The Transatlantic Renewal of Textual Practices:

Philology, Religion, and Classicism in Madame de Staël, Herder, and Emerson

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ABSTRACT

The Transatlantic Renewal of Textual Practices:

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This dissertation demonstrates how the rise of historical criticism in Germany transformed practices of reading, writing, and public address in the related fields of classicism and biblical criticism in a transnational context. In the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, writers on both sides of the Atlantic rendered these practices foundational to the goals of self-formation, cultural and spiritual renewal, and educational reform. In this process, Germaine de Staël's De l'Allemagne (1814) played a key role in disseminating new historically informed modes of teaching, preaching, translating, and reconstructing secular and religious texts among Transcendentalists. I show that her cultural study epitomizes crucial characteristics and functions of the historically informed textual practices that Johann Gottfried Herder's works articulated paradigmatically in Germany and which we find refracted in reviews, addresses, essays, and translations by many Antebellum American scholars, especially Ralph Waldo Emerson.

By bringing together intellectuals from both sides of the Atlantic in the context of their responses and contributions to century-old classical and religious debates, this study presents a different perspective on terms such as individual autonomy or spiritual freedom that have come to be seen by the critical literature as paradigmatic for our

understanding of the nineteenth-century relationship between German and American culture and its mediation by Staël. Unlike in the discourse of idealism that dominates the existing body of scholarship on the transnational impact of German Romanticism, Staël, Emerson, and his cohort do not associate these terms with abstract philosophical concepts but with specific exercises and practices the subject can deploy in different ways.

The first chapter focuses on Staël's discussion of how the learning of foreign languages and one's historical engagement with them fosters the individual's independent judgment and thinking. I concentrate on her investigation of how Winckelmann and Herder engage with ancient cultures by feeling themselves into the strange worlds of the past and by turning these acts of imaginary displacement into an occasion for creative reconstitutions of Greek art and Hebrew Scripture so that they serve Germany's spiritual and cultural revival. The second chapter explores how Herder renders practices of empathetic immersion and historical investigations foundational to his philological activities and translations. I work out his treatment of sacred and secular texts as sites for the anthropological making of meaning and of what he calls the human imperative of "Selbstschöpfung" or "self-shaping." The third chapter examines how the relationship between historicism, philology, and the rise of new models of education, cultural reform, and religious experience that figure so prominently in both Staël's and Herder's works resonate in a myriad of Transcendentalist texts. I look at how American classicists and critics like James Marsh and George Ripley discuss and adopt German techniques of self-abandonment, empathy, and poetic philology to refashion practices of preaching and teaching. The fourth chapter investigates how Emerson takes these contemporary debates about the value of scholarship and historical inquiry for educational reforms and the reinvigoration of religion a step further by developing the practices others highlight in the works of Herder or Friedrich Schleiermacher into fully-fledged cultural techniques.

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Introduction

The Transatlantic Renewal of Textual Practices: Philology, Religion, and Classicism in Madame de Staël, Herder, and Emerson demonstrates how the rise of historical criticism in Germany transformed practices of reading, writing, and public address in the related fields of classicism and Biblical criticism in a transnational context. In the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, writers on both sides of the Atlantic rendered these practices foundational to the goals of self-formation, cultural renewal, and educational reform. In this process, Germaine de Staël's *De l'Allemagne* (1814) played a key role in disseminating new historically informed modes of teaching, preaching, translating, and reconstructing secular and religious texts among Transcendentalists. I argue that her cultural study epitomizes crucial characteristics and functions of the textual practices that Johann Gottfried Herder's works articulated paradigmatically in Germany and which we find refracted in critical writings by American scholars, especially Ralph Waldo Emerson.

The study adds to existing critical debates about how historicism transformed classical and religious scholarship in two ways: it provides detailed examinations of facets of Staël's, Herder's, and Emerson's works that have received little or no critical attention, and it contributes to the existing body of scholarship on the transnational impact of German Romanticism. Critics have drawn attention to the vital impact of German eighteenth- and nineteenth-century thinking on the rise of American Transcendentalism and acknowledged *De l'Allemagne*'s intermediary role, but they have only highlighted Staël's and the Transcendentalists' concern with the philosophy of the self as an entity emerging into its autonomy. By contrast, I focus on how authors as diverse as Herder, Schleiermacher, Emerson, Staël, Winckelmann, George Ripley, and James Marsh explore how identities and worldviews were formed through the languages and literatures of ancient cultures. Informed by their historical and philological investigations, these authors foreground the modern use of critical practices and exercises as vehicles for the formation of the self, the development of educational reforms, religious experience, and a new understanding of aesthetic value.

The works I investigate suggest that we ought to read ancient texts by feeling ourselves into the strange worlds of the past and to make the empathetic exercise an occasion to divest ourselves of things we take for granted and regard as normative in our own lives. These acts of imaginary displacement help us see Hebrew scripture or Greek myths as living records, telling us how others experienced the world. Such practices, Transcendentalists and European critics show, are conducive to the development of our mental flexibility and also draw our attention to different styles of existence that could inspire and enrich our own cultural and spiritual lives. They discuss how to employ our emotional capacities and turn historical and philological investigations of the past into processes that serve our own purposes such as the creation of an individual style, the writing of our biographies, or the creation of an aesthetic or spiritual experience. Such innovative and individualized ways of tapping the cultures of the past for contemporary purposes mark a new direction in the late eighteenth- and nineteenth-centuries.

"A Clash of Cultural Ideas"

Of course, by the time Staël, Herder, and Emerson took up questions about the values of antiquity for their own time, the engagement with the past, and with antiquity more particularly, was already centuries, even millennia, old, and it is against the backdrop of changing notions of the uses of antiquity that we must place the transformation wrought by these thinkers. The most prominent European-wide debate about the modern role and function of classical culture in the tradition of which all three authors worked was the *Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes*. It emerged in the late-seventeenth century and divided French cultural loyalties into two parties, the Ancients and the Moderns [to prevent confusion, please take note of my use of upper-cased characters to distinguish the seventeenth-century battle party, "the Ancients," from "the ancients" as a historical group[1]]. The position of the Moderns gained wide public attention when Charles Perrault recited his poem "Le siècle de Louis le Grand" in the Acadèmie Française in 1687. Perrault and his supporters suggested that the age of Louis XIV reigns triumphantly over all previous ages and demonstrates marked advances in all fields of knowledge. To clearly stake out the supremacy of Louis' century, they would denigrate the achievements of the past and assimilate all elements that would not quite fit into their cultural model of *perfectibilité*. Antoine Houdar de La Motte's adjustment of the *Iliad* to French standards of form, style, taste, and behavior is an example for how the Moderns would engage with the past, guided by rules of reason and common sense.[2]

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[1] Throughout this text, the capitalized form 'the Ancients' is used to designate the opponents of 'the Moderns' during the quarrel over questions of cultural hegemony from the seventeenth- to the mid nineteenth-centuries. The 'ancients' (lower case) is used to refer to writers in classical antiquity and ancient Hebrew cultures.

The Ancients, by contrast, assumed that cultural developments had reached an unsurpassable state of perfection in the past. Madame Dacier's *Iliad* translation from 1711 exemplifies how this position informed the Ancients' treatment of sources. Dacier was well versed in Greek and Latin and known for her translations and editions of the classics. Unlike La Motte, her aim was not to alter and perfect ancient texts but to faithfully recuperate them, to reproduce their style and diction.[3]

These two competing modes of fashioning the relation between modernity and the classical past resonate with a dispute much older even than the French quarrel or its English response at the turn of the seventeenth century, the Battle of the Books. Both the Moderns' insistence on an ideal of perfectibility authorized by the progress of reason and the Ancients' claim to a fixed state of perfection bound to the recuperation of a fixed set of ancient themes and compositional techniques have their foundation in what Joseph Levine terms "a clash of cultural ideas" permeating European history since antiquity.[4] He shows that an early version of the argumentative pattern structuring the early modern dispute can be found in the rivalry of two schools of *paideia* in ancient Greece and Rome. One school concentrated on training the mind's reasoning faculties to ascertain the workings of fixed laws operative in both natural and supernatural worlds, whereas the members of the other school focused on uncovering phenomena they regarded as being of immediate use for handling everyday concerns. The teachers' primary interest lay in introducing effective strategies for students to train their eloquence rather than the faculty of reason.[5]

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[2] La Motte cut Homer's lengthy digressions, equipped the cast of characters with more favorable mannerisms and employed what he considered a more elegant and refined style of writing. What guided his endeavors to divest the text of its flaws was not scholarly acumen and knowledge of Greek but his common sense; that is, he applied the rule of reason. The grouping of materials in a dialogical structure in Charles Perrault's *Parallèle des anciens et des modernes* (1688-1692) also shows the strategies Moderns would employ to demonstrate the superior status of their own age. To also accommodate the arts that resist an easy assimilation into his perfectibilié model, Perrault distinguishes between a *beau universel* (denoting artistic themes, styles and genres which have unfolded progressively since antiquity with one major interruption during the dark ages) and a *beau relatif* (all customs, manners and modes of expression that seem at odds with modern times, as historical aberrations from universal norms fall into the beau relatif category).

[3] See Levine, *The Battle of the Books*, 136.

While this ancient controversy underwent a variety of renewals and transformations in late antiquity and the Middle Ages, it was only with Renaissance humanism in the fourteenth- to sixteenth-centuries that an comprehensive scholarly revival of antiquity was effected. Ancient Greek and especially Latin culture became the touchstone for moral behavior, cultural standards, and ideal linguistic forms. Rhetoric was advanced as the key element of every student's education; in style, and genre, their foremost challenge was to revive and approximate the ancient models, to go

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[4] Joseph M. Levine, "Ancients and moderns: cross-currents in early modern intellectual life," in *The Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland*, ed. E. S. Leedham-Green, Teresa Webber, and Giles Mandelbrote (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 9.

[5] Both, in *The Battle of the Books*: *History and Literature in the Augustan Age* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1991) and in "Ancients and moderns: cross-currents in early modern intellectual life," Levine provides the most comprehensive research on the complex historical backdrop against which the Ancient-Modern controversy in France and Britain formed. My cursory synopsis of the quarrel's pre-history draws primarily on his research. According to Levine, the two rival concepts of *paideia* are explicitly set against one another in Plato's dialogues: "Plato, above all, had represented this argument in many of his dialogues, in which he exalted the culture of dialectic and set Socrates deliberately against the sophists and their rhetoric; while the sophists, led by Isocrates, retorted with their own educational schemes and schools, which were elaborated later for the Romans by Cicero and Quintilian among others. In this way, classical culture was transmitted to later times, not as one consistent whole, but rather in two parts and in rivalry" (Levine, "Ancients and moderns: cross-currents in early modern intellectual life," 10).

ad fontes, directly to the ancient sources. Pedagogically, humanist educators directed students to recover the moral values of classical life through the imitation of the language and style of classical authors, uniting *sapientia* with *eloquentia*. Education had a moral but also utilitarian function; the man of letters learned the arts of rhetoric from ancient texts in order to meet his social and political obligations in the public sphere, in an active life of civic engagement.[6] The other strand of classical *paideia*, the exercising of the logical arts, associated as it was with medieval scholasticism, thereby moved into the background because in the eyes of most humanists, the training of abstract reasoning could not be put to work. Humanists encouraged a publicly useful learning based on the ethics and style of pagan moralists such as Cicero who themselves embodied the kind of practical, engaged philosophy held up as the ideal for the Renaissance man of letters.[7]

This massive humanist recovery project aimed at educational reforms and the renewal of cultural life at large was later intertwined with a second major reform movement, the Protestant Reformation. The reformers' main objective was also to return *ad fontes*, in this case to the primitive church described in the Scriptures. Dissatisfied with the leadership of the Catholic church and its (for Protestants, extra-scriptural) claim that clerics alone were authorized to mediate between humanity and the divine, Protestant reformers demanded new mediating practices independent of the church authorities and based only on Biblical authority. *Sola scriptura*: by Scripture alone could one hope to decipher the divine will. As with the humanists, the reformers rejected what they regarded as the abstract logical hair-splitting of medieval theologians and demanded an active engagement by believers themselves with the text, in this case the Bible. The authority to mediate between God and the world is not a God-given privilege of a human leader based on dubious customs and traditions with no scriptural warrant but rather resides in the words of the Bible, waiting to be unlocked.

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[6] The purpose of sixteenth-century rhetorical school manuals was "to equip the student to recognize the fundamental principles involved in the intelligent and persuasive expression of ideas in words, and to give him the wherewithal to produce spoken and written compositions of his own. That new works were best invented by imitating the old was a principle scarcely ever seriously disputed by the overridingly influential schoolroom orthodoxy of the sixteenth century," Ann Moss, "Humanist Education," in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: The Renaissance*, vol. 3. ed. Glyn P. Norton (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 149.

[7] "…logic was either downplayed or reformed under the influence of rhetoric, while the rest of the philosophical curriculum, with the exception of moral philosophy, was pretty much ignored, except by those who continued to aim at a career in religion" (Levine, "Ancients and moderns: cross-currents in early modern intellectual life," 12). In his recent study *What Was History? The art of history in early modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), Anthony Grafton complicates the common account of early modern education as exclusively focused on the art of rhetoric. While a more nuanced appreciation of the historico-critical techniques of the early modern period would exceed the brief review of this chapter, Grafton's latest research should nevertheless be noted. In unfolding the development of the genre of the *Artes historicae*, he recovers a number of hitherto occluded modes of history writing which, interestingly, adumbrate the new methods based on reason as well as the cultural historical methodologies developed in the eighteenth century by the Göttingen school.

As with the thorough scholarly resurrection of pagan Greek and Roman texts performed by the humanists, the turn to the Scriptures of the Hebrews and early Christian culture set in motion a comprehensive recovery project. Since the key to the true meaning of the Bible as much as the true meaning of the *Iliad* lay in the formulations of these sources alone, it was the scholar's task to uncover this information and to prove its authenticity and stability. Many Protestant reformers joined the humanists in detailed investigations of the linguistic peculiarities, religious beliefs, and cultural worlds of a wide range of texts from a world that now seemed genuinely]ancient but also in need of recuperation for its ethical, stylistic, and theological importance to contemporaries.[8]

To produce more accurate versions of any ancient text, pagan or Judeo-Christian, scholars needed instruments that would help them ascertain the histories of manuscripts and chronologies and assist them in recuperating the past texts within their respective cultural context. Groundbreaking research in this regard took place in the Enlightenment. It was during this period, as Jonathan Sheehan argues, that the wide distribution of scholarly instruments (literary, philological, and historical) and translations in Germany called forth *the* transformation of the century in the field of Biblical studies—that is, the birth of an Enlightenment Bible. He subsumes under the term "Enlightenment" the constellation of practices and institutions that opened the Bible to entirely new fields of inquiry and sites of reconstitution.[9] Prior to its large-scale transformation and plural recuperation in the eighteenth-century, the Bible had been a "self-legitimzing" text in the sense that as a manifestation of God's word its authority was always already affirmed. The legitimacy of the Enlightenment Bible, by contrast, was built on its place in the human world. The text's authority no longer had its center in the field of theology but was distributed across a wide network of different media and disciplines. Sheehan delineates how the fields of history, philology, and pedagogy each reconstituted the Bible in their own way and formulated their own answers to questions regarding the Scriptures' authority.[10]

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[8] On the intertwinements between the revival of the classics and the Protestant Reformation, see Jonathan Sheehan, "Scholarship, the New Testament, and the English Defense of the Bible," in *The Enlightenment Bible* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 31-53 and Levine, "Ancients and moderns: cross-currents in early modern intellectual life," 12.

[9] Jonathan Sheehan, *The Enlightenment Bible: Translation, Scholarship, Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), xi-xii.

Ironically, while the driving force behind the deployment of new scholarly instruments throughout different disciplines was to consolidate the authority of the earliest religious documents and ancient arts, it was precisely in that very moment that their timeless exemplary function began to be called into doubt. Scholars began to perceive the strangeness of ancient worlds and to gain insights into ways of life and thinking that seemed utterly distinct from their current life world. J.G. Eichhorn, for instance, demonstrates in his *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (1780-83) that the Bible consists of vastly different text collections, stemming from multiple origins. And F.A. Wolf, who transfers the methods of Biblical criticism to the field of classical studies in the *Prolegomena ad Homerum*, makes similar discoveries with regard to Homer's poetry.[11]

Such findings changed the perspective on history in major ways and called for a fundamental rethinking of the status of ancient texts. As Levine and Maike Oergel point out, the divide between Ancients and Moderns came to seem dated in light of the differences between present and past that historical critics and philologists brought to scholars' attention. The dissemination of historical research revealed that the arguments on both sides actually share much in common because they are both premised on the same notion of historical development. Both Levine and Oergel show that the plausibility of the Modern claim that ancient cultural standards have been perfected over time depends as much as the Ancients' insistence on the past's unsurpassable state of perfection on a universalist concept of history. Madame Dacier's preservative techniques and La Motte's modernization efforts are based on a shared notion of sameness and comparability between ages, because neither one of their reworkings of the *Iliad* takes into consideration that perceptions of taste, artistic beauty, or literary style might have changed altogether. As Levine concludes, the question about the relationship of past cultures to modern life and the role of scholarship therein remained an open one even after many centuries of disputes across Europe.[12]

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[10] Sheehan, *The Enlightenment Bible*, xii-xiv.

[11] Johann Gottfried Eichhorn, *Einleitung ins Alte Testament*. 2nd edition (Reutlingen: J. Grözinger, 1790); F.A. Wolf, *Prolegomena to Homer*, 1795, ed. and transl. Anthony Grafton, Glenn W. Most, and James E.G. Zetzel (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).

Responses

In dialogue with each other, the authors I discuss in this study each formulate their own answers to this question. Explicitly responding and contributing to the century-old classical and religious debates adumbrated above, they are all deeply invested in refashioning the relationship between ancient and modern cultures productively. What distinguishes them from their predecessors involved in quarrels over the role of the past is that that they seek to neither model modern projects on the norms and forms of antiquity nor to introduce the values of their own cultural advancements as improvements of ancient forms. Rather, their shared aim is to bring the different epochs into dialogue with one another by promoting and developing practices in the fields of reading, writing, and communication that help transform interesting aspects of the other, alien culture into vital ingredients of their own.

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[12] Older studies, most importantly Hans Robert Jauss' essay "Ästhetische Normen und geschichtliche Reflexionen in der Querelle" which introduces his translation of Perrault's *Parallèle* argue that the end of the *Querelle* marks the origin of historical relativism: "Einsicht in die Relativität ist das wesentliche und letzte Ergebnis der *Querelle*, hiermit erübrigt sich eine weitere Auseinandersetzung über die Vorbildlichkeit der Alten" (Jauss, "Ästhetische Normen," 62). Later research, however, agrees that the battles in France and England did not settle on the insight into the relativity of cultural values but left at least one legacy in the open question about the relationship betweeen ancient and modern cultures. Levine writes that "both sides in the quarrel shared more of their outlook than they had realized. Both sides implicitly accepted as timeless and universal very much the same set of literary and artistic standards that they were both sure had derived from antiquity. They disagreed only in how far they had in fact been restored or exceeded in the present—or how far they might yet be excelled in the future. It seems to have occurred to no one on either side to imagine that they might be altogether transformed" (Levine, *The Battle of the Books*, 28). Maike Oergel puts forth a similar claim in *Culture and Identity: Historicity in German Literature and Thought 1770-1815* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2006). She writes that the historicism associated with the *beau relatif* is a limited one because "it does not impinge on the existence of a *beau universel*, a universally valid ideal. Such an ideal presupposes the existence of universally valid standards for assessing culture and constancy in the nature of human understanding. These two presuppositions negate a thoroughly historicist approach" (Oergel, *Culture and Identity*, 16).

Something quite similar happens to religious literature. The complex distribution of the Bible's authority across media and disciplines that had been set off by the demands of Protestant reformers and resulted in major new findings about the human origin of the Scriptures inspires Staël, Herder, Emerson, and his fellow Transcendentalists to seek new forms for the reinvigoration of their own spiritual lives. Instead of adhering to religious rituals and symbols that had been invented and recorded by humans for other humans, they take the ancient records as sources of inspiration by reading, writing and speaking about them in creative ways.

By bringing together intellectuals from both sides of the Atlantic in the context of their involvements with these historical debates, this study presents a different perspective on terms such as individual autonomy or spiritual freedom that have come to be seen by the critical literature as paradigmatic for our understanding of the nineteenth-century relationship between German and American culture and its mediation by Staël. Unlike in the discourse of German idealism, Staël, Emerson and his cohort do not associate these terms with abstract philosophical concepts but with specific practices. Ripley, for instance, emphasizes in his discussion of Marsh's Herder translation how one can turn a text into a vehicle for spiritual freedom and revelation by combining historical examinations with philological techniques that resemble poetic ones, while Staël discusses how the learning of foreign languages and one's historical engagement with them can be made productive for working towards individual autonomy. These figures respond with a variety of concrete activities to the new insights scholarship had disclosed and thereby introduce notions of cultural, spiritual, and individual independence that differ from those the critical literature on German-American nineteenth-century relations has highlighted in discussions of Staël's and the Transcendentalists' reception of German idealism as well as historicism.

Through a comparison of Staël's earlier cultural study *De la Littérature considérée dans ses rapports avec les institutions sociales*, chapter one works out what *De l'Allemagne* introduces as the characteristics of the German contribution to the *Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes*. She suggests that figures such as Herder and Winckelmann depart from the positions held by both Ancients and Moderns by arguing that the past is not to be imitated or improved. Rather, what she finds in the works by these critics and in modes of instruction at schools and universities are critical activities that help transform the encounter with classical sources into moments of self-cultivation and cultural invigoration. Staël similarly highlights how Herder employs the same philological techniques in his translations of religious works, thereby advancing a new sense of modern religious experience.

The second chapter explores how the textual practices *De l'Allemagne* identifies as paradigmatic for the rise of historicism in Germany are developed specifically in Herder's works. Drawing on his essay on Winckelmann, on poetological writings concerned with the reconstruction of ancient genres such as fables, and on his theological works, I investigate his translations of secular and sacred texts as sites for the anthropological making of meaning and of what he terms the human imperative of "Selbstschöpfung" or "self-shaping." Through translations and collections, Herder makes foreign literatures accessible, I argue, and shows their role in the formation of the self as well as disciplines. My concentration on the anthropological interest of Herder's philological efforts foregrounds facets of his work that have been sidelined by the critical literature's focus on his critique of Enlightenment historicism.

