the reorganisation of the world.

Baldensperger hence accepted the positive role international connections had in preventing possible local and national isolations and stressed the historical inevitability of intellectual exchange. While the new organisation of the world undoubtedly built upon global exchange, there was also the need for "new order" and "new humanism", both of which were supposed to play "an eminent role in this re-education of intelligences" and in constructing "the real international mentality" of Europe.[606] As seen above, this new humanism was to be found in comparative literature. In a belligerent style, resonating with his claim that the First World War was in fact the war of the discipline, Baldensperger wrote:

> Comparative literature in action, conflict of opposing ideals, spiritual forces fighting for equity or hegemony: in any case, it was impossible that from the universal war there would not emerge a firm conception of interdependence of the world's spirit at the same time as the necessity, for each spiritual entity, of defining its position and delimiting its own value. The age of national isolations is clearly over.[607]

---

[606] He wrote: "…and if new humanism must help to create the real international mentality, France is called upon to play an eminent role in this re-education of intelligences. (…et si un nouvel humanisme doit aider à créer la véritable mentalité internationale, la France est appelée à jouer un rôle éminent dans cette rééducation des intelligences.)" (Baldensperger, 1919b: 271)

[607] "Littérature comparée en action, conflit d'idéals opposés, forces spirituelles luttant pour l'équité ou pour l'hégémonie: de toute façon, il était impossible que, d'une guerre universelle, ne sortît pas une conception affermie de l'interdépendance du monde de l'esprit en même temps que de la nécessité, pour chaque ensemble spirituel, de définir sa position et de délimiter sa valeur propre. L'âge des isolements nationaux est évidemment dépassé." (Baldensperger, 1919b: 265)

National isolation was indeed over, but so were the times in which nations would not need to define their position on the international podium. In other words, humanist ideals of cultural, national, and literary equality were challenged by local, nationalist, and prejudiced politics of invading parties. The intellectuals clearly failed to address the inequalities of these visions. The new world and the new humanism, as Baldensperger believed, would acknowledge the impossibility of cultural equality and reinstitute the world in which no new "defining" of identities would be needed and in which all cultural values would be properly "delimited". If the war was indeed, as he stressed, as much about "'spiritual' values" as it was about "economy" and "territory",[608] cultural and spiritual order had to be re-established, preferably in a way in which all "relative positions" would be clearly defined. A few years later, Baldensperger would repeat this claim in the inaugural and well-known article in *Revue de littérature comparée* entitled "Littérature comparée: le mot et la chose",[609] writing that the main problem of the old cosmopolitanism lay in the idea of national equality and autonomy which necessarily felt short of any possible reality. On the contrary, comparative literature with its understanding of influential nations, unequal circulation of literary ideas, and positioning of international centres and literary standards was perfectly suited for this mission: for it countered national delimitations in literary studies by stressing the interconnectedness of literary traditions, but at the same time also identified the "relative positions" of dominant and passive actors in these circulations.

The model of understanding literature and the world maintained by the French comparatists hence mapped ideally on Baldensperger's political vision for the future of Europe. By stressing the importance of defined power relations between European states and the role of comparative literature in it, Baldensperger also brought into discussion another important aspect: namely that the past literary traditions not only have a certain position in the literary system historically, but that all relationships between literatures are constantly redefined in numerous receptions. In other words, he argued that literatures always participate in the modern literary system and establish their own position in it. Baldensperger could therefore look back into history in order to propose the solution for the post-war future:

---

[608] Baldensperger, 1919b: 265.
[609] Baldensperger, 1921.

> …we mean to involve France in a circulation of ideas, forms, and suggestions in which her own genius would secure her the first place, and which would restore what the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries called 'the Republic of Letters'.[610]

As is apparent from the passage, the comparatist's vision of the new world was in fact the re-establishment of the old order, one going back two centuries. The "literary republic of letters" was presented as an ideal model, not only because France was at the time the centre of culture and scholarship, but also because it represented a model for how its superiority could be established after the war and how other traditions could be defined in relation to it. This, precisely, was the role of comparative literature Baldensperger had in mind, a re-emergence of the "republic of letters" in which France would again be "the first place" of cultural and literary world and to which people all over the world would look up and cherish its "genius". According to the comparatist, the only way to ensure global peace and prosperity was to establish a world in which everyone would acknowledge the so-called new cosmopolitan perception. At the same time, it was also an act of repositioning French literature of the seventeenth and eighteenth century into the centre of the literary world. Past literary dominance was reinterpreted in the present political situation and used as a device in planning and outlining a new world.

<center>***</center>

In the emergence and thriving of comparative literature in France there was hence an underlying historical ambivalence. On the one hand, comparative literature defined itself in opposition to nationalist tensions and against national and local particularities, clearly acting in order to prevent the post-war decay of Europe, but also as a critique of nationalism, racism, and expansionism. In this respect, Baldensperger and his students, most notably Jean-Marie Carré, were extremely critical of Fascism and Nazism during the Second World War and Carré even fought for the French Resistance.[611] Even René Wellek, who despised the nationalism of the French discipline, later acknowledged the positive vision the discipline had in countering fascist politics, imperialism, and racism in Europe.[612] Indeed, discipline's international outlook and insistence on literary influences helped promote the idea of Europe as a historical entity of

---

[610] "…nous entendions faire participer la France à une circulation d'idées, de formes, de suggestions où son génie propre lui eût assuré la première place, et qui restaurât ce que le XVIIe et le XVIIIe siècles appelaient 'la République des lettres'." (Baldensperger, 1919b: 263)
[611] Bataillon, 1958; Moura, 2000; cf. Haskell Block's memories in Dowden and Werner, 2002: 214. Cf. Martí Monterde, 2016a.
[612] Wellek, 1959: 150.

symbiosis in which nations and cultures could cohabitate, learn from each other, share their knowledge, and empower each other for a "better" world. This vision of comparative literature was used to reaffirm Europe's unity and cooperation in its post-war rebuilding, specifically in rebuilding its identity, politics, and ideologies.

At the same time, this vision was constructed in direct opposition to the "failed" humanist ideal of mutual equality and understanding – a world-view so heartily advocated by Goethe, for example. By stressing the inequality of various traditions in the literary system, the comparatists not only advocated that the world is unavoidably and also should be unequal, but also ascribed the fault for the war to the cosmopolitan inability to recognise different connections and power relations. Comparative literature was given the task to lead the intellectual revolution which would institute the new order, ascribing the most important positions of literary and intellectual power to the winners of the war. France and the United States were recognised as central in this recuperation of the world. They were followed by the defeated nations who still belonged to Europe and were, in a sense, given a second chance, provided they accepted the new rulers. With such an ambivalent, that is, at once anti-isolationists and asymmetrical understanding of literature, Baldensperger and other comparatists promoted a vision of a unified Europe in which the allied forces were properly recognised as winners.

While this was undoubtedly one of the reasons for the academic success of *la littérature comparée*, it also brought into discussion another important topic. The French comparatists demonstrated that all literary connections, including historical literary traditions, exist through a continuous readdressing and can hence be given a shifting normative or even a political role. Baldensperger looked to the seventeenth and eighteenth century in order to find an organisation of the literary system he preferred, one in which France was in its centre. The discussion of the French comparatists therefore showed that the inequalities in the literary system are not merely a historical fact, but are recreated, negotiated, reused, and re-established through contemporary receptions, and can even serve as platforms for political programmes and other world-making agendas. This idea was important also for the study of Homer – but in order to understand that, it will be necessary to return to the nineteenth century, and to the discovery of the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, before moving forward to the twentieth and even the twenty-first – to show how the idea of unequal contact can be used not only from the position of the winner (as was the case in this chapter) but also for the recovery of defeated voices.

CHAPTER VI: William Ewart Gladstone, the Epic of Gilgamesh*, and the ancient literary system*

In Chapter V, I argued that the French comparatists fostered an image of literature as an interconnected and simultaneously unequal system, which was subsequently used as a device for different political and world-making practices. The aim of Chapter VI is to research how similar ideas were envisaged in dealing with ancient texts – or with the ancient literary system, as I call it here. For this, I investigate how the discovery of previously unknown ancient literary traditions challenged and changed the understanding of classical and world literature in Homeric scholarship. Because the Homeric poems were traditionally considered the oldest and therefore uninfluenced by anything, the idea that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were themselves part of ancient literary circulation became relevant only when non-Greek scripts that were contemporary or preceding the Homeric tradition were deciphered in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. The decipherment of ancient scripts, archaeological discoveries, and the emergence of 'new' texts eventually provided scholars with evidence that the ancient Greeks were surrounded by rich literary traditions in other languages – something which Wolf could still deny due to the 'insufficient' material. If the Homeric epics were previously understood as independent literary works which emerged out of Greek literary genius *ex nihilo* – not unlike how Goethe read Homer, the "poet's Bible" – these discoveries provided scholars with the material to start considering possible intercultural relations, influences, and connections between ancient literatures.

Although the decipherment of Egyptian hieroglyphic by Jean-François Champollion in 1820 was important in launching various investigations of Greco-Egyptian literary contacts, and the discovery of Hittite texts was likewise influential in illuminating literary transfer between Greece and Anatolia, it was the decipherment of Akkadian texts that had by far the greatest impact in the study of Homer.[613] For this reason, Chapter VI focuses on one historical moment among these early discussions about the ancient literary exchange: the discovery of the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. I consider the effect of the discovery not only on the study of Homer, but on the creation of a specific world – since all engagements in world literature have, as has emerged from Chapter V especially, the effect of creating a specific understanding of the world.

---

[613] For the history and the decipherment of cuneiform and the Akkadian language see Damrosch, 2007b; cf. Budge, 1925: 39–51; Cathcart, 2011. Literature on the decipherment of ancient scripts in the nineteenth century and their importance for archaeology and philology is immense. A good introduction is Robinson, 2009; Baines et. al., 2008. Cf. also Damrosch, 2007a, 2013, 2016 on scripts and world literature. For decipherment of *Gilgamesh* specifically see Damrosch, 2007b; Schmidt, 2019.

While the announcement of the Akkadian epic initially stirred some debate in theology,[614] its early reception in classical scholarship became central for discussions about literary influences and cultural exchange in the ancient Mediterranean.

Chapter VI traces the beginnings of this debate by investigating the work of William Ewart Gladstone (1809–1898), a British politician and a student of Homer,[615] acting three times as a Prime Minister (in 1868–1874, 1880–1885, and 1892–1894). Gladstone was, as it happens, the first classical scholar to address how the discovery of the Akkadian epic affected interpretations of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. In order to understand how this conversation began and how it later developed, I provide a close reading and a detailed commentary on Gladstone's speech in response to the first public presentation of the epic and suggest that he grounded the discourse in a dialectic relationship between "the East" and "Europe", both forming what he alternately called "our race" and "the world". In addition to the fact that this speech is the earliest documented response to the discovery of the Akkadian epic by any Homeric scholar, the reason why I focus on it here is that it represents a clear recognition of the ideological and political potential that debates about Homer and the Near East still possess today – which I go on to address in the final part of the chapter. Examining how exactly the ancient literary exchange and power relations were conceived by Gladstone informs, I argue, our understanding of present debates about the exchange between the ancient Near Eastern literary traditions and Greece. This is relevant for my overall argument because it reveals that past and present discourses about the ancient literary system influence contemporary world horizons

---

[614] The *Epic of Gilgamesh* had its own reception in theology, especially in the first decades after its discovery. In 1875, George Smith published two works in which he described his discovery of the tablets, *Assyrian Discoveries: An account of explorations and discoveries on the site of Nineveh, during 1873 and 1874* (1875) and *The Chaldean account of Genesis* (1880), which included further fragments and a partial translation of the poem. Only a year after the publication of Smith's *Chaldean account of Genesis*, his work was translated into German as *George Smith's Chaldäische Genesis* (1876) by Hermann Delitzsch, brother of the first professor of Assyriology Friedrich Delitzsch, who himself contributed an introduction, addenda, and notes to the translation. In 1902, Friedrich Delitzsch held the first in a series of public lectures entitled "Babel und Bibel" in which he argued for a close similarity between the Bible and the Babylonian texts and even proclaimed that the Near Eastern sources were "purer and more original" (see Delitzsch, 1903). This series of lectures initiated a several decades long discussion in theology and eventually influenced also classical and Homeric scholarship. For the "Babel-Bibel Streit" and the theological reception of *Gilgamesh* see Johanning, 1988; Lehmann, 1994; Larsen, 1995; Marchand, 2004, 2007, 2009: 212–251, 2010; Ziolkowski, 2011: 23–28; Thelle, 2018: 133–138. Besides theology, the discovery of *Gilgamesh* influenced other fields as well, for example, natural sciences: see e.g. Cregan-Reid, 2009, 2015.

[615] A good introduction to Gladstone, his life, and his politics are Stansky, 1979; Bebbington, 1993; Jenkins, 1995; Matthew, 1997 (previously published in two parts as Matthew, 1988 and 1995); Bebbington and Swift, 2000. The most important recent discussions are Biagini, 2000; Bebbington, 2004; Quinault et. al., 2016. Gladstone's diaries have also been edited and published by Matthew (see Matthew, 2004). For Gladstone's Homeric scholarship see Myres, 1958: 94–122; Turner, 1981: 234 – 243; Lloyd-Jones, 1982: 110–125; Bebbington, 2000, 2004, 2008; Koelsch, 2006; Boer, 2007; Bridges, 2008; Gange, 2009.

and world-making strategies – and that these processes retrospectively inform different readings of the ancient world.

a) Gladstone, Homer, and the Phoenicians: the birth of the archaic East

The *Epic of Gilgamesh* was discovered among the numerous fragments housed in the British Museum's collection in 1872 by George Smith (1840–1876), a young self-taught Assyriologist with an interest in Biblical history. Soon thereafter, on the 3rd December, he introduced the epic in an announcement to the Society of Biblical Archaeology, presenting the "Epic of Izdubar" as it was then known, or rather some 250 verses of tablet XI, which contains a Mesopotamian version of the deluge-story.[616] Even if a discussion about possible influence on the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* was immediately available, Smith stressed the relevance of the Akkadian epic for The Book of Genesis, mostly in accordance with the occasion, the content of the tablet XI, and his personal interests. Nevertheless, the ancient Greek epics did not go unaddressed and attention was brought to them by the British Prime Minister and devoted student of Homer, William Ewart Gladstone.

After the papers had been read at the Society's meeting and the immediate discussion was over, Gladstone was called on to speak as the most eminent person in the audience. Besides rejecting outright any possibility of public funding for a new expedition to find the missing fragments of the poem – an issue most pressing for his political role as Prime Minister[617] – he immediately stressed the relevance of the Akkadian epic for Homer and ancient Greece. As he reportedly said:

> Almost everything begins for me with my old friend Homer […]. The course of recent discovery both in Assyria and Egypt, has tended to give – if I may use the expression – a solidity to much of the old Greek traditions which they never before possessed. I do not know whether it is supposed that inquiries into archaeological and other sciences are to have the effect of unsettling many minds in this our generation, but I must say that for me, as to the very few points on which I am able to examine them, they have a totally different effect, and much of ancient tradition and record which

---

[616] According to the publication of the paper entitled "The Chaldean history of the Flood" in the *Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archaeology* (Smith, 1873).

[617] He said: "But I do not know that I should have undertaken to perform that office [i.e. delivering a speech] if it had not been for the pointed appeal which has been made to the meeting, and to a body outside this meeting supposed to have the command of the public purse on the subject of Government grants for the prosecution of these explorations. That side of the question has been presented to you with great earnestness and ability. There is, however, another side of the question, which must never be overlooked – namely, that it has been the distinction and the pride of this country to do very many things by individual effort that in other countries would only be effected by what Sir Robert Peel used to call 'the vulgar expedient of applying to the Consolidate Fund,' or whatever in those other nations corresponded with that well-known institution of our country". "Chaldean history of the Deluge", *The Times*, 1872 (Dec. 4), p. 7. Cf. Damrosch, 2007b: 34.

we were formerly obliged to accept as of a purely indeterminate character, though we believed it contained a seed and nucleus of truth, we are about to see gradually taking its form, that there will be a disinterring and building up of what was conceived to be buried for ever, and not merely the recollections of that world, but its actual history is about to undergo a great process of great retrospective enlargement.[618]

While Gladstone recognised the provocative and "unsettling" nature Smith's discovery could have, and indeed soon had,[619] on the understanding of the Bible and religion, his interests mostly lay elsewhere.[620] Instead of continuing the discussion of the lecture, he placed the Akkadian epic in the context of other discoveries in the Near East, Egypt, and the Levant, and the role these discoveries played in shaping knowledge about the early periods of the ancient world, of which, as he believed, the two Homeric epics remained the main testimonies. According to Gladstone, therefore, the discovery of *Gilgamesh* was linked to the study of Homeric poetry, of ancient Greece, of the ancient Mediterranean, and consequentially of the world.

After 1872, Gladstone started following the discoveries of new Akkadian tablets, acquainted himself with the material, and read the most important publications in Assyriology. More importantly, he actively thought about the Near Eastern traditions in his readings of Homeric poetry. Smith's discovery piqued Gladstone's interest in the Akkadian literary tradition to the extent that he later argued it changed the landscape of Homeric studies in a manner that was without precedent. In 1890, for example, he appended an essay to *Landmarks of Homeric study* entitled "On the Points of Contact between the Assyrian Tablets and the Homeric Text", in which he wrote that "the story of the Flood […] was the first among the discoveries to challenge a large sphere of public attention in this country".[621] He further suggested that the discovery of the new literary tradition resulted in a whole new paradigm for students of Homer:

> The picture of the Homeric world, belonging to the period when legend hardens into history, lies within the range of that comparative science which of late has done so much to illuminate antiquity.

[618] "Chaldean history of the Deluge", *The Times*, 1872 (Dec. 4), p. 7.
[619] For a short overview of the controversy in Biblical studies brought by the discovery see Thelle, 2018: 122–138.
[620] The report on Smith's lecture in *The Spectator* picked up on this "threatening attitude" towards the Hebrew Bible, accusing Gladstone of supporting it. See "Untitled", *The Spectator*, 1872 (Dec 7), p. 1542; "Gladstone's passion for Homer", *The Spectator*, 1872 (Dec 7), pp. 1549–1550. The politician felt compelled to respond and reassert his support of the Church. See Gladstone, 1872 (14 Dec.). To a certain extent at least, Gladstone was also interested in the Biblical side of the story. He dealt with the importance of the *Epic of Gilgamesh* for the Bible and theology in his book *The impregnable rock of Holy Scripture* (1890c; cf. Gladstone, 1890b).
[621] Gladstone, 1890a: 158–159.

But we step beyond the process of collecting and comparing allied phenomena, when circumstances enable us to arrange them in order of time, or to connect them, such as they appear in one country, by affiliation, with their yet older forms manifested in another. […] Apart from the wider investigations of comparative science, it is [a] matter of legitimate interest to trace upwards to their source, through the channels now opened, a portion at least of the influences which have operated in moulding the Greek nation, and thus somewhat to advance at a point of capital interest the important work, now in progress, of reconstituting piecemeal the earlier records of our race.[622]

Constructing his argument in a way similar to Brunetière at the Paris Exhibition, Gladstone argued that the new evidence raised a completely different set of issues than the older "comparative science", with which he mostly meant the previous discussions in Egyptology, another important field for his understanding of the ancient Mediterranean.[623] The role of the new science was to "trace upwards to their source […] the influences which have operated in moulding the Greek nation". Due to the lack of texts that were contemporary to or earlier than Homer, scholars previously had to rely mostly on parallels and analogies, but the Akkadian discoveries, with the *Epic of Gilgamesh* as their cornerstone, opened the question of how ancient literatures were related, how different cultures interacted, and how they informed each other. The main focus of the new Homeric studies was hence not the "comparison" of "allied phenomena", but rather the question of how the Near East "influenced" Homer and the Greeks, which constituted a true picture of "the earlier records of our race".

In order to understand Gladstone's scholarship on Homer and *Gilgamesh*, it is thus important to unravel how he understood the ancient literary system, why he thought it was relevant, and what he meant by "our race". To interpret his view of Homer and *Gilgamesh* as merely an influence of the foreign "East" (as he often referred to Babylon and Egypt) on 'European' Greece would indeed miss the point. Even before the Akkadian epic was discovered and before the new paradigm in Homeric studies was proposed, Gladstone had been interested in questions of intercultural transmission between Greece and, primarily, the Phoenicians. In his response to Smith at the Society of Biblical Archaeology he quickly turned to the Phoenicians, "designated by a Greek name, but a people belonging to the East" and speculated about their contact with the "Chaldeans":

---

[622] Gladstone, 1890a: 127–28.
[623] See "The place of Homer in history and in Egyptian chronology" (1874a), "Homer's place in History" (1874b), "Religion, Achaian and Semitic" (1880), or "On the ancient beliefs in a future state" (1891). Cf. Gange, 2006, 2013.

170

> … but the distinct testimony of Herodotus, according with the voice of extremely ancient tradition, carries the people [i.e. Phoenicians] back to the head of the Persian Gulf, and places them in immediate association with those scenes to which the inquiry of this evening belongs.[624]

After establishing a historical link between Homer and *Gilgamesh*, he offered a short introduction to the Phoenicians on which he dwelt extensively in his past Homeric explorations. In the address he underlined their importance as transmitters of knowledge, religion, and literature from beyond the Greek world:

> I will venture to say that it is impossible for any person carefully to study the most remarkable history of manners, usages, institutions, religions, and all that belong to the life of man, that is presented to us in the poems of Homer – I am not speaking of the literal and historic truth of the Trojan war, which I conceive to be of secondary importance – and one, I say, who examines that living picture – by far the most complete that has ever been delineated by the hand of man for the instruction of the mind of man in any age – cannot fail to see that the seeds of almost all that was deposited in the Greek mind, there to bear fruit for future generations, were laid there by Phoenician hands and came from the source of Phoenician civilization.[625]

Phoenicians were, in fact, Gladstone's main means of addressing issues of interconnectedness, circulation, and influence between ancient cultures, especially between ancient Greece and what he understood as "the East". As he elaborated in a paper delivered to the Oriental Congress in 1892, "Phoenician" was a collective term used by Homer to signify "everything found in the Achaian Peninsula that was of foreign origin" and it included "all Syrian, Assyrian, Egyptian, and generally all Eastern meanings".[626] According to Gladstone, this "East" was crucial for the "early history of mankind – perhaps the most interesting and most important of all the portions of the varied history of our race".[627] Before turning to the political undertones of the expression "our race" and its connection with the "ahistoric" Trojan war, I address Gladstone's reception of the two ancient cultures and their relationship. Considering how he dealt with the Phoenicians reveals a multi-dimensional, in fact dialectic, understanding of the ancient Mediterranean that complicates the image of *Gilgamesh* and Homer framed as an Eastern influence on 'Western' Greece.

One further note is needed before I proceed with the discussion: to explain why Gladstone focused on the Phoenicians, and why he used them as a collective term for "all

---

[624] "Chaldean history of the Deluge", *The Times*, 1872 (Dec. 4), p. 7.
[625] "Chaldean history of the Deluge", *The Times*, 1872 (Dec. 4), p. 7.
[626] Gladstone, 1892: 6–7.
[627] "Chaldean history of the Deluge", *The Times*, 1872 (Dec. 4), p. 7.

Eastern meanings". The best explanation can perhaps be found in Josephine Crawley Quinn's recent book *In Search of the Phoenicians* (2018) where she argues that the Phoenicians "did not in fact exist as a self-conscious collective of 'people'"[628] and that the "fully developed notion of Phoenician ethnicity may be a nineteenth-century invention".[629] Furthermore, Quinn also shows that they were important for the construction of British identity and that they had an important role in the development of cultural comparisons – as both a counterpart and an opposite to the English nation.[630] Taking into account her arguments, it is possible to see why Gladstone put such emphasis on this particular ancient people: partly because their identity was difficult to determine so that he could use them to refer to the East in general; partly because they were already used in cultural comparisons, so that he could present his own scholarly work as their advancement; and partly because their ambivalent canonisation in the discourse about the British identity supported Gladstone's argument for a dynamic relationship between "the East" and Europe.

Gladstone first extensively dealt with Phoenician influences in his major three-volume work on the Homeric epics, *Studies on Homer and the Homeric Age* (1858). Here, the maritime civilisation featured mostly in relation to Homeric geography[631] as "reporters" that provided Homer with material about an "undiscovered world".[632] While in the mid-nineteenth century Gladstone relied mostly on the Homeric texts for his understanding of the ancient Near East, he later incorporated new evidence provided by expeditions undertaken by archaeologists in Egypt, Greece, Asia Minor, and other lands under the Ottoman empire – an interest which was reflected also in his speech at the Society of Biblical Archaeology. With new evidence becoming available, the importance of "the East" for his Homeric investigation increased. In the introduction to his second book on Homer *Juventus Mundi* (1869), he wrote that his new scholarship was greatly improved "with respect to the Phoenicians", bringing out "more clearly and fully what I had [in *Studies on Homer*] only ventured to suspect or hint at" and giving them, "if I am right, a highly influential function in forming the Greek nation."[633] As evidence of Levantine (and Egyptian) influence he discussed the emergence of writing, commerce, art, music, architecture, and mythology, which were according to Gladstone all brought to Greece by the Phoenicians.[634] His other writings too promoted the influence of the Phoenicians

---

[628] Quinn, 2018: xviii.
[629] Quinn, 2018: 204.
[630] Quinn, 2018: 176–200.
[631] See e.g. Koelsch, 2006.
[632] Gladstone, 1858b: 224.
[633] Gladstone, 1869: v.
[634] See especially Gladstone, 1869: 119–150.

alongside other Mediterranean and Eastern cultures, which Gladstone discussed as new discoveries became available.[635] He thus treated Phoenician culture as a channel of transmission "through which the old parental East poured into the fertile soil of the Greek mind…",[636] and as instrumental in bringing to the Aegean everything that the Greeks needed to develop their literature, art, culture, and religion.

While Gladstone's arguments to some extent changed depending on new archaeological discoveries and new historical theories, his main conviction about Homer remained the same: that he constructed the Greek nation and religion[637] by incorporating and reworking the influences from "the East", which were delivered to him via the Phoenicians. Contrary to the idea that cultures are unique, independent, and self-contained – something which permeated the thought of Herder, Wolf, Posnett, and Parry – Gladstone believed that the Greeks were shaped by traditions surrounding the Aegean and hence presented a conglomerate of various imports. In other words, he regarded ancient Greece, and needless to say, Homeric poetry, as essentially relatable, that is, as a tradition in ancient cultural exchange which was influenced by surrounding cultures. Specifically, he rejected the notion that Homeric poetry was autonomous. Because Near Eastern cultures decisively shaped the two ancient epics, he concluded that there could be no civilisation without transmission and no culture without cultural exchange. Gladstone believed that there had to be Homer for there to be ancient Greek culture, since Homer was its inventor. However, there could be no Homer and hence no Greece without the influence of the Phoenicians and "the East". The latter were essential for "forming the Greek nation"[638] and with it for the development of culture.

The new-found interconnectedness of the ancient world necessitated redefining the role of Homer in the modern world, as well as a new modern vision of antiquity. Gladstone understood ancient Greece as a predecessor of modern society – not unlike many other classical scholars at the time[639] – and saw in Homer the origins of modern religion, theology, ethics, and

---

[635] This can be further seen in two articles published in 1874 entitled "The place of Homer in history and in Egyptian chronology" and "Homer's place in history", and their subsequent reworking into a monograph entitled *Homeric Synchronism* (1876b). In this work, even more attention was given to contemporary archaeology, especially to the excavations in Turkey by Heinrich Schliemann (1822–1890). Cf. Vaio, 1990, 1992; Bebbington, 2004.

[636] Gladstone, 1869: 130.

[637] Gladstone believed that Homer was the inventor of ancient Greece by being the first to construct the Greek pantheon, religion, and mythology. This aspect of Gladstone's Homeric scholarship is discussed in more detail by Turner, 1981: 234–243; Bebbington, 2000, 2004.

[638] Gladstone, 1869: v.

[639] See e.g. Pfeiffer, 1976; Lloyd-Jones, 1982. For classics and the Victorians see Richardson, 2013. For a brief introduction to nationalism in classics, especially in the Victorian period, see Smith, 2016.

politics.[640] In an essay "On the place of Homer in classical education and in historical inquiry" (1857), for example, he wrote that the Greeks were "the original mould of the modern European civilization"[641] so that Homer "is to be read for theology, history, ethics, politics".[642] In the 1860 Rectorial address at the University of Edinburgh, he claimed that the ancients produced "the most typical forms" of "man" so that if "man is to be studied in books", he best be studied in ancient texts.[643] However, if ancient traditions were connected and Greek culture was not autonomous, the myth of the Greek genius needed recasting. The relationship between Homer and the Phoenicians provided the platform on which Gladstone could elaborate his claim that the interconnected ancient Mediterranean constituted the "most important of all the portions of the varied history of our race".