The relationship between historicism, philology and the rise of new models of education and religious experience that figure so prominently in both Staël's and Herder's works resonate powerfully in Transcendentalist texts. The third chapter examines how Transcendentalist critics like Marsh and Ripley discuss and adopt scholarly techniques of self-abandonment, empathy, and poetic-philology as modes through which Herder and Schleiermacher refashioned their practices of preaching and teaching. Religious integrity emerges thereby as something subjects acquire by carefully honing their skills of reading, writing, and social interaction. Classicists like Cornelius Conway Felton and Robert Patton promote similar skills as foundational to a liberal education centered on activities of learning that guide students on a secular path toward self-culture.

The fourth chapter approaches Emerson – the thinker of transition who uses literatures of various provenience as sites for the continuous breaking and remaking of habits and traditions – against the backdrop of his colleagues' engagement with German scholarship. I argue that his involvement with this discourse uncovers explanations for *why* he would promote such dynamic modes of thinking and engaging with literature in the first place. Like his colleagues, Emerson treats myths and the Bible not as authoritative and dogmatic texts but as sources providing us with insights into how ancient civilizations imparted meaning on their experiences and led spiritually and culturally rich lives. In that sense, he suggests that the way to relate to them productively is by using them as an inspiration for how to lead equally fulfilling lives. I demonstrate that Emerson's development of the figure of the American scholar and his own activities as a freelance lyceum lecturer show *how* to do that. Taking his fellow Transcendentalists' discussions of the value of scholarship further, he develops practices of abandonment, a language of love and friendship, and poetic philology into fully-fledged cultural techniques.

Chapter I

From Words to Worlds: *De l'Allemagne* and the Recasting of the Ancient Past

Introduction

It had taken Germaine de Staël years of hardship before she was at last able to publish a first London exile edition of *De l'Allemagne* in the fall of 1813. The author, who found herself exiled from her home country by Napoleon, had been en route to England through Russia to escape the emperor's troops. In her baggage was one surviving book manuscript. Originally, the distribution of Mme Staël's voluminous study of German history, religion, geography, politics, the arts, and philosophy had been scheduled for fall 1810:

> Le 23 septembre, je corrigeai la dernière épreuve de *l'Allemagne*: après six ans de travail, ce m'était une vraie joie de mettre le mot *fin* à mes trois volumes. Je fis la liste des cent personnes à qui je voulais les envoyer dans les différentes parties de la France et de l'Europe; j'attachais un grand prix à ce livre, que je croyais propre à faire connaître des idées nouvelles à la France.
>
> [On the 23rd of September I corrected the last proof of *Germany*; after six years' labor, I felt the greatest delight in putting the word *End* to my three volumes. I made a list of one hundred persons to whom I wished to send copies, in different parts of France and Europe; I attached great importance to this book, which I thought well adapted to communicate new ideas in France.[13]]

Napoleon, however, was determined to prevent at all costs that this woman and her "idées nouvelles" regain public attention in his empire. He made sure that she would not have a forum to stir open debates over the themes *De l'Allemagne* markets as so full of potential for guiding French culture and politics in the new century. When the news reached him that 10,000 copies had been printed in Paris, he ordered that every copy be destroyed in front of the eyes of the *gendarmerie* that had encircled the publishing house, making sure that not a single copy would be taken out of the building. Staël received the order to hand over her master copy, desist from her adversary activities, and leave France within twenty-four hours.

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[13] Anne Louise Germaine de Staël-Holstein, *Dix Années d'Exil*, ed. Paul Gautier (Paris: Plon, 1904), 165; *Ten Years' Exile*, ed. Augustus Baron Staël-Holstein (London, UK: Centauer Press, 2005), 81.

Bonaparte's personal prevention of *De l'Allemagne's* publication, however, backfired. By prohibiting the work he simultaneously set off a successful marketing campaign; the book was now even more eagerly awaited by the public and out of stock within three days of its publication in London. The first publication in France in May 1814 right after the fall of Napoleon's empire was equally profitable, selling about 70,000 copies within a few weeks all over Europe.[14] After having crossed the Rhine and the English Channel, Staël's study of Germany traveled on without pause and crossed the Atlantic in 1814 with the publication of the first American edition in New York.

The international attention her study elicited and the controversies it sparked seem somewhat surprising at first, given that *De l'Allemagne*'s overall approach to identifying characteristics of a culture's literary works by investigating its history, geography and socio-political customs are no novelty in the author's *oeuvre*. Staël was an incredibly focused thinker; throughout all her works, her investigations are centered on the same themes and questions. The title of her earlier study from 1800 sums up the leitmotiv permeating her thought: *De la Littérature considérée dans ses rapports avec les institutions sociales*.

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[14] On *De l'Allemagne's* publication history, see Monika Bosse's "Nachwort" to the latest German translation in Germaine de Staël, *Über Deutschland*, ed. Monika Bosse, trans. Friedrich Buchholz and Samuel Heinrich Catel (Frankfurt am Main: Insel Taschenbuch, 1985), 801-855.

Under the heading "littérature," she subsumes "tout ce qui concerne enfin l'exercice de la pensée dans les écrits" ["everything that involves the exercise of thought in writing"[15]], with the exclusion of the sciences. Each of *De la Littérature*'s chapters is concerned with the impact these "exercise[s] of thought" have had on a culture's governmental forms and religion throughout the cultural history of western civilization. And, conversely, Staël asks in what ways political institutions, religion, and the legal order of a community have been either conducive or detrimental to the thriving of the arts, philosophy, and the social sciences. As Morroe Berger notes in the introduction to his translation of selections of Staël's works, "she really never wrote about anything else; all her work was a brilliant elaboration of these themes."[16] In fact, many critics of *De l'Allemagne* read Staël's chapter on Germany in *De la Littérature* (which she wrote before her first trip to Germany in winter 1803/04) as an early template for her later book.

In both studies, she puts her research into the service of a common, overarching objective. All her cross-cultural inquiries are geared toward identifying, assembling and popularizing new strategies she felt had potential for bolstering France's life world in the post-Napoleonic era. “Oh, France! Terre de gloire et d’amour!”—framed by exclamation and quotation marks, this pathos-charged exclamation concluding *De l’Allemagne* leaves no doubt regarding the audience Staël sought to reach with her work. The motivating force guiding her comparative readings is nothing less than her pressing concern to usher in a new epoch in France.

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[15] Germaine de Staël, *De la Littérature considérée dans ses rapports avec les institutions sociales*, ed. Axel Blaeschke (Paris: InfoMédia Communication, 1998), 16; Germaine de Staël, *Politics, Literature, and National Character*, ed. and trans. Morroe Berger (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2000), 66.

[16] Berger, *Politics, Literature, and National Character*, 65.

Given these thematic and programmatic ties, why, then, was *De l’Allemagne* and not *De la Littérature* the work that provoked dismissals, accusations of betrayal of French cultural values, prohibition as well as enthusiastic approval among contemporaries in France, Europe, and beyond? Why was it *De l’Allemagne* that entered literary and cultural histories as one of the most important and controversial books of the nineteenth-century?[17] What had happened since the publication of *De la Littérature*, during which Staël had paid two visits to Germany and Austria and sojourned Italy in August Wilhelm Schlegel’s company? What makes the assemblage of translation clips, memorized citations, and notes from lectures Staël had attended, materials from her conversations, personal anecdotes, subjective reflections and programmatic proclamations into a multi-volume study so compelling and contentious?

There is, of course, no one answer to these complex questions. It is, however, interesting to see how confidently and surprisingly unanimously Staël’s critics have answered them. With minor variations, the critical literature has been telling the same narrative: *De l'Allemagne* is discussed as a work which has played an inestimable role in spreading a Romantic discourse centered on the autonomy of the subject. John Isbell's and James Vigus' studies exemplify this focus well: they both argue that the book's main function lies in promoting Staël's vision of national and individual independence in a propagandistic fashion. Germany serves her, so Isbell, as a suitable vehicle to develop a counter-model to French politics under Napoleon.[18] Similarly Vigus, who demonstrates that while Staël had been exposed to a wide range of perspectives on Germany, conceptual distinctions were not her goal when she began shaping her notes into a narrative in 1808. Instead, her weaving together of German life, letters, and landscapes is directly geared toward the promotion of a simple, direct, and penetrating image of political and intellectual freedom embodied by "la patrie de la pensée."[19] *De l'Allemagne*'s propagation of the self as the sole foundation of true knowledge, so the story always goes, crystallizes in the book's idiosyncratic rendering of the Kantian critiques. The chapters on Kant and her introduction of idealist thought take center stage in most of the critical works seeking to present a detailed analysis of the new subject Staël envisions.[20] With *De l'Allemagne*'s celebration of independent subjectivity and freedom of artistic expression, the author found a language with which she could distance herself from Napoleon's dictatorial politics and from French neo-classical aesthetics, the only art form that could thrive under his rule. By the same token, Kurt Mueller-Vollmer argues that her strategies of empowering the individual explain her popularity among New England intellectuals in the first half of the nineteenth-century. Staël's way of intuitively understanding nations and cultures in their individuality and of approaching literature and the arts by employing her interpretation of Kant's concept of "intuitive feeling" won her works a large American readership.[21]

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[17] On the reception of *De l’Allemagne* see Udo Schöning, “Mme Staël in der französischen Romantik,” in *Germaine de Staël und ihr erstes deutsches Publikum: Literaturpolitik und Kulturtransfer um 1800*, ed. Gerhard R. Kaiser and Olaf Müller (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2008); Edmond Eggli and Pierre Martino, *Le débat romantique en France 1813-1830. Pamphlets. Manifests. Polémiques de Presse*, vol. 2 (Paris: 1933); Germaine de Staël, *Über Deutschland*, ed. Monika Bosse, trans. Friedrich Buchholz and Samuel Heinrich Catel (Frankfurt am Main: Insel Taschenbuch, 1985).

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[18] John Claiborne Isbell, *The Birth of European Romanticism: Truth and Propaganda in Staël's "De l'Allemagne"* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 3-7: *De l'Allemagne*, he writes, "was Europe's and America's introduction to the German revolution." Her "new Romanticism is propaganda…full of deliberate lies, and dangerously revolutionary" 3-7. Comparing earlier drafts with printed editions, Isbell demonstrates in each chapter Staël's deliberate distortions and simplifications of historical facts.

[19] Germaine de Staël, *De l'Allemagne*, ed. Simone Balayé, vol. 1 (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1968), 47. James Vigus reads Staël's drafts for her chapters on German philosophy in proximity to Henry Crabb Robinson's notes to the private lectures he had given her on the philosophies of Schelling and Kant. Interestingly, these drafts reveal a complexity and nuance of thought wholly lacking from the final version. Here, she replaced her long elaborations by short pithy summaries and programmatic proclamations. His findings lead Vigus to conclude, like Isbell, that critics often overlook the book's polemic intent, its purpose is to suggest a clear-cut, unambiguous set of proposals for political and literary reforms: "Warum hat de Staël auf die komplexen Ausführungen verzichtet? Man muss die polemische Absicht hier berücksichtigen. Quellentreue stand nicht im Vordergrund. Man betrachtete *De l'Allemagne* zu oft als bequeme Zusammenfassung der Werke der deutschen Literatur und Philosophie und bewertete es ausschließlich hinsichtlich seiner Genauigkeit in der Wiedergabe. Solche Urteile übersehen die Polemik, die hier an jeder Stelle auszumachen ist" ("Zwischen Kantianismus und Schellingianismus: Henry Crabb Robinsons Privatvorlesungen über Philosophie für Staël 1804 in Weimar," in *Germaine de Staël und ihr erstes deutsches Publikum: Literaturpolitik und Kulturtransfer um 1800*, ed. Gerhard Kaiser [Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2007], 378). His essay is the latest approach which shows that works still concerned with the "accuracy" of the book judge on the wrong premises.

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[20] A variety of studies make it their main objective to work out the independence of her aesthetic judgments which she developed in conversations with the Schlegel brothers, Charles de Villers, and Benjamin Constant: Ernst Behler, "Kant vu par le Groupe de Coppet: la formation de l'image staëlienne de Kant," *Le Groupe de Coppet: Actres et documents du deuxieme Colloque de Coppet 10-13 juillet 1974*, ed. Simone Balaye (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1977), 135-67;, "Cross-Roads in Literary Theory and Criticism: Madame Staël and August Wilhelm Schlegel," in *Carrefour de Cultures: Mélanges offerts à Jacqueline Leiner*, ed. Régis Antoine (Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 1993); Pauline Pange, *Auguste-Guillaume et Madame Staël* (Paris: Edition Albert, 1938); Julia Rosen, *Kulturtransfer als Diskurstransformation: Die Kantische Ästhetik in der Interpretation Mme Staëls* (Heidelberg: Winter Verlag, 2004).

[21] Taking his cue from two articles by Sir James Mackintosh – a well known lawyer and cultural critic and opponent of Napoleon who became Staël's close companion in London in 1813 – Kurt Mueller Vollmer argues that what marks the difference between Staël's treatment of Germany in *De la Littérature* from *De l'Allemagne* is a "hermeneutic turn": "In *De la Littérature*, Staël still attempted to comprehend the diversity of cultures by applying philosophical generalizations to the national particulars. In *De l'Allemagne*, an intuitive idea of the new object, the nation, lies at the heart of her deliberations….comparing the two reviews [Mackintosh's reviews of *De la Littérature* in the February issue of the *Edinburgh Review*, (Feb. 1813) and *De l'Allemagne* right after the first exile edition had been published in London, *Edinburgh Review*, (Oct. 1813)], we can detect the watershed that separates the rationalist hermeneutics from the intuitively formed understanding of the Romantics" ("Setting the Stage in 1813: The Politics and Hermeneutics of 'Germany,'" in *British America and the United States, 1770s-1850s*, vol. 2, *The Internationality of National Literatures in Either America: Transfer and*

The attention critics have given to issues of individual independence and the role intuition plays therein has completely sidelined *De l'Allemagne*'s discussion of themes linked to the rise of historical criticism in Germany. This chapter focuses these thematic fields and argues that they enable us to see Staël's concern with individual autonomy from a different point of view. Moreover, my concentration on how she evaluates the impact of German historical scholarship on various spheres of contemporary life opens up a new venue for tracing the impact her study had on American Transcendentalism – a central topic of chapter three.

This chapter's first part places *De la Littérature*'s cultural historical readings against the backdrop of the *Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes*. In her attempt to demonstrate literature's limitless capacity toward perfectibility on the one hand, and her concurrent pointing to the unparalleled perfection of classical art forms on the other, Staël reiterates the main argumentative patterns which had propelled the Ancient-Modern battle. I have found that by utilizing these same interpretive techniques, Staël's inquiries also evoke the same unresolved question which remained long after the battle had subsided: the question regarding the role historical, literary, and philological

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Transformation, ed. Armin Paul Frank and Kurt Mueller-Vollmer [Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2000], 204). *De l'Allemagne* has fulfilled a variety of functions in an international context: it introduces a new interpretive strategy which allows one to grasp cultures in their individuality, a strategy "which served as the basis for her assessment of Germany and its culture" (Mueller-Vollmer, "The Politics and Hermeneutics of 'Germany,'" 205). Moreover, her work performs how the same hermeneutic practice can be put to use for the cultivation of a new aesthetic experience. Staël popularizes the idea that "at the core of Kant's philosophy lay an intuitive feeling (sentiment)," a feeling that obliterates all skepticism, and whose application "to art and literature alone would give birth to beauty, and this beauty was nothing but the 'image realized of our soul's representation" (Mueller-Vollmer, "The Politics and Hermeneutics of 'Germany,'" 216). In short, *De l'Allemagne* popularized a discourse congenial to the development of an idea of artistic and national autonomy on a transnational scale.

[21] Isbell*, Truth and Propaganda in Staël's "De l'Allemagne,"* 3-7.

research plays in countries that fashion their modern cultural self-understanding along debates of modes of adaptation of classical forms and styles. As the end of the quarrels had shown, the shared universalist historical understanding of the battle parties was unable to accommodate the findings of scholarship, suggesting fundamental differences between past and present.[22] *De la Littérature* recalls the predicament and comments on it without resolving it.

In *De l'Allemagne* Staël addresses the question concerning the function of historical scholarship for a modern culture's relationship to the past again. Unlike in *De la Littérature*, however, she develops a number of new responses in dialogue with German critics. The chapter's second and third part are focused on working out their characteristics in different thematic fields that illustrate Staël's changed position particularly well. I examine her introduction to what she represents as new ways of language learning at German educational institutions, her investigation of Winckelmann's engagement with classical art and its correspondence to the notion of art criticism she articulates in her novel *Corinne ou l'Italie* (1808), as well as her discussion of Herder's translations and reworkings of Hebrew Scriptures.

What distinguishes these involvements with the Bible and classical culture is a relationship to the past that renders the claims that had sustained the old Ancient-

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[22] As I discuss in the introduction, neither side was able to incorporate methodologically what the latest historical research suggested, namely the fundamental difference of past cultures: while the Modern battle party, with their insistence on the limitless potential of ancient works to be perfected, seemed to be on the progressive side, it turned out that their arguments were based on the same premises as the ones put forth by traditionalists. The arguments on both sides were universalist ones, because the Modern *perfectibilié* claim is only convincing if one assumes that the category of cultural value has not changed since antiquity.

Modern quarrels obsolete. Parameters quite distinct from the idea of universally achieved perfection proclaimed by the Ancients and the concept of perfectibility adhered to by the Moderns come to dominate the discussion centered on the revival of ancient cultures. What moves to the fore in Staël's discussion of Winckelmann and Herder or Corinne's occupation with ancient civilizations are questions concerned with the contingency of linguistic expressions and cultural representations. According to Staël, the innovative potential of their approaches resides in the techniques they employ to compensate for the historical differences separating them from their objects of inquiry. They develop practices of engagement premised on techniques of immersion, empathy, and emotional and imaginary investment to reconstruct the past. And questions regarding the authority and contemporary relevance of ancient Greek and Hebrew works are linked to these modes of revival, to aesthetic pleasure, and to the contribution they make to the individual's development.

So in the context of her involvement with historical criticism, Staël's vision of the independent subject appears as linked to engaging with the cultural worlds, works, and languages of others. In concluding the chapter, I will step back for a moment from those sections in *De l'Allemagne* that deal with specificities of historical criticism and turn to those in which she addresses her reform project for France more generally. Interestingly, her interest in idealism itself appears in a different light when looked at through a historico-critical lens. It is not philosophical questions regarding the plausibility of an idealist mind set that concern her but rather what it can *do* for the subject. For her the important question is in what ways such a way of thinking can help

France to regain its strength, vigor, and cultural leadership. Staël is interested in idealist philosophy not as a possible road toward rendering the relationship between the world and metaphysics more comprehensible but as a practice of thinking that has an impact on the ways people lead their daily lives.

Reverberations of a Great Divide: From *De la Littérature* to *De l'Allemagne* in Light of the *Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes* and the *Vorzugsstreit*

"De la Littérature chez les Anciens et chez les Modernes" and "De l'état actuel des Lumières en France, et de leurs progrès futurs," the two parts comprising *De la Littérature,* are unmistakably underwritten by a single overall motivation:

> En parcourant les révolutiones du monde et la succession des siècles, il est une idée première dont je ne détourne jamais mon attention; c'est la perfectibilité de l'espèce humaine…dans les périodes lumineuses, comme dans les siècles de ténèbres, la marche graduelle de l'esprit humain n'a point été interrompue.
>
> [As I survey the revolutions of the globe, and the succession of ages, one great idea is ever uppermost in my mind, from which I never allow my attention to be diverted; I mean that of the perfectibility of the human race…. [I]n the ages of light, as well as in those of darkness, the gradual advancement of the human spirit has never been interrupted].[23]

Staël's inquiries are faithful to the historicism advocated by the Moderns during the *Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes*. Even times of war and crisis which at first seem to have been the cause for major developmental setbacks have in Staël's readings made important contributions to the advancement of humanity. Her discussion of literary themes, generic forms and philosophical reasoning within the historically specific matrix of different social life worlds is premised on the assumption that "Les siècles…sont héritiers des siècles; les générations partent du point où se sont arrêtées les générations précédentes…" ["…ages become the inheritors of ages: generations start from the point at which preceding generations had stopped…"[24]]; in an accumulative and mechanical fashion, each age has added to the overriding imperative of perfectibility.

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[23] *De la Littérature*, 40-41; translated as Germaine de Staël, *A Treatise on Ancient and Modern Literature*, vol. 1 (London: George Cawthorn, 1803), 59.

Staël exemplifies the enormous advances humans have made since antiquity with comparisons between Greek and modern dramatists. She holds the Greek dramatists' lack of "la profonde connoissance des passions" ["a profound knowledge of the passions"[25]] responsible for the major shortcomings of these ancient works. Unlike their modern successors, Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides have a barely developed sense of reflection which becomes manifest in psychologically shallow character representations.

While the emotional depth distinguishing modern plays and the high degree of precision in rational philosophical thought seem to have no equal counterpart in the past age, the fine arts complicate Staël's *perfectibilié* thesis, she claims that "Les beaux arts ne sont pas perfectibles à l'infini" ["The fine arts are not susceptible of infinite perfection"]. And as for modern poetic works, "les successeurs des Grecs sont restés bien au-dessous d'eux [the Greeks]" ["the successors and imitators of the Greeks have fallen infinitely short of the perfection of their models"[26]]. Responsible for this limitation is the hybrid makeup of poetic compositions, consisting of both once perfected, always valid elements as well as of infinitely perfectible ones:

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[24] *De la Littérature*, 47-48; *A Treatise*, vol. 1, 71.
[25] *De la Littérature*, 68; *A Treatise*, vol. 1, 104.