Gladstone insisted that cultural exchange in the ancient world was profoundly relevant to the modern world. If ancient Greece was formed by the Phoenicians and "the East", this meant that connections were inscribed into the genealogy of modernity, and that both Greece *and* "the East" contributed to the development of "our race". In other words, Gladstone argued that the modern world originated in the connected world of the ancient Mediterranean and its intercultural transmissions. In a chapter on the Phoenician influences in *Juventus Mundi* (1869), he elaborated on this point:

> But that the main question is not the actual possession of this or that accomplishment, of this or that institution; it is the possession of the quality, in soul or body, which is adapted first to receive the gift as into a genial bed, and then so to develop its latent capabilities as to carry them onwards, and upwards, to its perfection. Among all the gifts of the great nations of modern Europe, how many are there which we can affirm to be, in each case, absolutely original?[644]

This interesting passage incorporates the essence of Gladstone's philological and historical reasoning. I have already demonstrated that he was preoccupied with cultural transmissions between people of the ancient world, tracing various "accomplishments" and "institutions" such as writing, mythology, and literature, which passed from "the East" to the Greek world. Claiming that Phoenicians, "Chaldeans", Egyptians, etc., were an essential element for the development "of this or that accomplishment, of this or that institution", Gladstone introduced an understanding of the ancient world, in which ancient Greeks were no longer the earliest and

---

[640] For this interpretation see Bebbington, 2000, 2004.
[641] Gladstone, 1858a: 4.
[642] Gladstone, 1858a: 13.
[643] "Rectorial addresses", 1900: 20.
[644] Gladstone, 1869: 135.

independent actors – while still attributing to the Greeks the agency to develop "to its perfection" these imported "gifts". Such reasoning created a dramatic shift in the role ancient Greeks held for "modern European civilization" and altered the importance of Homer for western literature. If the Phoenicians and "the East" influenced the Greeks, then Europe and the world must have been built on exchange. Claiming that cultural transmission was an essential part of the ancient world amounted to accepting that intercultural contact represented the essence of the modern world and of "our race".

This conclusion has a corollary which needs spelling out. The first corollary concerns the relationship between ancient cultures. Gladstone believed that the ancient world was inhabited by distinctly different cultures, but he also argued that all people were intrinsically connected. This supposed contradiction was synthesised in a dialectic understanding of the ancient network. On the one hand, all traditions were specific (and localised) because they had their own cultural traits and were different from each other. For example, Gladstone believed that the Greeks perfected the imported religious system so that it became different from religions of "the East". On the other hand, all ancient traditions were connected through cultural transfer and exchange, which was conditional for the development of the ancient Mediterranean. As I have demonstrated in this section, Gladstone argued that the Greek culture would not have existed had it not been for the contacts with the Phoenicians and other Eastern people. Moreover, Gladstone fused these two seemingly opposing views into a dialectic synthesis by inscribing the idea of the other ("foreign") in the very heart of the self ("original") – so much so that the other became a defining characteristic of the self. Homer and the Greeks, who clearly were not "Eastern", presented a "genial bed" that became a specific culture and the "original mould of the modern European civilization". Conversely, the Phoenicians (as well as Egyptians and Chaldeans), who belonged to the "East", were instrumental for the origination of the ancient Greece. Both cultures were distinct, but at once also alike: all this because cultures, as Gladstone argued, were not autonomous but rather relatable.

The second inference concerns the relationship between past and present systems. Gladstone saw the polyphonous nature of the ancient literary network not in terms of a struggle for dominance but rather as opening possibilities for its development. In the previous chapter, I argued that Baldensperger appropriated the seventeenth and eighteenth century "republic of letters" as a model for the desirable French dominance after the First World War, an argument which could be justified on the basis of perceived links between the two historical periods. Whether the ancient Mediterranean of the 2nd and 1st millennium BC could enter into a similar relationship to "our race" was, of course, quite a different question. Gladstone interpreted the

influence of the Phoenicians and other cultures of the ancient Near East on the Greeks not as a matter of a dominant centre shaping subaltern fringes, but as representative of intercultural relationships, arguing that the whole world – that is, "our race" – was essentially connected. This can be observed also in the above passage in which Gladstone related the situation in the archaic period to "the gifts of the great nations of modern Europe", none of which were "absolutely original".[645] If the world and its cultures are perceived as connected and as influencing each other, modern national and cultural autonomy could hold little significance. Just as the Greeks developed their religion, culture, and civilisation by using Eastern technology and knowledge, so too could the ideas of authentic and borrowed elements acquire only a dialectic meaning for the modern nations of Europe. Europe and "the East" were not in opposition and not even autonomous: "the East" belonged to the birth and to the historical development of Europe and the world.

As is apparent from Gladstone's reception of the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, his own scholarship employed a similar dialectic as he saw at work in the relationship between the Greeks and the Phoenicians. In his address at the Society of Biblical Archaeology, for example, he maintained that the discovery of the Akkadian epic strengthened the intercultural heritage of "our race". Homer and *Gilgamesh* were not opposed or separated by a power differential but rather entered the same intercultural discourse on equal terms. Just as "the old parental East poured into the fertile soil of the Greek mind", so too were both ancient epics perceived in a dialectic relation: *Gilgamesh* was inscribed into the Homeric epics as its possible Eastern influence that was at the same time a "foreign" alien as well as a source for the Homeric "original". Such a construction of *Gilgamesh* through Homer as both its Eastern influence and the main core of its existence, allowed for interpretations of the Akkadian epic as, on the one hand, the grounds on which the Greeks produced the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, and on the other, as a foreign borrowing or intrusion. The new paradigm opened the ancient Greek epics to being interpreted as the shared heritage of the ancient Mediterranean, humanity, and "our race", but it also allowed the possibility of seeing them as subject to a foreign "Eastern" influence that could be either accepted or rejected.

Gladstone's brief interpretation of "Izdubar" in *Landmarks of Homeric study* reveals this dialectic possibility for interpreting Greek and Akkadian epics as at the same time belonging to a single literary space and standing apart in an apparent cultural antagonism. For example, he argued that the Homeric simile at *Il.* 16.384–93, in which Zeus sends the violent

---

[645] Gladstone, 1869: 135.

waters to diminish the work of men, clearly pointed towards the story of the Deluge, which proves that Homer probably knew the story of *Gilgamesh* and incorporated it into the epic.[646] He further maintained that the idea of human deification, as seen for example in Leucothea's deification in *Od.* 5.225, came from Babylonia, primarily from Gilgamesh's deification.[647] On the other hand, Gladstone also pointed towards those elements in the Eastern tradition that were 'immoral', and that Homer rejected. For example, discussing *Gilgamesh* VI.6–79[648] (a passage that "imposed reserve on Mr. G. Smith" because Ishtar "offers her love to Izdubar, but is repelled"[649]) the Victorian was outraged by the goddess' "impure ingredients" and by the "baleful union between unrestrained lust and the observances of divine worship" permeating Babylonian culture.[650] Nevertheless, he claimed that Ishtar was an important part of the pantheon and hence had to be included as a necessary part of the religious system. In this respect, Homer's solution was to import Ishtar as Aphrodite, but in "a noble protest"[651] he filtered her explicit sexuality and attributed to her a less elevated position among the gods than she had in the Babylonian canon. The relationship between the two traditions therefore paralleled the dialectic relationship between the Greeks and the Phoenicians. This meant that Eastern influence could be interpreted as defining of Homeric poetry, sharing the same themes, the same religious system, and the same world-view, and at the same time as an exchange between two different, even if connected cultures, with different morals, political organisation, and historical trajectory. In this respect, Gladstone's speech at the Society of Biblical Archaeology points towards a multi-layered reception of *Gilgamesh* in Homeric scholarship – which, as I argue in the final part of this chapter, still continues. Being open for interpretation as both the "foreign" influence and the "original" of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, the *Epic of Gilgamesh* was henceforth framed as part of a dialect of imagining the heritage of "our race".

b) Gladstone and the ancient literary network: Homer enters the Eastern Question

In the previous section, I argued that Gladstone conceived the cultural exchange in the ancient literary system, especially the relationship between Homer and *Gilgamesh* as an interplay of various actors, which did not emphasise inequality of power between cultures, but rather

---

[646] Gladstone, 1890a: 159.
[647] Gladstone, 1890a: 137–138.
[648] I refer to the critical edition in George, 2003.
[649] Gladstone, 1890a: 145–146. Smith wrote in *Assyrian Disoveries*: "In the succeeding lines various amours of Ishtar are described. These I do not give, as their details are not suited for general reading. Izdubar concludes his speech by refusing to have anything to do with her" (Smith, 1875: 173).
[650] Gladstone, 1890a: 143–144.
[651] Gladstone, 1890a: 144.

envisaged an intercultural dialectic. Represented mostly by the Phoenicians in Gladstone's Homeric investigation, the "East" was perceived as constitutional for the development of ancient Greece and at the same time left the possibility of considering it distinct from Homer and the Greeks. While this dialectic view generally ignored, or at least concealed, power relations in the ancient literary network, this does not mean that it could not be used to emphasise such dynamics in the modern world. Quite the contrary: Gladstone – who was, after all, a politician first and foremost – discussed the ancient literary network with the concurrent political situation in mind. In this respect, his new Homeric paradigm in which the Greeks and "the East" were understood as interconnected traditions reflected the foreign policy of the British Empire. Even if Gladstone could not directly map ancient relationships onto his vision of the world – as, for example, Baldensperger did – studying the ancient world still presented a productive platform for addressing, affirming, and questioning different political relationships in the modern world-system.

The potential that Gladstone's work on Homer and *Gilgamesh* had for addressing and challenging power relations in the modern world is best reflected in his views on foreign relations. The historical event that is especially important here is the Bulgarian "April Uprising" of 1876 and other, similar revolts in the Balkans that followed it.[652] These events contributed to a political complex in international politics known as 'the Eastern Question', a long-term crisis in Europe and the Middle East caused by the gradual decline of the Ottoman Empire.[653] At this time, Gladstone was thinking intensively about international affairs,[654] and as closer examination of this period will reveal, his ideas about the Empire and international politics were developed in close dialogue with his Homeric scholarship.

When George Smith presented the *Epic of Gilgamesh* on the 3rd of December 1872, Gladstone was Prime Minister for his first term, but in 1874 he dissolved Parliament and after losing the general election to Benjamin Disraeli (1804–1881), retired as a leader of the Liberal party. However, his hopes that he would spend more time with his "old friend Homer" were soon shattered by the emergence of a new political crisis in the British politics, which was brought upon by the Bulgarian rebellion. Reflecting on the revolt and the events that followed, Gladstone wrote in his diary:

---

[652] For a general history of the Balkan revolts in the period see Jelavich, 1983: 329–76; Ković, 2010; Rodogno, 2012: 141–169; Stamatopulos, 2018.

[653] The 'Eastern Question' has been researched intensively. Some of the more general treatments that deal also with the Balkan question are Millman, 1979; Roider, 1982; Macfie, 1996; Milojković-Djurić, 2002. For Gladstone's role in the Eastern Question see Seton-Watson, 1962; Saab, 1991; Ković, 2010; Whitehead, 2015.

[654] Many biographers believe that it was in this period that Gladstone was most preoccupied with foreign policy. See e.g. Stansky, 1979: 121–141; Matthew, 1997: 374–413.

My desire for the shade, a true and earnest desire has been since August rudely baffled: retirement & recollection seem more remote than ever. But [it] is in a noble cause, for the curtain rising in the East seems to open events that bear cardinally on our race.[655]

The Eastern Question indeed became a major driver behind British domestic and foreign politics. Gladstone embraced the challenge, returned from retirement, and won the premiership for the second time in 1880. While politics took up most of his time during the mid-seventies and early-eighties, his views on foreign relations nevertheless resonated with his Homeric scholarship. Just as "the East" entered the study of archaic history, the most important part "of our race", so too the events in the Ottoman empire brought "the East" into the centre of British politics. Gladstone's understanding of "Izdubar", the Phoenicians, ancient exchange, and ancient intercultural dynamics in many ways corresponded with his political vision of the Balkans, Ottomans, Europe, and the British Empire.

Before I discuss how Gladstone's political stance relate to his Homeric scholarship, his role in the concurrent political crisis must be considered. The events that brought him out of the "shade" and eventually to a second premiership were a series of uprisings against the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans which started in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1875 but had the greatest impact on British politics after the Bulgarian revolt of 1876. This unsuccessful and, from the position of the Ottomans, relatively insignificant rebellion aimed to establish an independent Bulgarian state. It was quickly crushed but nevertheless gained notoriety because it was followed by a massacre of the civilian population by the Ottoman and Bashi-bazouk troops.[656] The brutal aftermath of the rebellion was widely reported in the British newspapers, where it became known as the "Bulgarian atrocities". Eventually, it set the stage for Gladstone's political comeback.[657] Because the Bulgarian population was mostly Christian (Orthodox), the British public soon turned against Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli's policy of non-interference[658] and demanded 'justice' for their fellow Christians living under the Porte's rule. When the Serbo-Turkish war, which was accompanied by similar atrocities, entered into its crucial phase in the summer of 1876, Gladstone took advantage of popular opinion swinging behind his political interests and embarked on a highly effective public

---

[655] Gladstone's diary, 29. Dec. 1876.
[656] For the Bulgarian uprising see Jelavich, 1983: 335–347; Crampton, 2005: 45–84.
[657] For Gladstone's return to politics see e.g. Matthew, 1997: 267–282. For the impact of the Bulgarian revolt on British internal politics see e.g. Seton-Watson 1962; Millman, 1979; Ković, 2010.
[658] In general, Israeli was supportive of the Ottoman empire, who were often perceived as allies of the Conservative party, especially in their struggle against Russia. See Ković, 2010: 27.

relations campaign against the "Bulgarian atrocities", accusing Disraeli of acquiescing to Ottoman crimes and indirectly financing the atrocities through loans to the Porte. The ensuing debates took on the character of an election campaign, which included public speeches (known also as Midlothian speeches),[659] publications, tours and pamphleteering. The aim was to move attention away from internal affairs (specifically the ongoing Long Depression) and towards foreign relations, especially the relationship between the British and the Ottoman Empire.[660] The episode passed into history as one of the earliest examples of a modern political campaign.[661]

Gladstone's new approach to public campaigning to some extent paralleled his approach to Homeric scholarship by moving the focus of attention from local to international questions. To elaborate: Gladstone's foreign policy is notoriously complicated and has been a topic of numerous debates.[662] Some described his political stance as "anti-colonialist" and "antiimperialist", which, in comparison to Disraeli at least, it undoubtedly was.[663] For example, Gladstone opposed further military expansionism by the British Empire as unnecessary,[664] proposed two Home Rule Bills for Ireland[665] (which, as I mentioned in Chapter III, Posnett supported), opposed the expansion of other states (seen in his criticism of the Prussian annexation of Alsace-Lorraine[666] which later preoccupied Baldensperger; and in his active support for the Italian Risorgimento[667]), and supported emancipatory actions in the colonies and among subordinate nations.[668] Others, however, have stressed that during Gladstone's second government (1880–1885) the British Empire acquired a significant amount of territory by force.[669] Gladstone was not a pacifist and was not opposed to military intervention if he deemed it necessary.[670] When the Egyptian revolt of 1882 threatened to cut off the British from the Suez Canal and increase the French presence in North Africa, he (with some reluctance) authorised a military campaign, which in the years 1882–1885 resulted in the occupation of

---

[659] For Gladstone's campaign see Matthew, 1997: 293–312;
[660] For Gladstone's Midlothian campaign and its role in foreign relations see e.g. Kelley, 1960; Brooks, 1985; Matthew, 1997: 293 – 312; Schreuder, 2012.
[661] This claim might have its origin in Gladstone's own speeches. See Kelley, 1960: 134–135.
[662] For Gladstone's foreign policies in general see Knaplund, 1935; Seton-Watson, 1962; Stansky, 1979; Swartz, 1985; Matthew, 1997; Biagini 2000: 75–89.
[663] Most famously by Young in his *Postcolonialism* (Young, 2016: 91).
[664] See e.g. Matthew, 1997.
[665] See e.g. Loughlin, 1986.
[666] See Schreuder, 1978.
[667] See e.g. Schreuder, 1970.
[668] For Gladstone's stance son national movements see e.g. Sandiford, 1981.
[669] For foreign policies and military interventions during Gladstone's second government see Bebbington, 1993; Jenkins, 1995; Matthew, 1997; Schreuder, 2012. See also Harrison (1995), who discusses Gladstone's invasion of Egypt.
[670] See e.g. Quinault, 2012.

both Egypt and Sudan. The complicated issue of Gladstone's imperialism and liberalism, however, needs not be resolved in order to see that he supported interventionist foreign policies in the hope of promoting peace, freedom, equal rights, and "humanity"[671] through international and intercultural co-operation.[672] Gladstone was not always supportive of national independence,[673] but rather asserted that the united European consortium – namely the British Empire, France, Germany, Austria-Hungary, and sometimes Russia – must guarantee other nations the ability to live freely, with dignity, and with some level of self-government in matters of religion, culture, and internal government. His political focus was thus on international agreement, treating the world as an interconnected world-system governed by the most powerful Empires.

In the "Crisis of 1875–1878" this understanding of an interconnected world guided Gladstone's response to the Ottoman reaction to the Bulgarian revolt. This can be seen, for example, in the extremely popular and well disseminated pamphlet *Bulgarian horrors and the question of the East* (1876), in which he not only condemned the slaughter of the Bulgarians and reprimanded the passivity of Disraeli's government, but clearly sympathised with national uprisings in the region, not just the Bulgarian uprising, but also the Montenegrin and Herzegovian rebellions and the Serbian war with Turkey. Disparaging the "Turkish race" as "the one great anti-human specimen of humanity",[674] Gladstone pitied the Christian populations living under its government and supported their demand for freedom. At the same time, his response to the crisis was aimed primarily towards the British public and with the internal political situation in mind, demanding from the Government an active approach to resolving the situation: stop the "atrocities", stabilise the situation, and establish local government – a government, however, that would continue to be subject to the Ottoman empire, maintaining Turkish suzerainty and territorial integrity. As he wrote:

> For of all the objects of policy, in my conviction, humanity, rationally understood, and in due
> relation to justice, is the first and highest. My belief is that this great aim need not be compromised,

---

[671] The most in-depth analysis of Gladstone's idea of freedom and humanity is in Bebbington, 2014.
[672] In the Midlothian speeches this can be seen clearly in how he approached the Bulgarian question and the concurrent crisis in Afghanistan. In this chapter, I discuss the situation in Bulgaria, but the Afghan crisis was similar, at least as far as Gladstone's political actions are concerned. The crisis started as a diplomatic dispute between Russia and the British Empire. Gladstone objected to Disraeli's support of an Anglo-Indian invasion of Afghanistan, accompanied by a brutal destruction of local villages. Indeed, after Gladstone seized control of parliament in 1880, he ordered an almost complete withdrawal of forces from Afghanistan and instead assisted Abdur Rahman, who was sympathetic to the British Empire, in seizing power in the country, thus retaining indirect control in the area. See Matthew, 1997: 380; Roberts, 2003: 13–24; Faught, 2006.
[673] See Sandiford, 1981.
[674] Gladstone, 1876a: 13.

and that other important objects would be gained, by maintaining the territorial integrity of Turkey.[675]

Even though Gladstone sympathised with the Balkan Christians and exhibited clear distaste of the Turks, he would not promote national independence of the revolting countries – at least not as early as 1876.[676] His preferred solution to the crises of his time was for the British Empire and other Great powers to act in the name of humanity. While the disputes were largely located in "the East" (in the Balkans, in Afghanistan, in Egypt, etc.), the crises were mostly the result of conflicting interests between the British Empire, the Ottoman Empire, Russia, Germany, Austria-Hungary, and France. Accordingly, these states alone were in a position to solve them, by allowing oppressed people to live freely and with dignity, to express their religious, political, and cultural[677] preferences, and to be able to live in accordance with the notion of humanity, but not necessarily to have complete national independence, control their own resources, external politics, trade agreements, etc. – those were to be left in the hands of bigger political players. The question of Montenegro, Serbia, Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Bulgaria was for Gladstone an international and not a local question and the solution to the situation in the Balkans was to be sought in an international agreement.

That this political solution paralleled Gladstone's interests in Homer was not accidental. As in his Homeric investigations, so too in his political actions Gladstone was convinced that the world is connected, that cultures are in contact, and that there is constant exchange between various actors within the world-system. In the previous section, I demonstrated that he understood Greek civilisation as the patrimony of "our race", focusing on the Phoenicians in order to demonstrate that the world was built through an intercultural exchange and that neither Europe nor modern nations were autonomous and "original". His solution for the Bulgarian question directly paralleled his understanding of the ancient world and the position of Greece in it. In *Homeric Synchronism*, which was published in the same year as the above-mentioned "Bulgarian Horrors", he reflected on ancient political structure with contemporary public affairs in mind. Discussing the ruling families with the title *anax andron*, which he associated with the "Egyptian Empire" and the "maritime power of the Phoenicians", he wrote:

---

[675] Gladstone, 1876a: 26.
[676] Ković, 2010.
[677] It is not irrelevant, in this respect, that Gladstone became interested in the oral traditions of the Balkans and even read an English translation of Vuk Karadžić's collection of South Slavic oral poetry in Bowring's translation, which is still found in his library (see Bowring, 1827). See Matthew, 1997: 266; cf. Gladstone's diary, 7 and 8 Apr. 1876. Travel writing was also an important source for Gladstone's vision of the Balkans (see Kelley, 2017).

It is no strained conjecture that these families, which, be it remembered, nowhere appear in Homer as a race or tribe, were the personal representatives of the central Power in the countries which it had bound to itself, by ties necessarily light and frail from the imperfect social organisation and locomotive provisions of the time. This personal representation, probably much resembling the Satrapy of later times, the Pachalic of the Ottomans down to our own day, supplied the only image or token of the existing supremacy in each subordinate region, and the only link between the two.[678]

This passage about ancient power relations is reminiscent of what Gladstone proposed for the Balkan Eyalets – a claim which can be supported by pointing to his use of modern political terminology. As he argued, Egyptians and Phoenicians, the "central Power" in Homeric times, officially ruled over the "subordinate" Greek regions through "personal representatives". This "existing supremacy", however, was "light and frail" and did not hinder Greek cultural and religious development, but productively encouraged it. The situation in the ancient world was therefore such as Gladstone hoped it would be in the modern Balkans: with the agreement of the European consortium, the Ottomans would be given a limited government over the Balkan Eyalets, so that people would be free to practice their religion, culture, and live according to the principles of humanity. This was accompanied by an underlying claim that the Balkan nations could also evolve and demand full national independence, as the Greeks essentially did, but in order to achieve this, religious, cultural, and human rights had to be guaranteed first.[679]

The ancient intercultural exchange not only confirmed to Gladstone that the world formed an interconnected network, but also allowed him to relate his Homeric studies to his own time. In the previous section, I argued that he promoted a vision of the ancient literary system that made cultural exchange a precondition for the development of the world. In this development, Greece and Europe originated in dialogue with the "East", but at the same time existed as their own cultural formation. This model also minimised the role of power differentials between the actors in the ancient literary system. With the emergence of the "Eastern crisis", however, Gladstone realised that the ancient relationship could be utilised to address the existing powers on the international political podium. His primary focus, of course, was the relationship between the Ottoman "East" and Europe. However, he did not map the ancient political situation directly onto the modern state of affairs – as for example Baldensperger did – but rather transposed the dialectic understanding of the ancient cultural exchange onto the concurrent political crisis. This created a kind of a platform for questioning

---

[678] Gladstone, 1876b: 208.
[679] Sandiford, 1981.

and testing ideas about the Empires and the modern world. In other words, the existing but nevertheless open relationship between "original" and "foreign" was applied also to the understanding of "supremacy" and "subordination", allowing for various and, indeed, different interpretations of power relations for both modern and ancient cultures.

A good illustration of how Gladstone's theory of the ancient network became relevant for addressing contemporary political action is his reading of the *Iliad*. In his interpretation, the Trojan War was a perfectly suited example of the above-described dialectic through which Gladstone could argue for political, religious, and moral superiority of Europe in the Eastern Crisis. In a short study entitled *Homer* published in 1878 (the year of the Russo-Turkish wars that effectively ended the Balkan Crisis) Gladstone approached the *Iliad* anachronistically, that is, as relevant to contemporary politics. In a chapter entitled "Europe and Asia, or Trojan and Achaian",[680] he first established that Achaeans and Trojans belonged to two distinct cultures: Achaeans were Greeks and Trojans "were in close relation with those other parts of the Olympian scheme, which I have described as Phoenician".[681] Furthermore, the two warring sides also differed in aspects such as "polygamy",[682] as well as "religion and polity":[683] Achaean decision-making was functional and communal, while Trojan collective decisions were more primitive and mere "chance gatherings".[684] On the other hand, Achaeans and Trojans were also similar because "there was no national animosity" and "no broad ethnical distinction" between them – and even their political organisation was similar in form ("externally, the form of polity is the same"[685]). The relationship between Achaeans and Trojans was hence, in its dialectic form at least, similar to that of Homer and *Gilgamesh* described above. Gladstone interpreted them as both different and similar at the same time.

Nevertheless, referencing concurrent political crisis, Gladstone's interpretation of the *Iliad* acquired an additional significance, which was much less sympathetic towards "the East" as was his treatment of the Phoenicians. This can be seen in how he reinterpreted the ancient dispute in terms of modern differences between "Europe" and "Asia":

---

[680] Gladstone, 1878a: 121–126.
[681] Gladstone, 1878a: 121.
[682] Gladstone was dismissive of Priam's polygamy and argued that there was no trace of it among the Achaeans, which was a clearly orientalising view – not unlike that of Ishtar's "impure ingredients" mentioned above. In *Juventus Mundi*, Gladstone devoted a long discussion to why "we have not the slightest trace of polygamy" among the "Homeric Greeks" and even related the Greek tradition to remarry (only) in case of a spouse's death to "the Law of England" (Gladstone, 1869: 408–412).
[683] Gladstone, 1878a: 121–122.
[684] Gladstone, 1878a: 125.
[685] Gladstone, 1878a: 124.

> A finer sense, a higher intelligence, a firmer and more masculine tissue of character, were the basis of distinctions in polity, which were then Achaian and Trojan only, but have since, through long ages of history, been in no small measure European and Asiatic respectively.[686]

The idea that European empires made fair communal decisions while Asian autocracies behaved in despotic ways[687] guided Gladstone to interpret the ancient situation, which supposedly passed into contemporary times, as a political statement. Even though the Achaeans and the Trojans were interpreted through a productive self-other dichotomy (like the Greeks and the Phoenicians discussed in the previous section), he used the ancient relationship to express his opinion about contemporary politics: his distaste for the Ottomans, condemnation of the Porte's actions in the Balkans, and a general wariness of "the East". The argument that the ancient Greeks were progenitors of modern Europe became relevant for addressing the division of political power between the Empires and for expressing views on international politics.

Gladstone's Homeric scholarship therefore became a platform for reasoning about contemporary issues: not only was it a model for the unavoidability of mutual transmission, it also provided a stimulus for thinking through issues in foreign politics such as the Balkan crisis and the Eastern Question. This does not mean that Gladstone understood the modern political situation in the same way as he did the ancient: the politician undoubtedly sympathised with the Phoenicians, ancient Egyptians, and Assyrians more than with the Turks – "a dwindling race and likewise a backward race", as he would describe them in parliament.[688] Likewise, his perception of Ottoman influence in the Balkans was clearly negative, while he would recognise several positive outcomes of the contacts between ancient cultures – even if he dismissed some aspects of the ancient East, such as lesser political organisation or the sexuality of Priam and Ishtar, for example. What his understanding of the ancient and modern world-systems brought, however, was the realisation that a dialectic understanding of ancient intercultural exchange applies to the modern political situation. Thinking through ancient relations was useful for addressing the contemporary politics, and because the new paradigm was dialectically open, this meant that the modern power relations could be reinterpreted either way Gladstone thought convenient. He could argue that the Greeks were "subordinate" to the Phoenicians and the Egyptians, and that the right solution for the Balkan crisis was analogous; but also that

---

[686] Gladstone, 1878a: 126.
[687] For Gladstone's view of the Turks and the Ottoman Empire see e.g. Yavuz, 2014; cf. Uslu, 2017: 23.
[688] Hansard, 31 July, 1876, 181.