> La poésie moderne se compose *d'images* et *de sentiments*. Sous le premier rapport, elle appartient à l'imitation de la nature; sous le second, à l'éloquence des passions.
>
> [Modern Poetry consists in *images* and *sentiments*. When viewed as consisting of imageries, it ranks among the imitations of nature; when looked upon as composed of sentiments, it then results from the eloquence of the passions.[27]]

While "la description du printemps, de l'orage, de la nuit, de la beauté, des combats, peut se varier dans ses détails" ["the description of spring, of a storm, of night, of beauty, of a battle, may be susceptible of infinite variety in the details"[28]], modern poets are unable to surpass the original vivacity of the imagery energizing a Homeric verse. By training the sense of foresight and their ability to anticipate the experience of beautiful or sinister natural scenes, modern humans have lost their susceptibility for moments of surprise, wonder or shock. It was only by virtue of the ancient poet's pristine faculties that nature could leave "la plus forte impression" ["the strongest impression"] on his mind, impressions he then worked into unique poetic images.

As long as a modern poet seeks to evoke impressions of nature, he is limited to reproducing the animated images comprising ancient repertoires. If, however, he shifts his perspective and treats perhaps a similar set of images as sentimental expressions, they become infinitely perfectible. Modern poetry's strength lies in scrutinizing and illuminating the complexity of human emotional states and in narrating these states into powerful verbal images. Staël's discussion of poetry's ambivalent position between classical nostalgia and modern progress in *De la Littérature* exemplifies a version of the discursive pattern structuring the *Querelle*.[29]

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[26] *De la Littérature*, 46; *A Treatise*, vol. 1, 67-68.
[27] *De la Littérature*, 46; *A Treatise*, vol. 1, 69, my emphasis.
[28] *De la Littérature*, 47; *A Treatise*, vol. 1, 70.

So while *De la Littérature*'s large conglomeration of facts and fictions is organized around the idea that historical events and literary compositions of each age and within each geographical zone have contributed to humanity's advancement, the author is at the same time careful not to antagonize the Ancients by retaining their claims.[30] She places the different strategies of how the two camps imagined the relationship of past literatures and arts to modern life in proximity: the Ancient's recuperative techniques focused on memorization and comprehensive reconstruction versus the Modern's concentration on enhancing procedures geared toward improvement.

And yet *De la Littérature* also steps beyond the inquiries of the *Querelle*; the study is commonly referred to as a threshold work. It is seen by critics as portending the revival of non-classical literatures during the Romantic age by virtue of its rehabilitation of the Middle Ages, and the geographical distinction between a literature of the South originating with Homer and one of the North leading back to Ossian.[31] Regardless of these chronological and geographical remappings, however, her survey is underwritten by the same methods practiced during the *Querelle* and by the French Lumiéres. And the same open question that stood at the end of it also looms large over *De la Littérature*: namely the question concerning the role of historical research in the context of *Querelle* methods that seek to reproduce and perfect forms of art and literature stemming from a culture wholly distinct from the present one.

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[29] While Staël's multi-layered intellectual alliances with such thinkers as Montesquieu, Rousseau, Diderot, d'Alembert, and Condorcet have been widely recognized, critics have only in recent years began to investigate the affinities between *De la Littérature* and the *Querelle*. As Berger notes in his "Introduction" to *Germaine de Staël*, "what is less often mentioned is that she drew upon earlier writers too, chiefly Charles Perrault and Bovier de Fontenelle" (47, 33).

[30] On Staël's attempt to make concessions to the validity of arguments on both sides of the divide, see Elwood Hartmann, "Mme Staël, the Continuing Quarrel of the Ancients and Moderns, and the Idea of Progress," *Research Studies* 50 (1982), 35 and Axel Blaeschke, "Les ambiguïtés du progress," in his introduction to *De la Littérature*, XLVII-LIX.

Staël addresses this question in “Des Ouvrages d’imagination,” one of the book’s closing chapters, and concludes that if one takes into consideration that the ancients produced their works under completely different circumstances one has to refrain from traditional *Querelle* practices:

> Si l’on vouloit se servir encore de la mythologie des anciens, ce seroit véritablement retomber dans l’enfance par la vieillesse…ces formes poétiques, empruntées du paganisme, ne sont pour nous que l’imitation de l’imitation; c’est peindre la nature à travers l’effet qu’elle a produit sur d’autres hommes.
>
> [To make use of the mythology of the ancients in these days, would be indeed to become childish through old age…. [T]hese poetical forms borrowed from Paganism, are to us only the imitation of an imitation, to use them is indeed to portray nature through the medium of the effect which it has produced upon other men.[32]]

The passage suggests that it is pointless to draw on ancient mythology in an imitative fashion because borrowing from and adapting their poetic forms means reworking materials that manifest expressions of the effects nature had on humans who lived during a different time and under different circumstances. Staël questions whether imitation is actually effective enough for France to attain literary success in the future and suggests tapping one's imagination as a new resource in addition to the traditional ways of making past literatures productive for the present:

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[31] See Elwood Hartmann, “Mme Staël, the Continuing Quarrel of the Ancients and Moderns, and the Idea of Progress,” *Research Studies* 50 (1982); L.R. Lind, “Madame Staël and the Battle of the Books,” *Classical and Modern Literature* 15 (1994); Axel Blaeschke, “Über Individual- und Nationalcharakter, Zeitgeist und Poesie. *De l’influence des passions* und *De la Littérature* im Urteil der Wilhelm von Humboldts und seiner Zeitgenossen,” in *Germaine Staël und ihr erstes deutsches Publikum: Literaturpolitik und Kulturtransfer um 1800*, ed. Gerhard Kaiser (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2007); Michel Brix, “Esthétique néo-classique et romantisme,” *Nineteenth-Century French Studies* 35, No. 1 (2006), 26-33.

[32] *De la Littérature*, 352; *A Treatise*, vol. 2, 186.

> Le public français accueille difficilement au théâtre les essays dans un genre nouveau; admirateur, avec raison, des chefs-d'œuvre qu'il possède, il pense qu'on veut faire rétrograder l'art, quand on s'écarte de la route que Racine a tracé. Je ne crois pas impossible cependant de réussir dans une route nouvelle…
>
> [A French audience is not generally willing to accept any innovation in the theatrical line, justly admiring the masterpieces already in its possession, any deviation from the path which Racine has pointed out appears to be prejudicial to the art. I do not, however, believe that it is impossible to succeed in a new track…[33]]

She associates the "route nouvelle" powered by "des ouvrages d'imagination" with "le genre anglais ou le genre allemand." Without giving offence to French neo-classical taste she proposes a gentle amplification of artistic boundaries by enriching the existing canon of masterpieces with "un genre intermédiaire." Such an intermediate style would be distinguished by "l'art de donner de la dignité aux circonstances communes" ["the art of giving dignity to common circumstance"[34]] and appeal to the French audience by virtue of its immediate connection to their surroundings. Unlike the classically oriented pieces, such works would not be confined to reproducing experiences made by other humans.

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[33] *De la Littérature*, 349-351; *A Treatise*, vol. 2, 181.

[34] *De la Littérature*, 348; *A Treatise*, vol. 2, 180.

Staël explores her careful gesturing at the potentials of a new method guiding artistic experience and productions to a full and theoretically sound extent in her engagement with the German contribution to the Ancient-Modern debate in *De l'Allemagne*. The study argues that "L'imitation des Anciens a pris chez les Allemands une direction tout autre que dans le reste de l'Europe" ["In their imitation of the ancients, the Germans have taken quite a different direction from the rest of Europe].[35] She does not explicitly name the German *Vorzugsstreit* when she elaborates on what she perceives as a new direction in the negotiation of the relationship between antiquity and German cultural life. But, with the exception of Schiller, she links the new approach to those intellectuals whom critics have identified as key figures in shaping the German contribution to the age-old dispute. For her, Herder, the Schlegel brothers and, above all, Winckelmann have reimagined the relationship to the past in ways without which the emergence of German culture as a culture of modernity would be unthinkable.

According to Staël's investigations, these individuals could gain such prominence in Germany because of the country's system of education. The ways in which foreign languages, the history of languages, and philology are taught at schools and universities are the backdrop against which the resuscitation of classical culture could advance in new directions in Germany. By following up on the transformations Staël's former adherence to the *Querelle* methods is undergoing in *De l'Allemagne*, my examinations provide a new interpretation of its significance. More specifically, I argue that the book makes a crucial contribution toward a reevaluation of the distinguishing characteristics of the *Vorzugsstreit*.

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[35] *De l'Allemagne*, vol. 2, 163; translated as *Germany*, (London: John Murray, 1814), vol. 3, 143.

Although the controversy coming from France and England fell on fertile ground in early eighteenth-century Germany,[36] it was not until the second half of the century, with the publication of the words of Winckelmann, Herder, Schiller and the Schlegel brothers, that the debate underwent transformations that sparked the formation of a specifically German contribution to the discussion. Critics from Jauss to Oergel agree on the centrality of the debate for the formation of a historical consciousness in Germany and zero in on the connections between the debate and the emergence of historical thinking. Their respective assessments of the characteristics of mid- to late-eighteenth century historical thought, however, differ significantly. In Jauss' and Szondi's earlier interpretations, historical thinking is rendered as a disposition that delimits the subject in its striving for freedom, posing a major impediment for modern culture's aesthetic autonomy. As a result of their consent in historicism's characteristics, these critics measure the critical value of these German disputants against the degree to which they can convincingly stake out a position that reaches beyond the confines of the historical vantage point.[37]

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[36] Compared to its English and French predecessors, the German *Vorzugsstreit* has received little critical attention. In his 1963 preface "Ästhetische Normen und geschichtliche Reflexionen" to Charles Perrault's *Parallèle des anciens et des modernes en ce qui regarde les arts et les sciences* (1688-1697), Hans-Robert Jauss wonders in a footnote to what extent the revival of antiquity by Winckelmann and German classicism can be seen as having been prefigured by the French *Querelle* (Jauss, "Ästhetische Normen," 9), suggesting that if one can speak at all of a German debate then it set in late with Winckelmann after the French *Querelle* had long been fought out. Later studies—e.g. Peter Kapitza, *Ein bürgerlicher Krieg in der gelehrten Welt: zur Geschichte der Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes in Deutschland* (München: Fink, 1981); Thomas Pago, *Gottsched und die Rezeption der Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes in Deutschland: Untersuchungen zur Bedeutung des Vorzugsstreites für die Dichtungstheorie der Aufklärung* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1989)—disprove the assumption that there was no German equivalent to the French *Querelle* and the English Battle of the Books. Pago and Kapitza assemble vast bodies of texts, showing that Germany took part in the debate even long before Winckelmann.
Jauss himself corrects his earlier claim in *Literaturgeschichte als Provokation* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970) and contributes, together with Peter Szondi in "Antike und Moderne in der Ästhetik der Goethezeit," in *Poetik und Geschichtsphilosophie I*, ed. Senta Metz (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1974), the most important research.

What the scholarly literature shares in common, according to Oergel (who has contributed the most recent analysis of the debate), is a representation of the awareness of the historically mediated character of artistic value as posing an opposition to concepts of artistic norm. The interpretations, in other words, are underwritten by the assumption that the discovery of historicism in the late eighteenth-century introduced a sense of the relativity of cultural values that conflicted with the universality of classical standards.[38]

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[37] Szondi and Jauss interpret Winckelmann's and Herder's contributions as caught up in an unsolvable predicament. Both writers vacillate between historical readings of classical culture on the one hand, and the search for an underlying order by which cultural history could be understood as a whole, by which one can conceive of an artistic representation as more than having an intrinsic value of its own derived from its origins (Szondi, "Antike und Moderne," 27,55; Jauss, *Literaturgeschichte als Provokation*, 72). In both discussions, Schlegel's Studium-Aufsatz surpasses Herder and Winckelmann in its attempt to show a way out of the dilemma by locating the recuperation of a consummate ideal of beauty as it was once realized in the past in a utopian future. While Jauss gives Schlegel credit for his bold attempt to move beyond history, he interprets the essay as regressive, after all, and aligns Schlegel with the Ancients of the French *Querelle* (Jauss, *Literaturgeschichte als Provokation*, 87-88). In Szondi's interpretation, Schlegel's move beyond Winckelmann and Herder is highlighted as successful. According to him, the Studiums-Aufsatz delineates a trajectory toward an ideal of Bildung which brings together ancient and modern culture that points the way to an overall progressive aesthetic of modern poetry (Szondi, "Antike und Moderne," 118-120). In Fuhrmann's reading, Schlegel is also successful in his endeavor to recuperate the past and in mapping out the future of modern poetry. This model, however, is problematic because Schlegel delineates a uniquely German national character and is therefore a precursor to the development of a German Sonderweg. In all these studies, Schiller's essay towers over all other contributions from the period. His solution resides in a dialectical model of history. See Manfred Fuhrmann, "Die 'Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes,' der Nationalismus und die deutsche Klassik," in *Deutschlands kulturelle Entfaltung. Die Neubestimmung des Menschen*, ed. Bernhard Fabian (München: Kraus, 1980), 49-67.

[38] Maike Oergel's *Culture and Identity: Historicity in German Literature and Thought 1770-1815* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2006) is the most recent book reviewing a vast body of critical works on German historicism and its prevalent theorizing as a mode of thought standing in opposition to what is conceived of as Enlightenment universalism. Oergel agrees with the majority of critics that the discovery of the temporality of cultural values and its theorizing found its first comprehensive expressions in Germany: "The German contribution to modern European thought has long been linked to historicism" (Oergel,

By reconsidering the unresolved historical question which the French battle had raised and its recasting throughout the *Vorzugsstreit*, Oergel brings to bear a new perspective on the German debate. She argues that it has to be conceived of as intellectually coherent in its departure from the *Querelle* and its unanimous emphasis on rethinking universalist questions within the context of historicity. What stands out as the discussion's distinct characteristic is a non-confrontational, integrative argumentative pattern. Schlegel, Herder or Schiller are all focused on developing theoretical models by means of which highly regarded attributes of classical culture can be transformed into vital ingredients of modern forms and concepts of art.

I suggest that Staël's representation of methods of learning and teaching at educational institutions and her appraisal of works by participants of the German Ancient-Modern debate substantiate this claim: *De l'Allemagne* shows that the intellectual climate in which these writers and critics worked was conducive to

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Culture and Identity, 2). See also George Iggers, *Deutsche Geschichtswissenschaft: eine Kritik der traditionellen Geschichtsauffassung von Herder bis zur Gegenwart* (Wien: Böhlau, 1997), 15: "freilich ist es eine unbezweifelte Wahrheit, dass der Historismus in Deutschland seine entscheidende Ausformung erhalten hat." While Oergel agrees with other critics that historical thinking originated in Germany, her study departs significantly from previous explanations in her approach to theorizing *how* we ought to understand the characteristics of eighteenth century historicism. What influential works—e.g. Friedrich Meinecke, *Die Entstehung des Historismus*, ed. Carl Hinrichs (München: Oldenbourg Verlag 1959); Hermann August Korff, *Geist der Goethezeit: Versuch einer ideellen Entwicklung der klassisch-romantischen Literaturgeschichte* (Leipzig: Koehler & Amelang, 1964); Hermann Nohl, *Das historische Bewusstsein*, ed. Erika Hoffmann (Göttingen: Muster-Schmidt, 1979)—have in common, according to Oergel, is the assumption that there always exists an "opposition between Enlightenment ideas and historicist perspectives. Invariably, their definitions centre on a rejection, or an overcoming, of the Enlightenment" (Oergel, *Culture and Identity*, 2). Another example of a dichotomous conceptualizing of historicism is the essay collection edited by Wilhelm Voßkamp, *Klassik im Vergleich: Normativität und Historizität europäischer Klassiken*, DFG-Symposium 1990 (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1993). The editor represents in his introduction to the volume the opposition between historicism and idealism in European classicism as the shared notion of the essays assembled in the volume: "Die stets widersprüchliche Einheit von Idealitätsanspruch und Geschichtlichkeit im Klassik-Begriff wird im Vergleich unterschiedlicher Klassiken diskutiert" (Voßkamp, *Normativität und Historizität europäischer Klassiken*, 2).

rethinking and reconstructing the idea of enduring classical models within the context of their historicity. In her discussions, the German critics lay emphasis on the reconstitution of the practical usefulness of classical culture. And it thereby becomes clear that the exacerbated construction of a binary opposition between historical and normative understandings of cultural values fails to take into account that the very idea of an authoritative cross-cultural norm itself undergoes a major transformation.

Rethinking the Past through the Lens of Language Education, and Winckelmann

Why and how would the recuperative project of ancient culture take a different direction in Germany? Staël's explanations do not suggest that the recasting of the ancient-modern relation was a testament to any native skill but rather a function of educational reforms, in particular in the area of language study. By making the learning of languages the basis of all "établissements d'éducation,"[39] universities trained the most capable men: "toute la gloire littéraire de l'Allemagne tient à ces institutions" ["the literary glory of Germany depends altogether upon these institutions"].[40] Staël explains the success of "Des universités allemandes" with their placing of the study of languages at the core of a student's curriculum.

Her ways of assessing the educational value of learning a language in *De l'Allemagne* differs significantly from the vantage point she holds in *De la Littérature*.

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[39] *De l'Allemagne*, vol. 1, 141.
[40] *De l'Allemagne*, vol. 1, 138; *Germany*, vol. 1, 173.

Regardless of whether it is Greek, Latin or any other language, the objective of a student's engagement with it is not the training of memory and the internalization of figures of speech. What moves into the foreground instead is the function of the study of languages as a student's window into the complexities of human existence. Nothing, she writes, articulates "les problèmes de la vie" where none is simply "positif, aucun n'est absolu," better than languages. To clearly demonstrate what she takes to be the benefits of exposing young people to different languages, she sets a language-based education up against a mathematical one:

> L'étude des langues, qui fait la base de l'instruction en Allemagne, est beaucoup plus favorable aux progrès des facultés dans l'enfance, que celle des mathématiques ou des sciences physiques... cette étude, dans le premier âge, n'exerce que le mécanisme de l'intelligence; les enfants que l'on occupe de si bonne heure à calculer perdent toute cette sève de l'imagination, alors si belle et si féconde, et n'acquièrent point à la place une justesse d'esprit transcendante: car l'arithmétique et l'algèbre se bornent à nous apprendre de mille manières des propositions toujours identiques. Les problèmes de la vie sont plus compliqués; aucun n'est positif, aucun n'est absolu: il faut deviner, il faut choisir, à l'aide d'aperçus et de suppositions qui n'ont aucun rapport avec la marche infaillible du calcul.
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> [The study of languages, which forms the basis of instruction in Germany, is much more favorable to the progress of the faculties in infancy, than that of the mathematics or of the physical sciences...this study, in early life, exercises only the mechanism of the understanding; children, who are employed so early in calculating, lose all that seed of the imagination which is then so fine and so fertile, and do not acquire, in its room, any transcendent correctness of mind: for arithmetic and algebra are confined to making us acquainted, in a thousand different forms, with propositions which are always the same. The problems of life are more complicated; none are positive, none are absolute; we must guess, we must choose, by the help of perceptions and suppositions, which have no relation to the infallible progress of calculation].[41]

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[41] *De l'Allemagne*, vol. 139, x; *Germany*, vol. 1, 175-176.

In her eyes, the learning and the application of mathematical formulas cannot do as good a job in preparing students for life as their occupation with languages can. At basic levels, mathematical reasoning is not helpful because it does not push the learner to step beyond clearly distinguished categories of right and wrong. Languages, by contrast, foster the ability to approach problems and questions in a much more flexible and open fashion and challenge the student to draw on his imagination. This characteristic of languages becomes particularly obvious, Staël writes, when we examine their histories; depending on when, where, and how they were used, their meaning would change: "tout a passé par les mots et tout s'y retrouve quand on sait les examiner: les langues sont inépuisables pour l'enfant comme pour l'homme, et chacun en peut tirer tout ce dont il a besoin" ["every thing has passed by means of words, and every thing is again found in words when we know how to examine them: languages are inexhaustible for the child as well as for the man, and every one may draw from them whatever he stands in need of"].[42] They exhibit an inexhaustible array of different modes of thinking and styles of existence. Words, Staël suggests, are windows into worlds, because their histories and different usages disclose to us narratives of the creation of meaning and truth.[43] And they do something more, this quote suggests: they function as an archive open for all to employ them and put them into the service of their own purposes.

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[42] *De l'Allemagne*, vol. 1, 142; *Germany*, vol. 1, 182.

[43] The phrase "from words to worlds" which I use in this chapter's title and in variations throughout my text is borrowed from Caroline Winterer, *The Culture of Classicism: Ancient Greece and Rome in American Intellectual Life, 1780-1910* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002). Winterer – whose research is crucial for the argumentation of my third chapter – uses the expression to sum up the major argument of her study: that during the antebellum period "classical scholars and other educated Americans turned from a love of Rome and a focus on classical grammar to a new focus on ancient Greece and the totality of its society, art, and literature" (4).

This discussion of the nature, function, and use of languages implies an understanding of foreign literatures and cultures, I claim, that differs fundamentally from the one she holds in *De la Littérature*. Her approach to words as expressions of different creations of meaning makes the one she promotes in her earlier study look dated: a student who has learned to engage with languages as living systems that are transforming continuously is unlikely to simply imitate literary forms and styles of Greek or any other culture but will process texts actively and productively. Staël suggests that teachers cannot begin early enough to direct their students' attention to the multi-dimensionality of linguistic meaning. Especially during childhood when "cette sève de l'imagination" is prolific, human minds are open, malleable and receptive for instable connections between words and experiences of the world. The best way to make use of this sensitive period is to challenge them with the experience of learning more than one language:

> Le sens d'une phrase dans une langue étrangère est à la fois un problème grammatical et intellectuel; ce problème est tout-à-fait proportionné à l'intelligence de l'enfant: d'abord il n'entend que les mots, puis il s'élève jusqu'à la conception de la phrase, et bientôt après le charme de l'expression...se fait sentir par degrés à l'enfant qui traduit. Il s'essaie tout seul avec les difficultés que lui présentent deux langues à la fois, il s'introduit dans les idées successivement, compare et combine divers genres d'analogies et de vraisemblances; et l'activité spontanée de l'esprit...est vivement excitée par cette étude. Le nombre des facultés qu'elle fait mouvoir à la fois lui donne l'avantage sur tout autre travail, et l'on est trop heureux d'employer la mémoire flexible de l'enfant à retenir un genre de connoissances, sans lequel il seroit borné toute sa vie au cercle de sa propre nation, cercle étroit comme tout ce qui est exclusif.
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> [The sense of an expression in a foreign language is at once a grammatical and an intellectual problem; this problem is altogether proportioned to the understanding of a child: at first he understands only the words, then he ascends to the conception of the phrase, and soon after the charm of the expression...(is)

> gradually perceived by the child while engaged in translating; he makes a trial of himself with the difficulties which are presented to him by two languages at a time;—he introduces himself to the several ideas in succession, compares and combines different sorts of analogies and probabilities; and the spontaneous activity of the mind...is in a lively manner excited by this study; the number of faculties which it awakens at the same time, gives it the advantage over every other species of labor; and we are too happy in being able to employ the flexible memory of a child, in retaining a sort of information, without which he would be all his life confined to the circle of his own nation, a circle narrow like every thing which is exclusive].[44]

What trains a child's sense for the rich variability of a word's meanings are translation exercises. Switching back and forth between different languages, it begins to associate meanings with whole sets of different and analogical word formations, compares ideas and explores a range of ways to articulate them. In Staël's eyes, such encounters with a variety of expressions exercise a child's flexible mind, animating its free and independent practice. And these exercises force the translator to step beyond the confines of a single nation and language.