"Europe", the heir of ancient Greece, was politically and morally superior to the Ottoman Empire. The dialectic openness of "foreign" and "original" that Gladstone posited for ancient Greece and the Near East paralleled his various arguments for contemporary political and cultural power relations.

William Ewart Gladstone was the first scholar of the ancient world to respond to the discovery of the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, placing the Akkadian epic in the immediate proximity of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Several axes defined his theory of the ancient literary system: first, the relationship between an original Greece and a foreign "East", in which the foreign element could be seen as both forming the essence of the original and to be standing in opposition to it; secondly, a relationship between past and present in which Greeks and Phoenicians appeared as the intercultural ancestors of the modern world and "our race"; and thirdly, the possibility of using this dialectic model to describe the relationships between ancient and modern nations and Empires. When dealing with current affairs, Gladstone was not always entirely consistent in his claims about ancient Greece and the Near East. His Homeric scholarship, however, did offer an incentive for addressing present political questions. In this respect at least, all the above axes were also correlated because ideas about the ancient network directly affected how he perceived the world, and how he acted in it.

Gladstone also recognised the direction in which the debates about the ancient epics were to develop. As he pointed out in the concluding part of his response to George Smith:

> I will not attempt to go further or occupy your time. I have laid my ground only to the extent of endeavouring to show that there is a most rational interest in the discussion in which you have been engaged to-night for those who, starting from the standing-point of the early history and tradition of Greece, desire to find for them their proper place in the early history of the world.[689]

On the one hand, Gladstone stressed the importance of Akkadian epic for anyone interested in Homer and ancient Greek literature by showing that even the two oldest ancient Greek epics are relatable and belong to an ancient literary network. This freed Homeric poetry from its isolation and opened it to the world. It was the discovery of *Gilgamesh* that made Homeric poetry become part of an ancient Mediterranean network and hence, in an entirely new way, part of the world and of world literature. On the other hand, and not unrelated to the first point, Gladstone outlined a new role that the ancient Greek epic acquired in the "early history of the world" – or, as he also said, in the "the earlier records of our race". By becoming part of an

---

[689] "Chaldean history of the Deluge", *The Times*, 1872 (Dec. 4), p. 7.

ancient world literature, Homer became part of the world and consequently entered the interplay of various power relations that defined the world-system, opening up to various ideological and political agendas for world-making. Belonging to the system of world literature also meant that Homer's position in it could be questioned at any time – and will remain to be perpetually redefined. I now turn to some of these redefinitions in more recent Homeric scholarship.

c) Gladstone's dialectic in Homeric scholarship of the late twentieth century: Martin Bernal, Walter Burkert, and Martin L. West

Above I discussed how Gladstone's understanding of the ancient literary system defined the discourse about Homer and *Gilgamesh*, suggesting that the political context in which the Akkadian epic was initially received influenced its relevance for addressing concurrent socio-political issues. In the final section of this chapter, I look at how this model resembles the Homeric scholarship of the late twentieth century, and how it was rewritten in debates about Homer, *Gilgamesh*, and other Near Eastern literary traditions. To this end, I here consider the work of Martin Bernal (1937–2013), Walter Burkert (1931–2015), and Martin L. West (1937–2015), classicists who extensively discussed the relationship between ancient Greece and other Mediterranean traditions and were deeply influenced by nineteenth-century colonial discourse.[690] Directly relevant is the fact that they all knew Gladstone's work and agreed with several of his arguments. Walter Burkert even placed the politician at the very beginning of a scholarly tradition, which he regarded as his own:

> William Ewart Gladstone (1809–1898) better known in his role as British Prime Minister, called
> attention to the Egyptian texts about the Sea Peoples, and he was the first to compare Oceanus and
> Tethys in Homer's *Iliad* with Apsu and Tiamat at the beginning of the Babylonian epic of creation,
> *Enuma Elish*. Classicists shook their heads in indignation.[691]

Not only was Gladstone the first to call attention to *Gilgamesh* and other Akkadian sources in dealing with the Homeric texts, his theory of the ancient literary system also influenced

---

[690] Both Walter Burkert and Martin L. West are considered institutional in introducing Akkadian and other Near Eastern texts to Homeric scholarship and to the study of archaic Greek literature. While Bernal was not primarily interested in literature, but rather in archaeology, religion, history, linguistics, and philosophy, his model of research, his arguments, and his critique of traditional philology nevertheless importantly stirred subsequent discussions in classical and Homeric scholarship, most of which have not ceased since.

[691] Burkert, 2004: 22. Burkert, instead of shaking his head, presented himself as an *epigonos*: "In the following pages comparisons with Mesopotamian literature will be prominent." (Burkert, 2004: 22–23). A longer analysis of Gladstone's importance for this academic tradition is discussed by Burkert in his article "Homerstudien und Orient" (see Burkert, 1991).

subsequent approaches to the topic in classical scholarship. As I ague here, Martin Bernal, Water Burkert, and Martin L. West all followed Gladstone's understanding of the ancient literary system and built upon his intercultural dialectic, even using his model of research for addressing contemporary socio-political issues. In other words, the cultural and political framing in which Akkadian epic was first received conditioned its subsequent receptions and discourses.

Among the three scholars, Martin Bernal was perhaps the most open (even if reserved[692]) supporter of Gladstone's scholarship. In his renowned work *Black Athena* (1987), he praised the politician for stressing the importance of foreign, specifically Phoenician, Egyptian, and other Eastern influences on the ancient Greeks.[693] More importantly, Bernal also actively utilised Gladstone's paradigm for promoting his own thesis that ancient Egypt invented Greek civilisation.[694] Criticising the idea of an autonomous emergence of Greek culture and proposing to focus on intercultural influence, circulation, and dominance as the most important aspects of the ancient Mediterranean, he suggested:

> The conclusion […] reiterates my general view that the etymologies and cultic parallels which make
> up the volume should be seen in context. The comparisons being made are not between Greek and,
> say, Algonquin or Tasmanian religions separated by vast distances of space and time. They are
> between two systems situated at the same end of the Mediterranean during the same millennia.[695]

This passage reflects Bernal's preference for interpreting similarities between cultural phenomena "in context", that is, as a direct cultural exchange between two neighbouring "systems". Like binary relations considered by the French comparatists or Gladstone's proposal for a new paradigm in Homeric studies, his method also distinguished between the research of intercultural influences and distant analogies, prioritising the first as the main focus

---

[692] Alongside praising his innovative scholarship, Bernal was critical of Gladstone's anti-Semitism, the fact that the British Empire spread greatly during his political career, and his explicit promotion of the Phoenicians over other cultures. In fact, he explicitly connected Gladstone's praise of the Phoenicians, those "sober cloth merchants who did a little bit of slaving on the side and spread civilization while making a tidy profit" with their likeness to ancient Victorians (Bernal, 1987: 350–351).

[693] See Bernal, 1987: 350–352, 362; 1995: 9; 2001: 7–8, 189.

[694] While Bernal's first volume of *Black Athena* (1987) dealt primarily with history of classical scholarship, exposing its concealed anti-Semitic and racist prejudices, the main aim of the project was to demonstrate that the idea of an autonomous ancient Greek civilisation was a scholarly myth and that Greeks 'stole' most of their knowledge from ancient Egypt and other Near Eastern traditions. In the subsequent two volumes of *Black Athena* (1991, 2006) as well as in *Cadmean Letters* (1990), Bernal tried to prove his argument historically, archaeologically, and linguistically. For the reception, discussion, and controversies around Bernal's work see: Hall, 1992; Myerowitz Levine, 1992, 1998; Lefkowitz, 1996; Lefkowitz and Rogers, 1996. Two modern evaluations are Orrells et. al., 2011; Adler, 2016: 113–172. For Bernal's response to some of his critics see Bernal, 2001.

[695] Bernal, 1987: 72.

of investigation and as a correct interpretation of evidence. Not only Bernal, but also Walter Burkert and Martin L. West promoted a similar outlook on the ancient literary circulation. While they approached the ancient material in the context of established traditional scholarship – and not as Bernal in opposition to it – they nevertheless envisaged that archaic Greece must have been influenced by surrounding literary traditions. Burkert, for example, claimed that "a cultural continuum including literacy" emanated "from the Near East" and "involved groups of Greeks who entered into intensive exchange with the high cultures of the Semitic East",[696] and West famously claimed: "Greece is part of Asia; Greek literature is a Near Eastern literature".[697]

Thus far I established that all three scholars actively engaged with Gladstone's work and that they, either consciously as Bernal, or less consciously as West, adopted his focus on literary influences. However, as I argued throughout Part III, the relatability of literature also postulates that literary systems relate to modern power relations and assists in processes of world-making. In Chapter V, I showed that Baldensperger used the historical "literary republic of letters" in order to demand a specific political organisation of the world, and above, I argued that Gladstone proposed his solution to the Bulgarian question in active dialogue with his understanding of the ancient world. This potential of the ancient literary system for political interpretation and world-making can be observed also in modern Homeric scholarship – even if contemporary scholars in the field are not, as in the case of Gladstone, major political figures. I argue here that Gladstone's construction of *Gilgamesh* in Homeric scholarship opened a platform for subsequent receptions and uses of the dialectically open discourse, which can be observed in the work of all three scholars discussed in this section.

Most famously perhaps, Bernal used the ancient world-system for addressing contemporary power-struggles in American academia and society.[698] Arguing that ancient Greece was produced by ancient Egypt, he not only proposed that the Egyptians were a dominant culture in the ancient Mediterranean, but utilised this vision in order to deconstruct a traditional understanding of classics as a paradigmatic academic discipline and of ancient Greece as the fountainhead of all subsequent cultural developments. Such arguments stemmed

---

[696] Burkert, 1992: 128.

[697] West, 1966: 21. West's commentary on Hesiod's *Theogony* is one of the earliest works that thoroughly dealt with literatures of the ancient Near East and Egypt. More famous, in this regard, is his *The East face of Helicon* (1997), where West proposed to interpret parallels in terms of influences: "I quote them [i.e. the parallels], as evidence that the concept, the form of expression, or whatever, was current in one or more of the West Asiatic literatures and might have come into Greek literature from the East." (West, 1997: viii)

[698] For Bernal's thought in its historical context see especially Adler, 2016: 113–172.

from Bernal's so called "sociology of knowledge"[699] in which he identified two scholarly models: one which stressed the importance of neighbouring Semitic nations for shaping Greek culture; and the other, which dismissed all claims of "foreign" and "non-European" (specifically Semitic) influences on ancient Greece, fostering the ideas of an autonomous, Indo-European, and Aryan-Greek intellectual and cultural predecessor of Europe. As Bernal argued, this second model was invented in the nineteenth century by classical scholars as a form of antisemitism.[700] *Black Athena* was therefore equally about ancient Egypt and Greece as it was about contemporary socio-political issues – much as the ancient world was for Gladstone about contemporary international politics. Indeed, Bernal was sympathising with Afrocentrism, an intellectual and political movement formed as an opposition to Eurocentrism,[701] and his work gained international attention mostly in the context of "culture wars" in American universities.[702] In his works, Bernal reproduced precisely the argument that Gladstone initiated in his reception of *Gilgamesh*, namely, that the ancient cultural exchange, a model that opposed seeing cultures as autonomous, directly addressed the contemporary society and its powers. If Gladstone used the ancient world to support the control of an imperial consortium, however, Bernal instead turned the discourse around and essentially argued against European dominance.

While Bernal's work was consciously and deliberately political, the work of West and Burkert less openly addressed contemporary ideologies and questions of cultural inequality. Indeed, both scholars avoided political comments[703] and their work always strove to give the impression that ancient literature has nothing to do with contemporary issues. Nevertheless, even their scholarship could not escape the heritage of Gladstone's dialectic, which is reflected in its reception at least. This can be primarily observed in the binary operation with which Burkert's and West's work has been received, interpreting their research as either subsuming the Eastern material under the category of the "original" Greek tradition, or as highlighting the multi-cultural origins of the ancient literary system. In this respect, some classicists see their work as contributing to multiculturalism, postcolonialism, and the "culture wars" mentioned

---

[699] Bernal, 1987: xii.
[700] Bernal's critical history of classical scholarship was much more influential and better received in classis than his thesis about the Egyptian origin of Greek civilisation. For his main argument about the Eurocentrism of classical scholarship see Bernal, 1987; cf. Bernal 1994; 1995; 2001.
[701] Bernal described himself as anti-Eurocentric, also because of his admiration of Afrocentrism. In the first volume of *Black Athena* he was critical of "Eurocentrism" in traditional classical scholarship (Bernal, 1987: 10) and later he explicitly wrote that he "consider[s] Eurocentrism a far more serious and pressing problem than Afrocentrism" (Bernal, 2001: 67).
[702] For the discussion of Bernal's role in the "culture wars" see Adler, 2016: 113–172. For Bernal and Afrocentrism see Lefkowitz, 1996; Lefkowitz and Roger, 1996; and for Afrocentrism in general see Ekwe-Ekwe, 1994; Howe, 1998; Adeleke, 2009.
[703] For example, Burkert was known for avoiding all political discussions. See Gemelli, 2018.

above. Carol Dougherty and Leslie Kurke, for example, explicitly connected the scholarship of Bernal, Burkert, and West with the "new debates on 'multiculturalism'" and "studies of nationalism, colonialism, and postcolonial encounters", which "underscored the importance of diversity, cultural contact, and cultural exchange".[704] Johannes Haubold too interpreted their work on Homer and the Near Eastern material as "a complicated and in many ways contradictory process of fashioning a new image of Homer, partly at least in response to a gradual change in the political and cultural climate"[705] and as "a steady encroachment of 'non-western' readers, literatures and ideas on the formerly 'western' territory of Homeric poetry".[706] Furthermore, Robin Osborne[707] and Louise Hitchcock[708] both positioned Burkert and West in relation to Edward Said's (1935–2003) postcolonialism.

Instead of seeing the research of Burkert and West in a post-colonial context, some scholars rather questioned if the claim that 'Greek literature is a Near Eastern literature' was not actually meant as 'Near Eastern literature is Greek literature'. Bernal himself was most direct in this regard, writing that neither West nor Burkert challenged the traditional model of understanding literatures, but simply transposed the beginnings of the literary tradition to the Babylonians. Because the latter were discovered, translated, and studied primarily in the western context, this transposition inserted an extra beginning to the usual story, for example in the context of courses on 'the great books of western civilisation' popular in the United States.[709] John Pairman Brown likewise wrote that *Gilgamesh*, unlike Homer or the Old Testament, was an invention of modern western scholarship,[710] and Ken Dowden further speculated that "the East is at least as much about us, our generation and our subscription to a great discipline",[711] arguing that West created "a Near Eastern literature in which Greeks or classicists might feel more at home."[712] One recent manifestation, in this regard, is Bruno Currie's recent monograph *Homer's Allusive Art* (2016), which has been criticised for taking the relationship between Greeks and Romans as the paradigm for explaining that between the Babylonians and the Greeks.[713] It seems hermeneutically more profitable, however, to

---

[704] Dougherty and Kurke, 2003: 2–3.
[705] Haubold, "Homer between East and West": 1.
[706] Haubold, 2014: 18.
[707] Osborne, 1993.
[708] Hitchcock, 2008: 193.
[709] Bernal, 2001: 308–44.
[710] Brown, 1996: 179. See also E.g. Budge, 1925: 39–51; André-Salvini, 1999; Cathcart, 2011 who point out that Akkadian tablets were discovered, deciphered, and interpreted primarily in Britain, France, and Germany.
[711] Dowden, 2001: 167.
[712] Dowden, 2001: 174.
[713] Currie, 2016. Cf. Currie, 2012.

acknowledge the considerable limitations of our knowledge concerning the processes of transmission and reception between early Greece and Mesopotamia – itself a product of unequal relationships in world history – and in that knowledge attempt to "look at early Greek epic within a shared Near Eastern discourse about the history of the world".[714]

Gladstone's legacy, or at least his way of reading ancient literature, defined subsequent discussions about Homer and Near Eastern literatures, some of which still continue today. His dialectically open interpretation of the relationship between the two traditions essentially allowed for different explanations of how ancient Greek epic poetry participated in the literary exchange. From the historical perspective, the idea of cultural and literary influences could be used to point towards shared literary and cosmogonic heritage in the ancient Mediterranean;[715] or to argue for dominance of a specific culture in the ancient world-system (as was the case with Bernal's argument for the superiority of ancient Egypt); or to promote a global and multi-cultural understanding of the ancient world; or, again, to promote a model of literary connectivity which was alive and yet did not present Homer as the absolute beginning. All these interpretations attempt to deconstruct the narrative of ancient literature's cultural independence by underlining its participation in the broader system of literatures. What this chapter further demonstrated is that the same discourses operate also anachronistically and normatively, meaning that they explicate and promote specific visions of the world's organisation or even act in support of agendas for contemporary world-making. In this case, the ancient literary system could be used either as an argument against Eurocentrism; or as classifying other ancient literary traditions under the umbrella of western scholarship; or in order to promote ideas of multicultural past. This means that even historically localised literatures participate as symbolic actors in the contemporary world-system and can be carriers of different world-views and world horizons in which organisations of localised traditions are either reproduced or reorganised.[716] Much like the discussion of literary scholarship and Homeric studies in Parts I and II, Part III also showed that receptions of world literature and Homeric epic, even if seen as relatable, necessarily negotiate between the global interconnectedness and various forms of cultural, national, and historical localisation.

---

[714] Haubold, 2002: 17.

[715] Such understanding of the ancient world has been accepted by several classical scholars, as well as Johannes Haubold quoted above, and here more fully: "As I hope to have shown, it can make good sense to look at early Greek epic within a shared Near Eastern discourse about the history of the world" (Haubold, 2002: 17). See also Louden, 2011; Haubold, 2013; Bachvarova, 2016. Rutherford suggests a similar shared understanding of the 5th century BC reception of Homer in Egypt and Greece (Rutherford, 2016). For a comparative exploration of shared genres in ancient Near Eastern literatures see Damrosch, 1987.

[716] For a discussion of how multicultural critiques advocate for different organisations of localised literary traditions that pertain to the same unequally formed system of world literature see Habjan, 2013.

Conclusions to Part III

In Part III, I investigated an approach to classical and world literature that understood literary traditions as *relatable*, that is, as connected, influencing each other, and as belonging to a broader system of literary circulations. This model is essentially different from understanding Homeric poetry and other literary traditions of the world as historical and autonomous – a view which was promoted (or at least accepted) by Herder, Wolf, Posnett, and Parry. As argued in Part II, viewing literatures as comparable usually presents various traditions as independent and hermeneutically equal, shadowing their connections as well as unequal power relations. In contrast to the models of world and classical literature discussed in Part I and II, the French comparatists and William Ewart Gladstone established a different view that foregrounded literature's relatability, interconnectedness, and asymmetrical universality as its hermeneutic and ontological status. This model conceived literatures and cultures as immediately related and proposed that these relationships include positions of dominance, centrality, peripherality, or semi-peripherality. On the one hand, such insistence on interconnectedness of literatures allowed scholars to construct a relatively international – although in most instances still Eurocentric – model of the literary system, while on the other hand, the concept of relatability pointed towards inequalities in the literary world. The French comparatists, for example, insisted that literary influences should become a theoretical and topical centre of the new literary discipline, hence introducing a model of historically unequal literary circulation in which different literary contexts were either influencing or were influenced, were central or peripheral, were in a position of powerful actors or powerless receivers and loners – or indeed something in between the both. Gladstone similarly used his understanding of cultural relations in the ancient world in order to address some of the most pressing political issues of his time. His vision that the world should be ruled by the consortium of the most powerful Empires was directly informed by his understanding of cultural exchange and political relations in the ancient Mediterranean. Both the comparatists and Gladstone therefore thought about literature as forming an interconnected literary system, but nevertheless a system in which cultural power was unevenly distributed and in which just few traditions, authors, genres, and ideas dominated.

This reasoning was often used in order to support Eurocentrism, aesthetic mastery of selected authors or traditions, intellectual superiority of certain nations, but also in order to justify international interference in politics or indirect economic and political control over other countries. Indeed, seeing literatures as unequal and dominating each other was a powerful tool

for the reproduction of existing despotisms and did not always result in critical rejections of such power-distribution. In comparative literature, post-war critics of *la littérature comparée* criticised the French comparatists for their "fervent nationalism", narrow outlook on literary exchange, and deep preoccupation with just few selected literatures, and in the past several decades such criticism of the discipline's prevalent focus on the western canon has increased. For example, two American Comparative Literature Association's 'State of the discipline' reports, known also as the *Bernheimer report* (1993)[717] and the *Saussy report* (2006),[718] alongside Susan Bassnett's *Comparative Literature* (1993) and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's *Death of a Discipline* (2003) all rejected the Eurocentric vision of the early comparative literature. At the same time that comparative literature was under attack for its Eurocentric literary focus and consequently reinvented with the infusion of multiculturalism, post-colonialism, and other progressive approaches, classical studies came under similar criticism in the context of the "culture wars". The main protagonist of this debate was Martin Bernal, who, as argued above, explicitly utilised ancient literature's relatability in order to argue for a different vision of the ancient exchange and with it for different world politics. What can be observed in all these discussions, or at least this is what I tried to show, are different conciliations between localised forms of reception and their global structuring. In this respect, different localised literatures are repositioned or reorganised through a world horizon, but they nevertheless remain unevenly represented and redistributed.

---

[717] Bernheimer, 1995.
[718] Saussy, 2006.

CONCLUSIONS

And so, what is Homer in a globalised world? In this thesis, I discussed three distinct ways in which past scholars interpreted Homeric epic in relation to world literature or utilised it for different projects of world-making. As I argued, these approaches acted as both intellectual rationale for literary interpretation as well as (self-)defining methodologies for the disciplines. Often a defining feature of Homeric studies and comparative literature, they were not always easy to uncover, and special attention had to be paid to archival material, letters, texts that do not deal explicitly with literature, and intellectual and political debates of the time. By investigating the work of scholars generally considered as most important for the development of Homeric and world literature studies (Johann Wolfgang Goethe, Friedrich August Wolf, Hutcheson Macaulay Posnett, Milman Parry, Ferdinand Brunetière, Fernand Baldensperger, and William Ewart Gladstone), I was able to identify the following attitudes towards Homeric poetry and world literatures:

1. *The (a)historical model*
2. *The comparative model*
3. *The circulation or systemic model*

Each of these "models", as I called them, represented a particular position with regard to local readings of Homer and the global tendencies of world literature. Part I identified ahistorical and historical literary interpretation as two mutually conditioned positions about cultural-historical defining and transhistorical receptivity. Both tendencies developed in a dialogue with each other by either insisting on the ahistorically formative role of Homer in a network of locally defined literary productions, as was the case with Goethe; or by defining the Homeric tradition as culturally and historically localised and hence aesthetically relative, but building upon it a universal method of philology, as was the case with Wolf. The rarely studied approach of both scholars to South Slavic poetry was an excellent example that illustrated these tensions: Goethe acknowledged the importance of oral traditions in the Balkans for world literature, but nevertheless believed them to be incomparable with Homeric poetry, which exercised an aesthetic control over the epic tradition; while Wolf simply ignored the tradition about which Jernej Kopitar wrote to him, with the suggestion that it was a perfect example that would prove his Homeric theories. These reactions neatly reflect how the two scholars went about Homer

and world literature, either aesthetically determining literary receptions with a universal, non-localised model or selectively promoting and repressing different localised literary traditions.

Both these reasonings about the universal literary network and historical localisation set the grounds for later debates, which exploited either the idea that literatures pertain to a global (systemic) network or built upon historical and cultural localisation. Part II explored how comparisons were utilised as a tool for addressing literature's global representativeness in light of its socio-historical delimitation. Focusing on Posnett's comparative literature, and Parry's Homeric scholarship, I argued that comparisons can act as a hermeneutic reconciliation of a historically defined Homeric tradition with a global outlook on world literature. Indeed, both scholars developed a particular method which linked different literary traditions around the world through a *tertium comparationis* (which was in Posnett's case social evolution and in Parry's case oral form), arguing that a broader disciplinary world-view is necessary for interpreting an autonomous and particular Homeric tradition. Comparison was hence proposed as a device that could consider literature's socio-historical particularity, but at the same time avoid repressing the universality of world literature – as was the case with historicism such as Wolf's, to which both scholars reacted. Reconstructing the historical and intellectual background of these claims, Posnett's unknown political writings demonstrated that the imperial context of the British Empire influenced his comparative project; and Parry's (previously unknown) archival material revealed various new aspects of his thinking on South Slavic poetry and on existing comparative scholarship. These documents also disclosed a possible risk of such comparative projects, which was identified as an imperialistic agenda of shifting peripheries: indeed, Posnett's and Parry's hermeneutically justified comparative methodology accepted narratives of localisations as given and hence disregarded global connectivity and inequality of power relations between cultures and literary traditions.

Part III scrutinised precisely these pitfalls of the comparative project by looking at how literature can be theorised as globally connected, both historically and in its contemporary receptivity. The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw an increasing interest in literary connections and exchange, questioning discourses about historically and nationally localised literary traditions. Scholars such as the French comparatists and the (amateur) classicist and professional politician William Ewart Gladstone focused on literature's mutual relatability, but in contrast to Romantic cosmopolitanism, defined inequalities, dominance, and peripherality as guiding forces in the literary system. By investigating the political context in which these scholars operated and their own political agendas (mostly expressed in lesser-known writings), I identified a consistent dependence of literary research on processes of

world-making. In his call for a new world order, for example, Fernand Baldensperger looked back to history at a time when France was culturally powerful and argued that such an order should be recreated; Gladstone used his dialectic about the ancient intercultural exchange as a historical justification for his foreign policy and what we would call his 'imperialism'; and Martin Bernal, building upon Gladstone's work, demanded a reorganisation of contemporary academia from a postcolonial perspective – which was, as the name itself suggests, deeply embedded in colonial discourse. What the analysis of these debates therefore demonstrated was that prioritising the global connectivity and exchange of literature often accompanied deconstructions of localising narratives. This essentially means that historical readings, which address literature's global relatability, often operate within a normative discourse, either for reaffirming existing power-structures or for demanding a new world order. Such interpretations hence acknowledge global literary circulation and consider world-wide reception but make a case for a new organisation of local readings, which still builds upon unequal representativeness.

What is apparent in all these approaches to Homer is that there is a persistent negotiation between localised interpretations and a de-localised world-view. With this in mind, it is possible to sketch an answer to the first two research questions of this dissertation, namely, how ideas about world literature and the globalised world affect Homeric interpretations, and how readings of Homeric poetry inform conceptions of world literature and assist in world-making. To answer the first question: the historical analysis offered in this thesis demonstrated that the development of Homeric scholarship was directly engaged in the emerging globalisation of the modern world and, consequently, that attitudes towards world literature defined readings of Homer and were integral for the development of Homeric studies. This dissertation demonstrated that transnationalism and globalisation of the world (as, for example, intercultural exchange, travelling, migration) actively contributed to the establishment of most important methodological rationales of classical and Homeric scholarship. At the same time, close readings of the early foundational texts and considerations of the concurrent intellectual and political debates also revealed that the discipline developed in an active dialogue with scholars of world literature and world-making agendas. Even though the investigated Homeric interpretations were clearly localising and delimited, focusing on one (or at most a few) literary works and traditions, these scholarly interpretations emerged in a dialogue with discourses about other works of world literature and as an active response to transnationalism. Concepts of world literature, understandings of the world, and world-making agendas all acted as defining operation in specific readings of Homer and in constructions of Homeric studies.

Throughout all six chapters, the influence of interconnectedness consistently proved to be one of the most important processes that guided the emergence of new ideas and methodologies in Homeric scholarship and literary studies more generally. Scholars corresponded internationally, travelled, migrated, came into contact with new cultures, responded to international politics, participated in transnational institutions, argued for their own political agendas, and actively participated in politics. All this influenced also their scholarship, methodologies of research, and ideas about literature. Exploration of Sicily, for example, was identified as one of the most important moments in Goethe's reception of Homeric epic and his concept of *Weltliteratur* was shaped by readings of non-western literature (such as Chinese novels, South Slavic epic, and the poetry of Hafez), international correspondence, circulation of texts, and international translations. *Weltliteratur*, in fact, presented the very definition of interconnectedness. Wolf's historical approach to ancient epic, which argued for cultural and historical localisation and, as I suggested, a delimitation of world literature, was also directly influenced by processes of transnationalism: an analysis of Wolf's correspondence with Goethe and other scholars such as Jernej Kopitar revealed that his historical criticism responded to similar questions as Goethe's *Weltliteratur*. Posnett, for example, developed his comparative approach to literary studies as a response to concurrent imperial agendas and under the influence of his migration to New Zealand. Parry as well found out about South Slavic poetry because of the cosmopolitan role of Paris and later moved to Dubrovnik to study the culture locally. Fernand Baldensperger was a veteran of the First World War, an international diplomat, and a member of the League of Nations, all of which importantly shaped his vision of comparative literature. And Gladstone's interest into ancient Near Eastern literatures was immediately informed by the Eastern Question and his role as a British Prime Minister. As the study of these individuals in this dissertation has revealed, various processes of globalisation and increased connectivity of the world directly influenced how scholars approached literary studies. In this respect, it can be said that Homeric studies developed in direct response to historical transnationalism.

New ideas about world literature, the world, and world-making influenced how these scholars envisaged and interpreted one particular literary tradition, Homeric epic. I demonstrated, for example, that Goethe reconciled the ahistorical perception of Homer as an aesthetic model with his understanding of modern literary circulation and reception, proposing Homer as a productive and normative model for how one should read world literature. Wolf, who was well acquainted with contemporary literary production, developed his Homeric criticism with Herder's reading of world literature in mind, inheriting his cultural and historic

relativism. His reading of Homer (which also established classical philology as an academic discipline) hence emerged from discussions about the universal value of literature, its international and transhistorical reach, and interests in non-European traditions. Furthermore, newly discovered archival material revealed that Milman Parry was developing his argument about orality in dialogue with discourses about world literature in folklore studies and comparative literature. His oral theory, which in itself presented the very argument for the cultural localisation of literature, demonstrated that a comparative consideration of oral traditions around the world importantly influenced the ways in which Homeric poetry could be read and understood. Like Parry, Gladstone also argued that it was necessary to consider other literatures in order to understand Homer, proposing to focus on the ancient Near East in order to find possible literary influences for Homer; and Bernal, West, and Burkert followed his suggestion by considering non-Greek traditions in their study of literatures and cultures of the ancient Mediterranean. As this dissertation shows, the way in which Goethe, Wolf, Posnett, Parry, Gladstone, Burkert, and Bernal understood world literature and the world fundamentally shaped how they read Homer and how they envisaged Homeric studies, either as a universal model, historical tradition, a comparable literary work, or an actor in the literary network. Even if these interpretations were localising in nature, they were directly influenced by readings and theories of world literature.

This brings me to the second research question, namely, how readings of Homeric poetry inform our understanding of world literature and assist in world-making. The historical investigation of scholarship provided here demonstrated that all literary interpretations, in some way or another, and to varying extents of course, contributed to constructions of world literature and to various other processes of transnationalism, most importantly through different world-making agendas. Every reception of Homeric poetry investigated in this thesis in some way evinced that they not only emerge, but also actively contribute to various processes of globalisation and, likewise, that localised readings of one literary work always reveal how other works of world literature or even the whole of world literature can be read. All Homeric interpretations investigated in this dissertation expressed different approaches to world literature and even constructed and productively informed them, while at the same time they created their own vision of the world and assisted in different projects of world-making. In this regard, Homeric scholarship can be understood as a process that actively contributed to, operated within, and assisted in globalisation and transnationalism.

Homeric scholarship and other fields of literary studies (such as comparative literature) contributed to the emergence or reassertion of different world-views, ideologies, and even

political and economic theories, while scholars often explicitly argued for or even implemented such policies. For example, Goethe's concept of *Weltliteratur* included a humanist perspective which argued for explicit political action, international cooperation, mutual understanding, and world peace, and therefore became an important platform for discussing different normative ideas about the world and its organisation. Wolf's classical philology became an important part of Humboldt's reform of the university, which is still one of the most important curricular organisations of higher education around the world. Posnett was also engaged in politics and often wrote about his own vision of the British Empire's future. As I argued in this dissertation, his reading and interpretation of literature paralleled his outspoken support for *laissez faire* liberalism and federalism. French comparatists like Fernand Baldensperger saw comparative literature as a productive force and device in reorganising Europe after the devastations of the First World War. And in his role as a British politician, Gladstone likewise turned to ancient literature and Homer as ideological justifications of his own foreign policy, not least towards the Ottoman Empire. His political actions, which importantly influenced the future of the Balkans, Egypt, Afghanistan, the Ottoman Empire, and other states, were entangled in his reception of the ancient Mediterranean and its connected literatures. Such ancient connections between Homer and Babylonian epic continued to provide a lens for the interpretation of the world, and a means of affecting conceptions of that world, in a postcolonial context. In all these examples, scholars, literary disciplines, and interpretations of Homeric poetry actively participated in different processes of transnationalism and globalisation.

Homeric scholarship also importantly influenced how literary studies approached world literature and how world literature was conceptualised and read. Wolf is perhaps the most influential example in this respect, since his textual criticism and historical philology not only defined classical and Homeric studies, but also presented theoretical grounds on which other national philologies were established. This dissertation briefly discussed the methodology of the brothers Grimm and the Romance philologist Gaston Paris, who were all influenced by Wolf's methods and applied them to reading of their own literatures. Parry's oral theory is another example of how a specific comparative approach to Homer encouraged literary scholars to look for and consider oral poetry around the world. His reading of Homer established a model of interpreting literature, which assisted in putting oral literary traditions on the map of world literature and has been utilised world-wide since. Focusing on the trans-local circulation of literary works, Gladstone's discourse about Homer and the *Epic of Gilgamesh* paralleled an approach to literature championed by the French comparatists. With his discussions about the ancient Mediterranean, he established a paradigm which encouraged

later scholars to consider literatures of the ancient Near East as relevant for classical studies. Furthermore, by demonstrating that the ancient literary network can be utilised for addressing contemporary positions of power, Gladstone also acted as a precursor to the post-colonial and multicultural turn in the so-called culture wars. All these receptions therefore expressed how global questions can be addressed and understood by approaching world literature on the level of one particular interpretation. Some of the historically most influential readings of Homeric epic hence not only mimicked different approaches to world literature but also directly constructed or enabled them.

As this dissertation demonstrated, reading Homeric epic becomes a two-fold operation with regard to world literature and with regard to globalisation. Based on my historical investigation of Homeric studies and comparative literature, I argued that: first, transnationalism plays an important role in the birth of modern Homeric scholarship and that ideas about world literature inform and affect Homeric interpretations; and second, that interpretations of Homer express different approaches to world literature, assist in its constructions, and act as a world-making process. Even though Homeric epic is one particular work of world literature and even though the investigated receptions were tendentiously localising, it is apparent that they were actively shaped by and responded to questions about world literature and the globalised world.

Thus far I focused on the first two research questions of this dissertation. The third research question, why should a literary scholar or anyone interested in world literature choose to focus on Homer, still needs to be addressed. In the introduction, I mentioned that this dissertation approaches questions about world literature and globalisation from localised view-point, that is, by considering scholarly receptions of a specific literary tradition, Homeric epic. I wrote about South Slavic poetry and *Gilgamesh* too, but both literary traditions were considered only to the extent that they impacted readings of Homeric poetry itself. To a certain degree, this goes against arguments advanced by scholars of world literature who proposed to shift the perspective by surpassing localised narratives, and focusing instead on broader literary networks, or reading literature in a global, world-encompassing perspective. Their scholarly interventions hence deal with various aspects of the world, with processes of globalisation, interconnectedness, intercultural hermeneutics, or explicate a humanist, normative, and ethical potential that presents literature as a cohabitation of world cultures or as a platform for political action. While Homer can indeed open a window to other cultures and times and can be read as

"a form of detached engagement with world beyond our own place and time",[719] it is also true that the world consists of other literatures which are equally worthy of attention. Accordingly, Damrosch, although he argues for an "intensive" way of reading world literature, considers numerous other ancient traditions such as the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, the Old Testament, ancient Egyptian poetry, ancient Chinese poetry, and early South Asian literatures, not to speak about other pre-modern, modern, and contemporary literatures.[720] Even his recent study of comparative literature's history, often regarded as a primarily Western discipline, considers its neglected global emergence.[721]

In this light, it is necessary to explicate why a dissertation devoted to Homer and world literature would focus just on Homer, and why someone interested in literature should consider Homeric poetry. As I already hinted at the beginning of the thesis, the answer to this question has to do with how one understands and approaches localisation and globalisation. Receptions of Homeric poetry, I suggested, present a process of localisation of world literature because they are informed by how world literature is comprehended and because these readings retrospectively play an important part in envisaging world literature and the world. Even a delimited and localised interpretation of Homeric epic is importantly determined by and itself determines the interconnectedness of the world and different approaches to world literature – this much has been established by answering the first two research questions. There are, however, further consequences for the investigation of the third research question. One of the aims of this dissertation was to demonstrate that local narratives are constructed through processes of transnationalism and globalisation and that it is therefore possible to address questions about the world by investigating the emergence of these narratives or by looking at how they retrospectively influenced world-makings. In other words, it is not necessary to focus on global circulation, the global representativeness of literature, intercultural hybridity, world-wide receptions, worlding of literature, or the global literary market in order to consider world literature. It turns out to be possible to address the same topics by investigating how literature creates local narratives in the context of global trends and how these localisations act in global agendas.

In this respect, my own choice of Homer and Homeric scholarship as the topic of investigation revealed that world literature and Homeric poetry were negotiated in different interpretations, that these readings were directly influenced by globalising processes, and that

---

[719] Damrosch, 2003: 281.
[720] See e.g. Damrosch, 2003, 2004, 2009b.
[721] Damrosch, 2020.

Homeric scholarship acted as a transnational operation or in other ways assisted in constructions of the world. That is to say, this dissertation revealed that Homeric receptions responded to globalising trends and were not simply produced on the account of scholars' personal interests, disciplinary belongings, or, for example, the presupposed literary value of the Homeric epics. On the contrary, Homeric interpretations acted in response to the world and played an active role in its conveyance. In order to consider world literature, it was therefore not necessary to focus on world literature *per se*, but rather to investigate how localised scholarly receptions emerged as a response to transnational and global operations. While the choice to read and study Homer is itself an act of localisation – and, as I mentioned above, my own investigation is equally localised – it is also an act that both emerges from and participates in reasonings about the world. A scholarly focus on Homeric epic together with its readings and interpretations can therefore acknowledge world literature even if it does not directly address other literary traditions. It does that, I argued, by approaching Homeric poetry as a way of *localising world literature*.

That processes of literary localisation are conditioned by globalisation of the world and, likewise, that Homeric interpretations are themselves localisations of world literature justifies why focusing on one literary tradition, Homeric epic, allows for considerations and theorisations of world literature. While not excluding the importance of the new perspective of world literature studies, an additional reason why such interventions are needed and indeed necessary is in the very nature of globalisation itself. Let us consider a hypothetic situation, which is not (yet?) a reality, and assume that all readers are global citizens, that there is one *lingua franca*, English, and that literature is itself world literature. In this thought experiment, not accidentally reminiscent of the Library of Babel, the real and important question becomes how a reading of one literary work localises world literature, as opposed to how transnationalism overcomes local narratives. In a world like that, it is less pressing to ask how literatures travel across cultural borders; or how literatures are translated; or how national discourses are surpassed; or how Eurocentrism is deconstructed; or how to read in a world-encompassing perspective, because that perspective already is the reality. In such a world a much more pressing issue is how a literary interpretation can establish borders; how it can form a delimited understanding of the world; how reading creates new identities; and how world literature is localised in various receptions. All these processes of localisation, regardless of their form, hence become central for understanding world literature, the world, and our place in it.

While such a world might not itself be a reality, at least some Homeric receptions seem to already operate in such a way, meaning that they take globalisation and transnationalism as an undisputed ontological condition of the world on the grounds of which they form a contractual image of the local. One such example, often addressed by classicists over the past few years, is the emergence of the alt-right communities and their appropriation of the classical tradition.[722] Interestingly enough, classical literature, especially Homer, plays an important role in these communities that emerged through online platforms and argue for different versions of 'white supremacy'.[723] Some of their uses of the ancient heritage have already been analysed,[724] but I am here interested in this phenomenon to the extent that it presents one possible example of how a localised reception of Homer can emerge on the grounds of a presupposition that globalisation and transnationalism are a finalised process and hence a given ontological reality of the world. It is emphatically not a kind of reception I endorse, but my answer to it would not insist on alternative globalised all-encompassing receptions since, as I argued, such receptions are the precondition for what the alt-right communities are doing. Rather, I advocate here for the possibility and, indeed, the importance of considering and studying other forms of localised reception.

Let us consider one such alt-right interpretation of the *Odyssey*. Here is a short passage from a longer interpretation of the epic:

> Taking place after the travails of the Trojan War, the tale is fundamentally about Odysseus' struggle to find and reestablish his place in a chaotic world. During his twenty-year absence, the hero's native land of Ithaca has fallen victim to usurpers, and he must overcome innumerable obstacles to find his way home and restore his political authority as king through subterfuge and violence. Odysseus never gives up on his quest, nor does he settle down in one of the many places he visits, because he never forgets his dear family and fatherland, those two defining aspects of his social identity.[725]

As is apparent from the passage, Odysseus is presented as a clever hero who respects his fatherland and is prepared to use force and subterfuge in order to re-establish his natural rights. The author also refers to Odysseus' "rightful" use of extreme violence, including the hanging

---

[722] The most important studies on the topic are Naoíse, 2019; Zuckerberg, 2018.

[723] For scholarly discussions on the alt-right see Hawley, 2017, 2018; Main, 2018; Esposito, 2019; Wendling, 2018; Neiwert, 2017.

[724] For how the alt-right embraced classical tradition with regard to women and feminism see Zuckerberg, 2018. For political aspects see Naoíse, 2019.

[725] "Homer's Odyssey: The Return of the Father; Part 1 of 2 – The Occidental Observer" [Online source]; "Homer's Odyssey: The Return of the Father; Part 2 of 2 – The Occidental Observer" [Online source].

of the maidens after he killed the suitors, "a dark deed necessary to restore his honour and authority". Among other things, the essay claims that kinship justifies violence, that hereditary lineage of the Greek kings and heroes is natural, and points to passages in which Homer says that foreigners present danger. It also presents Penelope as a woman who uses her "female charms" in order to protect the native land in the only way she has the right to do so, that is, inside the house. In this interpretation, the epic is a tale of a heroic man who is eagerly returning home to his birthplace Ithaca, an island usurped by the suitors (who, it is stressed, were not native but from neighbouring lands), and violently fights his way to establish the old and rightfully inherited kingdom. In other words, this reading reflects how the white supremacists perceive themselves: just as Odysseus is a warrior of the old order, which he manages to re-establish by killing the suitors, so too members of the alt-right present themselves as heroic figures fighting the new world in order to reaffirm supposedly old identities.[726]

Here is hence an interpretation that is clearly pushing for an extreme form of a localised reading, both in the way it presents Odysseus as a character who will do everything to localise himself, and as an exposition in which the reader sees only and just himself, that is, understands the poem as an alt-right manifesto. What characterises this interpretation of the epic, however, is that this localisation, that is, a return to the imaginative 'old world', is constructed through an opposition to the present reality, one which the members of the community believe is transnational and governed by multiculturalism.[727] This can be, for example, observed in how the author of the above interpretation elsewhere laments the changes in the "failing educational system":

> I am convinced that our educational systems do not teach classics properly. Taking my own example: I managed to studiously get through university and earn a degree in the liberal arts, with high honours, without ever reading Aristotle or Tocqueville, let alone Homer. No wonder my view of the world was rather stunted.[728]

The reality, he implies in this passage, has been one of world literature in which the classical tradition was not given its "proper" role and hence created a "stunted" view of the world – that is, stunted from the localised position the author champions. In this respect, classical literature

---

[726] Parallels between such readings and manifestos of the mass shooters in the past few years are indeed no coincidence, and neither is the apparent racial and violent tone of this Homeric reading.
[727] E.g. Hermansson et. al., 2020: ch. 2.
[728] "Classics in an age of confusion" [Online source].

is seen as a "corrective" that establishes the vision of the world that is sympathetic to the alt-right:

> This makes the Greeks particularly worthy of study: in addition to being the founders of our Western civilization, their world-view is surprisingly consonant with our own Darwinian assumptions.[729]

This reading emerges on the grounds of a presupposed globalised reality, the reality of world literature. The author perceives classical literature as a localisation which allows him to create an image that affirms only his own identity – but, and this is my main point, it does so through a disconnection of classics and Homer from world literature. The point of this thesis is that the kind of disconnection championed here cannot actually be achieved.

Literary interpretation, as for example the reading of the *Odyssey* presented above, a reading that predicates a negation of global universalism in an extreme and violent manner, is a localisation which allows for seeing just an illusory image of the localised self-identity. It localises Homer by arguing for an opposition to globalising processes, but it does so by assuming that absolute globalisation is the reality in which local identity is lost and needs to be created *ex nihilo*. In such readings, there is no place for universalism and transnationalism, no place to address the relationship between Homer and other literary traditions, and there is no place for world literature.

There are, of course, other and less perilous ways in which literature can localise. The Balkans featured repeatedly in this dissertation and it is to the Balkans that I again turn for a final example of localisation, namely, to the only writer from Yugoslavia (or its modern republics) to be awarded the Nobel prize, Ivo Andrić (1892–1975). That Andrić was deeply interested in processes of localisation is not surprising. He was a Croat, born in Bosnia, but often referred to himself as a Serb. This multinational identity and the fact that he lived in Yugoslavia, a country that was one of the founders of the Non-Aligned Movement, encouraged him to explore different ways in which world literature can localise. One such example is his lesser-known novel, *Travnička hronika* (*The Chronicle of Travnik*) published in 1945. It focuses on seven years (1807–1814) in the history of the city of Travnik, at the time the capital of the Bosnian Eyalet, from the perspective of a French consul. This period was marked by the establishment of the Illyrian Provinces and the arrival of the French and Austrian consuls to the town, a narrative that guides the basic tropes and themes of the novel: international politics,

---

[729] "Classics in an age of confusion" [Online source].

religious violence, ethnic disputes, modernisation, the gaze of the outside observers, etc.[730] While more than four hundred pages of this chronicle are concerned with various aspects of transnationalism and multiculturalism, the main story is encircled by a three page preface and a two page epilogue, both repeating the same scene: in the garden of the town's coffeehouse, under a lime tree, local beys gather, smoke chibouks, and discuss the local news, including the expected arrival of the consuls (in the epilogue) and their departure (in the prologue). It is in this peaceful, timeless place that the beys meet as in a shelter from the surrounding wars, conflicts, changes, and diplomacies of the French, the Austrian, and the Ottoman empire. All these forces shape their life when they leave the coffeehouse, and of course the beys themselves contribute to the events, even in the most violent ways, but for the moment their world is localised in this very spot, and in their apathy.

Both these pictures are quite different from what Goethe, Wolf, Posnett, Parry, Brunetière, Baldensperger, Gladstone, Bernal, Burkert and others professed when they negotiated their localised readings in direct relation to processes of globalisation, addressed the relationship between traditions around the world, and acknowledged that their readings of Homer were always also readings of world literature. Nevertheless, these images testify that localisations can, and indeed do, emerge in a supposedly global world. Those discussed are not the only possible localisations in our "Library of Babel" and indeed they are not consonant with the library location in which they happen. The point I am making here is that with increasing globalisation, localisations become important and unpredictable and therefore worthy of attention, if one is to understand how world literature operates. In this respect, closely reading one literary work or studying one narrow historical tradition must be seen to contribute to questions pertinent for understanding the world literature and the world. If a localised narrative is considered as directly conditioned by and as an actor in global formations, and, likewise, if a reading of one literary work is understood as emerging through world literature and at the same time forming it, then even narrow interests can consider the processes that shape the global world and the global system of literature. Importantly, such readings approach world literature from a different perspective, one which focuses on localisation of world literature, its delimitation, its role in identity-formations, in emergence of local narratives, national discourses and similar, but treats those processes as a receptive and active part of globalising trends. For in a world that is governed by globalisation, localisations play an important part and investigating these processes is necessary if we are to understand what is at

---

[730] See also the interpretation in Ćatović, 2019.

stake for world literature. As Borges said, the most revolutionary discovery about the Library of Babel was made by discovering and reading one single book:

> Five hundred years ago, the chief of an upper hexagon came upon a book as confusing as the others, but which had nearly two pages of homogeneous lines. He showed his find to a wandering decoder who told him the lines were written in Portuguese; others said they were Yiddish. Within a century, the language was established: a Samoyedic Lithuanian dialect of Guarani, with classical Arabian inflections. The content was also deciphered: some notions of combinative analysis, illustrated with examples of variations with unlimited repetition. These examples made it possible for a librarian of genius to discover the fundamental law of the Library.[731]

---

[731] Hace quinientos años, el jefe de un hexágono superior dio con un libro tan confuso como los otros, pero que tenía casi dos hojas de líneas homogéneas. Mostró su hallazgo a un descifrador ambulante, que le dijo que estaban redactadas en portugués; otros le dijeron que en yiddish. Antes de un siglo pudo establecerse el idioma: un dialecto samoyedo-lituano del guaraní, con inflexiones de árabe clásico. También se descifró el contenido: nociones de análisis combinatorio, ilustradas por ejemplos de variaciones con repetición ilimitada. Esos ejemplos permitieron que un bibliotecario de genio descubriera la ley fundamental de la Biblioteca. (Borges, *La biblioteca del Babel*)

ARCHIVAL SOURCES

Posnett, H. M. *Application*. UCL Appl. Classics 1892. UCL Special Collections, Archives, Rare Books and Records.

Parry, M. *Uncatalogued papers*. Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature. Widener Library, Harvard University.

Parry, M. *Report on work in Jugoslavia (June 18 - October 19)*. Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature. Widener Library, Harvard University.

Parry, M. *Project for a study of Jugoslavian popular oral poetry*. Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature. Widener Library, Harvard University.

Parry, M. *Report on work in Jugoslavia (October 20, 1934 - March 24, 1935)*. Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature. Widener Library, Harvard University.

Parry, M. *Papers*. In: *Papers of Albert Bates Lord*. Accession 2018.170. Box 18. Harvard University Archives.

Sterling, D. *Papers of Sterling Dow*. Accession 13132. Harvard University Archives.

Lord, A. *Papers of Albert Bates Lord*. Accession 2018.170. Harvard University Archives.

LITERATURE

Abbé, D. van. (1954). On correcting Eckermann's perspectives. *Publications of the English Goethe Society*, 23 (1), pp.1–26.

Adeleke, T. (2009). *The case against Afrocentrism*. Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi.

Adler, E. (2016). *Classics, the culture wars, and beyond*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Adler, H. (1996). Weltliteratur — Nationalliteratur — Volksliteratur. Johann Gottfried Herders Vermittlungsversuch als kulturpolitische Idee. In: Otto, R. (Ed). *Nationen und Kulturen: zum 250. Geburtstag Johann Gottfried Herders*. Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann. pp.271–284.

Adler, H. (2009a). Herder's style. In: Adler, H. and Koepke, W. (Eds). *A companion to the works of Johann Gottfried Herder*. Rochester, NY: Camden House. pp.189–213.

Adler, H. (2009b). Herder's concept of *Humanität*. In: Adler, H. and Koepke, W. (Eds). *A companion to the works of Johann Gottfried Herder*. Rochester, NY: Camden House. pp.93–116.

Adler, H. and Koepke, W. (Eds). (2009). *A companion to the works of Johann Gottfried Herder*. Rochester, NY: Camden House.

Amrine, F. R., Zucker, F. J. and Wheeler, H. (2012). *Goethe and the sciences: a reappraisal*. Dordrecht; Boston, MA; Lancaster; Tokyo: D. Reidel Publishing Company.

Anderegg, J. and Kunz, E. A. (Eds). (2005). *Goethe und die Bibel*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft.

Anderson, B. (1983). *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. London: Verso Books.

André-Salvini, B. (1999). Les débuts de la recherche Française en assyriologie. Milieu et atmosphère du déchiffrement. *Journal asiatique*, 287 (1), pp.331–355.

Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at large: cultural dimensions of globalization*. Minneapolis,MN; London: University of Minnesota Press.

Appadurai, A. (Ed). (2001). *Globalization*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Appadurai, A. (2013). *The future as cultural fact: essays on the global condition*. London; New York, NY: Verso Books.

Apter, E. (2011). *The translation zone: a new comparative literature*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Apter, E. (2013). *Against world literature: on the politics of untranslatability*. London; New York, NY: Verso.

Arnold, G., Kloocke, K. and Menze, E. A. (2009). Herder's reception and influence. In: Adler, H. and Koepke, W. (Eds). *A companion to the works of Johann Gottfried Herder*. Rochester, NY: Camden House. pp.391–420.

Arnold, M. (1869). *Culture and anarchy: an essay in political and social criticism*. London: Smith, Elder & co.

Arnold, M. (1883). *Essays in criticism*. New York, NY: Macmillan.

Arnold, M. (1922). Wordsworth. In: *Selected Poems of William Wordsworth*. New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace and company. pp.1–22.

Auerbach, E. (2003). *Mimesis: the representation of reality in Western literature*. 50th anniversary edition. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Bachvarova, M. R. (2015). *From Hittite to Homer: the Anatolian background of ancient Greek epic*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bähler, U. (2002). Gaston Paris et Ferdinand Brunetière: deux mondes. *Revue des Langues Romanes*, 106 (1), pp.49–68.

Bähler, U. (2004a). *Gaston Paris et la philologie romane*. Geneva: Librairie Droz.

Bähler, U. (2004b). Gaston Paris et la philologie romane: quelques réflexions synthétiques. In: Zink, M. (Ed). *Le Moyen Âge de Gaston Paris*. Paris: Odile Jacob.

Baines, J., Bennet, J. and Houston, S. D. (Eds). (2008). *The disappearance of writing systems: perspectives on literacy and communication*. London; Oakville, CT: Equinox.

Balakian, A. (1994). How and why I became a comparatist. In: Gossman, L. and Spariosu, M. (Eds). *Building a profession: autobiographical perspectives on the history of comparative literature in the United States*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press. pp.75–87.

Baldensperger, F. (1899). *Gottfried Keller: sa vie et ses oeuvres*. Paris: Librairie Hachette.

Baldensperger, F. (1904). *Goethe en France: étude de littérature comparée*. Paris: Librairie Hachette.

Baldensperger, F. (1918). Prophesying in time of war. *Columbia University Quarterly*, 20 (2), pp.97–115.

Baldensperger, F. (1919a). French universities and the war. *Columbia University Quarterly*, 21 (1), pp.51–63.

Baldensperger, F. (1919b). Où nous en sommes: examen de conscience d'un 'comparatiste'. *Revue universitaire*, 28, pp.260–273.

Baldensperger, F. (1920). *Université de Strasbourg. Fêtes d'inauguration, 21, 22, 23 novembre 1919*. Strasbourg: Imprimerie Alsacienne.

Baldensperger, F. (1921). Littérature comparée: le mot et la chose. *Revue de littérature comparée*, 1, pp.5–29.

Baldensperger, F. (1922). Où l'Orient et l'Occident s'affrontent. *Revue de Littérature Comparée*, 2, pp.5–29.

Baldensperger, F. (1932). Littérature générale et littératures particulières. *The French Review*, 6 (1), pp.5–14.

Baldensperger, F. (1934). La Littérature universelle selon l'esprit occidental. *Annales de l'Université de Paris*, 6, pp.532–560.

Baldensperger, F. (1940). *Une vie parmi d'autres: notes pour servir à la chronique de notre temps*. Paris: Librairie Conard.

Baldensperger, F. (1945). Solidarité internationale et Littérature Comparée. *Comparative Literature Studies (Liverpool)*, 16, pp.2–4.

Baldensperger, F. (1950). My debt to Goethe. *Books Abroad*, 24 (1), pp.19–22.

Barnard, F. M. (2003). *Herder on nationality, humanity, and history*. Montreal and Kingston; London; Ithaca, NY: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Barner, W. (1993). Anachronistische Klassizität. Zu Schillers Abhandlung Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung. In: Voßkamp, W. (Ed). *Klassik im Vergleich Normativität und Historizität europäischer Klassiken: DFG-Symposion 1990*. Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler. pp.62–80.

Bassnett, S. (1993). *Comparative literature: a critical introduction*. Oxford; Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.

Bassnett, S. (2006). Reflections on comparative literature in the twenty-first century. *Comparative Critical Studies*, 3 (1–2), pp.3–11.

Bataillon, M. (1958). L'héritage de Fernand Baldensperger. *Revue de Littérature Comparée*, 32, pp.161–167.

Bauman, Z. (1998). *Globalization: the human consequences*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Bauman, Z. (2000). *Liquid modernity*. Cambridge; Malden, MA: Polity Press; Blackwell.

Bauman, Z. (2004). *Identity: conversations with Benedetto Vecchi*. Cambridge; Malden, MA: Polity Press.