Staël's preference of language learning over mathematics for the core education of students and children is by no means meant to devalue the sciences. Unlike in the field of language studies, however, it takes much longer and involves much more training before one reaches the point where mathematical reasoning challenges a student's imagination and creative faculties. Only few people advance in their studies to that point while most become familiar with mathematics as a science in which "Une proposition en fait de chiffres est décidément fausse ou vraie" ["a proposition in figures is decidedly either false or true"]. According to Staël,

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[44] *De l'Allemagne*, vol. 1, 141; *Germany*, vol. 1, 180-181.

> Rien n'est moins applicable à la vie qu'un raisonnement mathématique...sous tous les autres rapports le vrai se mêle avec le faux... L'étude des mathématiques, habituant à la certitude, irrite contre toutes les opinions opposées à la nôtre; tandis que ce qu'il y a de plus important pour la conduite de ce monde, c'est d'apprendre les autres, c'est-à-dire de concevoir tout ce qui les porte à penser et à sentir autrement que nous.
>
> [Nothing is less applicable to the conduct of life than a mathematical reasoning...in all other relations, the true mixes itself with the false...the study of mathematics, accustoming us to certainty, irritates us aginst all opinions opposite to our own; while that which is most important for our conduct in this world is to understand our fellow creatures, that is to say, to comprehend all that induces them to think or feel differently from ourselves].[45]

In its basic reductionist form, mathematics cultivates a practice of reasoning predicated on static, incontestable rules that guarantee specific results. Mental exercises geared toward a clearly circumscribed outcome, however, are of little practical value. Mathematical thinking is unsuitable for preparing the subject to acquire what Staël holds up as one of the most important skills in life—the ability to create a distance from one's opinions. A student has to acquire the ability to think through a question from more than one angle and learn thereby why others think the way they do, and what it is that motivates others to think and feel differently than he does. According to Staël, someone who is used to thinking and expressing himself in a language not his own is more likely to feel himself into ways of thinking different from what he is used to. She regards this capacity "plus important pour la conduite de ce monde":

> En apprenant la prosodie d'une langue, on entre plus intimement dans l'esprit de la nation qui la parle que par quelque genre d'étude que ce puisse être. De là vient qu'il est amusant de prononcer des mots étrangers: on écoute comme si c'étoit un autre qui parlât...

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[45] *De l'Allemagne*, vol. 1, 139-140; *Germany*, vol. 1, 177.

> [In learning the prosody of a language, we enter more intimately into the spirit of the nation by which it is spoken, than by any other possible manner of study. Thence it follows that it is amusing to pronounce foreign words: we listen to ourselves as if another were speaking...].[46]

From its initial stages, the learning of languages makes empathetic transformations, the act in which one familiarizes oneself with the unfamiliar imperative. Therefore the student who, from early childhood on, has been accustomed to think himself into the spirit of cultures different from his own is better prepared, Staël's discussion suggests, for handling the co-existence of different ways of thinking. He knows how to go beyond thinking and experiencing what lies within the immediate radius of his familiar zones.

Furthermore, what makes languages so particularly apt for educational purposes is that they challenge both a student's creative and cognitive faculties simultaneously: "La grammaire lie les idées l'une à l'autre, comme le calcul enchaîne les chiffres; la logique grammaticale est aussi précise que celle de l'algèbre" ["Grammar unites ideas, as calculation combines figures; grammatical logic is equally precise with that of algebra"]. The student has to acquire a fixed set of grammatical and syntactical rules and apply them correctly. In this regard the learning of languages, the memorization and internalization of linguistic patterns, resembles mathematical reasoning. At the same time, however, the grammatical logic "...s'applique à tout ce qu'il y a de vivant dans notre esprit: les mots sont en même temps des chiffres et des images; ils sont esclaves et libres" ["...applies itself to every thing that is alive in the mind: words are at the same time ciphers and images; they are both slaves and free"].[47] While words are "slaves" in that their usage is regulated within a fixed web of grammatical rules, they are also illustrations of mental spontaneity. Viewed as free expressions of the mind, words exhibit seemingly boundless imaginary freedom.

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[46] *De l'Allemagne*, vol. 1, 197; *Germany*, vol. 1, 280.

In "Des universités allemandes," Staël introduces an educational concept focused on the cultivation of a culturally literate subject. The objective of learning languages is to train children's and students' awareness for the broad variety of human self-expression and self-fashioning in the medium of language. Moreover, her discussion suggests that the exposure to different forms of processing experience and expressing it has a stimulating effect on young people's minds, animating them to work more feely and productively with language.

According to Staël, this approach to education forms a crucial backdrop against which the resuscitation of classical culture could advance in new directions in Germany. The active cultivation of a historical consciousness and recognition of the alterity of other languages and literary works constitutes the baseline for fresh responses to the question of what role ancient culture plays in modern life. I interpret Staël's explications about the teaching of ancient and modern languages, and her investigations of how critics and writers in Germany have related to and made use of the past as her development of a new response to the lingering question of the Ancient-Modern battle. She does not explicitly refer to the old debate but given her earlier involvement and the group of critics *De l'Allemagne* turns to, it is justified to draw a direct link between her explications of how the revival of classicism could move in “une direction tout autre que dans le reste de l’Europe” in Germany and the historical question raised in *De la Littérature*.

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[47] *De l'Allemagne*, vol. 1, 141-142; *Germany*, vol. 1, 182.

She singles out Winckelmann as the one whose research demonstrates paradigmatically the direction that the revival of the past took in Germany: “Winckelmann a banni des beaux-arts, en Europe, le mélange du gout antique et du goût moderne” [“Winckelmann has banished from the fine arts in Europe the mixture of ancient and modern taste in Germany”].[48] He was the first whose work clearly showed that artistic rules and classical modes of representation do not simply translate into modern frames of reference, and Staël adds that what he demonstrates for the fine arts holds true for all literary adaptations as well: “La littérature des anciens est chez les modernes une littérature transplantée...les circonstances politiques et religieuses…soient changées” [The literature of the ancients is, among the moderns, a transplanted literature...the circumstances both political and religious…are all entirely changed].[49] By emphasizing the difference between past and present so emphatically, Staël leaves no doubt about her departure from the position she held in *De la Littérature*.

What makes Winckelmann’s approach so interesting, in her eyes, is the particular mode of critique with which he responds to insights into antiquity’s historical differences. She goes so far as to introduce that mode as a revolution in the manner of considering the arts and literature: “Toutefois l'homme qui fit une veritable révolution en Allemagne dans la manière de considérer les arts, et par les arts la littérature, c'est

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[48] *De l’Allemagne*, vol. 1, 187; *Germany*, vol. 1, 262.
[49] *De l’Allemagne*, vol. 1, 213; *Germany*, vol. 1, 309-310.

Winckelmann." His writings, she points out, are not focused on improving or on preserving and imitating the past:

> Des poëtes, avant Winckelmann, avoient étudié les tragédies des grecs pour les adapter à nos théâtres... mais personne ne s'étoit fait pour ainsi dire un païen pour pénétrer l'antiquité.
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> [Some poets before Winckelmann, had studied Greek tragedies, with the purpose of adapting them to our theatres...but no one had hitherto rendered himself a pagan in order to penetrate antiquity].[50]

Rather, Winckelmann strips himself of the Christian belief and becomes a pagan. He can thereby approach the ancients at eye level and overcome hierarchical barriers. And more than that, he even treats them as loved friends:

> Nul avant lui n'avoit réuni des observations exactes et profondes à une admiration si pleine de vie; c'est ainsi seulement qu'on peut comprendre les beaux-arts. Il faut que l'attention qu'ils excitent vienne de l'amour, et qu'on découvre dans les chefs-d'oeuvre du talent, comme dans les traits d'un être chéri, mille charmes révélés par les sentiments qu'ils inspirent.
>
> [No one before him had united such exact and profound observation with admiration so animated; it is thus, only, that we can comprehend the fine arts. The attention they excite must be awakened by love, and we must discover in the chef-d'oeuvres of genius, as we do in the features of a beloved object, a thousand charms, which are revealed to us by the sentiments they inspire].[51]

Staël concludes from her reading of Winckelmann that his particular way of combining a very personal and emotion-driven approach with detailed critical examinations of his objects needs to underlie all investigations of the fine arts. What we can learn from him is that the emotions we direct toward an object help to animate them, and become personal, alive, and unique. Because of the transformations that artworks undergo with this practice, Staël regards it as authentic and resistant to common nostalgic neo-classical revival methods:

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[50] *De l'Allemagne*, vol. 1, 185; *Germany*, vol. 1, 259.
[51] *De l'Allemagne*, vol. 1, 185; *Germany*, vol. 1, 259.

> L'imagination et l'érudition prêtoient également à Winckelmann leurs différentes lumières; on étoit persuadé jusqu'à lui qu'elles s'excluoient mutuellement. Il a fait voir que, pour deviner les anciens, l'une étoit aussi nécessaire que l'autre. On ne peut donner de la vie aux objets de l'art que par la connoissance intime du pays et de l'époque dans laquelle ils ont existé… C'est ainsi qu'il faut prendre l'érudition pour guide à travers l'antiquité; les vestiges qu'on aperçoit sont interrompus, effacés, difficiles à saisir: mais, en s'aidant à la fois de l'imagination et de l'étude, on recompose le temps, et l'on refait la vie.
>
> [Imagination and erudition equally lent their different lights to Winckelmann; before him it was thought that they mutually excluded each other. He has shown us that to understand the ancients, one was as necessary as the other. We can give life to objects of art only by an intimate acquaintance with the country and with the epoch in which they existed….It is thus, that through antiquity we must take learning for our guide: the vestiges which we perceive are interrupted, effaced, difficult to lay hold of; but by making use at once of imagination and study, we bring back time, and renew existence.][52]

Not only our emotions but also our imagination, she claims, are an indispensible guide through the ruins of the past. By following Winckelmann's lead and feeling ourselves imaginatively into the culture of antiquity, we are able to compensate for its lacking accessibility and blurred traces. In her eyes, imaginary reconstructions of incomplete objects as well as an emotional involvement with them needs to form an essential component of any erudite investigation.

In her novel *Corinne ou l'Italie*, Staël elaborates in more detail on how a critical approach that actively works with emotions and the imagination transforms the historical sites of Rome into venues full of life, connected to personal feelings and memories. As Nanette Le Coat points out in "Places of Memory: History Writing in

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[52] *De l'Allemagne*, vol. 1, 185-186; *Germany*, vol. 1, 260-261.

Staël's *Corinne*," the novel's heroine is not only a muse, an improviser, and a poet but also an erudite historian and art critic.[53] Corinne confronts French neoclassicism – represented in the novel by the French aristocrat Count d'Erfeuil – with a new perspective on artistic originality that corresponds with Staël's interpretation of Winckelmann's art criticism in *De l'Allemagne*.

The historical tours that Corinne gives her English companion Lord Nelvil (aka Oswald) throughout Italy are regularly interrupted by the narrator's voice which complements and explicates Corinne's accounts. The narrator explains to the reader, for instance, that Corinne manages to captivate her listener's attention by drawing on both her intellectual memories – "Les souvenirs de l'esprit" – and the memories of her imagination – "Les souvenirs de l'imagination":

> Les souvenirs de l'esprit sont acquis par l'étude. Les souvenirs de l'imagination naissent d'une impression plus immédiate et plus intime qui donne de la vie à la pensée, et nous rend, pour ainsi dire, témoins de ce que nous avons appris.
>
> [Intellectual memories are acquired by study. Memories of the imagination stem from a more immediate, more profound impression, which gives life to our thoughts and makes us, as it were, witnesses of what we have learned.][54]

Later on in the novel, a longer commentary explains in more detail why Corinne's approach should be considered much more productive, interesting, and pleasurable than one that relies simply on historical facts:

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[53] Nanette Le Coat, "Places of Memory: History Writing in Staël's Corinne," in *The Novel's Seductions: Staël's Corinne in Critical Inquiry*, ed. Karyna Szmurlo (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1999), 139-140.

[54] Anne-Louise-Germaine de Staël, *Corinne ou l'Italie*, ed. Simone Balayé (Paris: H. Champion, 2000), 85; Anne-Louise-Germaine de Staël, *Corinne: or Italy*, ed. and transl. Sylvia Raphael (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 64.

> Les érudits qui s'occupent seulement à recueillir une collection de noms qu'ils appellent l'histoire sont sûrement dépourvus de toute imagination. Mais pénétrer dans le passé, interroger le coeur humain à travers les siècles, saisir un fait par un mot, et le caractère et les moeurs d'une nation par un fait, enfin remonter jusques aux temps les plus reculés, pour tâcher de se figurer comment la terre, dans sa première jeunesse, apparaissait aux regards des hommes, et de quelle manière ils supportaient alors ce don de la vie que la civilisation a tant compliqué maintenant ; c'est un effort continuel de l'imagination, qui devine et découvre les plus beaux secrets que la réflexion et l'étude puissent nous révéler. Ce genre d'intérêt et d'occupation attirait singulièrement Oswald….
>
> [The scholars who are concerned only to gather a collection of names which they call history are undoubtedly devoid of any imagination. But to delve into the past, to question the human heart across centuries, to grasp a fact through one word, and the character and customs of a nation from one deed, in short to go back to the most far-off times, to try to imagine how the world, in its first youth, appeared to the eyes of men, and how at that time they bore the gift of life which civilization has made so complicated today, that requires a sustained effort of the imagination, which penetrates and discovers the finest secrets that meditation and study can reveal to us. Oswald was particularly attracted to that kind of interest and occupation….][55]

What makes Corinne’s stories attractive, in the narrator’s opinion, is that she does not burden her companion’s attention with studious historical details but picks out selected aspects that appear significant to her. Drawing on her empathetic and imaginative faculties, she uses those aspects as a springboard to draw out larger historical connections and weaves her observations thereby into bigger narratives. The connections between Corinne’s practices and those of Staël’s Winckelmann are quite obvious. Both revive the ruins of antiquity for their contemporary audience by advancing techniques of reconstruction that include an active incorporation of personal emotions, empathy, and the imagination.

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[55] Staël, *Corinne ou l’Italie*, 291; *Corinne: or Italy*, 200.

With the promotion of such models of revival, she clearly distances herself from those practiced during the *Querelle*. Regardless of whether we turn to Winckelmann, Corinne, or to what Staël introduces as new modes of language instruction at German educational institutions, the transformation that her historical understanding undergoes cannot be overlooked. She views languages, literatures, and the fine arts as culturally and historically unique expressions that give those able to interpret them insights into foreign worlds and people's experiences thereof. Her discussions suggest that the way to render them contemporary in a productive fashion is to employ techniques such as those practiced by Winckelmann or Corinne. For her they have an exemplary function because of how they succeed in making their listeners' and readers' encounter with the past informative, pleasurable, personal, and aesthetically engaging.[56]

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[56] It might be productive to discuss Staël's model of reinvigorating the past in the context of Christoph Menke's outline of the category of aesthetic experience in the introduction to *Dimensionen Ästhetischer Erfahrung*, ed. Joachim Küpper and Christoph Menke (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2003), 7-15. In *De l'Allemagne* and *Corinne*, the quality of works of art is no longer measured in relation to the ways in which writers and critics have either sought to improve them or faithfully focused on copying classical styles, contents, and moral codes. Rather, their modern revival comes to be associated with a set of practices and also with the subject's ability to adopt an aesthetic stance. Menke emphasizes the crucial function of aesthetic experience for the success of a culture, defining aesthetic experience as a specific mode of orientation in the world, as a "spezifische Form des Umgangs mit Objekten, Situationen, Personen": "Ästhetische Erfahrung erscheint also als eine Weise, sich in der Welt zu orientieren und mehr noch: das Vorhandensein und der Grad der Ausbildung dieser ästhetischen Orientierungsweise erscheint als ein wesentlicher Gradmesser für das Gelingen einer Kultur… die Ausbildung der Fähigkeit zur ästhetischen Erfahrung [ist] Teil eines allgemeinen Prozesses der Kultivierung." The extent to which members of a cultural community are able to assemble a variety of aesthetic modes of orientation becomes an important standard for measuring the progress of processes of cultivation. Winckelmann's imaginative engagements describe such a "specific mode of dealing with objects." The only way the past can truly come alive for him and his generation is in an aesthetically transformed fashion. Following his lead, a whole host of German writers and critics [Staël details the Schlegel brother's technique of imaginative immersion in "Des richesses littéraires de l'Allemagne et de ses critiques les plus renommés, A.W. et. F. Schlegel," *De l'Allemagne*, vol. 2, 67-75] respond to feelings of deracination and detachment from the past with the empathetic technique to narrow the distance. It was this model of criticism which, as Staël writes, did away with imitation in Germany and gave way to "originalité," to new themes and manners of expression and style [*De l'Allemagne*, vol. 2, 183].

Staël's Herder, Religious Revival, and the Project of France's Cultural Recovery

De l'Allemagne, as I have illustrated, explores the historical question which Ancient and Modern interpretative practices had brought to the fore from a new vantage point. Staël observes that in Germany the growing awareness of the historical embeddedness of languages and literatures facilitates the dissemination of altogether new approaches to reconstituting the past, approaches that actively work with capacities of imagination, empathy, and emotion. Not only the legacies of the pagan Greeks, however, become touchstones for a modern cultural self-understanding in Germany. Of equal significance are, according to Staël, new methods of resuscitating the Bible. *De l'Allemagne* introduces Herder as an important figure who – similar to Winckelmann, as far as basic methodological aspects are concerned – combines empathy and imagination with scholarly acumen for the purpose of bringing religious writings to life:

> Herder s'attachoit à pénétrer le génie des temps les plus reculés, peut-être que la qualité qu'il possédoit au suprême degree, l'imagination, servoit mieux que toute autre à les faire connoître... il semble qu'on se promène au milieu de l'ancien monde avec un poëte historien qui touche les ruines de sa baguette et reconstruit à nos yeux les édifices abattus.... et celui de tous ses ouvrages où l'on reconnoît le plus jusqu'à quel point il portoit le tact des nations étrangères, c'est son essai sur la poésie hébraïque. Jamais on n'a mieux exprimé le genie de ce peuple prophète, pour qui l'inspiration poétique étoit un rapport intime avec la divinité.
>
> [...as Herder's object was to penetrate the genius of the earliest periods of time, perhaps the quality he most eminently possessed, which was imagination, proved more serviceable to him in that pursuit than any other would have done…it seems as if we were walking in the midst of the old world with an historical poet, who touches the ruins with his wand, and erects anew before our eyes, all the fallen edifices...his essay on Hebrew poetry is the work in which he

> most readily discovers how far he could adopt the spirit of foreign nations. The genius of a prophetic people, for whom poetical inspiration consisted of its intimate connection to divinity, was never better expressed].[57]

In Staël's eyes, Herder's ability to immerse himself in distant centuries can best be studied in his major theological work *Vom Geist der Ebräischen Poesie*. This unfinished study brings together historical narratives, translations of poetry from the Old Testament as well as from Oriental literatures, and what makes it so appealing, she suggests, is how Herder arranges and comments on his sources. *Vom Geist* is not just a work by a historian but by "un poëte historien"; what distinguishes the historical poet is that he uses his imagination to remake missing links and connections between the themes and sources he investigates. (Years later, this observation will become central for Transcendentalist evaluations of the value of Herder's collections of Hebrew poetry, on which see chapter three, part one.) The imaginative mode helps to transport the reader back in time and make it appear in vivid images before his inner eye. And Herder's poetic reworkings do more than that: he brings his sources into a form conducive to the reader's active engagement with them: "On a dit que ses écrits ressembloient à une conversation animée: il est vrai qu'il n'a pas dans ses ouvrages la forme méthodique qu'on est convenu de donner aux livres" ["It has been said, that his writings resemble an animated conversation: it is true that he has not made use of that methodical form in his works, which is given to books in general"]. Herder maintains the open and lively conversational style he found in his transcripts. Unlike modern book prints that arrange and present their themes within some sort of organizational framework, Herder's translations, she writes, are held in the provisional style of "entretiens écrits" ["written down conversations"].[58]

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[57] *De l'Allemagne*, vol. 2, 63-64; *Germany*, vol. 2, 364-365.

By refraining from corseting the Hebrew poems into a form in accord with modern understandings of logic, Herder can sustain the dynamic of the ancient verses and retain an open format that facilitates an equally open engagement by the reader with his texts. It is the way in which his "théologie poétique" inspires readers to express their religious feelings in poetic imagery that Staël regards as the most productive and forward-looking aspect of his collections:

> Herder le premier fit renaître la foi par la poésie: profondément instruit dans les langues orientales, il avoit pour la bible un genre d'admiration semblable à celui qu'un Homère sanctifié pourroit inspirer.
>
> [Herder was the first to regenerate faith by poetry: deeply instructed in the eastern languages, he felt a kind of admiration for the Bible like that which a sanctified Homer would inspire].[59]

By means of the form and style of his reworkings, he finds ways to contribute to the revival of people's spiritual lives through poetry, and he thereby pushes the Bible into the realm of aesthetics and national literature. Based on this appraisal of the function of Herder's works on the Old Testament, I suggest that *De l'Allemagne* introduces its readers to what Jonathan Sheehan refers to as the invention of the cultural Bible in Germany. A cultural Bible is a text "whose legitimacy and authority [is] embedded no longer in theology, but in that complex of literature, teaching, scholarship, and history that came to be called culture."[60] According to Sheehan, a cultural interpretation of the Bible is no longer premised on the assumption that the Holy Scriptures, if thoroughly scrutinized, disclose the truth of God's words. Rather, for a cultural reader, their authority resides in the changing functions the texts have had throughout different times and within different cultural contexts. In Sheehan's account of the production of the cultural Bible in late eighteenth-century Germany, Herder's theological writings occupy a key position.[61]

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[58] *De l'Allemagne*, vol. 2, 65; *Germany*, vol. 2, 368.
[59] *De l'Allemagne*, vol. 2, 248; *Germany*, Vol. 3, 288.