Bauman, Z. and Raud, R. (2015). *Practices of selfhood*. Cambridge; Malden, MA: Polity Press.

Baumgarten, A. G. (2010). *Aesthetica*. Turnhout: Brepols Publishers.

Baumgartner, A. (1897–1911). *Geschichte der Weltliteratur*. Freiburg im Breisgau; München: Herder.

Baumstark, M. et al. (Eds). (2016). *Historisierung: Begriff - Geschichte - Praxisfelder*. Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler.

Bebbington, D. (1993). *William Ewart Gladstone: faith and politics in Victorian Britain*. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing.

Bebbington, D. (2000). Gladstone and Homer. In: Bebbington, D. and Swift, R. (Eds). *Gladstone centenary essays*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press. pp.57–74.

Bebbington, D. (2004). *The mind of Gladstone: religion, Homer, and politics*. Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Bebbington, D. (2008). Gladstone and the Classics. In: Hardwick, L. and Stray, C. (Eds). *A companion to classical receptions*. Chichesters; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell. pp.86–97.

Bebbington, D. (2004). *The mind of Gladstone: religion, Homer, and politics*. Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Bebbington, D. and Swift, R. (Eds). (2000). *Gladstone centenary essays*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Beck, U. (2000). *What is globalization?* Cambridge; Malden, MA: Polity Press; Blackwell.

Beecroft, A. (2008). World literature without a hyphen: towards a typology of literary systems. *New Left review*, 54, pp.87–100.

Beecroft, A. (2010). *Authorship and cultural identity in early Greece and China: patterns of literary circulation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Beecroft, A. (2015). *An ecology of world literature: from antiquity to the present day*. London; New York, NY: Verso Books.

Behdad, A. (2018). The history of comparison matters. *Cambridge Journal of Postcolonial Literary Inquiry*, 5 (3), pp.266–273.

Beiser, F. C. (2011). *The German historicist tradition*. Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Belhalfaoui, B. (1987). Johann Gottfried Herder: Shakespeare, — ein Vergleich der alten und der modernen Tragödie. *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, 61 (1), pp.89–124.

Bergel, L. (1968). Vico and the Germany of Goethe. *Forum Italicum: A Journal of Italian Studies*, 2 (4), pp.566–588.

Berlin, I. (2013). *Three critics of the enlightenment: Vico, Hamann, Herder*. Second Edition. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Bernal, M. (1987). *Black Athena: the Afroasiatic roots of classical civilization. Vol. 1. The fabrication of Ancient Greece 1785 - 1985*. New Brunswick, NJ; London: Rutgers University Press; Free Association Books.

Bernal, M. (1990). *Cadmean letters: the transmission of the alphabet to the Aegean and further west before 1400 B.C.* Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns.

Bernal, M. (1991). *Black Athena: the Afroasiatic roots of classical civilization. Vol. 2. The archaeological and documentary evidence.* New Brunswick, NJ; London: Rutgers University Press; Free Association Books.

Bernal, M. (1994). The image of Ancient Greece as a tool for colonialism and European hegemony. In: Bond, G. C. and Gilliam, A. (Eds). *Social construction of the past: representation as power*. London; New York, NY: Routledge. pp.119–128.

Bernal, M. (1995). Greece: Aryan or Mediterranean? Two contending historiographical models. In: Federici, S. (Ed). *Enduring Western civilization: the construction of the concept of Western civilization and its 'others'*. Westport, CT; London: Praeger. pp.3–11.

Bernal, M. (2001). *Black Athena writes back: Martin Bernal responds to his critics*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Bernal, M. (2006). *Black Athena: the Afroasiatic roots of classical civilization. Vol. 3. The linguistic evidence.* New Brunswick, NJ; London: Rutgers University Press; Free Association Books.

Bernheimer, C. (1995). *Comparative literature in the age of multiculturalism*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Betz, L. P. and Texte, J. (1900). *La littérature comparée: essai bibliographique*. Strasbourg: Karl J. Trübner.

Bhattacharya, B. (2016). On comparatism in the colony: archives, methods, and the project of *Weltliteratur*. *Critical Inquiry*, 42 (3), pp.677–711.

Bhattacharya, B. (2018). *Postcolonial writing in the era of world literature: texts, territories, globalizations*. Abingdon; New York, NY: Routledge.

Biagini, E. F. (2000). *Gladstone*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.

Billings, J. (2014). *Genealogy of the tragic: Greek tragedy and German philosophy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Birus, H. (1995). Goethes Idee der Weltliteratur: eine historische Vergegenwärtigung. In: Schmeling, M. (Ed). *Weltliteratur heute: Konzepte und Perspektiven*. Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann. pp.5–28.

Birus, H. (2000). The Goethean concept of world literature and comparative literature. *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture*, 2 (4).

Birus, H. (2011). Goethe and Homer. In: Klaniczay, G., Werner, M. and Gecser, O. (Eds). *Multiple antiquities, multiple modernities: ancient histories in nineteenth century European cultures*. Frankfurt; New York, NY: Campus Verlag. pp.501–512.

Biti, V. (2016). *Tracing global democracy: literature, theory, and the politics of trauma*. Berlin; Boston, MA: De Gruyter.

Blanco, A. G. (2018). Translation studies for a world community of literature. In: Bassnett, S. (Ed). *Translation and world literature*. Abingdon; New York, NY: Routledge. pp.44–59.

Bloch, H. (1985). Naturalism, nationalism, medievalism. *Romanic Review*, 76 (4), pp.341–360.

Blyth, C. A. (2006). *History of the Economics department of the University of Auckland with some notes on the early academic teaching of economics in New Zealand*. Department of Economics, Auckland Business School, The University of Auckland. [Working paper].

Boas, F. (1927). *Primitive art*. Oslo; Cambridge, MA: H. Aschehoug; Harvard University Press.

Bock, K. E. (1966). The comparative method of anthropology. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 8 (03), pp.269–280.

Bock, K. E. (1974). Comparison of histories: the contribution of Henry Maine. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 16 (2), pp.232–262.

Boer, P. D. (2007). Homer in modern Europe. *European Review*, 15 (2), pp.171–185.

Bohlman, P. V. (2017). *Song loves the masses: Herder on music and nationalism*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press.

Bohm, A. (2007). *Goethe's Faust and European epic: forgetting the future*. Rochester, NY: Camden House.

Bolter, J. (1980). Friedrich August Wolf and the scientific study of antiquity. *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies*, 21 (1), pp.83–99.

Bommel, B. van. (2015a). *Classical humanism and the challenge of modernity: debates on classical education in 19th-century Germany*. Berlin; Boston, MA: De Gruyter.

Bommel, B. van. (2015b). Between "Bildung" and "Wissenschaft": the 19th-century German ideal of scientific education. In: European History Online (EGO), published by the Leibniz Institute of European History (IEG), Mainz. URL: http://www.ieg-egso.eu/bommelb-2015-en URN: urn:nbn:de:0159-2015120917. [Accessed 10 March 2020].

Borchmeyer, D. (1994). *Weimarer Klassik: Portrait einer Epoche*. Weinheim: Beltz Athenäum.

Borges, J. L. (1942). *El jardín de senderos que se bifurcan*. Buenos Aires: SUR.

Borges, J. L. (2007). *Labyrinths: selected stories and other writings*. Yates, D. A. and Irby, J. E. (Eds). New York: New Directions.

Bošković-Stulli, M. (2008). Folk poetry as an identity creating instrument (On Serbian and Croatian Examples). *Journal of the Society for the Anthropology of Europe*, 2 (2), pp.45–54.

Bošnjak, B. (2002). Matija Murko in ljudsko pesništvo. *Slavistična revija*, 3 (50), pp.389–399.

Boulard, G. (2000). Ferdinand Brunetière et le classicisme, ou la conjonction des nationalismes. *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France*, 100 (2), pp.217–236.

Bowring, J. (1827). *Servian popular poetry*. London: Baldwin, Cradock, & Joy.

Boyle, N. (1991). *Goethe: the poet and the age. Volume I, The poetry of desire (1749-1790)*. Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Boyle, N. (2000). *Goethe: the poet and the age. Volume II, Revolution and renunciation (1790-1803)*. Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Bridges, M. (2008). The Eros of Homeros: the pleasures of Greek epic in Victorian literature and archaeology. *Victorian Review*, 34 (2), pp.165–183.

Brooks, D. (1985). Gladstone and Midlothian: the background to the first campaign. *The Scottish Historical Review*, 64 (177), pp.42–67.

Brown, C. (2013). What is 'Comparative' Literature? *Comparative Critical Studies*, 10 (1), pp.67–88.

Brown, J. P. (1996). M. L. West, 'The East Face of Helicon: West Asiatic elements in Greek poetry and myth' (Book Review). *General Linguistics*, 36 (3), pp.179–186.

Bruford, W. H. (1962). *Culture and society in classical Weimar, 1775-1806*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Brunel, P. LITTÉRATURE - La littérature comparée. *Encyclopædia Universalis*. URL: http://www.universalis.fr/encyclopedie/litterature-la-litterature-comparee/. [Accessed 10 March 2020].

Brunel, P., Pichois, C. and Rousseau, A.-M. (1983). *Qu'est-ce que la littérature comparée?*, Paris: Colin.

Brunetière, F. (1898). *Après le procès; rèponse à quelques "intellectuels"*. Paris: Perrin et cie.

Brunetière, F. (1900a). La littérature Européenne. *Revue des deux mondes*, 46 (9), pp.276–355.

Brunetière, F. (1900b). Littérature Européenne. In: *Annales internationales d'histoire: Congrès de Paris 1900. Section 6, Histoire comparée des littératures.* Paris: Librairie Armand Colin. pp.5–38.

Brunetière, F. (1973). European Literature. In: Schulz, H.-J. and Rhein, P. H. (Eds.) *Comparative literature: The early years*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press. pp.157–182.

Bucco, M. (1981). *René Wellek*. Boston, MA: Twayne Publishers.

Budelmann, F. and Haubold, J. (2008). Reception and tradition. In: Hardwick, L. and Stray, C. (Eds). *A companion to classical receptions*. Malden, MA; Oxford: Blackwell. pp.13–25.

Budge, E. A. W. (1925). *Rise and progress of Assyriology*. London: M. Hopkinson.

Bulger, P. A. (2006). Alan Lomax collection. *Newsletter - Institute for Studies in American Music*, 36 (1), p.11, 15.

Burgard, P. J. (1991). Literary history and historical truth. Herder — "Shakespeare" — Goethe. *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, 65 (4), pp.636–652.

Burgess, J. S. (2006). Neoanalysis, orality, and intertextuality: an examination of Homeric motif transference. *Oral Tradition*, 21 (1), pp.148–189.

Burke, P. (1999). Erasmus and the republic of letters. *European Review*, 7 (1), pp.5–17.

Burke, P. (2000). *A social history of knowledge: from Gutenberg to Diderot.* Cambridge; Malden, MA: Polity Press; Blackwell.

Burke, P. (2009). *Cultural hybridity*. Cambridge; Malden, MA: Polity Press; Blackwell.

Burkert, W. (1991). Homerstudien und Orient. In: Latacz, J. (Ed). *Zweihundert Jahre Homer-Forschung: Rückblick und Ausblick*. Stuttgart; Leipzig: Teubner. pp.155–181.

Burkert, W. (1992). *The orientalizing revolution: Near Eastern influence on Greek culture in the early archaic age*. Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press.

Burkert, W. (2004). *Babylon, Memphis, Persepolis: eastern contexts of Greek culture*. Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press.

Burns, L. (2019). *Postcolonialism after world literature: relation, equality, dissent*, New horizons in contemporary writing. London; New York, NY: Bloomsbury Academic.

Buschmeier, M. (2008a). *Poesie und Philologie in der Goethe-Zeit: Studien zum Verhältnis der Literatur mit ihrer Wissenschaft*. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag.

Buschmeier, M. (2008b). Epos, Philologie, Roman. Wolf, Fr. Schlegel und ihre Bedeutung für Goethes "Wanderjahre". *Goethe-Jahrbuch*, 125. pp.64–79.

Butler, E. M. (1935). *The tyranny of Greece over Germany: a study of the influence exercised by Greek art and poetry over the great German writers of the Eighteenth, Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Butterworth, J. (1985). Robert Wood and Troy: A comparative failure. *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies*, 32 (1), pp.147–154.

Bynum, D. E. (1974). *Four generations of oral literary studies at Harvard University*. Cambridge, MA: Center for the Study of Oral Literature.

Bynum, D. E. (1979). The Bell, The Drum, Milman Parry, and the Time Machine. *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews (CLEAR)*, 1 (2), pp.241–253.

Calder, W. M. and Kramer, D. J. (1992). *An introductory bibliography to the history of classical scholarship chiefly in the XIXth and XXth centuries*. Hildesheim: G. Olms.

Calder, W. M. and Smith, R. S. (2000). *A supplementary bibliography to the history of classical scholarship: chiefly in the XIX and XXth centuries*. Bari: Dedalo.

Calhoun, G. M. (1933). *Homeric repetitions*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Cantilena, M. (1998). Milman Parry: settant'anni dopo. *Rivista di cultura classica e medioevale*, 40 (1/2), pp.21–31.

Cao, S. (2013). *The variation theory of comparative literature*. Berlin; London: Springer.

Carlyle, T. (1825). *The life of Friedrich Schiller. Comprehending an examination of his works.* London: Printed for Taylor and Hessey.

Carlyle, T. (1827). *German Romance: specimens of its chief authors*. Edinburgh; London: W. Tait; C. Tait.

Carlyle, T. (1830). *Leben Schillers, aus dem Englischen*. Frankfurt am Main: H. Wilmans.

Carrol, A. (2018). *The Return of Alsace to France, 1918-1939*. Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Casanova, P. (1999). *Le republique mondiale des lettres*. Paris: Editions du Seuil.

Casanova, P. (2004). *The world republic of letters*. Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press.

Casanova, P. (2005). Literature as a World. *New Left Review*, 31, pp.71–90.

Cathcart, K. J. (2011). The earliest contributions to the decipherment of Sumerian and Akkadian. *Cuneiform Digital Library Journal*, 1, pp.1–12.

Cha, D. (2015). Goethe's world literature, universal particularism, and European imperialism. *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture*, 17 (4).

Chadwick, H. M. and Chadwick, N. K. (1932). *The growth of literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Chanda, I. (2015). 'World Literature': a view from outside the window. In: Bessière, J. and Gillespie, G. (Eds). *Contextualizing world literature*. Bruxelles: Peter Lang. pp.29–40.

Chaney, E. (1998). *The evolution of the grand tour: Anglo-Italian cultural relations since the Renaissance*. London; Portland, OR: Frank Cass.

Cheah, P. (2008). What is a world? On world literature as world-making activity. *Daedalus*, 137 (3), pp.26–38.

Cheah, P. (2016). *What is a world?: on postcolonial literature as world literature*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Chevalier, J.-C. and Bergounioux, G. (2004). Gaston Paris et la mythologie comparée. In: Zink, M. (Ed). *Le Moyen Âge de Gaston Paris*. Paris: Odile Jacob.

Chevrel, Y. (1988). *La littérature comparée*, Que sais-je?, 499. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.

Childs, B. S. (1979). *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press.

Chow, R. (2006). *The age of the world target: self-referentiality in war, theory, and comparative work*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Christophe, C. (1986). Baldensperger (Fernand, Philippe, Jules). *Publications de l'Institut national de recherche pédagogique*, 2 (2), pp.19–21.

Clark, M. E. (1986). Neoanalysis: a bibliographical review. *The Classical World*, 79 (6), pp.379–394.

Clark, W. (2006). *Academic charisma and the origins of the research university*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Clements, W. M. (1988). *100 years of American folklore studies: a conceptual history*. Washington, D.C.: American Folklore Society.

Cocks, R. (1988). *Sir Henry Maine: a study in Victorian jurisprudence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Combellack, F. M. (1959). Milman Parry and Homeric artistry. *Comparative Literature*, 11 (3), pp.193–208.

Compagnon, A. (1997). *Connaissez-vous Brunetière? Enquête sur un antidreyfusard et ses amis*. Paris: Seuil.

Connell, L. and Marsh, N. (2011). *Literature and globalization: a reader*. Abingdon; New York, NY: Routledge.

Conrad, S. (2016). *What is global history?* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Constantine, D. (1984). Achilleis and Nausikaa: Goethe in Homer's world. *Oxford German Studies*, 15 (1), pp.95–111.

Cornis-Pope, M. and Neubauer, J. (2004). *History of the literary cultures of East-Central Europe: types and stereotypes*. Amsterdam; Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins Publishing.

Crampton, R. J. (2005). *A concise history of Bulgaria*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cregan-Reid, V. (2009). The *Gilgamesh* controversy: the ancient epic and Late-Victorian geology. *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 14 (2), pp.224–237.

Cregan-Reid, V. (2015). *Discovering Gilgamesh: geology, narrative and the historical sublime in Victorian culture*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Crossley, P. K. (2008). *What is global history?* Cambridge; Malden, MA: Polity Press.

Cummings, R. and Gillespie, S. (2009). Translations from Greek and Latin classics 1550–1700: a revised bibliography. *Translation and Literature*, 18 (1), pp.1–42.

Currie, B. (2012). The *Iliad*, *Gilgamesh*, and neoanalysis. In: Montanari, F., Rengakos, A. and Tsagalis, C. C. (Eds). *Homeric contexts*. Berlin; Boston, MA: De Gruyter.

Currie, B. (2016). *Homer's allusive art*. Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Čubelić, T. (1961). Matija Murko kao proučavač srpskohrvatskih narodnih epskih pjesama. *Slovenski etnograf*, 14, pp.171–182.

Ćatović, V. (2019). The small-town globalism of Ivo Andrić. *Journal of World Literature*, 4 (3), pp.394–410.

Ćurčin, M. (1932). Goethe and Serbo-Croat ballad poetry. *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 11 (31), pp.126–134.

D'haen, T. (2012). *The Routledge concise history of world literature*. Abingdon; New York, NY: Routledge.

D'haen, T., Damrosch, D. and Kadir, D. (Eds). (2012). *The Routledge companion to world literature*. Abingdon; New York, NY: Routledge.

Dahmer, H. (2010). *Mit Goethe in Sizilien oder Die Entdeckung des sizilianischen Goethe*. Norderstedt: Books on Demand.

Damrosch, D. (1987). *The narrative covenant: transformations of genre in the growth of biblical literature*. San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row.

Damrosch, D. (2003). *What is world literature?* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Damrosch, D. (2004). *The Longman anthology of world literature*. New York, NY: Longman.

Damrosch, D. (2006). Rebirth of a discipline: the global origins of comparative studies. *Comparative Critical Studies*, 3 (1), pp.99–112.

Damrosch, D. (2007a). Scriptworlds: writing systems and the formation of world literature. *Modern Language Quarterly*, 68 (2), pp.195–219.

Damrosch, D. (2007b). *The buried book: the loss and rediscovery of the great Epic of Gilgamesh*. New York, NY: H. Holt.

Damrosch, D. (2009a). Frames for world literature. In: Fotis, J., Winko, S. and Lauer, G. (Eds). *Grenzen der Literatur*. Berlin; New York, NY: De Gruyter. pp.1–20.

Damrosch, D. (2009b). *How to read world literature*. Chichester; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Damrosch, D. (2009c). Toward a history of world literature. *New Literary History*, 39 (3–4), pp.481–495.

Damrosch, D. (2013). Global scripts and the formation of literary traditions. In: Küpper, J. (Ed). *Approaches to world literature*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag. pp.85–102.

Damrosch, D. (2014). *World literature in theory*. Chichester; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Damrosch, D. (2016). Scriptworlds lost and found. *Journal of World Literature*, 1 (2), pp.143–157.

Damrosch, D. (2020). *Comparing the literatures: literary studies in a global age*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Damrosch, D., Melas, N. and Buthelezi, M. (Eds). (2009). *The Princeton sourcebook in comparative literature: from the European Enlightenment to the global present*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Danek, G. (2012). Homer und Avdo Međedović als 'post-traditional singers'? In: Meier-Brügger, M. (Ed). *Homer, gedeutet durch ein grosses Lexikon: Akten des Hamburger Kolloquiums vom 6.-8. Oktober 2010 zum Abschluss des Lexikons des frühgriechischen Epos*. Berlin; Boston, MA: De Gruyter. pp.27–44.

Davies, A. T. (1975). Aryan Christ: a motif in Christian anti-Semitism. *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, 12 (4), pp.569–579.

de Vet, T. (2005). Parry in Paris: structuralism, historical linguistics, and the oral theory. *Classical Antiquity*, 24 (2), pp.257–284.

de Vet, T. (2018). Marcel Mauss, the gift, and the oral theory. In: Varto, E. (Ed). *Brill's companion to classics and early anthropology*. Leiden; Boston, MA: Brill.

Deiters, F.-J. (2010). '...atop a single plank on the wide, open sea...': Johann Gottfried Herder's concept of poetry as a medium of cultural identity and the problem of a hermeneutic anthropology. In: Deiters, F.-J., Fliethmann, A. and Weller, C. (Eds). *Passagen. 50 Jahre Germanistik an der Monash Universität*. St. Ingbert: Röhrig Universitätsverlag. pp.467–489.

Delitzsch, F. (1903). *Babel und Bibel: ein Vortrag*. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs.

Dembeck, T. (2017). Lyrik kanonisieren. Herders Volksliedersammlung als Versuch einer Gattungskonstitution. In: Ajouri, P., Kundert, U. and Rohde, C. (Eds). *Rahmungen: Präsentationsformen und Kanoneffekte*. Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag. pp.123–145.

Denecke, W. (2014). *Classical world literatures: Sino-Japanese and Greco-Roman comparisons*. Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

DeSouza, N. (2012). Language, reason, and sociability: Herder's critique of Rousseau. *Intellectual History Review*, 22 (2), pp.221–240.

Dev, A. (1993). Literary history, literary theory and comparative literature. *Neohelicon*, 20 (2), pp.23–29.

Dewey, C. (1991). The influence of Sir Henry Maine on agrarian policy in India. In: Diamond, A. (Ed). *The Victorian achievement of Sir Henry Maine: a centennial reappraisal*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp.353–375.

Diamond, A. (Ed). (1991). *The Victorian achievement of Sir Henry Maine: a centennial reappraisal*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dietrich, W. (1985). Die Geheimnisse (1784/85), Achilleis (1799), Das Tagebuch (1810). In: Lützeler, P. M. and McLeod, J. E. (Eds). *Goethes Erzählwerk: Interpretationen*. Stuttgart: Reclam. pp.268–290.

Dimock, G. E. (1963). From Homer to Novi Pazar and back. *Arion: A Journal of Humanities and the Classics*, 2 (4), pp.40–57.

DiVanna, I. (2008). *Reconstructing the Middle Ages: Gaston Paris and the development of nineteenth-century Medievalism*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars.

Domínguez, C., Saussy, H. and Villanueva, D. (2015). *Introducing comparative literature: new trends and applications*. Abingdon; New York, NY: Routledge.

Dönike, M. (2005). *Pathos, Ausdruck und Bewegung: Zur Ästhetik des Weimarer Klassizismus 1796-1806*. Berlin: De Gruyter.

Dougherty, C. and Kurke, L. (2003). Introduction: The cultures within Greek culture. In: Dougherty, C. and Kurke, L. (Eds). *The cultures within ancient Greek culture: contact, conflict, collaboration*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp.1–16.

Dowden, K. (2001). West on the East: Martin West's East Face of Helicon and its forerunners. *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 121, pp.167–175.

Dowden, S. D. and Werner, M. (2002). *German literature, Jewish critics: the Brandeis symposium*. Rochester, NY: Camden House.

Dubar, M. (2000). Fernand Baldensperger (1871-1958). *Revue de littérature comparée*, 74 (3), pp.323–338.

Dundes, A. (1986). The anthropologist and the comparative method in folklore. *Journal of Folklore Research*, 23 (2/3), pp.125–146.

During, S. (2004). Comparative literature. *ELH*, 71 (2), pp.313–322.

Ebert, J. and Zimmermann, H.-D. (1989). *Innere und äussere Integration der Altertumswissenschaften. Konferenz zur 200. Wiederkehr der Gründung des Seminarium Philologicum Halense durch Friedrich August Wolf am 15.10.1787: Beiträge*. Halle: Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg.

Eckermann, J. P. (1906). *Conversations of Goethe with Eckermann and Soret*. London: Bell.

Eckermann, J. P., Otto, R. and Wersig, P. (1988). *Gespräche mit Goethe in den letzten Jahren seines Lebens*. München: Beck.

Edmunds, L. (2019). *Toward the characterization of Helen in Homer. Appellatives, periphrastic denominations, and noun-epithet formulas*. Berlin, Boston, MA: De Gruyter.

Eggel, D., Liebich, A. and Mancini-Griffoli, D. (2007). Was Herder a nationalist? *The Review of Politics*, 69 (1), pp.48–78.

Ekwe-Ekwe, H. (1994). *Operationalising Afrocentrism*. Reading: International Institute for Black Research.

Elkins, J. (2007). *Is art history global?*. Abingdon; New York, NY: Routledge.

Elmer, D. (2011a). The Milman Parry collection of oral literature. *Oral Tradition*, 28 (2), pp.341–354.

Elmer, D. (2011b). Oral-Formulaic theory. In: Finkelberg, M. (Ed). *The Homer Encyclopedia*. Chichester; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell. pp.604–607.

Erbse, H. (1994). Milman Parry und Homer. *Hermes*, 122 (3), pp.257–274.

Esposito, L. (2019). The Alt-Right as a revolt against neoliberalism and political correctness: the role of collective action frames. *Perspectives on Global Development and Technology*, 18 (1–2), pp.93–110.

Étiemble, R. (1963). *Comparaison n'est pas raison: la crise de la littérature comparée*. Paris: Gallimard.

Even-Zohar, I. (2008). Culture planning, cohesion, and the making and maintenance of entities. In: Pym, A., Shlesinger, M. and Simeoni, D. (Eds). *Beyond Descriptive Translation Studies: Investigations in Homage to Gideon Toury*. Amsterdam; Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins. pp.277–292.

Evrigenis, I. D. and Pellerin, D. (Eds). (2004). *Johann Gottfried Herder: another philosophy of history and selected political writings*. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Pub.

Faught, C. B. (2006). An imperial Prime Minister? W.E. Gladstone and India, 1880–1885. *Journal of The Historical Society*, 6 (4), pp.555–578.

Feichtinger, J., Fillafer, F. L. and Surman, J. (Eds). (2018). *The worlds of positivism: a global intellectual history, 1770-1930*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Ferris, D. S. (2000). *Silent urns: romanticism, Hellenism, modernity*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Fichte, J. G. (1971). *Gesamtausgabe der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*. Bad Cannstatt, Stuttgart: Friedrich Frommann Verlag.

Fink, K. J. and Baeumer, M. L. (Eds). (1984). *Goethe as a critic of literature*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

Finkelberg, M. (2003). Neoanalysis and oral tradition in Homeric studies. *Oral Tradition*, 18 (1), pp.68–69.

Finnegan, R. (1988). *Literacy and orality: studies in the technology of communication*. Oxford; New York, NY: Blackwell.

Finnegan, R. (1990). What is orality — if anything? *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 14 (1), pp.130–150.

Fischer, B. (1994). Goethes Klassizismus und Schillers Poetologie der Moderne: 'Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung'. *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie*, 113 (2), pp.225–245.

Finsler, G. (1912). *Homer in der neuzeit von Dante bis Goethe: Italien, Frankreich, England, Deutschland*. Leipzig: B. G. Teubner.

Fokkema, D. W. (1982). Comparative Literature and the new paradigm. *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature/Revue Canadienne de Littérature Comparée*, 9 (1), pp.1–18.

Foley, J. M. (1985). *Oral-formulaic theory and research: an introduction and annotated bibliography*. New York, NY: Garland Pub.

Foley, J. M. (1991). *Immanent art: from structure to meaning in traditional oral epic*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Foley, J. M. (2002). Editing and translating traditional oral epic: the South Slavic song and Homer. In: Worthington, I. and Foley, J. (Eds). *Epea and Grammata. Oral and Written Communication in Ancient Greece*. Leiden; Boston, MA; Köln: Brill.

Foley, J. M. (2004). Textualization as mediation: the case of traditional oral epic. In: Modiano, R., Searle, L. and Shillingsburg, P. L. (Eds). *Voice, text, hypertext: emerging practices in textual studies*. Seattle, WA; London: University of Washington Press. pp.101–120.

Foley, J. M. (2005). Comparative oral traditions. In: Armistead, S. G. and Zulaika, J. (Eds). *Voicing the moment: improvised oral poetry and Basque tradition*. Reno, NV: Center for Basque Studies, University of Nevada, Reno. pp.65–81.

Foley, J. M. (2007). 'Reading' Homer through oral tradition. *College Literature*, 34 (2), pp.1–28.

Ford, B. and Ingamells, J. (1997). *A dictionary of British and Irish travellers in Italy, 1701-1800*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Forster, M. N. (2010). *After Herder: philosophy of language in the German tradition*. Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Fortmann, P. (2013). Romanticism's old German as stepping-stone to Goethe's world literature. *Goethe Yearbook*, 20 (1), pp.247–263.

Fox, R. A. (2003). J.G. Herder on language and the metaphysics of national community. *The Review of Politics*, 65 (2), pp.237–262.

Franco, B. (2016). *La littérature comparée: histoire, domaines et méthodes*. Malakoff: Armand Colin.

Freeman, E. A. (1873). *Comparative politics: six lectures read before the Royal Institution in Jan. and Feb., 1873, with the Unity of history, the Rede lecture read before the University of Cambridge, May 29, 1872*. London: Macmillan.

Friedrich, L. (2013). Zeichenbaustellen: Goethes 'Achilleis'. In: Harst, J. and Mendicino, K. (Eds). *Sema: Wendepunkte der Philologie*. Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann. pp.65–82.

Fuhrmann, M. (1959). Friedrich August Wolf. Zur 200. Wiederkehr seines Geburtstages am 15. Februar 1. *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft Und Geistesgeschichte*, 33 (2), pp.187–236.

Fürbeth, F., Krügel, P., Metzner, E. and Müller, O. (1999). *Zur Geschichte und Problematik der Nationalphilologien in Europa, 150 Jahre Erste Germanistenversammlung in Frankfurt am Main (1846-1996)*. Berlin, Boston, MA: De Gruyter.

Gange, D. (2006). Religion and science in late nineteenth-century British Egyptology. *The Historical Journal*, 49 (4), pp.1083–1103.

Gange, D. (2009). Odysseus in Eden: Gladstone's Homer and the idea of universal epic, 1850–1880. *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 14 (2), pp.190–206.

Gange, D. (2013). *Dialogues with the dead: Egyptology in British culture and religion, 1822-1922*. Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Gantar, K. (1969). Homer and Slovene culture. *Balkan Studies*, 10 (2), pp.225–250.

Gantar, K. (1981). Matija Murko in sodobno homeroslovje. *Jezik in slovstvo*, 27 (4), pp.119–121.

Garbrah, K. A. (2000). The forerunners of Milman Parry: I. Matthias Murko on South-Slavic popular epic. *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature/ Revue Canadienne de Littérature Comparée*, 27 (1), pp.274–306.

García, J. F. (2001). Milman Parry and A. L. Kroeber: Americanist anthropology and the oral Homer. *Oral Tradition*, 16 (1), pp.58–84.

García J. F. and Marizzi, B. (2009). La primera historia de la Literatura romana: el programa de curso de F. A. Wolf. *Cuadernos de filología clásica: Estudios latinos*, 29 (2), pp.145–177.

Gaskill, H. (2003). Ossian, Herder, and the idea of folk song. In: Hill, D. (Ed). *Camden House history of German literature, VI: literature of the Sturm und Drang*. Rochester, NY; Woodbridge, UK: Camden House. pp.95–116.

Gaskill, H. (Ed). (2004). *The reception of Ossian in Europe*. New York, NY: Thoemmes Continuum.

Gasparini, P. (2004). Le rôle de la tradition dans la circulation de littérature médiévale: Gaston Paris, Pio Rajna et Aleskandr N. Veselovskij. In: Zink, M. (Ed). *Le Moyen Âge de Gaston Paris*. Paris: Odile Jacob.

Gayley, C. M. (1902). *The classic myths in English literature*. Boston, MA: Ginn & Company Publishers.

Gayley, C. M. (1903). What is Comparative Literature? *Atlantic Monthly*, 42, pp.56–68.

Gayley, C. M. and Kurtz, B. P. (1920). *Methods and materials of literary criticism: lyric, epic and allied forms of poetry*. Boston, MA: Ginn & Company Publishers.

Gayley, C. M. and Scott, F. N. (1899). *Methods and materials of literary criticism: the bases in aesthetics and poetics*. Boston, MA: Ginn & Company Publishers.

Gellner, E. (1983). *Nations and nationalism*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Gemelli, L. M. (2018). Walter Burkert. *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 162 (1), p.115.

George, A. R. (2003). *The Babylonian Gilgamesh epic: introduction, critical edition and cuneiform texts*. Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Giddens, A. (1991). *Modernity and self-identity: self and society in the late modern age*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Giddens, A. (2007). *Europe in the global age*. Cambridge; Malden, MA: Polity.

Gildenhard, I., Barrow, R. J. and Silk, M. (Eds). (2014). *The Classical tradition: art, literature, thought*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Gillespie, G. (1996). The internationalization of comparative literature in the second half of the twentieth century. In: Nemoianu, V. (Ed). *Multicomparative theory, definitions, realities*. Whitestone, NY: Council on National Literatures. pp.13–42.

Gillies, A. (1933). Herder and the preparation of Goethe's idea of 'Weltliteratur'. *Publications of the English Goethe Society*, 9 (1), pp.46–67.

Gjesdal, K. (2015). History and historicity. In: Malpas, J. and Gander, H.-H. (Eds). *The Routledge companion to hermeneutics*. Abingdon; New York, NY: Routledge. pp.300–320.

Gjesdal, K. (2017a). *Herder's hermeneutics: history, poetry, enlightenment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gjesdal, K. (2017b). Human nature and human science: Herder and the anthropological turn in hermeneutics. In: Waldow, A. and DeSouza, N. (Eds). *Herder: philosophy and anthropology*. Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press. pp.166–184.

Gjesdal, K. (2017c). literature, prejudice, historicity: the philosophical importance of Herder's Shakespeare studies. In: Kottman, P. A. (Ed). *The insistence of art*. New York, NY: Fordham University Press. pp.91–115.

Gladstone, W. E. (1858a). *Oxford essays*. London: John W. Parker and Son.

Gladstone, W. E. (1858b). *Studies on Homer and the Homeric age, vol. 1-3*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gladstone, W. E. (1868). Phoenician and the East. *Quarterly Review*, 124, pp.199–225.

Gladstone, W. E. (1869). *Juventus mundi: the gods and men of the heroic age*. London: Macmillan.

Gladstone, W. E. (1872). Letters to the editor. Mr. Gladstone and Homer. *The Spectator*, 14 December, p. 1586.

Gladstone, W. (1874a). Homer's place in history. *The Contemporary review*, 24, pp.1–22.

Gladstone, W. (1874b). The place of Homer in history and in Egyptian chronology. *The Contemporary Review*, 24, pp.175–200.

Gladstone, W. E. (1876a). *Bulgarian horrors and the question of the East*. London: J. Murray.

Gladstone, W. E. (1876b). *Homeric synchronism: an enquiry into the time and place of Homer*. New York, NY: Harper & brothers.

Gladstone, W. E. (1876c). The Hellenic factor in the Eastern problem. *The Contemporary review*, 29, pp.1–27.

Gladstone, W. E. (1878a). *Homer*. London: Macmillan.

Gladstone, W. E. (1878b). Liberty in the East and West. *The Nineteenth Century*, 16, pp.1154–1174.

Gladstone, W. (1880). Religion, Achaian and Semitic. *The Nineteenth Century*, 38, pp.710–725.

Gladstone, W. E. (1888). Further notes and queries on the Irish demand. *Contemporary Review*, 53, pp.321–339.

Gladstone, W. E. (1889). Phoenician affinities of Ithaca. *The Nineteenth Century*, 26, pp.289–290.

Gladstone, W. E. (1890a). *Landmarks of Homeric study*. London: Macmillan.

Gladstone, W. E. (1890b). On the recent corroboration of Scripture from the regions of history and natural science. *The Eclectic Magazine of Foreign Literature*, 52 (6), pp.773–783.

Gladstone, W. E. (1890c). *The impregnable rock of Holy Scripture*. London: W. Isbister.

Gladstone, W. E. (1891). On the ancient beliefs in a future state. *The Eclectic Magazine of Foreign Literature*, 54 (5), pp.701–713.

Gladstone, W. E. (1892). *Archaic Greece and the East*. London: n.d.

Glaser, H. A. (Ed). (1986). *Goethe und die Natur: Referate des Triestiner Kongresses. Akten Internationaler Kongresse auf den Gebieten der Ästhetik und der Literaturwissenschaft, 0177-4700*. Frankfurt am Main; Bern: Peter Lang.

Glaser, H. A. and Vajda, G. Mihály. (Eds). (2000). *Die Wende von der Aufklärung zur Romantik 1760-1820: Epoche im Überblick*. Amsterdam; Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins Publishing.

Goethe, J. W. von. (1887–1919). *Goethes Werke. Weimarer Ausgabe*. Weimar: H. Böhlau.

Goldhill, S. (2017). The limits of the case study: exemplarity and the reception of classical literature. *New Literary History*, 48 (3), pp.415–435.

Goody, J. and Watt, I. (1963). The consequences of literacy. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 5 (3), pp.304–345.

Goody, J. (Ed). (1975). *Literacy in traditional societies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Goßens, P. (2011). *Weltliteratur: Modelle transnationaler Literaturwahrnehmung im 19. Jahrhundert*. Stuttgart; Weimar: J.B. Metzler.

Görner, R. (1993). Goethe's Ulysses: on the meaning of a project. *Publications of the English Goethe Society*, 64 (1), pp.21–37.

Grafton, A. (1981). Prolegomena to Friedrich August Wolf. *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 44, pp.101–129.

Grafton, A. (1983). Polyhistor into Philolog: notes on the transformation of German classical scholarship, 1780–1850. *History of universities*, 3, pp.159–192.

Grafton, A. (1991). *Defenders of the text: the traditions of scholarship in an age of science, 1450-1800*. Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press.

Grafton, A. (1999). Juden und Griechen bei Friedrich August Wolf. In: Markner, R. and Veltri, G. (Eds). *Friedrich August Wolf: studien, dokumente, bibliographie*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag.

Grafton, A., Most, G. W. and Settis, S. (2010). *The classical tradition*. Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press.

Graziosi, B. (2002). *Inventing Homer: the early reception of epic*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Graziosi, B. (2007). Homer in Albania: oral epic and the geography of literature. In: Graziosi, B. and Greenwood, E. (Eds). *Homer in the twentieth century*. Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press. pp.120–142.

Graziosi, B. and Haubold, J. (2005). *Homer: the resonance of epic*. London: Duckworth.

Graziosi, B. and Greenwood, E. (2007). *Homer in the twentieth century*. Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Green, E. H. H. (1999). The political economy of Empire, 1880–1914. In: Porter, A. (Ed). *The Oxford history of the British Empire. Volume III: the nineteenth century*. Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press. pp.346–368.

Greene, W. C. (1937). Milman Parry (1902-1935). *Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, 71 (10), pp.535–536.

Greenwood, E. (2010). *Afro-Greeks: dialogues between Anglophone Caribbean literature and classics in the twentieth century*. Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Grumach, E. and Goethe, J. W. von. (1949). *Goethe und die Antike: eine Sammlung*. Berlin: De Gruyter.

Guillén, C. (1993). *The challenge of comparative literature*. Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press.

Gumbrecht, H. U. (1986). 'Un souffle d'Allemagne ayant passé': Friedrich Diez, Gaston Paris and the genesis of national philologies. *Romance Philology*, 40 (1), pp.1–37.

Gumbrecht, H. U. (2004). Gaston Paris en 1871. In: Zink, M. (Ed). *Le Moyen Âge de Gaston Paris*. Paris: Odile Jacob. pp.69–80.

Gummere, F. B. (1901). *The beginnings of poetry*. New York, NY: Macmillan.

Gummere, F. B. (1903). Primitive poetry and the ballad. *Modern Philology*, 1 (1), pp.193–202.

Gummere, F. B. (1907). *The popular ballad*. Boston, New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Gupta, S. (2009). *Globalization and literature*. Cambridge; Malden, MA: Polity.

Güthenke, C. (2008). *Placing modern Greece: the dynamics of Romantic Hellenism, 1770-1840*. Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Güthenke, C. (2009). Shop talk: reception studies and recent work in the history of scholarship. *Classical Receptions Journal*, 1 (1), pp.104–115.

Güthenke, C. (2010). The potter's daughter's sons: German classical scholarship and the language of love circa 1800. *Representations*, 109 (1), pp.122–147.

Güthenke, C. (2015a). *The history of modern classical scholarship (since 1750)*. Oxford online research bibliographies. Oxford: Oxford University Press. [Online]. Available at: doi:10.1093/obo/9780195389661-0199 [Accessed 10 March 2020].

Güthenke, C. (2015b). "Enthusiasm dwells only in specialization": classical philology and disciplinarity in nineteenth-century Germany. In: Pollock, S. I., Elman, B. A. and Chang, K. K. (Eds). *World philology*. Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press. pp.264–284.

Güthenke, C. (2020). *Feeling and classical philology: knowing antiquity in German scholarship, 1770–1920*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Guyard, M. F. (1951). *La littérature comparée*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.

Habjan, J. (2013). From cultural third-worldism to the literary world-system. *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture*, 15 (5).

Hall, E. (1992). When is a myth not a myth? Bernal's 'Ancient model'. *Arethusa*, 25 (1), pp.181–201.

Hamilton, P. (Ed). (2016). *The Oxford handbook of European Romanticism*. Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Hamm, H. (1998). *Goethe und die französische Zeitschrift 'Le Globe': eine Lektüre im Zeichen der Weltliteratur*. Weimar: H. Böhlaus Nachfolger.

Hamza, G. (2005). Sir Henry Maine et le droit comparé. *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 45 (2–3), pp.193–206.

Hardwick, L. and Stray, C. (Eds). (2008). *A companion to classical receptions*. Malden, MA; Oxford: Blackwell.

Harloe, K. (2013). *Winckelmann and the invention of Antiquity: history and aesthetics in the age of Altertumswissenschaft*. Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Harloe, K. (2016). Christian Gottlob Heyne and the changing fortunes of the commentary in the age of Altertumswissenschaft. In: Kraus, C. S. and Stray, C. (Eds). *Classical commentaries: explorations in a scholarly genre*. Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press. pp.435–456.

Harrer, F. (2009). Ganzheitliches Denken und Naturmystik bei Goethe. In: Dinzelbacher, P. (Ed). *Mystik und Natur: Zur Geschichte ihres Verhältnisses vom Altertum bis zur Gegenwart*. Berlin; Boston, MA: De Gruyter. pp.155–170.

Harrison, R. T. (1995). *Gladstone's imperialism in Egypt: techniques of domination*. Westport, CN: Greenwood Publishing Group.

Harvitt, H. (1958). Fernand Baldensperger (1871-1958). *Comparative Literature*, 10 (2), pp.188–189.

Haubold, J. (2002). Greek epic: a Near Eastern genre? *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society*, 48, pp.1–19.

Haubold, J. (2007). Homer after Parry: tradition, reception, and the timeless text. In: Graziosi, B. and Greenwood, E. (Eds). *Homer in the Twentieth Century*. Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press. pp.27–46.

Haubold, J. (2013). *Greece and Mesopotamia: dialogues in literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Haubold, J. (2014). Beyond Auerbach: Homeric narrative and the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. In: Cairns, D. and Scodel, R. (Eds). *Defining Greek Narrative*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. pp.13–28.

Haubold, J. Homer between East and West. Armstrong, R. and Dué, C. (Eds). *Classics@*, 3, pp.1–14. [Online]. Available at: https://chs.harvard.edu/CHS/article/display/1318 [Accessed 10 March 2020].

Hawas, M. (Ed). (2018). *The Routledge companion to world literature and world history*. Abingdon; New York, NY: Routledge.

Hawkes, T. (1977). *Structuralism and semiotics*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Hawley, G. (2017). *Making sense of the Alt-Right*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Hawley, G. (2018). *The Alt-Right: what everyone needs to know*. Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Heinz, J. (2014). "Geographie der dichtenden Seele". Die Entwicklung einer naturalistischen Ästhetik in Herders Volkslied-Projekt. In: Hermes, S. and Kaufmann, S. (Eds). *Der ganze Mensch - die ganze Menschheit*. Berlin, München, Boston, MA: De Gruyter.

Heilbron, J. and Sapiro, G. (2016). La traduction comme vecteur des échanges culturels internationaux. In: Sapiro, G. (Ed). *Translatio: Le marché de la traduction en France à l'heure de la mondialisation*. Paris: CNRS Éditions. pp.25–44.

Helgesson, S. and Thomsen, M. R. (2019). *Literature and the world*. Abingdon; New York, NY: Routledge.

Hendrickson, G. L. Report of the senior delegate of the Association to the American Council of Learned Societies. *Report of the Senior Delegate of the Association to the American Council of Learned Societies*, 66, pp.xxiii–xxiv.

Hensley, N. K. (2016). *Forms of empire: the poetics of Victorian sovereignty*. Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Herder, J. G. (1877–1913). *Herders sämmtliche Werke*. Berlin: Weidmann.

Herder, J. G. (1992). *Selected early works: 1764-1767. Addresses, essays, and drafts, Fragments on recent German literature*. Menze, E. A., Menges, K. and Palma, M. (Eds). University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press.

Hermansson, P., Lawrence, D., Mulhall, J. and Murdoch, J. (2020). *The international alt-right: fascism for the 21st century?*. Abingdon; New York, NY: Routledge.

Herz, A. (1997). "Einfühlung": Bemerkungen zum Divinationsaspekt in J. G. Herders Hermeneutik-Konzept. In: Laufhütte, H. and Ecker, H.-P. (Eds). *Methodisch reflektiertes Interpretieren: Festschrift für Hartmut Laufhütte zum 60. Geburtstag*. Passau: Wissenschaftsverlag Rothe. pp.215–252.

Herzog, R. (1983). On the relation of disciplinary development and historical self-presentation — the case of classical philology since the end of the eighteenth century. In: Graham, L. R., Lepenies, W. and Weingart, P. (Eds). *Functions and uses of disciplinary histories*. Dordrecht; Boston, MA: Kluwer Academic Publishers. pp.281–90.

Highet, G. (1957). *Classical tradition: Greek and Roman influences on Western literature*. Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Himstedt-Vaid, P. (2004). Rezeption der serbischen Volkslieder und ihrer Übersetzungen in der deutschen Presse in der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts. *Zeitschrift für Balkanologie*, 40 (2), pp.121–140.

Hitchcock, L. (2008). *Theory for Classics: a student's guide*. Abingdon; New York, NY: Routledge.

Hobsbawm, E. J. (1990). *Nations and nationalism since 1780: programme, myth, reality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hoesel-Uhlig, S. (2004). Changing fields: the directions of Goethe's *Weltliteratur*. In: Prendergast, C. (Ed). *Debating world literature*. London; New York, NY: Verso Books. pp.26–53.

Hoesel-Uhlig, S. and Zhang, C. (2018). Introduction: Goethe, worlds, and literatures. *Seminar: A Journal of Germanic Studies*, 54 (2), pp.121–132.

Hohlfeld, A. R. (1953a). Eckermanns *Gespräche mit Goethe* (1925). In: *Fifty years with Goethe (1901-1951)*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press. pp.129–140.

Hohlfeld, A. R. (1953b). Karl Ernst Schubarth und die Anfänge der Fausterklärung (1938). In: *Fifty years with Goethe (1901-1951)*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press. pp.29–60.

Holmes, U. T. (1945). Comparative literature: past and future, American Colleges and Universities. *Studies in Philology*, 42 (3), pp.440–451.

Holquist, M. (2010). Remembering René Wellek. *Comparative Critical Studies*, 7 (2–3), pp.163–178.

Horstmann, A. (1978). Die "Klassische Philologie" zwischen Humanismus und Historismus Friedrich August Wolf und die Begründung der modernen Altertumswissenschaft. *Berichte zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte*, 1 (1–2), pp.51–70.

Howe, S. (1998). *Afrocentrism: mythical pasts and imagined homes*. London; New York, NY: Verso Books.

Humboldt, W. von. (1990). *Briefe an Friedrich August Wolf*. Mattson, P. (Ed). Berlin; Boston, MA: De Gruyter.

Hutton, C. (2000). Race and language: ties of 'blood and speech', fictive identity and empire in the writings of Henry Maine and Edward Freeman. *Interventions*, 2 (1), pp.53–72.

Iggers, G. G. (1983). *The German conception of history: the national tradition of historical thought from Herder to the present*. Middletown, CN; Scranton, PA: Wesleyan University Press; Harper and Row.

Irmscher, H. D. (1994). Nationalität und Humanität im Denken Herders. *Orbis Litterarum*, 49 (4), pp.189–215.

Irmscher, H. D. (2009). Grundzüge der Hermeneutik Herders. In: Heinz, M. and Stolz, V. (Eds). *"Weitstrahlsinniges" Denken: Studien zu Johann Gottfried Herder*. Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann. pp.177–206.

Isaković, A. (1975). *Hasanaginica 1774-1974: prepjevi, varijante, studije, bibliografija*. Sarajevo: Svjetlost.

Jansen, L. (2018a). *Borges' classics: global encounters with the Graeco-Roman past*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jansen, L. (2018b). Extreme Classicisms: Jorge Luis Borges. In: Richardson, E. (Ed). *Classics in Extremis*. London, New York, NY: Bloomsbury Academic. pp.157–170.

Jauß, H. R. (1970). Schlegels und Schillers Replik auf die 'Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes'. In: *Literaturgeschichte als Provokation der Literaturwissenschaft*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp. pp.67–106.

Jelavich, B. (1983). *History of the Balkans*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jenkins, R. (1995). *Gladstone*. London: Macmillan.

Jennings, J. (2000). Anti-Semitic discourse in Dreyfus-affair France. In: Arnold, E. J. (Ed). *The development of the Radical Right in France: from Boulanger to Le Pen*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press. pp.16–32.

Jeßing, B. (2009). Homerisches und Unhomerisches. Zwischen Antikisierung und Moderne: Goethes 'Achilleis'. In: Effe, B., Glei, R. F. and Klodt, C. (Eds). *'Homer zweiten Grades': zum Wirkungspotential eines Klassikers*. Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier. pp.249–264.

Jež, A. (2016). *Stanko Vraz in nacionalizem: Od narobe Katona do narobe Prešerna*. Ljubljana: ZRC SAZU.

Johanning, K. (1988). *Der Bibel-Babel-Streit: eine forschungsgeschichtliche Studie*. Frankfurt am Main; New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Jolly, R. (2006). Robert Louis Stevenson, Henry Maine, and the anthropology of comparative law. *Journal of British Studies*, 45 (3), pp.556–580.

Jost, F. (1972). Littéature comparée et littérature universelle. *Orbis Litterarum*, 27 (1), pp.13–27.

Jousse, M. (1925). *Études de psychologie linguistique: le style oral rythmique et mnemotechnique chez les verbo-moteurs*. Paris: Beauchesse.

Juvan, M. (2012). *Prešernovska struktura in svetovni literarni sistem*. Ljubljana: LUD Literatura.

Juvan, M. (2013a). Introduction to world literatures from the nineteenth to the twenty-first century. *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture*, 15 (5).

Juvan, M. (2013b). Worlding literatures between dialogue and hegemony. *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture*, 15 (5).

Juvan, M. (2019). *Worlding a peripheral literature*. Singapore: Springer Singapore.

Kadir, D. (2010). *Memos from the besieged city: lifelines for cultural sustainability*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Kallendorf, C. W. (Ed). (2007). *A companion to the classical tradition*. Malden, MA; Oxford: Blackwell.

Kamenetsky, C. (1973). The German folklore revival in the eighteenth century: Herder's theory of *Naturpoesie*. *The Journal of Popular Culture*, 6 (4), pp.836–848.

Karadžić, V. S. (1824). *Narodne srpske pjesme*. Vol. 2. U Lipisci: U štampariji Brejtkopfa i Eršla.

Kaufmann, T. D., Dossin, C. and Joyeux-Prunel, B. (2015). *Circulations in the global history of art*. Farnham; Burlington, VT: Ashgate.

Kay, M. W. (1995). *The Index of the Milman Parry collection, 1933-1935: heroic songs, conversations, and stories*. New York, NY: Garland Pub.

Kelletat, A. F. (1984). *Herder und die Weltliteratur: zur Geschichte des Übersetzens im 18. Jahrhundert*. Frankfurt am Main; New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Kelley, D. R. (2003). *Fortunes of history: historical inquiry from Herder to Huizinga*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Kelley, R. (1960). Midlothian: a study in politics and ideas. *Victorian Studies*, 4 (2), pp.119–140.

Kelley, W. F. (2017). *Intellectuals and the Eastern question: 'historical-mindedness' and 'kin beyond sea', c. 1875-1880*. University of Oxford. [Dissertation].

Kennedy, W. J. (1996). 'Interest' in René Wellek. *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature*, 44, pp.32–34.

Kim, J. P. (2012). *Pour une littérature médiévale moderne: Gaston Paris, l'amour courtois et les enjeux de la modernité*. Paris: Honoré Champion éditeur.

Kinghorn, A. M. (1982). Comparative literature and the "universal" ideal. *Neophilologus*, 66 (1), pp.1–15.

Klaniczay, G., Werner, M. and Gecser, O. (Eds). (2011). *Multiple antiquities, multiple modernities: ancient histories in nineteenth century European cultures*. Frankfurt; New York, NY: Campus Verlag.

Knaplund, P. (1935). *Gladstone's foreign policy*. New York: Harper.

Knodt, E. M. (1996). Hermeneutics and the end of science: Herder's role in the formation of "Natur-" and "Geisteswissenschaften". In: Köpke, W. and International Herder Society (Eds). *Johann Gottfried Herder: academic disciplines and the pursuit of knowledge*. Columbia, SC: Camden House. pp.1–12.

Koch, M. (2002). *Weimaraner Weltbewohner. Zur Genese von Goethes Begriff Weltliteratur*. Tübingen: M. Niemeyer.

Koelsch, W. A. (2006). W. E. Gladstone and the reconstruction of bronze age geography. *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, 12 (3), pp.329–345.

Koepke, W. (2009). Herder's views on the Germans and their future literature. In: Koepke, W. and Adler, H. (Eds). *A companion to the works of Johann Gottfried Herder*. Rochester, NY: Camden House. pp.215–232.

Kohn, H. (1953). *Pan-Slavism: its history and ideology*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.

Korff, H. A. (1923). *Geist der Goethezeit: Versuch einer ideellen Entwicklung der klassisch-romantischen Literaturgeschichte*. Leipzig: J. J. Weber.

Körte, W. (1833). *Leben und Studien Friedrich August Wolf's, des Philologen*. Essen: G.D. Bädeker.

Ković, M. (2011). *Disraeli and the Eastern Question*. Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Kramer, A. (1997). Wackes at war: Alsace-Lorraine and the failure of German national mobilization, 1914–1918. In: Horne, J. (Ed) *State, society and mobilization in Europe during the First World War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp.105–122.

Krischer, T. (1996). Friedrich August Wolfs 'Prolegomena ad Homerum' und die Neuere Homerforschung. *Poetica*, 28 (1/2), pp.171–180.

Kullmann, W. (1984). Oral poetry theory and neoanalysis in Homeric research. *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies*, 25 (4), pp.307–323.

Lamberterie, C. de. (2001). Milman Parry and Antoine Meillet. In: Loraux, N. et al. (Eds). *Antiquities: postwar French thought III*. New York, NY: The New Press. pp.409–421.

Lamping, D. (2017). Literaturkritik im Geist der Weltliteratur: der alte Goethe als Rezensent. In: Schuster, J., Schwarz, A. and Süselbeck, J. (Eds) *Transformationen literarischer Kommunikation: Kritik, Emotionalisierung und Medien vom 18. Jahrhundert bis heute*. Berlin; Boston, MA: De Gruyter. pp.55–66.

Lanza, D. (1981). Friedrich August Wolf: l'Antico e il classico. *Belfagor*, 36 (5), pp.529–553.

Larsen, M. T. (1995). The 'Babel/Bible' controversy and its aftermath. In: *Civilizations of the ancient Near East.* New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons. pp.95–106.

Latacz, J. (Ed). (1991). *Zweihundert Jahre Homer-Forschung: Rückblick und Ausblick*. Stuttgart; Leipzig: De Gruyter.

Lawall, S. (1988). René Wellek and modern literary criticism. *Comparative Literature*, 40 (1), pp.3–24.

Lawall, S. (1994). *Reading world literature: theory, history, practice*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

Lawall, S. (1999). Wellek, René (1903-1995). In: Garraty, J. A. and Carnes, M. C. (Eds). American National Biography. Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Lee, D. C. J. (1996). *Ernest Renan: in the shadow of faith*. London: Duckworth.