More specifically, he argues that the important role of Herder's investigation of the relationship between the Old Testament and the national self-understanding of ancient Hebrew culture lies in the conclusions Herder draws from this link for the Bible's place in German culture: "if the literature of the Hebrews was a national one, then translation would be the secret to resurrecting the Bible as a specifically German literary text."[62] These observations are relevant for Staël's introduction of Herder in *De l'Allemagne*, because she also emphasizes that Herder makes the engagement with the Scriptures not only an occasion for a revival of faith by poetry but also for contributing to the national bonding amongst the members of a German speaking cultural community.

She points out connections between those writers she groups together as "Les écrivains religieux de L'Allemagne actuelle" ["The current religious writers of

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[60] Jonathan Sheehan, *The Enlightenment Bible: Translation, Scholarship, Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 92.

[61] According to Sheehan, Herder was the one who "pushed beyond artistry and pure aesthetics into the politics of national literatures" by creating an explicit link between Luther and German national literature (Sheehan, *Enlightenment Bible*, 170).

[62] Sheehan, *Enlightenment Bible*, 172-175.

Germany"] and the formation of a literary canon. She suggests that Bible translations have gone beyond contributing to an appreciation of the aesthetic beauty of Hebrew poetry. Crucially, the "sentiments religieux" which works like *Vom Geist* have facilitated are of a specific kind: "le caractère national en est empreint, et le génie des arts et de la littérature y puise toute son inspiration" ["...the national character is impressed with them (religious sentiments), and it is from them that the genius of the arts and of literature draws all its inspiration"].[63] The poetic expressions which translators like Herder would employ to recuperate the character of the Hebrew verses inspired other modes of forging the Scriptures in German idioms and within modern literary forms.

On her travels through Germany's northern Protestant areas, Staël observes a strong confidence and faith among the inhabitants in the truth of their religious feelings, of their enthusiasm: "l'enthousiasme signifie *Dieu en nous*" ["enthusiasm signifies *God in us*"].[64] Northern Germany, she writes is the region in which, unlike in the Catholic south, theological questions have been scrutinized in depth. And it is "la réunion d'une foi vive avec l'esprit d'examen" ["the union of a lively faith with the spirit of inquiry"][65] which paved the way for religion's revival, inspiring the composition of poetry and creating feelings of belonging.[66]

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[63] *De l'Allemagne*, vol. 2, 249; *Germany*, vol. 3, 291.

[64] *De l'Allemagne*, vol. 2, 301; *Germany*, Vol. 3, 388.

[65] *De l'Allemagne*, vol. 2, 243; *Germany*, vol. 3, 278.

[66] On the importance of religious feelings for the creation of group solidarity among members of the Volk, see Staël's anecdote from her trip from Dresden to Leipzig, *De l'Allemagne*, vol. 2, 249, *Germany*, vol. 3, 291-292.

At this point, the shared practices and functions of the revival of the classics and the Bible throughout *De l'Allemagne* become evident. Herder's poetic reworkings of Hebrew poetry and Winckelmann's reconstructions of Greek art are underwritten by the same techniques: both seek to fully immerse themselves in the other culture and turn that moment of empathetic immersion into an occasion for a creative reconstitution. Staël emphasizes that these processes can transform the subject's mode of perception and enable it to experience the world and express itself anew spiritually or in other ways. She proposes that this ability inhabits a central function for Germany's cultural development. Her discussions, in other words, suggest that the interlinking of the reconstitution of ancient texts and objects with processes of displacement and immersion elicited a reconceptualizing of categories of artistic and religious truth that contributed in major ways to Germany's cultural unfolding.

In "De la Poésie Allemande" she turns to Goethe and comments on the naturalness of his poetic language which, she writes, developed out of his talent "pour se transporter dans les siècles, dans les pays, dans les caractères" ["to transport (himself) into ages, countries, and characters"]:

> Goethe... est naturel au suprême degree... quand il se transporte dans des pays, des moeurs et des situations toutes nouvelles, sa poésie prend facilement la couleur des contrées étrangères: il saisit avec un talent unique ce qui plaît dans les chansons nationales de chaque peuple; il devient, quand il le veut, un grec, un indien, un morlaque.
>
> [Goethe is to the highest degree natural...when he transports himself to new climates, customs, and situations, his poetry easily assimilates itself with foreign

> countries; he seizes, with a talent perfectly unique, all that pleases in the national songs of each nation; he becomes, when he chooses it, a Greek, an Indian, or a Morlachian].[67]

Goethe applies techniques of empathy and immersion to access and revive the Greeks as well as popular literatures belonging to other ages. Through his protean skills, the encounter has a transformative effect on his writing, bestowing it with what Staël refers to as its non-artificial, natural characteristic. It resonates with the lives of common people – "Des poëmes de Goethe et de Bürger sont mis en musique, et vous les entendez répéter des bords du Rhin jusqu'à la Baltique" ["The poems by Goethe and Bürger are set to music, and repeated from the banks of the Rhine to the shores of the Baltic"] – and differs thereby significantly from modern French compositions that "sont tout-à-fait inconnues aux gens du peuple et aux bourgeois même des villes" ["are quite unknown to the common people, and even to the class of citizens in our towns"].[68]

Against this backdrop of Staël's interest in the role of history for Germany's cultural self-understanding, her notion of individual autonomy appears in a new light. Her engagement with modes of instruction and scholarship in the fields of religion, classical studies, and language education does not impart the vision of the subject as an elite being who exists removed from and untroubled by the currents of historical change and institutions. Quite the contrary: her assessment of language teaching at German schools and universities suggests that independence of thinking, and the impulse to work freely and creatively with words is acquired by students' exposure to and active work with a broad variety of modes of human self-expression and self-fashioning. For the scholars and writers she discusses, the road toward cultural and spiritual independence is also paved with a variety of exercises: Corinne and Winckelmann establish themselves as art critics and historians by applying special reconstructive techniques to the objects under investigation. Similarly, religious critics like Herder inspire people's enthusiasm by means of their writings' form and style, and by injecting a spirit of inquiry into the histories of the Scriptures.

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[67] *De l'Allemagne*, vol. 1, 233; *Germany*, vol. 1, 350.
[68] *De l'Allemagne*, vol. 1, 214; *Germany*, vol. 1, 310.

In conclusion to this chapter, I want to ask in what way this notion of autonomy that – to speak with Foucault – takes the self as a work to be accomplished could be made productive for our understanding of Staël's objective to contribute with *De l'Allemagne* to the cultural recovery of post-Napoleonic France. Foucault's "self-technology" is a useful umbrella term to subsume the different exercises and techniques I have discussed so far and to ask how they might modify our perspective on the nature of Staël's vision of individual independence for France as she articulates it in her discussions of German idealist philosophy.

Foucault develops the concept of self-technology in his late works. In distinction to his earlier works concerned with technologies of power and domination, by 1980 he had become interested in how "a human being turns him- or herself into a subject."[69] He turns away from sweeping historical and epistemological claims regarding discursive techniques of power and domination. The question taking center stage in his last works is how "one can think differently than one thinks, and perceive differently than one sees."[70] How can the individual impact and change the pervasive influence current ways of thinking exercise over his life?

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[69] Michel Foucault, *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, ed. Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman, and Patrick H. Hutton (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), 16-49.

In the Vermont lectures, he examines techniques of self-formation from the early Greek to the Christian age and defines them as activities that

> permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality.[71]

He examines the self-activities, the work that people have performed on themselves to reach a state different from their current one, throughout different historical periods. In his account, classical culture figures as the golden age congenial to the flourishing of a variety of lifestyles; the subject was free to form his own independent mode of existence.[72] In the age of Christianity, by contrast, self-techniques were highly regulated and controlled. Christian moral codes subjected the self to the performance of practices under the surveillance of pastoral authorities.[73] While Foucault's specific appraisals of the distinguishing characteristics of the history of the subject in antiquity and

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[70] Michel Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure*, vol. 2, *The History of Sexuality*, trans. Robert Hurley (London: Penguin, 1984), 8.

[71] Foucault, *Technologies of the Self*, 18.

[72] Foucault investigates the ethical discourse of antiquity in the second and third volume of *The History of Sexuality*. Morality, understood as "a set of values and rules of action that are recommended to individuals through the intermediary of various prescriptive agencies such as the family, educational institutions, churches, and so forth" was not linked to one unified doctrine or way of teaching in antiquity. Moral codes did not constitute "a systematic ensemble," they existed independently from a metaphysical discourse of truth (Foucault, *The Use of Pleasures*, 25). Instead, ethical activities were focused on the subject and antiquity became the golden age of highly differentiated self-cultures: "…moral conceptions in Greek and Greco-Roman antiquity were much more oriented toward practices of the self and questions of askesis than toward codifications of conducts and the strict definition of what is permitted and what is forbidden" (Foucault, *The Use of Pleasures*, 30).

[73] The subject is obliged to "accept a set of obligations, to hold certain books as permanent truth, to accept authoritarian decisions in matters of truth, not only to believe certain things but to show that one believes, and to accept institutional authority…" (Foucault, *Technologies of Self*, 40).

Christianity have sparked much critique, the overall approach itself has proved productive for critical investigations focused on exploring changing forms of human self-conception over the course of history.[74]

His approach also provides a useful framework for interpreting *De l'Allemagne* because in each domain of her historico-critical inquiries, Staël examines "to what extent the effort to think one's own history can free thought from what it silently thinks, and so enable it to think differently."[75] Regardless of whether she talks about how to revive antiquity, the spirit of religious writings, or the need to broaden one's horizon by comparing different languages, she suggests throughout that the function of feeling oneself into other cultures lies in "free[ing] thought from what it silently thinks." By employing a number of self-technologies (in my discussions I refer to them as practices, exercises, or techniques), the subject frees itself from commonly held assumptions about the authoritative nature of religious dogmas or artistic norms and begins to think differently. It achieves thereby a new state of freedom and independence.

I suggest approaching her concern with the autonomy of the self in the context of her interpretation of German idealist thinking in a similar way. She is clearly not interested in this tradition as a means to bring the individual closer to the true meaning of things but rather in the *effect* the direction of idealist thinking can have on those engaging it. She is interested in it, I want to propose, as a self-technology that has the power to lead France into new directions of thinking. For a variety of complex reasons, she is deeply concerned with the philosophical beliefs that have informed the character of the French zeitgeist since the beginning of the Napoleonic era.[76] A major target for her attacks is the pervasive dominance of "la philosophie des sensations," a highly reductive version of sensationist philosophy that had gained immense popularity among the French.

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[74] A recent and comprehensive study is Christian Moser's *Buchgestützte Subjektivität: Literarische Formen der Selbstsorge und der Selbsthermeneutik von Platon his Montaigne*, vol. 36, *Communicatio: Studien zur europäischen Literatur- und Kulturgeschichte*, ed. Fritz Nies and Wilhelm Voßkamp (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2006). Moser disagrees with Foucault's claim regarding "die relative Machtlosigkeit der antiken Wahrheitsdiskurse, die dem Individuum eine weitgehende Freiheit der Selbstgestaltung garantieren" (24). At the same time, however, he makes Foucault's distinction between "Praktiken des Wissens" and "Praktiken der Selbstkonstitution" the methodological basis for his inquiry of how techniques of reading have informed human self-understanding from Plato to Montaigne.

[75] Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure*, 9.

The list of the many ills in current French society for which Staël locates the cause in the prevalent assumption that the mind is formed exclusively by what comes through the senses is long and dense. Whether she turns to social issues, literary themes or political topics, what emerges as the overriding characteristic of sensationist thinking is the proliferation of a lethargic, enervated, and uninspired outlook on the world. People assume

> ...qu'on ne peut rien à rien, ils répètent, avec l'ermite de Prague dans Shakespear, que ce qui est, est, et que les theories n'ont point d'influence sur le monde. Ces hommes finissent par rendre vrai ce qu'ils disent; car avec une telle manière de penser on ne sauroit agir sur les autres...
>
> [...that nothing can be done with nothing; they repeat, with the Hermit of Prague, in Shakespeare, that what is, is, and that theories have no influence on the world. Such men leave off with making what they say true, for with such a mode of thinking they cannot act upon others...].[77]

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[76] Claudia Moscovici, "Between Two Worlds: Germaine Staël's De l'Allemagne," in *Romanticism and Postromanticism* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2007), 27-37 details Staël's critique and investigates the relation of the author's objections to the leading currents of philosophical thinking in France.

[77] *De l'Allemagne*, vol. 2, 308; *Germany*, vol. 3, 400-401.

An empirically grounded self-understanding withdraws the subject's capacities from itself and disqualifies any practices of self-care and theories proclaiming that such practices can actually affect something. In light of the subject's lacking confidence in the strength and transformative impact of its abilities, Staël seeks to introduce a new mode of thinking that she considers as having the potential to turn the present French mind-set:

> Si l'on admettoit au contraire que *l'âme agit par elle-même, qu'il faut puiser en soi pour y trouver la vérité*, et que cette vérité ne peut être saisie qu'à l'aide d'une méditation profonde, puisqu'elle n'est pas dans le cercle des expériences terrestres, la direction entière des esprits seroit changée.
>
> [If it was admitted, on the contrary, *that the soul acts by itself, and that we must draw up information out of ourselves to find the truth*, and that this truth cannot be seized upon, except by the aid of profound meditation, because it is not within the range of terrestrial experience; the whole course of men's mind would be changed].[78]

Her use of the subjunctive here indicates that her interest in a philosophy of life premised on the idea of preexistent forms of knowledge is not concerned with questions of the truth or falsehood of such an assumption. As she writes, "Il n'est pas probable que nous puissions jamais connoître les vérités éternelles qui expliquent l'existence de ce monde" ["It is not likely that we should ever be able to know the eternal truths which explain the existence of this world"].[79] She does not, as has often been argued, stake out a position focused on establishing epistemological security.[80] Rather, she envisions the promotion of what she takes to be Germany's idealist mode of thinking as a healing formula for her own society, which she diagnoses as suffering from moral decline and literary stagnation.[81] In the social sphere, the sensationist mind-set has produced hedonistic lifestyles and corrupted moral values: "Si tout ce qui compose notre volonté nous vient des objets extérieurs, chacun peut en appeler à des relations particulières pour motiver toute sa conduite" ["If all that composes our will comes to us from external objects, every one may appeal to his own particular relations for the motives of his whole conduct..."].[82] And in the realm of literature, the sensationist conception of reality has stunted the thriving of works that abound with imaginary imagery.

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[78] *De l'Allemagne*, vol. 2, 114; *Germany*, vol. 3, 49, my emphasis.

[79] *De l'Allemagne*, vol. 2, 90; *Germany*, vol. 3, 3.

[80] See, for instance, Udo Schöning: "Mme Staël in der französischen Romantik," in *Germaine Staël und ihr erstes deutsches Publikum: Literaturpolitik und Kulturtransfer um 1800*, ed. Gerhard R. Kaiser and Olaf Müller (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2008). According to his analysis, the book's idealist

Staël's recipe for a way out of the aridity of France's cultural landscape lies in the active cultivation of an enthusiastic disposition. Throughout *De l'Allemagne*, she proposes that idealist thinking manifests itself in people's enthusiasm and confident use of their imagination (she uses the two terms interchangeably to characterize Germany);

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perspective sidesteps the confines of materialism and historical relativism: "…in *De l'Allemagne* [handelt es sich um das Projekt] einer politischen, sozialen, moralischen und ästhetischen Erneuerung des Landes auf idealistischer Grundlage, ein Gedanke, der in dem ethisch-religiösen und ästhetisch gefassten Enthusiasmusbegriff kulminiert. Auf diese Weise entgeht Staël sowohl den Zwängen des Materialismus als auch denen des historischen Relativismus….Durch die idealistische Komponente wird es möglich, die durch die Anerkennung der historischen Bedingtheit aller kulturellen Phänomene theoretisch bedrohten Freiheit und Autonomie des Individuums zu postulieren, insbesondere die des Künstlers als Genie," 28.

[81] Staël proposes that the philosophical assumptions which prevail in a society define the zeitgeist, the general mind-set shaping the feeling and thinking of people in a specific period: "Le système philosophique adopté dans un pays exerce une grande influence sur la tendance des esprits: c'est le moule universel dans lequel se jettent toutes les pensées; ceux même qui n'ont point étudié ce système se conforment sans le savoir à la disposition générale qu'il inspire" [The philosophical system, adopted in any country, exerts a great influence over the direction of mind; it is the universal model after which all thought is cast; those persons even, who have not studied the system, conform, unknowingly, to the general disposition which it inspires], *De l'Allemagne*, vol. 2, 113; *Germany*, vol. 3, 46.

[82] *De l'Allemagne*, vol. 2, 100; *Germany*, vol. 3, 25. According to Staël, a society which turns in the first place to external circumstances when trying to explain human behavioral patterns fosters an attitude of moral indifference. People do not seek the cause of certain predicaments in themselves but hold the unfortunate situation they find themselves in responsible for all hazards.

they designate “la qualité vraiment distinctive de la langue allemande” [“the quality which really distinguishes the German nation”].[83] Depending on the context of her discussion, the terms are religiously connoted (as I mentioned, she notes that Protestantism was a major force behind people’s trust in their own spiritual perceptions: “l’enthousiasme signifie *Dieu en nous*”) or designate, more generally, a productive approach of dealing with texts and objects and of processing experiences.[84]

In her eyes, that is exactly what France needs, and she appeals to artists and writers to focus their eloquence and expressive skills on strengthening people’s confidence in their “imagination enthousiaste”:

> Les travaux de l'esprit ne semblent à beaucoup d'écrivains qu'une occupation presque mécanique... mais de tels hommes ont-ils l'idée du sublime bonheur de la pensée quand l'enthousiasme l'anime? Savent-ils de quel espoir l'on se sent pénétré quand on croit manifester par le don de l'éloquence une vérité profonde, une vérité qui forme un généreux lien entre nous et toutes les âmes en sympathie avec la nôtre?
>
> [The labours of the understanding are considered by many writers as an occupation almost merely mechanical...but have such men even an idea of the sublime happiness of thought when it is animated by enthusiasm? Do they know the hope which penetrates the soul, when there arises in it the confident belief, that by the gift of eloquence we are about to demonstrate and declare some profound truth, some truth which will be a generous bond of union between us and every soul that sympathizes with ours?][85]

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[83] *De l’Allemagne*, vol. 2, 305; *Germany*, vol. 3, 395.

[84] In her Kant interpretation, the Kantian categories are rendered a reliable basis for moral and aesthetic truth which enthusiasm generates. Enthusiasm, she writes, “c'est une disposition innée...et nous reconnoissons la beauté quand nous la voyons, parce qu'elle est l'image extérieure de l'idéal, dont le type est dans notre intelligence [“is an innate disposition...and we discover beauty when we see it, because it is the outward image of that ideal beauty, the type of which exists in our mind”], *De l’Allemagne*, vol. 2, 137; Germany, vol. 3, 90.

[85] *De l’Allemagne*, vol. 2, 311; *Germany*, vol. 3, 409.

Techniques such as eloquence are crucial for effecting an experience of uplift. They put people in a position where they feel they act as agents in a process of uncovering truth. Writings and artworks that have such an effect, she claims in "Influence de l'enthousiasme sur le Bonheur," set new energies free and contribute significantly to people's happiness. The popularization of this notion of the role of literature and the arts, the book concludes, would constitute a milestone on the path toward France's cultural recovery.

Conclusion

De l'Allemagne's intense and wide-ranging occupation with modes of language learning, theology, religion, and classical studies brought to bear a different perspective on the book's significance. Staël's discussions of German critical investigations of ancient civilizations foregrounds questions of the historical integration of languages and literatures, and her interest is focused on bringing into view methods of language instruction and reconstituting ancient texts and objects that draw attention to historical differences while also developing techniques aimed at integrating the other culture productively. In light of the techniques of immersion, empathy, and emotional and imaginary animation that Staël introduces as vehicles for the revival of texts and objects, her vision of individual autonomy appears as complexly integrated into the cultural worlds, works, and languages of others.

These aspects of *De l'Allemagne* are usually occluded by the critical literature that is mostly interested in examining how and to what degree of argumentative accuracy Staël processed the philosophies of Kant, Fichte, or the Schlegel brothers and contributed to their cross-cultural popularity. An interpretation focused on the transformations of her historical understanding from *De la Littérature* to *De l'Allemagne*, by contrast, draws attention to a different facet and to different qualities of her project to introduce the French to an alternative perspective on the capacities of the subject. In a rather cursory fashion that needs more attention, I asked in the chapter's concluding paragraphs how a notion of independence premised on the subject's intense engagement with foreign cultures and their histories as a language learner, critic or artist changes our perspective on the objective of her reception of idealist philosophy. Against the backdrop of her historical thinking, the reproduction of argumentative accuracy never seemed to be her goal but rather the effect such thinking has on a culture and its people. Staël, I argued, is interested in idealist thinking not as a philosophy for or against which one can argue but as a healthy mind-set, as a mode of thinking that animates enthusiasm and promotes the thriving of the arts.

Chapter II

Der Mensch siehet nur, wie ein Mensch siehet: Modern Functions of Ancient Greek and Hebrew Literature in Light of Herder's Anthropological Thinking

Introduction

This chapter examines the restructuring of the relation between ancient and modern cultures in selected writings by Herder on ancient Greek and Hebrew literature. As in the preceding analysis of Staël's assessment of German historical scholarship, the objective is two-fold: First, I tease out the characteristics of the hermeneutic practice Herder employs to fashion this relation, and I then investigate his thoughts on how people's occupation with works from the past are of use to their self-development and the invigoration of modern cultural life. Second, I ask in what ways Herder's mode of constructing the relation serves the reform objectives he pursued in his professional life as a theologian.