Leerssen, J. (1984). *Komparatistik in Grossbritannien, 1800-1950*. Bonn: Bouvier.

Leerssen, J. (2004a). Ossian and the Rise of Literary Historicism. In: Gaskill, H. (Ed). *The reception of Ossian in Europe*. The Athlone critical traditions series v. 5. London; New York, NY: Thoemmes Continuum. pp.331–350.

Leerssen, J. (2004b). Literary Historicism: Romanticism, Philologists, and the Presence of the Past. *MLQ: Modern Language Quarterly*, 65 (2), pp.221–243.

Leerssen, J. (2006). *National thought in Europe: a cultural history*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam Univ. Press.

Leerssen, J. (2010a). Some Notes on Hutcheson Macauley Posnett (1855–1927). In: O'Connor, M. (Ed). *Back to the Future of Irish Studies*. Oxford; New York, NY: Peter Lang. pp.111–119.

Leerssen, J. (2010b). The rise of philology: the comparative method, the historicist turn and the surreptitious influence of Giambattista Vico. In: Bod, R., Maat, J. and Weststeijn, T. (Eds). *The making of the humanities. - Vol. 2: From early modern to modern disciplines*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press. pp.23–35.

Leerssen, J. (2012). Oral epic: the nation finds a voice. In: Baycroft, T. and Hopkin, D. M. (Eds). *Folklore and nationalism in Europe during the long nineteenth century*. Leiden; Boston, MA: Brill. pp.11–26.

Leerssen, J. (2015). Comparing what, precisely? H. M. Posnett and the conceptual history of 'Comparative Literature'. *Comparative Critical Studies*, 12 (2), pp.197–212.

Leerssen, J. (2018). *Encyclopedia of Romantic nationalism in Europe*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Leerssen, J. (2019). *Comparative literature in Britain: national identities, transnational dynamics 1800-2000*. Cambridge: Legenda, Modern Humanities Research Association.

Lefkowitz, M. R. (1996). *Not out of Africa: how Afrocentrism became an excuse to teach myth as history*. New York, NY: BasicBooks.

Lefkowitz, M. R. and Rogers, G. M. (Eds). (1996). *Black Athena revisited*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.

Legaspi, M. C. (2010). *The death of Scripture and the rise of biblical studies*. Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Lehmann, R. G. (1994). *Friedrich Delitzsch und der Babel-Bibel-Streit*. Freiburg: Universitätsverlag.

Leonard, M. (2012). *Socrates and the Jews: Hellenism and Hebraism from Moses Mendelssohn to Sigmund Freud*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Leoussi, A. S. (1997). Nationalism and racial Hellenism in nineteenth-century England and France. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 20 (1), pp.42–68.

Leoussi, A. S. (1998). *Nationalism and classicism: the classical body as national symbol in nineteenth-century England and France*. Basingstoke; New York, NY: Macmillan; St. Martin's Press.

Leoussi, A. S. and Grosby, S. E. (2007). *Nationalism and ethnosymbolism: history, culture and ethnicity in the formation of nations*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Leventhal, R. S. (1986). The emergence of philological discourse in the German states, 1770-1810. *Isis*, 77 (2), pp.243–260.

Leventhal, R. S. (1994). *The disciplines of interpretation: Lessing, Herder, Schlegel and hermeneutics in Germany, 1750-1800*. Berlin; Boston, MA: De Gruyter.

Levin, H. (1937). Portrait of a homeric scholar. *The Classical Journal*, 32 (5), pp.259–266.

Levin, H. (1994). Comparative literature at Harvard. In: Gossman, L. and Spariosu, M. (Eds). *Building a profession: autobiographical perspectives on the history of comparative literature in the United States*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press. pp.75–87.

Levine, C. (2013). The great unwritten: world literature and the effacement of orality. *Modern Language Quarterly*, 74 (2), pp.217–237.

Levine, C. and Venkat Mani, B. (2013). What counts as world literature? *Modern Language Quarterly*, 74 (2), pp.141–149.

Lianeri, A. and Zajko, V. (Eds). (2008). *Translation and the classic: identity as change in the history of culture*. Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Lichtenstern, C. (1995). *Die Wirkungsgeschichte der Metamorphosenlehre Goethes: Von Philipp Otto Runge bis Joseph Beuys*. Berlin; Boston, MA: De Gruyter.

Lightman, B. (2010). The International Scientific Series and the communication of Darwinism? *Journal of Cambridge Studies*, 5 (4), pp.27–38.

Littlejohns, R. (1987). The discussion between Goethe and Schiller on the epic and dramatic and its relevance to Faust. *Neophilologus*, 71 (3), pp.388–401.

Lloyd-Jones, H. (1982). *Blood for the ghosts: classical influences in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries*. London: Duckworth.

Lohmeier, D. (1974). Goethes 'Nausikaa'-Fragment. *Jahrbuch des Freien Deutschen Hochstifts*, pp.1–16.

Longxi, Z. (2014). Epilogue: the changing concept of world literature. In: Damrosch, D. (Ed). *World literature in theory*. Chichester; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell. pp.513–523.

Lord, A. B. (1948). Homer, Parry, and Huso. *American Journal of Archaeology*, 52 (1), pp.34–44.

Lord, A. B. (1960). *The singer of tales*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Lord, A. B. (1991). *Epic singers and oral tradition*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Louden, B. (2011). *Homer's Odyssey and the Near East*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Loughlin, J. (1986). *Gladstone, Home Rule and the Ulster question, 1882-93*. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan.

Loué, T. (2003). L'apologétique de Ferdinand Brunetière et le positivisme: un bricolage idéologique « généreux et accueillant ». *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques*, 87 (1), p.101–126.

Macfie, A. L. (1996). *The eastern question, 1774-1923*. London; New York: Longman.

Macintyre, S., Maiguashca, J. and Pók, A. (Eds). (2011). *The Oxford history of historical writing*. Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Mackenzie, A. S. (1911). *The evolution of literature*. London: J. Murray.

Magoun, F. P. (1953). Oral-Formulaic character of Anglo-Saxon narrative poetry. *Speculum*, 28 (3), pp.446–467.

Main, T. J. (2018). *The rise of the Alt-Right*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press.

Maine, H. S. (1871). *Village-communities in the East and West. Six lectures delivered at Oxford*. London: J. Murray.

Mairs, R. and Muratov, M. (2015). *Archaeologists, tourists, interpreters: exploring Egypt and the Near East in the late 19th-early 20th centuries*. London; New York, NY: Bloomsbury Academic.

Mallette, K. (2005). Orientalism and the nineteenth-century nationalist: Michele Amari, Ernest Renan, and 1848. *Romanic Review*, 96 (2), pp.233–252.

Mantena, K. (2010). *Alibis of empire: Henry Maine and the ends of liberal imperialism*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Marchand, S. (1996). *Down from Olympus: archaeology and philhellenism in Germany, 1750-1970*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Marchand, S. (2004). Philhellenism and the Furor Orientalis. *Modern Intellectual History*, 1 (3), pp.331–358.

Marchand, S. (2007). Popularizing the Orient in fin de siècle Germany. *Intellectual History Review*, 17 (2), pp.175–202.

Marchand, S. (2009). *German orientalism in the age of empire: religion, race, and scholarship*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Marchand, S. (2010). 'What did the Greeks owe the Orient?' The question we can't stop asking (even though we can't answer it). *Archaeological Dialogues*, 17 (1), pp.117–140.

Marchand, S. and Grafton, A. (1997). Martin Bernal and his critics. *Arion: A Journal of Humanities and the Classics*, 5 (2), pp.1–35.

Marino, L. (1994). Der "Geist der Auslegung" Aspekte der Göttinger Hermeneutik (am Beispiel Eichhorns). *Aufklärung*, 8 (2), pp.71–89.

Markner, R. and Veltri, G. (Eds). (1999). *Friedrich August Wolf: studien, dokumente, bibliographie*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag.

Martí Monterde, A. (2011). *Un somni europeu: història intel·lectual de la literatura comparada: de la Weltliteratur a la literatura comparada*. València: Universitat de València.

Martí Monterde, A. (2016a). Jean-Marie Carré i els orígens polítics de la imagologia comparatista. *Afers. Fulls de recerca i Pensament*, pp.197–217.

Martí Monterde, A. (2016b). Literatura comparada i imagologia en la Primera Guerra Mundial: Fernand Baldensperger i Jean-Marie Carré. *Estudis Romànics*, (38), pp.239–265.

Martí Monterde, A. (2017). Edgar Quinet, Joseph Texte et les origines de la Littérature Comparée à Lyon. *Revue de littérature comparée*, 363 (3), pp.291–305.

Matthew, H. C. G. (1988). *Gladstone, 1809-1874*. Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Matthew, H. C. G. (Ed). (1994). *The Gladstone Diaries*. Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Matthew, H. C. G. (1995). *Gladstone, 1875-1898*. Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Matthew, H. C. G. (1997). *Gladstone 1809-1898*. Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Maufroy, S. (2011). Friedrich August Wolf, un modèle philologique et ses incidences européennes. *Revue germanique internationale*, (14), pp.27–40.

Mayo, R. S. (1969). *Herder and the beginnings of comparative literature*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.

McInturff, K. (2003). The uses and abuses of world literature. *The Journal of American Culture*, 26 (2), pp.224–236.

McKillop, A. D. (1932). Goethe and literary criticism. *Rice Institute Pamphlet - Rice University Studies*, 19 (2), pp.84–108.

McLane, M. and Slatkin, L. (2011). British romantic Homer: oral tradition, 'primitive poetry' and the emergence of comparative poetics in Britain, 1760-1830. *ELH*, 78, pp.687–714.

Meid, C. (2013). Goethes 'Achilleis': Versuch eines modernen Epos in der Nachfolge Homers. In: May, M. and Zemanek, E. (Eds). *Annäherung - Anverwandlung - Aneignung: Goethes Übersetzungen in poetologischer und interkultureller Perspektive*. Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann. pp.83–101.

Meinecke, F. (1936). *Die entstehung des historismus*. München; Berlin: R. Oldenbourg.

Meinecke, F. (1972). *Historism: the rise of a new historical outlook*. London: Routledge and K. Paul.

Melas, N. (2007). *All the difference in the world: postcoloniality and the ends of comparison*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Ménard, P. (2005). Les méthodes de Gaston Paris et de Joseph Bédier. In: *L'histoire littéraire à l'aube du XXIe siècle*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France. pp.98–110.

Menges, K. (2009). Particular universals: Herder on national literature, popular literature, and world literature. In: Adler, H. and Koepke, W. (Eds). *A companion to the works of Johann Gottfried Herder*. Rochester, NY: Camden House. pp.189–213.

Millman, R. (1979). *Britain and the Eastern question, 1875-1878*. Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Milojković-Djurić, J. (2002). *The Eastern question and the voices of reason: Austria-Hungary, Russia, and the Balkan States, 1875-1908*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Mitchell, S. A. and Nagy, G. (2000). Introduction to the Second Edition. In: *The singer of tales*. 2nd ed. Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press.

Mojašević, M. (2014). Grimm, Goethe und Karadžić. In: Suvajdžić, B. (Ed). *Vuk Stefanović Karadžić: 1787-1864-2014: mündliches Volksgut der Serben*. Belgrad: Vukova zadužbina; Čigoja štampa. pp.216–237.

Mommsen, K. (1988). *Goethe und die arabische Welt*. Frankfurt am Main: Insel.

Moreau, P. (1956). Brunetière, professeur de 'littérature comparée'. *Revue de littérature comparée*, 30, pp.71–84.

Moretti, F. (2000). Conjectures on world literature. *New Left Review*, (1), pp.54–68.

Moretti, F. (2003). More conjectures. *New Left Review*, (20), pp.73–81.

Moretti, F. (2005). World-systems analysis, evolutionary theory, 'Weltliteratur'. *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)*, 28 (3), pp.217–228.

Moretti, F. (2007). *Graphs, maps, trees: abstract models for literary history*. London; New York, NY: Verso Books.

Moretti, F. (2013). *Distant reading*. London; New York, NY: Verso Books.

Moriarty, M. (1972). H. M. Posnett and Two American Comparatists. *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature*, 21, pp.15–22.

Moriarty, M. (1973). Comparatism in the United States: an impression. *Neohelicon*, 1 (1–2), pp.359–367.

Moser, C. (2018). From literary predation to global intellectual commerce: world literature, world history, and the modes of cultural exchange in the work of Johann Gottfried Herder and Johann Wolfgang Goethe. In: Hawas, M. (Ed). *The Routledge companion to world literature and world history*. Abingdon; New York, NY: Routledge.

Most, G. W. (1997). One hundred years of fractiousness: disciplining polemics in nineteenth-century German classical scholarship. *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, 127, pp.349–361.

Most, G. W. (Ed). (2001). *Historicization = Historisierung*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht.

Most, G. W. (2002). *Disciplining classics = Altertumswissenschaft als Beruf*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht.

Most, G. W. (2004). Homer between poets and philologists. In: Wellbery, D. E. and Ryan, J. (Eds). *A new history of German literature*. Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press. pp.500–505.

Most, G. W. (2011). Philhellenism, cosmopolitanism, nationalism. In: Klaniczay, G., Werner, M. and Gecser, O. (Eds). *Multiple antiquities, multiple modernities: ancient histories in nineteenth century European cultures*. Frankfurt; New York, NY: Campus Verlag. pp.29–47.

Most, G. W. (2016a). The rise and fall of Quellenforschung. In: Blair, A. and Goeing, A.-S. (Eds). *For the Sake of Learning*. 2 vols. Leiden; Boston, MA: Brill. pp.933–954.

Most, G. W. (2016b). Historicization reconsidered. In: Baumstark, M. and Forkel, R. (Eds). *Historisierung: Begriff – Geschichte – Praxisfelder*. Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler. pp.36–41.

Moura, J.-M. (2000). Jean-Marie Carré (1887-1958): images d'un comparatiste. *Revue de Littérature Comparée; Paris*, 74 (3), pp.361–372.

Mourão, M. (2000). Comparative literature in the United States. *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture*, 2 (4).

Mucignat, R. (2016). Tasso and the quest for modern epic: Goethe's *Torquato Tasso* and Leopardi's *Operette morali*. *Publications of the English Goethe Society*, 85 (1), pp.28–39.

Murko, M. (1929). *La poésie populaire épique en Yougoslavie au début du xx siècle*. Paris: Champion.

Murko, M. (1951a). *Spomini*. Ljubljana: Slovenska Matica.

Murko, M. (1951b). *Tragom srpsko-hrvatske narodne epike: putovanja u godinama 1930-1932*. Zagreb: Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti.

Murko, M. (1962). *Izbrano delo*. Ljubljana: Slovenska matica.

Myerowitz Levine, M. (1992). The use and abuse of Black Athena. *The American Historical Review*, 97 (2), pp.440–460.

Myerowitz Levine, M. (1998). Review article: the marginalization of Martin Bernal. *Classical Philology*, 93 (4), pp.345–363.

Myres, J. L. (1958). *Homer and his critics*. London: Routledge and K. Paul.

N.d. (1872). Chaldean history of the Deluge. *The Times*, 4 December, p.7.

N.d. (1872). Untitled [On Tuesday night Mr. George Smith, of the British Museum…]. *The Spectator*, 7 December, pp.1542.

N.d. (1872). Mr. Gladstone's passion for Homer. *The Spectator*, 7 December, pp.1549–1550.

N.d. (1900). *Rectorial addresses: delivered before the University of Edinburgh, 1859-1899*. London: Richards.

N.d. *Classics in an age of confusion*. [Online]. Available at: https://www.counter-currents.com/2018/10/classics-in-an-age-of-confusion/ [Accessed 10 March 2020].

N.d. *Homer's Odyssey: the return of the father. Part 1 of 2 – The Occidental Observer*. [Online]. Available at: https://www.theoccidentalobserver.net/2019/06/22/homers-odyssey-the-return-of-the-father-part-1-of-2/ [Accessed 10 March 2020].

N.d. *Homer's Odyssey: the return of the father. Part 2 of 2 – The Occidental Observer*. [Online]. Available at: https://www.theoccidentalobserver.net/2019/06/23/homers-odyssey-the-return-of-the-father-part-2-of-2/ [Accessed 10 March 2020].

Nagy, G. (1994). *Pindar's Homer: the lyric possession of an epic past*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Nagy, G. (2001). Orality and literacy. In: Sloane, T. O. (Ed). *Encyclopedia of Rhetoric*. Oxford, New York, NY: Oxford University Press. pp.532–538.

Nagy, G. (2017). *Sappho and Aesop, distinctions between diachronic and historical perspectives*. [Online]. Available at: https://classical-inquiries.chs.harvard.edu/sappho-and-aesop-distinctions-between-diachronic-and-historical-perspectives/ [Accessed 20 March 2020].

Naiditch, P. G. (1988). *A.E. Housman at University College, London: the election of 1892*. Leiden; New York, NY: Brill.

Naoíse, M. S. (2019). Claiming the classical: the Greco-Roman world in contemporary political discourse. *Council of University Classical Departments Bulletin*, 48, pp.1–19.

Neiwert, D. (2017). *Alt-America: the rise of the radical right in the age of Trump*. London; New York, NY: Verso Books.

Neschke-Hentschke, A. (1997). Hermeneutik von Halle. Wolf und Schleiermacher. *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte*, 40, pp.142–159.

Neschke-Hentschke, A. (2008). Le texte de Platon entre Friedrich August Wolf (1759–1824) et Friedrich Daniel Schleiermacher (1767–1834). In: Laks, A. and Neschke-Hentschke, A. (Eds). *La naissance du paradigme herméneutique: de Kant et Schleiermacher à Dilthey*. Villeneuve-d'Ascq: Presses universitaires du Septentrion. pp.245–276.

Netter, M. L. (1993). Ferdinand Brunetière contre les intellectuels. *Mil neuf cent*, 11 (1), pp.66–70.

Newall, D., Barker, E. and Carter, W. (2017). *Art and its global histories: a reader*. Manchester: Open University Press.

Newman, J. O. (2013). Auerbach's Dante: poetical theology as a point of departure for a philology of world literature. In: Küpper, J. (Ed). *Approaches to world literature*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag. pp.39–58.

Nicholls, A. (2018). The 'Goethean' discourses on *Weltliteratur* and the origins of comparative literature: The cases of Hugo Meltzl and Hutcheson Macaulay Posnett. *Seminar: A Journal of Germanic Studies*, 54 (2), pp.167–194.

Nisbet, H. B. (1972). *Goethe and the scientific tradition*. London: Institute of Germanic Studies, University of London.

Nohl, H. (1970). *Die deutsche Bewegung. Vorlesungen u. Aufsätze z. Geistesgeschichte von 1770-1830*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht.

Norton, R. E. (2009). Herder as critical contemporary. In: Adler, H. and Koepke, W. (Eds). *A companion to the works of Johann Gottfried Herder*. Rochester, NY: Camden House.

Noyes, J. K. (2006). Goethe on cosmopolitanism and colonialism: Bildung and the dialectic of critical mobility. *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 39 (4), pp.443–462.

Noyes, J. K. (2014). Herder, postcolonial theory and the antinomy of universal reason. *Cambridge Journal of Postcolonial Literary Inquiry*, 1 (1), pp.107–122.

Noyes, J. K. (2015). *Herder: aesthetics against imperialism*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Nünlist, R. (1971). *Homer, Aristoteles und Pindar in der Sicht Herders*. Bonn: Bouvier Verlag.

O'Bell, L. (2018). Chinese novels, scholarly errors and Goethe's concept of world literature. *Publications of the English Goethe Society*, 87 (2), pp.64–80.

Ocvirk, A. (1936). *Teorija primerjalne literarne zgodovine*. Ljubljana: Znanstveno društvo.

Oergel, M. (2006). *Culture and identity: historicity in German literature and thought 1770-1815*. Berlin; Boston, MA: De Gruyter.

Oergel, M. (2012). The aesthetics of historicity: Friedrich Schiller's and Friedrich Schlegel's concepts of the art of modernity. In: Oergel, M., Carroll, J. and Giles, S. (Eds). *Aesthetics and modenity: from Schiller to the Frankfurt School*. Oxford, New York, NJ: Peter Lang.

Oergel, M. (2016). Jena 1789-1819: ideas, poetry and politics. In: Hamilton, P. (Ed). *The Oxford handbook of European Romanticism*. Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press. pp.219–239.

Ong, W. J. (1991). *Orality and literacy: the technologizing of the word*. Abingdon; New York, NY: Routledge.

Onians, J. (1996). World art studies and the need for a new natural history of art. *Art bulletin*, 78 (2), pp.206–209.

Onians, J. (Ed). (2006). *Compression vs. expression: containing and explaining the world's art*. Williamstown, MA; New Haven, CT: Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute; Yale University Press.

Orenstein, H. (1968). The Ethnological Theories of Henry Sumner Maine. *American Anthropologist*, 70 (2), pp.264–276.

Orrells, D., Bhambra, G. K. and Roynon, T. (2011). *African Athena: new agendas*. Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Osborne, R. (1993). À la grecque. *Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology*, 6 (2), p.231–237.

Ostler, N. (2005). *Empires of the word: a language history of the world*. London: HarperCollins.

Page, D. L. (1973). *Folktales in Homer's Odyssey*. Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press.

Palmer, R. E. (1972). *Hermeneutics: interpretation theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

Paris, G. (1899). *La poesie du moyen age: lecons et lectures*. Paris: Librairie Hachette.

Paris, G. (1900). Résumé de l'allocution de M. Gaston Paris. In: *Annales internationales d'histoire: Congrès de Paris 1900. Section 6, Histoire comparée des littératures.* Paris: Librairie Armand Colin. pp.39–41.

Parodi, B. and Corradini, A. M. (2008). *Goethe in Sicilia: l'isola iniziatica*. Messina: A. Siciliano.

Parry, M. (1928). *L'épithète traditionnelle dans Homère: essai sur un problème de style homérique*. Paris: Société d'éditions 'Les belles lettres'.

Parry, M. (1928). *Les formules et la métrique d'Homère*. Paris: Société d'éditions 'Les belles lettres'.

Parry, M. (1971). *The making of homeric verse: the collected papers of Milman Parry*. Parry, A. (Ed). Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Patten, A. (2010). 'The most natural state': Herder and nationalism. *History of Political Thought*, 31 (4), pp.657–689.

Payne, C. (2009). Epic world citizenship in Goethe's *Hermann und Dorothea*. *Goethe Yearbook*, 16 (1), pp.11–28.

Peabody, S. (2018). Goethe and (Um)Weltliteratur: environment and power in Goethe's literary worlds. *Seminar: A Journal of Germanic Studies*, 54 (2), pp.215–230.

Perišić, D. (1968). *Goethe bei den Serben*. Bern: Peter Lang.

Petit, A. (2005). Histoire et philosophie de l'histoire de Renan. *Etudes de Lettres*, 3 (271), pp.81–109.

Pfeiffer, R. (1976). *History of classical scholarship from 1300 to 1850*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Piirimäe, E. (2015). Sociability, nationalism and cosmopolitanism in Herder's early philosophy of history. *History of political thought*, 36 (3), pp.521–559.

Pizer, D. (1961). Evolutionary ideas in late nineteenth-century English and American literary criticism. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 19 (3), pp.305–310.

Pizer, J. (2000). Goethe's 'World Literature' paradigm and contemporary cultural globalization. *Comparative Literature*, 52 (3), pp.213–227.

Pizer, J. (2005). Cosmopolitanism and Weltliteratur. *Goethe Yearbook*, 13 (1), pp.165–179.

Pizer, J. (2006). *The idea of world literature: history and pedagogical practice*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press.

Pizer, J. (2012). Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Origins and relevance of *Weltliteratur*. In: D'haen, T., Damrosch, D. and Kadir, D. (Eds). *The Routledge companion to world literature*. Abingdon; New York, NY: Routledge. pp.3–11.

Pizer, J. D. (2019). Goethe's world literature paradigm: from uneasy cosmopolitanism to literary modernism. In: Seigneurie, K. (Ed). *A Companion to World Literature*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons. pp.1–11.

Poggioli, R. (1943). Comparative literature. In: Shipley, J. T. (Ed). *Dictionary of world literature; criticism, forms, technique*. New York, NY: The Philosophical Library. pp.114–117.

Pollock, S. I. (2015). What was philology in Sanskrit? In: Pollock, S. I., Elman, B. A. and Chang, K. K. (Eds). *World philology*. Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press. pp.114–136.

Popović, M. (1964). *Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, 1787-1864*. Belgrade: Nolit.

Porter, A. (1999). Introduction: Britain and the Empire in the nineteenth century. In: *The Oxford history of the British Empire. Volume III: the nineteenth century*. Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press. pp.1–28.

Porter, A. (Ed). (1999). *The Oxford history of the British Empire. Volume III: the nineteenth century*. Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Portmann, A. (1987). Goethe and the concept of metamorphosis. In: Amrine, F., Zucker, F. J. and Wheeler, H. (Eds). *Goethe and the sciences: a reappraisal*. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands. pp.133–145.

Posnett, H. M. (1882). *The historical method in ethics, jurisprudence, and political economy*. London: Longmans.

Posnett, H. M. (1883a). The Irish franchises. *The Times*, 30 January, p.12.

Posnett, H. M. (1883b). The Irish grand jury and the Irish county board. *The Times*, 16 February, p.3.

Posnett, H. M. (1884a). Clan poetry. *The Academy*, 23 February, p.134.

Posnett, H. M. (1884b). *The Ricardian theory of rent*. London: Longmans, Green, and co.

Posnett, H. M. (1886). *Comparative Literature*. London: K. Paul, Trench.

Posnett, H. M. (1894). *Hereditary Lords: a reply to the Peers*. London: Longmans, Green.

Posnett, H. M. (1901a). Pi-Pa-Ko, or, San-Pou-Tsong. *The Nineteenth century*, 49, pp.307–320.

Posnett, H. M. (1901b). The federal constitution of Australia. *Fortnightly review*, 69, pp.969–988.

Posnett, H. M. (1906a). Federation in fiscal anarchy. *The Contemporary Review*, 89, pp.387–405.

Posnett, H. M. (1906b). Irish national imperialism. *The Contemporary Review*, 89, pp.645–660.

Posnett, H. M. (1910). What are we voting for?. *The Times*, 6 January, p.5.

Posnett, H. M. (1913a). Action of moderate liberals. *The Times*, 14 October, p.5.

Posnett, H. M. (1913b). Sitting 'Dharna'. *The Times*, 11 March, p.14.

Posnett, H. M. (1914). No more higgling. *The Times*, 29 July, p.10.

Posnett, H. M. (1973). The science of comparative literature. In: Schulz, H.-J. and Rhein, P. H. (Eds). *Comparative literature: the early years*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press. pp.183–206.

Postclassicisms Collective. (2019). *Postclassicisms*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Powers, E. (2019). Fritz Strich and the dilemmas of world literature today. *Goethe yearbook*, 26, pp.233–250.

Prendergast, C. (2001). Negotiating world literature. *New Left Review*, (8), pp.100–121.

Prendergast, C. (Ed). (2004). *Debating world literature*. London; New York, NY: Verso Books.

Prendergast, C. (2005). Evolution and literary history: a response to Franco Moretti. *New Left Review*, (34), pp.40–62.

Prendergast, C. (2014). Across the 'Between'. *New Left Review*, (86), pp.151–158.

Pribić, N. (1969). Goethe, Talvj und das südslavische Volkslied. *Balkan Studies*, 10 (1), pp.135–144.

Priest, R. D. (2014). The 'great doctrine of transcendent disdain': history, politics and the self in Renan's *Life of Jesus*. *History of European Ideas*, 40 (6), pp.761–776.

Priest, R. D. (2015a). Ernest Renan's race problem. *The Historical Journal*, 58 (1), pp.309–330.

Priest, R. D. (2015b). *The gospel according to Renan: reading, writing, and religion in nineteenth-century France*. Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Puchner, M. (2011). World literature and the creation of literary worlds. *Neohelicon*, 38 (2), pp.341–348.

Puech, A. (1936). Milman Parry. *Revue des Études Grecques*, 49 (229), pp.87–88.

Purdy, D. (2014). Goethe, Rémusat, and the chinese novel: translation and the circulation of world literature. In: Beebee, T. O. (Ed). *German literature as world literature*. London; New York, NY: Bloomsbury Academic. pp.43–60.

Quinault, R. (2012). Gladstone and war. In: Quinault, R., Swift, R. and Windscheffel, R. C. (Eds). *William Gladstone: new studies and perspectives*. Farnham; Burlington, VT: Ashgate. pp.235–251.