Throughout this examination, I pay particular attention to how Herder's historical revival efforts in the field of Greek and Hebrew literature and its use for contemporary purposes are underwritten by his anthropological thinking. His lifelong study of the science of man helps to highlight a dimension of his thinking which scholars focused on the historicist impetus of Herder's writings on and translations of ancient literary works have not taken into account. This anthropological facet of

Herder's work has been sidelined by critics' main interest: Herder's relationship to Enlightenment thought.

The Herder we know best today is the one who attacks Enlightenment historiographers' assumption that the values of their own age are universal, and that other cultures could therefore be understood only in terms of Enlightenment standards and ideals. We know Herder as someone who like no other thinker of his time urges his contemporaries to make an effort and strive to understand human actions, events, and works of art internally; who appeals to people to interpret other civilizations within their time and place, rather than imposing their own notions.

Some critics have gone so far as to link Herder's concern with the contingency of cultural values with a relativist outlook on historical developments. The most important aim of Herder's investigations into the literatures and cultures of the past, they claim, resides in his spreading of a consciousness of difference.[86] Other recent studies in the field agree that Herder's primary objective lies in advancing an awareness for the plurality of forms of life but they part company with relativist interpretations in that they insist on the integrative character of Herder's historicism. Leventhal to a certain extent and especially Morton, Muthu or Oergel are all deeply invested in demonstrating that Herder's responses to Enlightenment historiography is underwritten by an integrative impulse: All four critics demonstrate that Herder's efforts to illuminate the lifeworlds and works of ancient civilizations are prompted by his impulse to productively correlate and not to oppose the present and past age. Each critic explores in different ways the twin gestures of Herder's integrative approach: his historical inquiry into how different cultures shaped their respective moral and aesthetic values, and his concurrent concern with their translatability, with the question to what extent the cultural resources of bygone eras can function as a source of inspiration for the present.

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[86] In the field of Anglo-American criticism, this relativistic interpretation of Herder's historical thinking points back to Isaiah Berlin's way leading scholarship. In his works on Herder and the Enlightenment, he sets up Herder as a radical proponent of cultural pluralism; aligning himself with what he takes to be a Herderian conception of pluralism, Berlin defines it as "[den] Glauben…an die Unvergleichbarkeit der Werte verschiedener Kulturen und…an die Unvereinbarkeit von Idealen, die gleichermaßen gültig sind." See Robert E. Norton, "Die anglo-amerikanische Herder-Rezeption: 'Gegenaufklärung' und ihre Befürworter," in *Vom Selbstdenken: Aufklärung und Aufklärungskritik in Herders "Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*," ed. Regine Otto und John H. Zammito (Heidelberg: Synchron, 2001), 216-217. The representation of Herder as a counter-Enlightenment figure is equally widespread in the field of Germanistik. Reverting to works by Friedrich Meinecke, Hermann August Korff or Herman Nohl, Oergel sums up this strand of Herder studies in her discussion of the development of late eighteenth century German historicism in *Culture and Identity: Historicity in German Literature and Thought 1770-1815* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2006), 2-13. See also Wilhelm Voßkamp's introduction to the essay collection *Klassik im Vergleich: Normativität und Historizität europäischer Klassiken*, DFG Symposium 1990 (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1993): "Die stets widersprüchliche Einheit von Idealitätsanspruch und Geschichtlichkeit im Klassik-Begriff wird im Vergleich unterschiedlicher Klassiken diskutiert," 2.

Morton claims that the way in which Herder puts the languages and art forms of the past and present into a dialogue is underwritten by a dialectical structure of thinking that later resonates in Hegel and Adorno, among others.[87] He interprets Herder's "Über den Fleiß in mehreren gelehrten Sprachen" as a paradigmatic text of his oeuvre that unfolds in the pattern of thesis, antithesis, synthesis and overcomes thereby the split between particularism and cosmopolitanism.[88]

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[87] Michael Morton, *Herder and the Poetics of Thought: Unity and Diversity in "On Diligence in Several Learned Languages"* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1989), 38-39.

[88] Herder's method of "Einfühlung" figures thereby as a nodal point where the characteristics of how exactly he overcomes the split crystallizes. To understand foreign languages we need to perform two movements, which occur simultaneously but in opposite directions: "we must bring them to us, in the sense of grasping them from, and in the terms of, the perspective of our own language. At the same time, we must go to them, in the sense of achieving a perspective corresponding to theirs." This process of "sich verpflanzen," of transplanting oneself from one's native standpoint into a different linguistic system

Oergel develops her argument regarding Herder's effort to relate antiquity and modernity against the background of his response to the *Querelle*; notably in his renowned essay on "Shakespeare" (1773), she suggests, he forges a vantage point that departs from the positions which had propelled the battle in France and England (see chapter I). She argues that Herder formulates his response to the *Querelle* along reconciliatory lines. While the age of the past looks different through Herder's empathic mode of analysis, his essay famously also refers to Sophocles and Shakespeare as equals, calling them brothers even. What they share in common is that they are both truly representative of their respective cultures, both "are different but equally admirable because both of them produced drama that was relevant to their time and audience, 'natural' in Herder's terminology, because it had grown from and represented their respective cultures." Shakespeare's "historical drama" and "ancient Greek tragedy" are equals not based on their content but because of their structural equivalence: both writers "occupy the same position structurally in their respective cultural histories." By suggesting that Shakespeare's and Sophocles' common ground is

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and culture yields a new perspective; a perspective that is different in that neither the original native nor the foreign language remain unaltered. When the two opposing poles come together, they express an activity of productive synthesis, a state of fusion in which both native and foreign elements remain in force while also transforming and transcending one another. Furthermore, Morton observes that this activity of mutual transformation which underlies the confrontation of native and foreign language is also the driving force behind Herder's vision of "the possibility of a distinctive German national literature." The key toward a genuine native tradition lies in taking the literatures of the past as models of inspiration and to carve out "a position analogues to theirs, to be to our own time what they were to their eras." This process of self- and culture building by means of crossing linguistic and mental frontiers, fosters the contact and communication across national, geographic and temporal boundaries. It contributes considerably to the advancement of Herder's "Humanitätsideal," to his vision of "humanity as a unity-in-difference," see Morton, *Herder and the Poetics of Thought*, 108-119.

the cultural community they each represent and engage, Herder is able to integrate the concept of the norm in the historical process.[89]

Both Oergel's and Morton's investigations uncover argumentative structures in Herder's writing which suggest a productive and enriching relation to the past. Their respective claims center on the relation between Herder's efforts to draw people's attention to cultural diversity and his concurrent concern to further the development of a German national literature and the advancement of humanity. Leventhal's study, by contrast, foregrounds the instability and problematic nature of cross-cultural communication. The purpose of his examination is to demonstrate that Herder's interpretive method marks a radical departure from the semiotic Enlightenment discourse of interpretation as well as from the "Romantic hermeneutics" practiced prominently by critics like Dilthey and Gadamer.[90] Herder's divinatory theory of reading, the act of feeling one's way into the spirit of the past has an estranging effect upon the subject, facing it with its "limits and boundaries." According to Leventhal, this is not to say that the divinatorial practice rules out the subject's ability to span the vast gulf between different cultures but that Herder imagines the hermeneutic process as a conflicting and highly instable one.[91]

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[89] According to Oergel's analysis, Herder links ideas regarding the representation of truth and value in art to public recognition and approval: "perfection in art" that is "the state when the artwork perfectly expresses and represents the culture it originates from, when culture is first crystallized into art, creating identity, and eventually tradition." While the art work's normative value is contingent upon its recognition within a specific time and culture, its structural value is universal; it remains "as a representative ideal of that culture" and survives the currents of historical change. With his distinction between an art work's structural and cultural specific value, with his claim that the culture of antiquity retains its status as an ideal by virtue of its organic qualities, Herder escapes a limited notion of historicism and reintegrates normative thinking in his organic understanding of historical processes (Oergel, *Culture and Identity*, 4, 21-26).
Karl Menges also makes a strong case against the assumption that Herder remains caught in the relativist rhetoric of the Querelle, formulating a counter-Enlightenment position. According to Menges, Herder rejects both sides of the battle and considers progress as a continuous sequence of "Kulturentelechien." The different ages of cultural development are related to one another by periods in which civilizations fully realize their inherent productive potentials. Compare Karl Menges, "Herder und die 'Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes': Eine wirkungsgeschichtliche Replik," in *Ethische contra ästhetische Legitimation von Literatur. Traditionalismus und Modernismus. Kontroversen um den Avantgardismus*, ed. Walter Haug and Wilfried Barner (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1986), 156-159.

[90] Leventhal argues that what Herder shares in common with Lessing and the early Romantics is a fundamental doubt in the plausibility of the semiotic Enlightenment discourse on interpretation figuring prominently in writings from Christian Wulff, Johann Martin Chladenius and Georg Friedrich Meier to the work of Kant (Leventhal, *Disciplines of Interpretation*, 13). In these works, interpretation is premised

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in the assumption that the interpreter discloses "the intrinsic value, comprehensibility, authenticity, rationality and truth of discourse" (Leventhal, *Disciplines of Interpretation*,18, comp. also 7); Herder and a number of likeminded critics, by contrast, undercut these "underlying 'rules' of Enlightenment discourse – a discourse of transparency, ideality and immediacy" by advancing a new understanding of hermeneutics. The key characteristic of this different understanding is that it "engage[s] in an interpretation of the interpretive process itself;" Leventhal observes a "'folding back' of interpretation upon itself" in writings by Herder or Friedrich Schlegel and analyses how they thereby set themselves off from the Enlightenment discourse of interpretation (Leventhal, *Disciplines of Interpretation*, 7). Moreover, Leventhal set Herder off from what he calls a "naïve sense of divinatorial reading" by critics like Dilthey or Gadamer (Leventhal, *Disciplines of Interpretation*, 196-198). According to Leventhals's analysis of their "Romantic hermeneutics," the empathic practice fosters the continuation of "Geist," of a "universal historical spirit that underlies all human expression;" they see in "hermeneutics the task of arriving at that spirit through textual interpretation" (Leventhal, *Disciplines of Interpretation*, 13). Through his divinatorial understanding, the interpreter's task is to fully reconstitute the text's underlying meaning and to enter into a reconciliatory relationship with it. Such a hermeneutic concept foregoes what Leventhal underscores as "intellectually revolutionary moments in Herder's writing," that is his demonstration that while "cultures can be interpreted in principle because they are linguistically constituted," processes of interpretation always posit conflicts between discursive systems and are a highly fluctuating undertaking (Leventhal, *Disciplines of Interpretation*, 203-204).
For a "Romantic hermeneutic" appraisals of Herder's work which both follows the tradition of Schleiermacher and Dilthey while also modifying it, see Hans-Dietrich Irmscher, "Grundzüge der Hermeneutik Herders," in *Bückeburger Gespräche über Johann Gottfried Herder*, ed. Johann Gottfried Maltusch (Bückeburg: Grimme, 1973), 17-57. In his essay, Herder's divinatorial method, his concept of "Einfühlung," figures as the nodal point where the two gestures of Herder's reconstructive efforts crystallize. The purpose of his research on Herder's hermeneutics is to demonstrate that his method goes far beyond the objective to establish an emotional situation whereby the modern individual can identify with the object of his engagement. Herder's works, he argues, do not suggest that the task of hermeneutics lies only in the reconstruction and identification with some original meaning in Schleiermacher's or Dilthey's sense; but, following the debates sparked by Gadamer's *Wahrheit und Methode*, Irmscher claims that the purpose of Herder's method of interpretation is to mark out multiple ways in which the past can be of use for the present and future (Irmscher, "Grundzüge der Hermeneutik Herders," 53-55).

[91] The imaginary encounter is always transformative in a two-fold way for "neither the interpretive subject nor the aesthetic 'object' are extant in their historical individuality, already constituted, as it were, prior to any confrontation with the Other." He regards these dynamic, process-oriented characteristics of the divinatorial practice as "intellectually revolutionary moments in Herder's writing"; that is his demonstration that while "cultures can be interpreted in principle because they are linguistically constituted," processes of interpretation always posit conflicts between discursive systems and are a highly fluctuating undertaking, see Leventhal, *Disciplines of Interpretation*, 196-204.

In Leventhal's analysis, Herder's fashioning of the ancient-modern relation portends a deconstructivist hermeneutics; Oergel takes him to be modeling the relation on what she calls a structural level, and Morton views in Herder a precursor of dialectical thinking. What their arguments all share in common is that they take Herder to be deeply suspicious of any moments in which the reading subject loses sight of the limits of comprehending the lives and works of others. In fact, the argumentative models they each uncover in their respective analyses of Herder's texts suggest that his thinking is underwritten by a built-in structure of "checks and balances," disrupting any moments which imply the illusion of closure and intimacy.

To be sure, in sophisticated and compelling ways these critical studies cast into relief Herder's subtle negotiations between the anxiety of synthesis permeating all his writings and his simultaneous exploration of the translatability of cultural values. There is, however, another unexplored dimension in his thinking which these existing critical frameworks do not accommodate and which comes clearly into view when we take into consideration the extent to which the makeup and the direction of his historical investigations is shaped by his anthropological beliefs. In light of Herder's deep probing into how humans operate and what it takes to become human, these historical questions often fade into the background; when Herder lays out how modern subjects ought to form an empathic and affective relationship to distant objects, he does not judge the value and plausibility of the relation by the extent to which the subject exhibits its distance and difference from the poetic text or art work it revives. What takes center stage instead is his multi-layered examination of how classical scholarship, Greek poetic genres and the Hebrew Bible can facilitate the human imperative of self-formation through processes of imaginary world-building. The origin and development of self-formation in and of itself without any specified objectives lies at the heart of his anthropological thinking.

When Herder addresses the objective of humanity and explains what he means by "Humanität,“ then the core objective resides in the process of unfolding, training, and specialization itself. What lies at the center of Herder's "Humanitätsidee“ is the imperative of self-formation itself; the direction and end of it, however, is not specified. Drawing on the *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, Muthu makes this point very clear. Humanity, in Muthu's analysis of Herder's anthropological thinking, does not stand for a definable objective or quality but for "the sum total, and ever changing uses, of our active powers in different ages and places."[92]

If we regard Herder's negotiation of the ancient-modern relation from this angle of a philosophical anthropology, then questions concerning historical accuracy, or the limited accessibility of cultural, temporal, and spatial remoteness become less pressing. Herder's attention shifts to the question of what the engagement, of what such reconstructive efforts do for the subject, how he makes use of the past. The chapter's first part demonstrates this interest through the lens of Herder's interpretation of Winckelmann. Herder argues that Winckelmann's contribution to the field of classical scholarship lies in his personal and personifying practice. It allows him to unfold and to ground the coordinates of his own existence vis-à-vis the invention of a circle of imaginary Greek friends. In fact, Herder suggests that individual life stories like Winckelmann's constitute a formative element of the emerging discipline of classical scholarship.

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[92] Sankar Muthu, "Pluralism, Humanity, and Empire in Herder's Political Thought," in *Enlightenment against Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 235.

Herder takes Winckelmann's practice as his own point of orientation and promotes it in his writings on Greek literature as a valuable strategy. Why does Herder ascribe such significance to the use of literary texts as sites for the cultivation of personhood? In the second part of this chapter, I argue that his poetological writings on the origin of poetry provide an answer. I suggest that Herder pays so much attention to Winckelmann's practice because it echoes what he introduces in his discussion of the development of ancient poetic forms as the oldest elements of the human creation of meaning. Setting himself off from Enlightenment conceptions of how humans acquire knowledge, Herder develops his "Menschenbild" of humans as creatures whose ideas all originate in sensation and experience. We perceive the world in analogy to our sensuous, embodied existence, and ancient poetic genres like the Aesopian fable exhibit this process vividly: with its personifications of acting objects and animals, the genre provides a window into the affective and empathic mode humans employ to find meaning and orientation in the world.

With his step-by-step narrative of the fable's sensuous development, Herder draws attention to how our perception of the world is structured by the organ filtering it and the medium in which it gets expressed. Through these explications, Herder does something more than to familiarize his readership with early manifestations of human mappings of the world, and to animate individuals to use these vivid representations as springboards for their own imaginary mappings. By pointing out that narratives about the origin of poetry appear in a different light, depending on the culture we turn to and the literary genre or medium of art – be it painting, poetry, or music – we take into view, he suggests explicitly that origin questions are a highly contested matter.

This element of contest determines Herder's examinations nowhere more than in his major theological work *Vom Geist der Ebräischen Poesie*. The chapter's third part concentrates on how Herder recapitulates the same anthro-poetological considerations governing his discussion of the constitution and function of Greek poetry in his analysis of Hebrew literature. I work out how he sets up the narrative of poetic development in the context of the Oriental tradition. Much more so than in discussions of non-theological writings, he works through questions of the origin of poetry by drawing attention to a polyphony of narratives competing with one another. Of particular interest is thereby how he switches back and forth between settling and unsettling the question. Herder and his fictive speaker Eutyphron, I argue, enter the contest and actively construct narratives in which the origin of poetry is sometimes located in the structure of the Hebrew language and sometimes somewhere else.

Herder's Winckelmann, Classical Scholarship, and the Use of History

Like many of his contemporaries, Herder sets forth Winckelmann's works on classical culture as landmark investigations which determined the direction of his own undertakings in the field in major ways. The point of my analysis of Herder's engagement with Winckelmann is not for Winckelmann's sake; rather, I consider "Denkmal Johann Winkelmanns" (1777) a suitable entryway into how Herder sets up his anthropological position. Within the context of current scholarly debates over how to evaluate Winckelmann's contribution to the emerging field of classical scholarship, Herder stakes out what he considers Winckelmann's main accomplishments in the field. And in delineating these characteristics, Herder hones his own humanist approach.

The essay is Herder's response to a "Preisausschreiben," an open contest which Landgraf Friedrich II von Hessen had advertised. Upon his return from Italy, he had founded the "Fürstliche Hessische Gesellschaft der Altertümer" in Kassel in 1777; a principal objective of the society's members was to evaluate and determine Winckelmann's contributions to the discipline of classical scholarship and support further research in the field. For that purpose, they were looking for a "Lobrede auf Herrn Winckelmann, worin ausgeführt werden soll, auf welchem Punkt er die Altertumswissenschaft vorgefunden und auf welchem er sie zurückgelassen hat."[93] The eulogy was supposed to be written in the rhetorical style of the French éloge and address the state of the field as Winckelmann had found it as well as the state in which he had left it to future next generations of classical scholars.

Readers, however, who expect a response that lines up conveniently with the society's criteria for content and style will be disappointed by Herder's essay. He opens with a biting critique of the restrictive stylistic and linguistic guidelines, arguing that it is impossible to compose an appropriate appraisal of Winckelmann's life and work within the strict corset of these instructions. In fact, Herder goes so far as to reformulate the topic of the essay contest itself throughout his text so that it would fit what he introduces as a more adequate representation of Winckelmann's merits; instead of taking the state of the field of "Altertumswissenschaften" as his starting point, Herder organizes his essay around a quest for the relationship between Winckelmann's research and vital moments and turning points in his personal life. He takes the society's formulation "auf welchem Punkt er die Altertumswissenschaft vorgefunden und auf welchem er sie zurückgelassen hat" and replaces the disciplinary angle with a biographical one: "Wo Winkelmann anfing und wo er auförte?," "von welchem Punkt er von jeher ausging und wohin er strebte?" or "der Punkt, wo er ausging und auf den er immer zurückkam" (*FA* 2:631-635).[94]

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[93] The original French version of the topic read as follows: "L'Eloge de Mr. Winckelmann, dans lequel on fera entrer le point où il a trouvé la Science des Antiquités, et à quel point il l'a laissée." For both the French original and the German translation see Arthur Schulz, *Die Kasseler Lobschriften auf Winckelmann* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1963), 9.

Through these reformulations of the same question which Herder foregrounds by putting them in quotation marks, the memorial essay sets a clear focus: Herder assumes that the emergence of the "Altertumswissenschaften" as a discipline cannot be severed from the biographies of those who narrate it. I argue that Herder pursues two interrelated objectives by bringing together the issue of self-formation with the formation of a discipline: he seeks to uncover the ways in which Winckelmann's development of an exclusive set of assumptions about antiquity determined the formation of his personality and patterned his way of life. Moreover, his aim is to suggest that the connection between the individual and the field, as he finds it in Winckelmann's work, not only impacts the history of the individual but also the history of the field. Herder works out how Winckelmann's practice of engaging with the past generates a unique scholarly discourse, making the study of the ancients an attractive and popular field of study on a transnational scale.

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[94] See also Jürgen Dummer, "Johann Gottfried Herders Denkmal Johann Winckelmann's," *Philologia sacra et profana* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2006), 356-357; in his essay, Dummer points to Herder's deliberate distortions of the society's original question.

For a clearer understanding of the essay's two focal points, I treat them one after the other, beginning with Herder's concentration on Winckelmann's biography:

> "von welchem Punkt er von jeher ausging und wohin er strebte?" In seiner verschämtesten Armut und Niedrigkeit, ohne einige bestimmte Aussicht, wohin er je kommen? und wozu ihn das Glück brauchen würde? strebt er schon mit dem edlen Stolze, mit dem unbefriedigten aber auch unauslöschlichen Gefühl für Freiheit, Freundschaft, Einfalt und Sinn der Alten... – Er dürstet nach dem gesunden Menschenverstande und simpeln Sinne der Alten, nach ihrer einfachen Art des Lebens zu genießen und dasselbe rühmlich, zu einem edeln Zwecke, doch etwas in der Welt ausgerichtet zu haben und nachzulassen ein Denkmal seiner! so sein Leben zu gebrauchen. Lasset es sein, dass dies ein Traum, dass es Romantische Ideen waren; gnug, sie waren auch in den folgenden Zeiten der Geist und die Wurzel seines Lebens; ohne sie wäre nie ein Winkelmann worden. (*FA* 2:634)

With the aid of his imaginary reconstructions of an ideal ancient life world, Winckelmann is able to counterbalance and compensate for the toils and hardships of his own poverty-ridden existence. The parallel world he builds for himself – "Er betrachtete sich als einen Alten, der wie sie schreiben, leben und denken sollte" (*FA* 2:635) – provides him with a spiritual home, and gives him the feeling of belonging he missed in the social and intellectual environment in which he came of age. In Herder's eyes, Winckelmann’s imaginary act of displacement, his invention of a home in a bygone life world make up the roots of his existence; without the ancients’ companionship “wäre nie ein Winkelmann worden.” He experiences his life through the eyes of an imaginary other and can thereby carve out his own place and craft himself a lasting “Denkmal” with his writings.

Herder measures the value of Winckelmann’s work by the extent to which it has helped him take on the unfolding and cultivation of his selfhood as a lifelong project; his primary interest lies in illuminating how Winckelmann uses his immersion into a bygone era as a vehicle and solid point of orientation for his own self-realization: “Dieser Sinn und Geist für die Alten, auch im Gebrauch der Gelehrsamkeit und in der Anwendung seines Lebens, war Winkelmanns Wurzel“ (*FA* 2:635). Interestingly, in light of the determination and success with which he makes use of the ancients, it is no pressing concern for Herder that these reconstructions are imaginary ones: “Lasset es sein, dass dies ein Traum, dass es Romantische Ideen waren, sie waren auch in den folgenden Zeiten der Geist und die Wurzel seines Lebens.”

What justifies the idealist character of Winckelmann’s renewal strategy lies not only in Herder’s observation that it gives his life a foundation and direction; he also values Winckelmann’s approach from a historical point of view, arguing that in light of the cultural relicts’ material state, his selective and imaginary mode appears historically adequate:

> Und wie fing ers denn an? Er schrieb statt Geschichte, die nicht geschrieben werden kann, ein historisches Lehrgebäude….Unvollständig mag das allerdings sein, es ist mehr als unvollständig, Idealisch: so viel ich aber einsehe, ists bei

> dem großen Mangel von Namen, Nachrichten und würklicher Geschichte, das einzige Mittel zu einem Ganzen, das den Nutzen oder vielleicht mehr als den Nutzen erreicht, den uns die dürftige Geschichte gäbe. So wie schon Aristoteles gesagt hat, daß die Poesie Philosophischer sei, als die Geschichte; so ist ein solches Idealgebäude, wenns nur für sich selbst auf guten Gründen beruhet, lehrreicher, als Namen und Jahrzahlen sein würden. (*FA* 2:656-657)

In this passage, Herder brings together both anthropological and historical observations so as to make a strong case for the incomplete and idealist nature of Winckelmann's "historisches Lehrgebäude." In his function as a historian, Herder applauds Winckelmann's departure from the kind of historiography practiced by antiquarians. Their method of marshaling a broad range of evidence and of adhering to a systematic and unselective study is an impossible undertaking in light of the boundless abundance and the blurred, fragmentary state of ancient artifacts. More pressing than his historical objections, however, are his humanist ones: an assembly of names and dates can hardly serve a productive purpose. As at other points throughout his works, Herder recalls the authority of Aristotle when he argues that an "Idealgebäude," that is a well reasoned imaginary construction as that of Winckelmann, does a better service to the individual than historical data collections.

My focus on Herder's interest in the role of the past for the cultivation of selfhood is certainly not intended to gloss over passages in which he problematizes Winckelmann's work and calls attention to areas of his scholarship which call for further investigation and revision.[95] Rather, I want to highlight those unexplored facets of his thinking in which he puts historical considerations into the service of his humanist project of self-formation. It is remarkable how he directs his readers' attention to the value of Winckelmann's "Idealgebäude" even when he takes a critical view of Winckelmann's thinking; this dynamic figures most prominently in his discussion of Winckelmann's idealization of the Greeks as the inventors of art. On the one hand, Herder critiques his disregard for the Greeks' indebtedness to other cultures, particularly the Egyptians: "Der große Verehrer der Griechen nimmt an: 'sie…haben sich ihre Kunst selbst erfunden, sie sein einem fremden Volke nichts schuldig." (*FA* 2:658) Winckelmann's invention of a birthplace for art is premised on the exclusion of other historical relations:

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[95] In "Winckelmänner der Poesie: Herders und Friedrich Schlegels Anknüpfung an die Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums," *Deutsche Vierteljahresschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 77, no. 4 (2003): 548-563, Stefan Matuschek argues that Herder's concept of history is incompatible with

> "…aus ihrem Boden waren die Griechen doch nicht gewachsen, sie winken selbst, insonderheit in ihrer Kultur, auf Asien und Ägypten. Diese hatten Abgötterei, Kunst und Baukunst, da Griechenland noch in Barbarei lag….Die ersten Kunstwerke der Griechen waren aus Asien oder Asien nahe....Die Ähnlichkeit, die sich zwischen dem alten Griechischen und Aegyptischen Styl findet, ist offenbar und niemand kann sie leugnen." (*FA* 2:660-661)

No one can deny the affinities between Greek and Egyptian culture. Interestingly, however, Winckelmann's ignorance of these connections does not detract from the value of his work, because Herder's analysis suggests on the other hand that his invention of the origin of art in Greece is "idealisch wahr"; it is true because Winckelmann in a way does nothing else than what the oldest cultures did themselves: they invented an order and an origin, a set of roots from the messiness of historical

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Winckelmann's "selbstgemachte[r] idealische[r] Ordnung;" although one is easily led into thinking that Herder is supportive of Winckelmann's approach to the past, it is a misleading assumption. The reason for Herder's positive appraisel, Matuschek suggests, lies in the generic conventions of of the French éloge.

material to orient themselves in the world and to create an indigenous tradition, and that is good because the quest for *the* origin is a bottomless and mind-numbing one.[96]

At this point, we can see the different angles from which Herder supports and authorizes Winckelmann's idealizing reconstructions, which serve his orientation and self-formation: the material condition of the cultural relicts legitimizes his practice. Moreover, his imaginary practice reiterates in modern times and on an individual scale processes of global cultural identity formation (which I will return to in the next section of this chapter).

The most pressing question that arises for now is where and how, in Herder's eyes, Winckelmann's mode of putting his scholarship into the service of his self-fashioning impacts the history of the discipline. Gathering from the response Herder's essay received from the "Gesellschaft der Altertümer," one gains the impression that his exploration of the connection between Winckelmann's life and the ways his reinventions of the past formed classical scholarship did not meet a receptive audience. Herder lost the contest against the Göttingen philologist Christian Gottlob Heyne; in a secret vote, the members of the society voted unanimously for Heyne's "Lobschrift auf Winckelmann." Unlike Herder's eulogy, Heyne's "Lobschrift" focuses on the question and follows the instructions. Heyne highlights shortcomings in Winckelmann's works and suggests that the imaginary reconstructions are his way of compensating for his lack of knowledge and familiarity with the most up to date scientific literature.[97] From Heyne's essay and from the society's refusal to engage with Herder's argument, one is led to assume that what he holds to be Winckelmann's most valuable contribution to the field did not resonate with contemporary learned audiences. To draw this conclusion, however, would be wrong. Herder was certainly not alone in suggesting that a personal and idealizing practice like Winckelmann's deserves to be taken seriously because it constitutes a significant element in the shaping of the self-understanding of the emerging discipline.

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[96] See *FA* 2:658-659 and here especially the following passage: "Die Frage ist hier: wer machte in dem was Kunstwerk ist, als solchem, ersten Fortschritt?...Endlich, muss man sich auch nicht die Schwierigkeiten erschweren und vermehren, wie Ein Volk aus andre haben würken, etwas von Einem Volk aufs andre habe kommen können? sonst macht man sich gegen die lichteste Sache Zweifel und gegen die leichteste Schwierigkeiten. Zuletzt wird jede Bewegung unmöglich."

In "The Potter's Daughter's Sons: German Classical Scholarship and the Language of Love Circa 1800," Güthenke observes that from the beginning "the life stories of individual scholars and institutions form a guiding paradigm" in the consolidation of classical scholarship as a discipline; "the biographical and personal have played a significant part in how the discipline looks at itself."[98] She investigates this link between the personal and the emergence of the field of classics in texts by Winckelmann, Herder, Schlegel, Humboldt, Wolf, Boeckh, and Schleiermacher; while some of these figures determined the course and program of the field's professionalization directly by means of their institutional affiliations, others were not classical scholars in the professional sense. Both, however, had an equally significant impact on the consolidation and progress of the Altertumswissenschaften as a discipline whose historiography needs to be considered in terms of the individuals who shape it.

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[97] See Dummer's comparative analysis of Heyne's and Winckelmann's essays, *FA* 2:354-355.

[98] Constanze Güthenke, "The Potter's Daughter's Sons: German Classical Scholarship and the Language of Love Circa 1800," *Representations* 109 (2010): 122-147.

More specifically, what the works by these figures share in common is “the conception of the ancient past as a quasi-human figure vis-à-vis its observer”; in their accounts of antiquity, these scholars employ strategies of personification and express their reconstitutions in a contemporary language of interpersonal affection, attraction, and intimacy.[99] Against the backdrop of her observation, Güthenke develops her central claim that this language of love and the imagery of affect has shaped individuals as much as the scholarly discourse that was establishing itself.

Since at least the outbreak of the *Querelle*, Güthenke states, it is clear that the state of classical scholarship has had an enormous impact on the self-understanding of modern societies. What is distinct about the field’s consolidation in Germany, however, is a turn toward individual experience; with the rise of the idea of Bildung the focus lies on how the engagement with classical antiquity can facilitate individual self-formation. While it is no news that classicism has significantly informed the conception of Bildung, critics have not considered how “Bildung and its cultivation of particular attachments also informed classical scholarship’s model of itself.”[100] Güthenke demonstrates how reconstructions of the past structured around imaginary intimate interpersonal encounters have shaped the discipline and its practitioners. The discourse of love links the scholar and the object of his study through a “rhetoric of exclusivity,” and affirms thereby the singularity of the individual and the autonomy of the discipline.[101]

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[99] Güthenke, 122.

[100] Güthenke, 129. “The study of antiquity established itself as a discipline that put a high value on the individual and self-reflexivity, that encouraged strategies of personifying especially Greek antiquity, and that in turn also inflected the self-understanding of the discipline and its practitioners, suggesting a model of individual development as the default approach to interpreting the past and the pursuit of classical scholarship alike. In other words, not only did classical antiquity inform the conception of *sentimental* Bildung, but *sentimental* Bildung and its cultivation of particular attachments also informed classical scholarship’s model of itself” (Güthenke, 122-123).

Güthenke does not discuss Herder's Winckelmann essay, but "Denkmal Johann Winkelmanns" addresses exactly the mutually transformative relationship Güthenke observes between self-formation and the emerging scholarly discourse. In Herder's analysis, Winckelmann's mode of establishing a relation to the past is the vehicle through which he constitutes not only himself in a distinctive way but also the field of classical studies; and it is this dynamic which he wants to bring to the attention of the members of the society for "Altertumswissenschaften."

Right in his essay's opening paragraph, Herder highlights Winckelmann's unique "Schreibart" in which he invents antiquity: "Er ist in der Zahl der Wenigen, die den Deutschen Namen auch Gegenden schätzbar gemacht, wo man ihn sonst unter dem Namen der Goten zu begreifen gewohnt ist…Die Schreibart seiner Schriften wird bleiben, so lange die deutsche Sprache dauert; ein großer Teil ihres Inhalts und ihr Geist wird sie überleben." (*FA* 2:630) Herder predicts a long survival of Winckelmann's style, of his innovative mode of crafting language; he writes that Winckelmann has expressed his skill nowhere else in his works more beautifully and captivatingly than in his famous debut study on the theme of imitation in Greek works of art. His *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke* (1755) has a programmatic function:

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[101] Güthenke, 133-134. "Wolf's 1782 edition and commentary on Plato's *Symposium* is, in this context, a good case study for the way the rhetoric of romantic love, in tandem with a focus on the personality of the scholar, permeates his actual scholarship, too. Wolf's lasting fame as a classical scholar rested not only on the content of his scholarship but also on the fact that he cultivated his own persona as a visionary scholar" (Güthenke, 136).

Herder designates it as both the “Keim” of Winckelmann’s own life as well as the key work for future scholarly studies in the field in Germany and abroad.[102]

Herder points out precisely how Winckelmann’s work formed the scholarly discourse in pioneering ways, making the study of antiquity an attractive and widely popular field:

> Da zaubertest Du dich liebevoll ins alte Griechenland, in schöne aber verlebte Zeiten, liehest dem toten Marmor, der sich in Deiner Brust beseelte, *Deine* Ideen von Heldenruhm, Schönheit und Liebe, und pflücktest von ihrem erstarrten Busen die Blume des Ruhms und des Genusses im Leben. Du strecktest Deinen Arm in die Ferne, um Freundschaft zu finden, Griechische Freundschaft, die Du Dir wünschtest. (*FA* 2:671)

The relation Winckelmann builds is a personal one; feeling himself into the foreign cultural world, he treats its objects of art like individuals, and invests them with feelings of love. He revives the dead marble figures by imparting them with *his* ideas of beauty, love, and friendship and transforms the experience of his imaginary friendships into an unparalleled personal style, into what Herder calls his “Schreibart.”

According to Herder, it is this language of affect and friendship which had a vital impact on how he himself and future generations would experience and revive the past. To read about antiquity in a language so personal and filled with youthful love and ardor conveys the impression, Herder notes, that the *Gedanken* are addressed personally to oneself; he compares his reading experience to the reception of a bride’s letter: “Ich las sie [Winckelmann’s *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke*] mit der jugendlichen Empfindung eines heitern Morgens, wie den Brief einer Braut von fernher, aus einer verlebten glücklichen Zeit, aus einem glücklichen Himmelsstriche" (*FA* 2:632-633). A language filled with the emotion of love bestows Winckelmann's representations with an aura of beginning and exclusivity; Herder compiles metaphors evoking images of beginning such as "Duftvolle Jugendblüte," "Keim," "Knospe," "Morgen," or "Quelle" to describe the impression Winckelmann's work left him with.

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[102] See *FA* 2:644

Engaging with antiquity through the lens of Winckelmann's language of friendship and pristine freshness leads one into thinking that nobody has imagined the works of the past in the ways oneself does here and now. The strategies of personalizing and personifying antiquity give modern individuals a stage on which to invent themselves in conversation with an imaginary other. Moreover, by forging an original perspective on classical culture and by working it into an equally original language, critics like Winckelmann have contributed to the recognition, consolidation and spreading of classical scholarship in major ways. Herder concludes his essay by announcing that he will follow in Winckelmann's footsteps: "so erlaubt mir die Bescheidenheit nur, auf Winkelmanns Spur zu bleiben" (*FA* 2:653). Indeed, as I will demonstrate, both the issue of self-fashioning through personal investigations of past cultures in a language of love and the question of how such investigations shape a discipline underwrite Herder's own examinations.

Personified Beginnings: Arguing Animals, Grumpy Trees, and the Birth of Poetry

Unlike his Weimar Classics colleagues Schiller, Goethe and Wieland, Herder did not gain recognition by writing canon-forming works of fiction. Instead, he concentrated his energies on collecting, translating, and reworking the literary legacies of cultures from around the globe, beginning with the earliest ones. The main body of his capacious output consists of mythical stories, folk songs, and poetry of various origin. What makes these collections fascinating resources in the first place are the ways in which Herder introduces and interprets them. Applying tools of historical and philological criticism, he treats these materials as media that tell us how humanity's earliest cultures experienced the world, how they found orientation and constructed meaning. Ancient poetry, he suggests, is a captivating window into the diversity of the oldest expressions of human world-building.

A widely popular genre in the Enlightenment which, according to Herder, stages and performs these processes particularly lucidly is the fable; he designates it as a "Migniaturstück der großen Dichtkunst" (*FA* 4:1320), a composition which in the most condensed fashion introduces its readers to basic characteristics of how humans create and engage with the world they inhabit. Herder collected fables from the Greek and Oriental tradition and uses them throughout many of his writings as springboards for extensive theoretical reflections about the origin, nature and function of poetry and other art forms in ancient and modern times. In his crucial essay *Über Bild, Dichtung und Fabel* (1798), the genre figures as a *pars pro toto* for how the study of ancient poetry and art can function as a vehicle, fostering individual development and a vibrant modern cultural life.

Because of the paradigmatic status which the fable inhabits in Herder's work, it lends itself as a hook to exploring questions the "Denkmal" essay on Winckelmann raised: why does Herder put such high value on strategies of personifying antiquity, of projecting feelings of love and friendship onto inanimate objects for the purpose of their imaginary revival? Why is he supportive of Winckelmann's idealized accounts of the Greeks as the inventors of beauty in art, representing his "Idealgebäude" as a nodal point for Winckelmann's development and crucial for the consolidation and spreading of classical scholarship? I argue that answers to these questions are bound up with Herder's idea of man and his theory of how humans obtain knowledge. I begin by putting into focus the premises and characteristics of Herder's concept of the evolution of knowledge; in a second step, I concentrate on Herder's establishment of parallels between what he takes to be the basic practices humans employ to create meaning on the one hand and the content and compositional structure of the fable on the other. This context, I suggest, illuminates why Herder values Winckelmann's modes of reviving antiquity.

Ultimately, the objective of my analysis is to show that for Herder the primary modern function of ancient genres like the fable lies in honing the individual's capacity of analogical thinking. Throughout *Über Bild, Dichtung und Fabel,* he designates with "Analogie" processes of how humans continuously shape, reshape and enhance their ideas by actively engaging their senses; in discussing the Aesopian fable and poetry of the age of myth, Herder highlights how the senses operate and how they mediate and structure experience. He points out that from the outset, questions regarding the origin of the arts dovetailed with the ability of individuals and different cultures to represent their ideas and perceptions in different media of art. With these examinations, I argue, Herder seeks to raise awareness of the inexhaustibility of modes of experience and representation and inspire an active cultivation of the different senses. Finally, his aim is to prompt his contemporaries to intervene in the battle of rival narratives about the origin of the arts in which the different cultures he examines invented themselves.

Drawing on many of his earlier works – most importantly, the pioneering *Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache* (1772) – Herder premises his multi-step examination of humanity's beginnings in *Über Bild, Dichtung und Fabel* on the idea that humans found themselves put into a situation in which they had to invent for themselves poetry in order to compensate for a basic lack: "Der Mensch erfindet nur aus Armut, weil er nicht hat: er wähnt und dichtet, weil er nicht weiß" (*FA* 4:645). In Herder's eyes, man is a "Mängelwesen," as a wanting creature; in his treatise on the origin of language he argues that what distinguishes humans from animals is that the former are deficient creatures who are born with unfocused instincts and unspecialized skills. To different degrees, animal senses are all programmed toward particular activities and the execution of a specific set of skills. In contrast to animals, with their goal oriented sensory organization, humans find themselves equipped with unfocused senses and lack of specific talents. A bird is born with the ability to assemble nests and bees have always known how to build cells and spiders how to weave the most complex webs; humans, however, have no developed talents whatsoever when they are born. The human child with its impoverished instincts and undefined senses appears to be nature's most helpless and orphaned being.[103]

This situation of lack, however, also has an upside: their underdeveloped senses free humans from being confined to one particular realm in nature and from performing a predetermined number of activities: "Wenn der Mensch Vorstellungskräfte hat, die nicht auf den Bau einer Honigzelle…bezirkt sind…so bekommen sie eben damit, weitere Aussicht" (*FA* 1:716). The lack of attachment of our senses to one particular sphere enables freedom of choice; it is up to us to decide toward which ends we develop our capacities. We are forced to build our world, create meaning and develop our own coordinates of orientation.

Building and elaborating on his explications in the language essay, Herder details in the opening paragraphs of *Über Bild, Dichtung und Fabel* exactly how he imagines such constantly active processes of human knowledge production and world designing. The senses, he suggests, are our fundamental mode of access to the world and humans recover their knowledge about things within the complex web of experience: “Der Mensch ist ein so zusammengesetztes, künstliches Wesen, dass, Trotz aller Anstrengung, in ihm nie ein ganz einfacher Zustand möglich ist (*FA* 4:633). As in earlier works, notably in the fourth volume of his *Kritische Wäldchen* (1769) and in *Plastik* (1778), his thinking about sensory knowledge is a broadening and deepening of the line of argumentation set out by Baumgarten in the *Aesthetica*.[104] Herder departs from the idea that the capacity of reason can be regarded as separate from sensible experience; he drastically revises the place of logic by arguing that we develop our cognitive skills not in abstraction from the senses but, as with other skills, mediated through the senses. We obtain all our ideas as embodied, sensuous beings.

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[103] See Johann Gottfried Herder, "Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache," in *FA* 1:695-810. For his idea of humans as "Mängelwesen," the following passages are crucial: "Und wenn endlich Sinne und Vorstellungen auf Einen Punkt gerichtet sind, was kann anders, als Instinkt daraus werden? Aus ihnen also erkläret sich die Empfindsamkeit, die Fähigkeiten und Triebe der Tiere nach ihren Arten und Stufen…Der Mensch hat keine so einförmige und enge Sphäre, wo nur Eine Arbeit auf ihn warte…Seine Sinne und Organisation sind nicht auf Eins geschärft: er hat Sinne für alles…Seine Seelenkräfte sind über die Welt verbreitet; keine Richtung seiner Vorstellungen auf ein Eins: mithin kein Kunsttrieb, keine Kunstfertigkeit" (713); see also: "Die Biene sumset, wie sie sauget; der Vogel singt wie er nistet—aber wie spricht der Mensch von Natur? Gar nicht!...Ich nehme bei einem neugebornen Kinde das Geschrei seiner empfindsamen Maschine aus; sonst ists stumm; es äußert weder Vorstellungen noch Triebe durch Töne, wie doch jedes Tier in seiner Art; bloß unter Tiere gestellet, ists also das verwaisetste Kind der Natur. Nackt und bloß, schwach und dürftig, schüchtern und unbewaffnet…Mit einer so zerstreuten geschwächten Sinnlichkeit, mit so unbestimmten, schlafenden Fähigkeiten, mit so geteilten und ermatteten Trieben geboren…so verwaiset und verlassen, dass es selbst nicht mit einer Sprache begabt ist, seine Mängel zu äußern" (715). For a comprehensive analysis of the function of Herder's idea of man as "Mängelwesen" for his theory about the origin of language see Ulrich Gaier, *Herders Sprachphilosophie und Erkenntniskritik* (Stuttgart: Friedrich Frommann Verlag, 1988), 75-156; Georg W. Bertram, "Herders antireduktionistische Sprachphilosophie," in *Herder im Spiegel der Zeiten. Verwerfungen der Rezeptionsgeschichte und Chancen einer Relektüre*, ed. Tilman Borsche (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2006), 227-246.