Quinault, R. E., Swift, R. and Windscheffel, R. C. (2012). *William Gladstone: new studies and perspectives*. Farnham; Burlington, VT: Ashgate.

Quinn, J. C. (2019). *In search of the Phoenicians*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Rampley, M. et al. (Eds). (2012). *Art history and visual studies in Europe: transnational discourses and national frameworks*. Leiden; Boston, MA: Brill.

Ranković, S. (2012). Managing the 'Boss': epistemic violence, resistance, and negotiations in Milman Parry's and Nikola Vujnović's *Pričanja* with Salih Ugljanin. *Oral Tradition*, 27 (1), pp.5–66.

Rebenich, S., Reibnitz, B. von and Späth, T. (Eds). (2010). *Translating antiquity: Antikenbilder im europäischen Kulturtransfer*. Basel: Schwabe.

Reece, S. (2019). The Myth of Milman Parry: Ajax or Elpenor? *Oral Tradition*, 33 (1), pp.115–142.

Reed, T. J. (1980). *The classical centre: Goethe and Weimar, 1775-1832*. Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Rehm, W. (1936). *Griechentum und Goethezeit; Geschichte eines Glaubens*. Leipzig: Dieterich.

Remak, H. H. (1971). Comparative literature: its definition and function. In: Stallknecht, N. P., Frenz, H. and Remak, H. H. (Eds). *Comparative literature: method and perspective*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press. pp.3–57.

Renan, E. (1863). *Vie de Jésus*. Paris: Nelson; Calmann-Lévy.

Renan, E. (1890). *L'avenir de la science*. Paris: Calmann-Levy.

Richards, R. J. (2002). *The romantic conception of life: science and philosophy in the age of Goethe*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Richardson, E. (2013). *Classical Victorians: scholars, scoundrels and generals in pursuit of antiquity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Riedel, M. (1995). Zwischen Dichtung und Philologie. Goethe und Friedrich August Wolf. In: Hartwich, H.-H. and Berg, G. (Eds). *Bedeutende Gelehrte der Universität zu Halle seit ihrer Gründung im Jahr 1694*. Opladen: Leske und Budrich. pp.189–206.

Riedel, V. (2002). Ein 'Grundschatz aller Kunst': Goethe und die Vossische Homer-Übersetzung. *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, 8 (4), pp.522–563.

Ringer, F. (1991). *Fields of Knowledge: French academic culture in comparative perspective, 1890-1920*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ritzer, G. (2007). *The Blackwell companion to globalization*. Malden, MA; Oxford: Blackwell.

Roberts, J. J. (2003). *The origins of conflict in Afghanistan*. Westport, CT: Praeger.

Robertson, R. (1992). *Globalization: social theory and global culture*. London: SAGE Publications.

Robertson, R. and Buhari-Gulmez, D. (Eds). (2016). *Global culture: consciousness and connectivity*. Abingdon; New York, NY: Routledge. pp.1–218.

Robertson, R. and White, K. E. (2008). What is globalization? In: Ritzer, G. (Ed). *The Blackwell companion to globalization*. Oxford: Blackwell. pp.54–66.

Robertson, R. (2015). Weltliteratur from Voltaire to Goethe. *Comparative Critical Studies*, 12 (2), pp.163–181.

Robertson, R. (2017). Suffering in art: Laocoon between Lessing and Goethe. In: Lifschitz, A. and Squire, M. (Eds). *Rethinking Lessing's Laocoon: antiquity, enlightenment, and the 'limits' of painting and poetry*. Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press. pp.257–278.

Robinson, A. (2009). *Writing and script: a very short introduction*. Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Robinson, W. I. (2011). Globalization and the sociology of Immanuel Wallerstein: A critical appraisal. *International Sociology*, 26 (6), pp.723–745.

Rodogno, D. (2012). *Against massacre: humanitarian interventions in the Ottoman Empire, 1815-1914: the emergence of a European concept and international practice*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Roe, G. H. (2014). *The passion of Charles Péguy: literature, modernity, and the crisis of historicism*. Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Roider, K. A. (1982). *Austria's eastern question, 1700-1790.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Pres.

Ronell, A. (1986). *Dictations: on haunted writing*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Rose, P. L. (2013). Renan versus Gobineau: semitism and antisemitism, ancient races and modern liberal nations. *History of European Ideas*, 39 (4), pp.528–540.

Roucek, J. S. (1935). The Yugoslav immigrants in America. *American Journal of Sociology*, 40 (5), pp.602–611.

Rüdiger, H. (1964). Weltliteratur in Goethes 'Helena'. *Jahrbuch der deutschen Schillergesellschaft*, 8, p.172.

Rudy, J. T. (2004). Transforming audiences for oral tradition: Child, Kittredge, Thompson, and connections of folklore and English Studies. *College English*, 66 (5), pp.524–544.

Rüegg, W. (2004). *A history of the university in Europe. Volume 3: Universities in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (1800–1945)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rutherford, I. (2016). *Greco-Egyptian interactions: literature, translation, and culture, 500 BCE-300 CE*. Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Saab, A. P. (1991). *Reluctant icon: Gladstone, Bulgaria, and the working classes, 1856-1878*. Cambridge, MA: London: Harvard University Press.

Sachers, R. (2015). *Goethe's poetry and the philosophy of nature: Gott und Welt 1798-1827*. Cambridge; Oxford; New York, NY: Legenda; Modern Humanities Research Association; Routledge.

Sachs, J. (2010). On the road. Travel, antiquarianism, philology. In: Gurd, S. A. (Ed). *Philology and its histories*. Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press. pp.127–147.

Sachsenmaier, D. (2011). *Global perspectives on global history: theories and approaches in a connected world*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Said, E. W. (2003). Introduction to the Fiftieth-anniversary edition. In: *Mimesis: the representation of reality in Western literature*. 50th anniversary edition. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. pp.ix–xxxii.

Sale, M. (1996). In defense of Milman Parry: renewing the oral theory. *Oral Tradition*, 11 (2), pp.374–417.

Sandiford, K. A. P. (1981). W. E. Gladstone and Liberal-Nationalist movements. *Albion*, 13 (1), pp.27–42.

Sandys, J. E. (1908). *A history of classical scholarship. Vol. III.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Santini, C. (2013). L 'enfance des Grecs et l'épopée homérique: poésie et chants fictifs dans la pensée herderienne. In: Dècultot, E. and Lauer, G. (Eds). *Herder und die Künste. Aesthetik, Kunsttheorie, Kunstgeschichte*. Heidelberg: Winter Verlag. pp.161–178.

Sapiro, G. (Ed). (2009). *L'espace intellectuel en Europe: de la formation des états-nations à la mondialisation, XIXe-XXIe siècle*. Paris: Découverte.

Sapiro, G. (2015). Translation and symbolic capital in the era of globalization: French literature in the United States. *Cultural Sociology*, 9 (3), pp.320–346.

Sapiro, G., Brun, E. and Fordant, C. (2019). The rise of the social sciences and humanities in France: institutionalization, professionalization, and autonomization. In: Fleck, C., Duller, M. and Karády, V. (Eds). *Shaping human science disciplines*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan. pp.25–68.

Sauder, G. (2002). Herders Gedanken über Lyrische Sprache und Dichtkunst. In: Menges, K., Otto, R. and Koepke, W. (Eds). *Herder Jahrbuch. Herder Yearbook VI/2002: Studien zum 18. Jahrhundert*. Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler. pp.97–114.

Saussure, F. de. (1983). *Course in general linguistics*. London: Duckworth.

Saussy, H. (Ed). (2006). *Comparative literature in an age of globalization*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Saussy, H. (2011). Comparisons, world literature, and the common denominator. In: Behdad, A. and Thomas, D. (Eds). *A companion to comparative literature*. Chichester; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell. pp.60–64.

Saussy, H. (2015). The return of orality. *Comparative Literature*, 67 (3), pp.312–318.

Saussy, H. (2016). *The ethnography of rhythm: Orality and its technologies*. New York, NY: Fordham University Press.

Schadewaldt, W. (1963). *Goethestudien: Natur und Altertum*. Zürich: Artemis.

Schamoni, W. (2008). "Weltliteratur" – zuerst 1773 bei August Ludwig Schlözer. *Arcadia - International Journal for Literary Studies*, 43 (2), pp.288–298.

Schein, S. L. (2015). *Homeric Epic and its reception: Interpretive essays*. Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Schellenberg, R. (2012). The impact of Ossian: Johann Gottfried Herder's literary legacy. In: Campbell, M. and Perraudin, M. (Eds). *The voice of the people*. London: Anthem Press. pp.9–20.

Schiller, F. (1943–). *Schillers Werke. Nationalausgabe*. Weimar: H. Böhlau.

Schiller, F. (1993). On naive and sentimental poetry. In: Hinderer, W. (Ed). *Essays*. New York, NY: Continuum.

Schlegel, A. W. von. (1962). Hermann und Dorothea. In: Staiger, E. (Ed). *Kritische Schriften*. Zürich: Artemis Verlag.

Schlegel, F. von. (1958–). *Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe*. Paderborn; Zurich: F. Schöningh; Thomas.

Schmaus, A. (1938). Ćor-Huso Husović. *Prilozi proučavanju narodne poezije*, 5 (1), pp.141–136.

Schmidt, F. (1970). Goethe über die »historische Kritik« F. A. Wolfs. *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, 44 (3), pp.475–488.

Schmidt, M. (2019). *Gilgamesh: the life of a poem*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Schmidt, R. J. (1956). Cultural nationalism in Herder. *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 17 (3), p.407.

Schreuder, D. M. (1970). Gladstone and Italian unification, 1848-70: The Making of a Liberal? *The English Historical Review*, 85 (336), pp.475–501.

Schreuder, D. M. (1978). Gladstone as 'troublemaker': liberal foreign policy and the German annexation of Alsace-Lorraine, 1870-1871. *Journal of British Studies*, 17 (2), pp.106–135.

Schreuder, D. M. (2012). Gladstone's 'Greater World': free trade, empire and liberal internationalism. In: Quinault, R. E., Swift, R. and Windscheffel, R. C. (Eds). *William Gladstone: new studies and perspectives*. Farnham; Burlington, VT: Ashgate. pp.267–290.

Schubarth, K. E. (1821). *Ideen über Homer und sein Zeitalter. Eine ethisch-historische Abhandlung*. Breslau: J. Max.

Schulz, H.-J. and Rhein, P. H. (1973). *Comparative literature: the early years*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.

Schwinge, E.-R. (1999). *'Ich bin nicht Goethe': Johann Gottfried Herder und die Antike*. Hamburg: Joachim Jungius-Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften.

Seamon, D. (1998). Goethe, nature and phenomenology. In: Seamon, D. and Zajonc, A. (Eds). *Goethe's way of science: a phenomenology of nature*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press. pp.1–14.

Seamon, D. and Zajonc, A. (1998). *Goethe's way of science: a phenomenology of nature*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Seibt, G. (2008). *Goethe und Napoleon: eine historische Begegnung*. München: Verlag C.H. Beck.

Seo, J. M. (2019). Classics for all: future antiquity from a global perspective. *American Journal of Philology*, 140 (4), pp.699–715.

Seton-Watson, R. W. (1962). *Disraeli, Gladstone, and the Eastern question; a study in diplomacy and party politics*. London: F. Cass.

Shamel, S. (2013). *Goethe and Hafiz: poetry and history in the West-östlicher Divan*. Bern: Peter Lang.

Shannon, R. (1963). *Gladstone and the Bulgarian agitation 1876*. London, New York, NY: Nelson.

Sharpe, L. (Ed). (2002). *The Cambridge companion to Goethe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sherrington, C. (1949). *Goethe on nature and on science*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Shorey, P. (1928). Book reviews: Les Formules et la metrique d'Homère. L'Epithète traditionelle dans Homère. Milman Parry. *Classical Philology*, 23 (3), pp.305–306.

Shurts, S. (2013). Resentment and the right: a twentieth-century cycle of reaction, revaluation, and retreat by the French extreme right. *European History Quarterly*, 43 (2), pp.257–278.

Shurts, S. (2017). *Resentment and the right: French intellectual identity reimagined, 1898-2000*. Newark, NJ: University of Delaware Press.

Sienaert, E. R. (1990). Marcel Jousse: the oral style and the anthropology of gesture. *Oral Tradition*, 5 (1), pp.91–106.

Sienaert, E. R., Kelber, W. H. and Jousse, M. (2016). *In search of coherence: introducing Marcel Jousse's anthropology of mimism*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications.

Sikka, S. (2011). *Herder on humanity and cultural difference: enlightened relativism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Simon, W. M. (1972). *European positivism in the nineteenth century: an essay in intellectual history*. Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press.

Simonsuuri, K. (1979). *Homer's original genius: eighteenth-century notions of the early Greek epic (1688-1798)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Simpson, J. (1979). *Matthew Arnold and Goethe*. London: Modern Humanities Research Association.

Sinclair, K. (1983). *A history of the University of Auckland, 1883-1983*. Auckland: Auckland University Press.

Sirinelli, J.-F. (1988). *Génération intellectuelle: khâgneux et normaliens dans l'entre-deux-guerres*. Paris: Fayard.

Smith, A. D. (2016). Classical ideals and the formation of modern nations in europe. In: Fögen, T. and Warren, R. (Eds). *Graeco-Roman antiquity and the idea of nationalism in the 19th century*. Berlin; Boston, MA: De Gruyter.

Smith, G. (1873). The Chaldean account of the Flood. *Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, 2, pp.213–234.

Smith, G. (1875). *Assyrian discoveries: an account of explorations and discoveries on the site of Nineveh, during 1873-1874.* New York: Scribner, Armstrong & co.

Smith, G. (1876). *George Smith's Chaldäische Genesis: Keilinschriftliche Berichte über Schöpfung, Sündenfall, Sintfluth, Thurmbau und Nimrod, nebst vielen anderen Fragmenten ältesten Babylonisch-Assyrischen Schriftthums*. Leipzig: Hinrich.

Smith, G. (1880). *The Chaldean account of Genesis*. London: S. Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington.

Sondrup, S. (2015). Goethe, China, and world literature. In: Bessière, J. and Gillespie, G. (Eds). *Contextualizing World Literature*. Brussels: Peter Lang. pp.93–102.

Spencer, T. J. B. (1957). Robert Wood and the problem of Troy in the eighteenth century. *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 20 (1/2), pp.75–105.

Spencer, V. A. (2012). *Herder's political thought: a study of language, culture, and community*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Spoerhase, C. and Dehrmann, M.-G. (2011). Die Idee der Universität. Friedrich August Wolf und die Praxis des Seminars. *Zeitschrift für Ideengeschichte*, 5 (1), pp.105–117.

Spivak, G. C. (2003). *Death of a discipline*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Stamatopulos, D. A. (2018). *The eastern question or Balkan nationalism(s): Balkan history reconsidered*. Göttingen: V&R Unipress; Vienna University Press.

Stanford, W. B. (1971). Remarks on the collected works of Milman Parry. *Hermathena*, 112, pp.36–51.

Stansky, P. (1979). *Gladstone, a progress in politics*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown.

Stearns, P. N. (2010). *Globalization in world history*. Abingdon; New York, NY: Routledge.

Steger, M. B. (2013). *Globalization: a very short introduction*. 3rd ed. Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Stokes, M. (2004). Music and the global order. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 33, pp.47–72.

Sturm-Trigonakis, E. (2013). *Comparative cultural studies and the new Weltliteratur*. West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press.

Strich, F. (1946). *Goethe und die Weltliteratur*. Bern: Francke Verlag.

Strich, F. (1949). *Goethe and world literature*. New York, NY: Hafner Pub. Co.

Summers, D. (2003). *Real spaces: world art history and the rise of Western modernism*. London; New York, NY: Phaidon Press.

Swartz, M. (1985). *The politics of British foreign policy in the era of Disraeli and Gladstone*. Houndmills; London: Macmillan.

Swiggers, P. (1985). La linguistique historico-comparative d'Antoine Meillet: théorie et méthode. *Cahiers Ferdinand de Saussure*, 39, pp.181–195.

Szondi, P. (1995). *Introduction to literary hermeneutics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Szwed, J. F. (2010). *Alan Lomax: the man who recorded the world*. New York: Viking Penguin.

Talam, J. (2015). Creation, transmission and performance: guslars in Bosnia and Herzegovina. *Musicological Annual*, 51 (2), p.203–221.

Talvet, J. (2013). Towards a symbiotic coexistence of comparative literature and world literature. *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture*, 15 (5).

Tantillo, A. O. (2002). *The will to create: Goethe's philosophy of nature*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Tate, A. P. (2010). 'There were two foreigners and one of ours': Parry and Lord in Kijevo, Croatia, 24 September 1934. *Folklore*, 121 (3), pp.311–320.

Tate, A. P. (2011a). Collecting South Slavic oral epic in 1864: Luka Marjanović's earliest account. *Oral Tradition*, 26 (1), pp.159–174.

Tate, A. P. (2011b). Matija Murko, Wilhelm Radloff, and oral epic studies. *Oral Tradition*, 26 (2), pp.329–352.

Templeman, W. D. (1946). Arnold's 'The Literary Influence of Academies,' Macaulay, and Espinasse. *Studies in Philology*, 43 (1), pp.89–92.

Tenorth, H.-E. (2018). *Wilhelm von Humboldt: Bildungspolitik und Universitätsreform*. Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh.

Tessitore, F. and Cerasuolo, S. (1997). *Friedrich August Wolf e la scienza dell'antichità: atti del Convegno Internazionale (Napoli 24-26 maggio 1995)*. Napoli: Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II.

Texte, J. (1898). *Études de littérature européenne*. Paris: Armand Colin.

Texte, J. (1973). The comparative history of literature. In: Schulz, H.-J. and Rhein, P. H. (Eds.) *Comparative literature: The early years*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press. pp.105–112.

Thelle, R. I. (2018). *Discovering Babylon*. Abingdon; New York, NY: Routledge.

Thieme, H. P. (1901). Joseph Texte. *Modern Language Notes*, 16 (7), pp.198–202.

Thomas, R. (1992). *Literacy and orality in ancient Greece*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Thoms, P. P. (1824). *Chinese courtship, in verse*. London: Parbury, Allen and Kingsbury.

Thomsen, M. R. (2008). *Mapping world literature: international canonization and transnational literatures*. London; New York, NY: Continuum.

Tihanov, G. (2019). *The birth and death of literary theory: regimes of relevance in Russia and beyond*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Timpanaro, S. (2005). *The genesis of Lachmann's method*. Most, G. W. (Ed). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Tötösy de Zepetnek, S. (1998). *Comparative literature: theory, method, application*. Amsterdam; Atlanta, GA: Rodopi.

Trevelyan, H. (1941). *Goethe and the Greeks*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Trousson, R. (1965). *Un probleme de littérature comparée: les etudes de themes. Essai de methodologie*. Paris: M. J. Minard.

Turner, F. M. (1981). *The Greek heritage in Victorian Britain*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Turner, J. (2014). *Philology: the forgotten origins of the modern humanities*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Underwood, T. (2013). *Why literary periods mattered: historical contrast and the prestige of English studies*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Ungnad, A. (1923). *Gilgamesch-Epos und Odyssee*. Kulturfragen 4/5. Breslau: im Selbstverlag des Herausgebers.

Uslu, G. (2017). *Homer, Troy and the Turks: heritage and identity in the Late Ottoman Empire 1870-1915*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Vail, A. E. K. (2001). *The last of the Homeridai: Goethe's road to Hermann und Dorothea*. The Ohio State University. [Dissertation].

Vaio, J. (1990). Gladstone and the early reception of Schliemann in England. In: Calder, W. M. and Cobet, J. (Eds). *Heinrich Schliemann nach hundert Jahren*. Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann. pp.415–430.

Vaio, J. (1992). Schliemann and Gladstone: new light from unpublished documents. In: Herrmann, J. (Ed) *Heinrich Schliemann: Grundlagen und Ergebnisse moderner Archäologie 100 Jahre nach Schliemanns Tod*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag. pp.73–76.

Valdez, D. (2014). *German Philhellenism: the pathos of the historical imagination from Winckelmann to Goethe*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Van Tieghem, P. (1931). *La littérature comparée*. Paris: A. Colin.

Vasmer, M. (1938). *Bausteine zur Geschichte der deutsch-slavischen geistigen Beziehungen*. Berlin: Verlag der Königlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften.

Venkat Mani, B. (2017). *Recoding world literature: libraries, print culture, and Germany's pact with books*. New York, NY: Fordham University Press.

Vidan, A. (2003). *Embroidered with gold, strung with pearls: the traditional ballads of Bosnian women*. Cambridge, MA: The Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature.

Vogt, E. (2013). *Literatur der Antike und Philologie der Neuzeit: Ausgewählte Schriften*. Berlin; Boston, MA: De Gruyter.

Volkmann, R. von. (1874). *Geschichte und Kritik der Wolfschen Prolegomena zu Homer. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der homerischen Frage*. Leipzig: B. G. Teubner.

Vuk Stefanović Karadžić. (1824). *Narodne srpske pjesme*. U Lipisci: U štampariji Brejtkopfa i Eršla.

Wagner, F. (1960). *Herders Homerbild, seine Wurzeln und Wirkungen*. Köln. [Dissertation].

Waldow, A. and DeSouza, N. (Eds). (2017). *Herder: philosophy and anthropology*. Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Wallerstein, I. (2000). Globalization or the age of transition?: a long-term view of the trajectory of the world-system. *International Sociology*, 15 (2), pp.249–265.

Wallerstein, I. M. (1974). *The modern world-system I: capitalist agriculture and the origins of the European world-economy in the sixteenth century*. New York, NY: Academic Press.

Wallerstein, I. M. (1991). *Geopolitics and geoculture: essays on the changing world-system*. Cambridge; Paris: Cambridge University Press; Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme.

Wallerstein, I. M. (2004). *World-systems analysis: an introduction*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Walzel, O. F. (1923–1941). *Handbuch der Literaturwissenschaft*. Berlin-Neubabelsberg: Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft Athenaion.

Weber, H.-D. (1997). Goethe und der Historismus. *Saeculum*, 48 (1), pp.72–94.

Weisstein, U. (1974). *Comparative literature and literary theory: survey and introduction*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Weisstein, U. (1984). D'où venons nous? Que sommes-nous? Où allons-nous? The permanent crisis of comparative literature. *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature/ Revue Canadienne de Littérature Comparée*, 11 (2), pp.167–192.

Weitz, H.-J. (1987). 'Weltliteratur' zuerst bei Wieland. *Arcadia - International Journal for Literary Studies*, 22 (1–3), pp.206–208.

Wellek, R. (1931). *Immanuel Kant in England, 1793-1838*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Wellek, R. (1955). *A history of modern criticism 1750-1950. Volume 1: the later eighteenth century*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Wellek, R. (1959). The crisis of comparative literature. In: Werner, F. P. (Ed). *Proceedings of the second International Congress of Comparative Literature*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press. pp.148–195.

Wellek, R. (1963). *Concepts of criticism*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Wellek, R. (1965). Comparative literature today. *Comparative Literature*, 17 (4), p.325.

Wellek, R. (1970a). *Discriminations: further concepts of criticism*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Wellek, R. (1970b). The name and nature of comparative literature. In: *Discriminations: further concepts of criticism*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. pp.1–30.

Wellek, R. (1988). René Wellek and modern literary criticism: response. *Comparative Literature*, 40 (1), pp.25–28.

Wellek, René. and Warren, A. (1949). *Theory of literature*. New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace, and Company.

Wellmon, C. (2015). *Organizing Enlightenment: information overload and the invention of the modern research university*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Wells, G. A. (1978). *Goethe and the development of science, 1750-1900*. Alphen aan den Rijn: Sijthoff & Noordhoff.

Wendling, M. (2018). *Alt-Right: From 4chan to the White House*. London: Pluto Press.

West, M. L. (1997). *The east face of Helicon: west Asiatic elements in Greek poetry and myth*. Oxford, New York, NY: Clarendon Press.

West, M. L., Hesiod. (1966). *Theogony: edited with prolegomena and commentary by M.L. West*. Oxford, New York, NY: Clarendon Press.

Whitehead, C. (2015). Reading beside the lines: marginalia, W.E. Gladstone, and the international history of the Bulgarian horrors. *The International History Review*, 37 (4), pp.864–886.

Wilgus, D. K. (1959). *Anglo-American folksong scholarship since 1898*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Wilkinson, E. M. and Willoughby, L. A. (1962). *Goethe, poet and thinker*. London: Edward Arnold.

Willcock, M. (1997). Neoanalysis. In: Morris, I. and Powell, B. B. (Eds). *A new companion to Homer*. Leiden; New York; Köln: Brill. pp.174–189.

Wilson, D. (1970). *The life and times of Vuk Stefanović Karadzić, 1787-1864: literacy, literature and national independence in Serbia*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Wilson, W. A. (1973). Herder, folklore and romantic nationalism. *The Journal of Popular Culture*, 6 (4), pp.819–835.

Witte, B., Otto, R. and Janssen, C. (Eds). (1996–1998). *Goethe-Handbuch: in vier Bänden*. Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler.

Wohlleben, J. (1967). Goethe and the Homeric Question. *The Germanic Review: Literature, Culture, Theory*, 42 (4), pp.251–275.

Wohlleben, J. (1990). Homer in German classicism: Goethe, Friedrich Schlegel, Hölderlin and Schelling. *Illinois Classical Studies*, 15 (1), pp.197–211.

Wohlleben, J. (1996). Friedrich August Wolfs 'Prolegomena ad Homerum' in der literarischen Szene der Zeit. *Poetica*, 28 (1/2), pp.154–170.

Wolf, F. A. (1807). *Darstellung der Altertumswissenschaft nach Begriff, Umfang, Zweck und Wert*. Berlin: Realscbulbuchhandlung.

Wolf, F. A. (itu). *Vorlesungen über die Alterthumswissenschaft*. Leipzig: Verlag der Lehnhold'schen Buchhandlung.

Wolf, F. A. (1869). *Kleine Schriften in lateinischer und deutscher Sprache: 2. Deutsche Aufsätze*. Bernhardy, G. (Ed). Halle: Verlag der Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses.

Wolf, F. A. (1985). *Prolegomena to Homer, 1795*. Grafton, A. (Ed). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Wood, R. (1773). *Versuch über das Originalgenie des Homers. Aus dem Englischen*. Frankfurt am Main: Andrea.

Wood, R. (1776). *An essay on the original genius and writings of Homer: with a comparative view of the ancient and present state of the Troade.* Dublin: Printed for William Hallhead.

Yack, B. (2013). The significance of Isaiah Berlin's Counter-Enlightenment. *European Journal of Political Theory*, 12 (1), pp.49–60.

Yavuz, M. H. (2014). Orientalism, the 'terrible Turk' and genocide. *Middle East Critique*, 23 (2), pp.111–126.

Young, R. (1995). *Colonial desire: hybridity in theory, culture, and race*. Abingdon; New York, NY: Routledge.

Young, R. (2016). *Postcolonialism: an historical introduction*. 15th Anniversary ed. Chichester; Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Zabel, B. (2019). Hutcheson Macaulay Posnett, world literature, and the colonial comparisons. *Journal of World Literature*, 4 (3), pp.330–349.

Zabel, B. (2020). Matija Murko, predhodnik Milmana Parrya? In: Jesenšek, M. (Ed). *Matija Murko − slovanski filolog v najširšem pomenu besede*. Razprave 24. Ljubljana: SAZU. pp.112–129.

Zapperi, R. (2016). Goethe in Sicilia. In: Freschi, M. (Ed). *L'Italia di Goethe*. Acireale: Bonanno editore. pp.189–204.

Zelenka, M. (2012). Matija Murko in Jan Jakubec v razpravi o češkem narodnem prerodu (pozitivistični koncept literarne zgodovine v korespondenci dveh slovanskih filologov). *Primerjalna književnost*, 35 (3), pp.209–220.

Zijlmans, K. and Van Damme, W. (2008). *World art studies: exploring concepts and approaches*. Amsterdam: Valiz.

Zink, M. (2004). *Le Moyen Âge de Gaston Paris*. Paris: Odile Jacob.

Ziolkowski, M. (2013). *Soviet heroic poetry in context: folklore or fakelore*. Newark, NJ: University of Delaware Press.

Ziolkowski, T. (2011). *Gilgamesh among us: modern encounters with the ancient epic*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Zuckerberg, D. (2018). *Not all dead white men: classics and misogyny in the digital age*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Zuckert, R. (2019). *Herder's naturalist aesthetics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Zumbusch, C. (2019). *Weimarer Klassik: Eine Einführung*. Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler.

Zumwalt, R. L. (1988). *American folklore scholarship: a dialogue of dissent*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.