More precisely, Herder connects all acts of producing knowledge with moments in which we bring the continuous stream of impressions filtering through our senses – “Der Mensch…schwimmt in einem Meer von Eindrücken der Gegenstände” (*FA* 4:633) – to a temporary halt:

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[104] On Herder’s intervention in discussions over the status of the emerging discipline of aesthetics, see Jason Gaiger’s introduction to his translation of Herder’s “Plastik”: *Sculpture: Some Observations on Shape and Form from Pygmalion’s Creative Dream* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002): “Whereas Baumgarten sought to incorporate aesthetics as a second domain of inquiry alongside logic, Herder recognizes that this new science has important consequences for logic itself. Rather than functioning as an ancillary discipline, the study of aesthetics ultimatively subverts the attempt to keep the two domains apart. For Herder, a theory of ideas conceived in abstraction from the operations of the senses must necessarily be deficient.” Sensible knowledge cannot be grasped as an “analogy of reason,” nor can the categories through which it is analyzed be taken from traditional logic. Instead, we need to effect a reversal approach, replacing the “nominal” definitions of logic with a philosophy that traces our ideas back to their origin in sensation and experience (8-9). See also John Zammito, *Kant, Herder, and the Birth of Anthropology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 318-330 and Hans Adler, *Die Prägnanz des Dunklen: Gnoseologie, Ästhetik, Geschichtsphilosophie bei Johann Gottfried Herder* (Hamburg: F. Meiner, 1990), 49-149.

> Alle Gegenstände unsrer Sinne nämlich werden nur dadurch unser, dass wir sie gewahr werden, d.i. sie mit dem Gepräge unsres Bewusstseins, mehr oder minder hell und lebhaft bezeichnen. In dem Walde sinnlicher Gegenstände, der mich umgibt, finde ich mich nur dadurch zurecht und werde über das Chaos der auf mich zudringenden Empfindungen Herr und Meister, dass ich Gegenstände von anderen trenne, dass ich ihnen Umriss, Maß und Gestalt gebe, mithin im Mannigfaltigen mir Einheit schaffe und sie mit dem Gepräge meines inneren Sinnes, als ob dieser ein Stempel der Wahrheit wäre, lebhaft und zuversichtlich bezeichne. (*FA* 4:635)

The creation of knowledge is bound up with acts of recognition, isolation and appropriation. This opening scene of Herder's essay on the development of the fable recalls the scenario from the language treatise in which he imagines that man acquires the capacity to speak and develop a sense of logic during an encounter with a sheep.[105] Like the moment of "Besonnenheit" and "aufmerken" in which the figure in the treatise takes notice of the sheep (*FA* 1:719-726), "gewahr werden" in this passage designates the instance when one brings the interactive, continuously productive relationship between the senses and external stimuli to a momentary standstill. We get to know objects by isolating, categorizing and designating specific characteristics from the overwhelming flood of impressions we take in through our perceptive organs, and by giving a selected number of objects "Umriss, Maß und Gestalt"; Herder describes these acts of appropriation with verbs like "metaschematisieren," "übersetzen," "anempfinden," and, most importantly, "prägen."

Throughout his works, Herder favors the term "prägen," to coin, when he explores the particular ways in which humans experience their surroundings, isolate a number of specificities and form ideas and concepts about them. In the passage above, he suggests that it is the “Gepräge meines inneren Sinnes,” the unique structure and composition of man’s senses, which determines how he isolates the perceptions streaming in on him. Crucially, “Der Mensch siehet nur, wie der Mensch siehet” – the ways in which we process perceptions and coin them are underwritten by what Herder calls the law of analogy, meaning that we make sense of the world and organize it in proportion to how we experience it through the lens of our embodied, sensuous existence.

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[105] See Gaier, *Herders Sprachphilosophie und Erkenntniskritik* for a comprehensive analysis of the sheep scene and of the characteristics of Herder's narrative of the origin of language in relation his discussion of multiple other contemporary language theories, esp. 100-119.

He distinguishes major elements – “Hauptstücke des Habitus unserer Empfindungsweise“ – which direct the human mode of perception. First, what mediates our perspective on the world is the category of personhood, of subjectivity:

> Alles was da ist, sehen wir wirken; und schließen mit Recht, dass der Wirkung eine wirkende Kraft, mithin ein Subjekt zum Grunde liegt; und da wir Personen sind, so dichten wir uns an allem Wirkenden der Naturkräfte persönliche Wesen. Daher nun jene Belebung der ganzen Natur, jene Gespräche mit allen Dingen um uns her...jene Prosopopöien und Personifikationen bei allen Völkern der Erde...sobald unser Geist in andern Organen die Natur sähe, würde er notwendig anders klassifizieren. Der sinnliche Mensch kann nun nicht anders, als sinnlich ordnen; und indem er in alles Wirkende seine eigene Wirkungskraft hinüberträgt, so erscheinen ihm Götter in allen Elementen. (*FA* 4:643)

Assuming that how we experience the world holds equally true for others, we imagine the relation between ourselves and the animate and inanimate beings surrounding us as a relation of correspondence. We personify nature, communicate with it and imagine that the creatures inhabiting it and the life forces permeating it interact in modes that are in accordance with our own. We customize and personalize the world and see it in the light of who we are; if our sensuous organs were furnished differently, we would perceive and organize it differently.[106] This argument regarding the perspectivism of human perception constitutes a core element of Herder's idea of man; in his eyes, man's productive fashioning of the living world around him is not a sign of ignorance and primitivism. Rather, ancient myths in which stars, winds, clouds and the sun speak to each other, and mountains and rivers are infused with a soul and colonized by spirits, are a vivid window into how humans took on the challenge and compensated for their wanting existence; these stories exhibit ur-scenarios of human world-creating.[107]

Herder draws attention to how these modes of personifying nature and of populating it with spirits and gods are organized along the human gender division and conceptualized in a language of affect: "So natürlich es dem Menschen scheinet, dass alles Wirkende Person sei: so kann er sich auch keine andre Art der Wirkung als die in seiner Natur liegt, Tätigkeit und Leiden, Empfangen und Geben, Liebe und Haß, am Ende nichts als die beiden Geschlechter denken, in welche die Natur ihre belebtesten Wesen geteilt hat…Und so ward der Himmel mit Göttern und Göttinnen, so wurden die Elemente mit Wesen erfüllt, die sich einander fliehen oder anziehen, einander fördern

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[106] Herder stresses throughout his essay that if humans were equipped with different perceptive organs, the entire network of relations in which we organize the world would look different; for a creature without feeling, for instance, the world would be nothing but a dead mass and for a chaotic mind a lawless, colorful chaos, see *FA* 4:641.

[107] On the mode and functions of personifications, see particularly *FA* 4:649, 653-655. See also Jürgen Brummack, "Herders Theorie der Fabel," in *Johann Gottfried Herder, 1744-1803*, ed. Gerhard Sauder (Hamburg: F. Meiner, 1987): "Das mythische Zeitalter…ist [bei Herder] nicht mehr nur eine Stufe in der Geschichte des Geistes und fortwirkende Grundlage der späteren Kulturentwicklung, sondern zugleich Modell menschlicher Erkenntnis überhaupt, das letztlich immer gültig bleibt. Denn alle Gegenstandswahrnehmung kann, weil nach Maßgabe der beteiligten Sinne und nach der Regel des im Mannigfaltigen Einheit stiftenden inneren Sinnes erfolgt, ein Dichten, ein Bilderschaffen genannt werden…In allem Wirklichen setzen wir 'eine wirkende Kraft' voraus und tragen unvermeidlich 'unsere Empfindungs- und Denkart' analogisch 'in die Gegenstände hinüber,' die für den Mythos typische Personifizierung ist nu rein besonders anschaulicher, noch unmittelbar einsehbarer Fall," 257-258.

oder zerstören,“ (*FA* 4:644). In these mythological narratives, humans assign gender categories and posit emotions of love, suffering, joy, and hatred as a central motor to establish contact with what is other than the self. Another instance where we can witness such basic analogical patterning of human bonding with their surroundings every day is among children; in their play they imagine objects as living figures and direct emotions toward them.[108]

According to Herder, in the poetic genre of the fable, this structure of analogy manifests itself in the simplest, most straightforward fashion; “Analogie,” he states, is the fable’s mother (compare *FA* 4:673). I suggest that he chose the genre to exemplify his point because it both vividly *performs* the principle of analogy and at same time it also *facilitates* the reader’s “analogische Erfindungskraft” by virtue of its polyfunctional structure. Moreover, he picked the fable over other poetic forms because it resonated with his audience: “Jeder kennt dieselbe [die Aesopische Fabel] aus gemeinen Begriffen und Beispielen” (*FA* 4:648). The animated animals stage what Herder singles out as the crucial elements of man’s orientation in the world, that is to say the representation of animals, nature’s living elements and inanimate objects as having the qualities and thoughts of a human being: “Tiere handeln in der Fabel, weil dem sinnlichen Menschen alles Wirkende in der Natur zu handeln scheinet…der Araber spricht mit seinem Roß, der Hirte mit seinem Schaf…er glaubt, sie zu verstehen und wähnt, dass sie ihn verstehen” (*FA* 4:649). Subjects assign gender identities to what is other than the self and imagine that the interactions among other beings and the conflicts and joys they share correspond to their own ways of feeling and experiencing.

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[108] Compare for example *FA* 4:643: “In der Kindheit sehen wir lange Jahre die Welt so an und in Träumen kommen uns solche Personifikationen der Kindheit häufig wieder.”

For the reader, however, the relation between the scenario with which the fable opens and the conclusions drawn from it is discontinuous. The stories and their interpretations evolved in concrete life situations of Aesop's time and the reader cannot really reproduce and relate to them (see *FA* 4:657). The relation between the two parts of the story is polyfunctional but it is precisely this ambiguity between the two parts which Herder regards as the genre's most productive feature; it challenges the reader to practice his most important capacity, his "analogische Erfindungskraft."[109] The reading subject trains his mind's plasticity by transforming and applying what he has read to similar situations: "Ich kenne keine nützlichere Bildung menschlicher Seelenkräfte, als die Übung der Analogie, ähnliche Fälle zu erdenken und in ihnen das Ähnliche auf treffende Art genau zu bezeichnen" (*FA* 4:661). The lack of cohesion between story and the interpretation of the staged scene sharpens the reader's thinking within networks and structures of affinity.

By promulgating such a notion of Bildung, Herder suggests a modern use of the fable that works with and not against a conception of human perception and cognition as emphatically active, productive processes. In advancing his position, he departs from the didactic purpose which Lessing, among other prominent Enlightenment figures, had assigned to the genre.[110] In both "Aesop und Lessing" (1768) and in *Über Bild, Dichtung und Fabel*, Herder infers from Lessing's "Abhandlungen über die Fabel" (1759) that he determines the purpose of the stories to be the communication of a normative moral statement which the story stages so clearly and unambiguously that it does not leave the reader in any doubt over how to understand its point of instruction. In Herder's eyes, the objective of Lessing's *Abhandlungen* relies on the kind of understanding of how humans learn which he himself rejects; Lessing's concept is premised on the division between rational reflection and sensory knowledge which Herder discards by claiming that humans learn everything through their senses. Lessing assumes that learning can be separated from experience when he suggest that the point of the genre is to communicate a normative moral statement; his didactic objective relies on the idea that man's cognitive capacities can be conceived in abstraction from our senses and disengaged from real life experience.[111]

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[109] "er gewöhnte sich in der Fabel selbst das Wesentliche vom Unnötigen zu unterscheiden, die ganze Situation derselben praktisch anzusehen und die brauchbarste seiner Seelenkräfte, die analogische Erfindungskraft zu üben" (*FA* 4:660-661).

Herder's deconstruction of this normative didactic purpose of the fable gives rise to a reconstructive practice which makes the unfolding of one's capacities the primary objective, enabling him to put the ancient genre into the service of his "Humanitätsprojekt." In "Pluralism, Humanity, and Empire in Herder's Political Thought," Muthu provides an analysis of Herder's notion of "Humanität" which helps to sharpen the point I want to make here. Drawing on Herder's theory of humans as "Mängelwesen" and on his observation that what all humans have in common is a set of open-ended capacities, Muthu argues that the imperative of unfolding, training, and specializing one's capacities constitutes the core objective of Herder's "Humanitätsidee." Zeroing in on Herder's *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, Muthu brings into view Herder's survey of how across temporal and geographical zones, people have cultivated and exercised their potentials in manifold ways and used them toward vastly different ends: "all peoples…strive to find meaning in their lives and exercise artful and creative capacities, through their languages, customs, intimate relationships, spiritual pursuits, all of which take an almost infinite variety." Humanity, in Muthu's analysis of Herder's anthropological thinking, does not stand for a definable objective or quality but for "the sum total, and ever changing uses, of our active powers in different ages and places."[112] Herder's concept does not provide any instruction for how humans ought to make use of their capacities. The only imperative is development itself because of man's unspecialized physical and mental constitution.

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[110] On the history and reception of the fable, see Peter Hasubek, *Die Fabel: Theorie, Geschichte und Rezeption einer Gattung* (Berlin: E. Schmidt, 1982).

[111] On Herder's discussion of Lessing's "Abhandlungen," see "Aesop und Lessing," *FA* 4:1311-1322 and "Über Bild, Dichtung und Fabel" esp. *FA* 4:638, 657 .

According to Muthu, these anthropological investigations into the diverse ways in which humans have exercised their role as cultural agents constitute the backdrop against which Herder sets up his conception of humanity as a moral ideal. "The grand law of nature," writes Muthu upon quoting from book XV of the *Ideen*, is to "let man be man," to "let him mould his condition according to what he himself shall view best."[113]

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[112] Sankar Muthu, "Pluralism, Humanity, and Empire in Herder's Political Thought," in *Enlightenment against Empire* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2003), 235.

[113] Herder, *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Mankind*, trans. T. Churchill (London: J. Johnson, 1800), 440, quoted in Muthu, "Pluralism, Humanity, and Empire in Herder's Political Thought," 247. Original passage in the *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*: "In allen Zuständen und

The higher law is to respect and protect plural forms of life, to give individuals and cultures the opportunity to unfold and cultivate themselves according to their own standards.

I suggest that with his poetological writings and ancient text collections, Herder seeks to contribute to the creation of an environment which supports individuals in their efforts to develop plural forms of life. The practice of analogical thinking which he sees so vividly performed in the literatures of the past figures thereby as a key technique. Herder represents it as a cognitive tool that fosters progress in all fields of knowledge and as an exercise for humans to act out their role as cultural agents:

> Eigentlich und absolut kann der Mensch weder dichten, noch erfinden; er würde damit der Schöpfer einer neuen Welt. Was er tun kann, ist, Bilder und Gedanken paaren, sie mit dem Stempel der Analogie, insonderheit aus sich selbst bezeichnen. (*FA* 4:645)
>
> Der Geist dichtet: der bemerkende innere Sinn schafft Bilder. Er schafft sich neue Bilder, wenn die Gegenstände auch tausendmal angeschaut und besungen

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Gesellschaften hat der Mensch durchaus nichts anders im Sinn haben, nichts anders anbauen können, als Humanität, wie er sich dieselbe auch dachte. Ihr zu gut sind die Anordnungen unserer Geschlechter und Lebensalter von der Natur gemacht, dass unsre Kindheit länger daure und nur mit Hülfe der Erziehung eine Art Humanität lerne. Ihr zu gut sind auf der weiten Erde alle Lebensarten der Menschen eingerichtet, alle Gattungen der Gesellschaft eingeführt worden. Jäger oder Fischer, Hirt oder Ackermann und Bürger; in jedem Zustande lernte der Mensch Nahrungsmittel unterscheiden, Wohnungen für sich und die Seinigen errichten: er lernte für seine beiden Geschlechter Kleidungen zum Schmuck erhöhen und sein Hauswesen ordnen. Er erfand mancherlei Gesetzte und Regierungsformen, die alle zum Zweck haben wollten, dass jeder, unbefehdet vom andern, seine Kräfte üben und einen schönern, freieren Genuss des Lebens erweben könnte...Lasset uns auf den Erdstrich zurückblicken, den wir bisher durchwandert haben; in allen Einrichtungen der Völker von Sina bis Rom, in allen Mannigfaltigkeiten ihrer Verfassung, so wie in jeder ihrer Erfindungen des Krieges und Friedens, selbst bei allen Greueln und Fehlern der Nationen blieb das Hauptgesetz der Natur kenntlich: „der Mensch sei Mensch! Er bilde sich seinen Zustand nach dem, was er für das Beste erkennet.“ Hiezu bemächtigten sich die Völker ihres Landes und richteten sich ein, wie sie konnten. Aus dem Weibe und dem Staat, aus Sklaven, Kleidern und Häusern, aus Ergötzungen und Speisen, aus Wissenschaft und Kunst ist hie und da auf der Erde alles gemacht worden, was man zu seinem oder des Ganzen Besten daraus machen zu können glaubte. Überall also finden wir die Menschheit im Besitz und Gebrauch des Rechtes, sich zu einer Art von Humanität zu bilden, nachdem es solche erkannte” (*FA* 6:631-633).

> wären: denn er schaut sie mit seinen Augen an, und je treuer er sich selbst bleibt, desto eigentümlicher wird er zusammensetzen und schildern. (*FA* 4:640)
>
> Der Ursprung aller menschlichen Dichtung [ist] jener wirksame Trieb in uns, Analogien zu schaffen, mit innerem Vergnügen sie anzuerkennen und jedes Mal dadurch [unsere] Begriffe zu erweitern, zu üben, zu stärken. (*FA* 4:673)

As these passages illustrate, Herder designates invention as a process of isolating, assembling, combining, recombining and refining thoughts and experiences. The originality of a representation hinges on the cultivation of the individual's senses, on his ability to make use of them in their diversity. Each sense structures one's perceptions in a unique way depending on such factors as one's point of view, cultural environment, and the medium of representation: "Alle diese Dinge…bestimmen sich zuletzt…nach dem Standpunkt in welchem man siehet, nach dem Organ oder Ton der Empfindung, mit welchem man es zeichnet oder bemerket" (*FA* 4:641), and, according to Herder, humans should take advantage of this interactive, perpetually moving and changing relationship between the senses and their life world. It enables them to cast a unique light even on objects which others have already taken into view and represented multiple times. He encourages his readers to explore how each sense structures one's perceptions differently, depending on the medium through which it operates: "Jedes Sylbenmaß sogar, jeder Ton des Liedes schattiert die Bilder der Phantasie auf eigene Weise" (*FA* 4:639). The subject, for instance, will find that the same inner image will appear in a fundamentally different light depending on whether it is translated in the medium of music or poetry. Herder urges his readers to investigate this dynamic relationship between perceptions and different media; he encourages them to combine their thinking and life experience confidently and determinately with images and themes from the past and to observe how their senses mediate them without worrying that others have already explored them in detail: “Wenn Deine Rede oder Dichtkunst dieser Bilder [Herder refers to Homeric descriptions] bedarf: so schildere sie nach Deiner Art, wie Du solche wahrnahmest, wie der Geist Deiner Poesie sie fordert” (*FA* 4:639).

This larger context of Herder’s efforts to raise his reader’s awareness of how the subject can productively shape reality by actively engaging and honing his senses renders his interest in Winckelmann comprehensible. What makes Winckelmann’s revival of classical culture so appealing in Herder’s eyes is the affective, personal manner in which he imagines the encounter with objects of art: “Du…liehest dem toten Marmor, der sich in Deiner Brust beseelte, Deine Ideen von Heldenruhm, Schönheit und Liebe” (*FA* 2:671). For Herder, I suggest, Winckelmann’s work encapsulates core elements of the project he wants to promote with his own work. Winckelmann revives in a modern fashion the characteristics Herder singles out as worthy of study and imitation in his examinations of fables and myths: He cultivates an animated mode of perception and confidently works his inner images – “die Bilder seiner Phantasie,” to phrase it in Herderian terms – into a sensuous and highly original style of writing. Through the medium of his “Schreibart,” familiar objects come into sight in hitherto unknown ways.

My argument is thus that Herder severs the modern function of ancient literatures from a specific objective, be it of moral, didactic or aesthetic kind. Instead, the sole purpose of his project to engage people with literatures of the past lies in familiarizing them with basic principles of human world-creating and in motivating them to train their own sensuous faculties. By framing the objective of his focus on the past in such broad, non-restrictive ways, the Greco-Roman tradition appears as one among multiple ancient cultural traditions. With his concentration on illuminating models of human world orientation, knowledge generation and reality construction, Herder opens up the field of examination – clearly, the engagement with any literary tradition and culture can potentially serve him as a springboard to bring his topics of interest into view and facilitate his project.

More specifically, by not setting any limits to the field of inquiry and by not providing rules or instructions for how people ought to use any of the themes and images he uncovers, Herder advocates that the authority to do so lies in each individual: “der Mensch sei Mensch! Er bilde sich seinen Zustand nach dem, was er für das Beste erkennet” (*FA* 6:633). Man himself has to decide on the appropriate way of doing things. Once again, the Winckelmann essay, I propose, provides a concrete example for Herder’s stance on this point: Herder highlights Winckelmann’s invention of the Greeks as the originators of truth and beauty in art and problematizes that this model is premised on bracketing off the formative impact of other cultures, of the Egyptians for that matter. At the same time, however, he demonstrates that the specific way in which Winckelmann fashions this origin narrative is authoritative by virtue of its impact and the functions it fulfills: it serves his and other people’s individual development, and it forms a powerful discourse around the study of the Greeks in such a way that it boosts the authority and popularity of classical scholarship far beyond Winckelmann’s life time and the borders of his culture.

Über Bild, Dichtung und Fabel proposes that the negotiation of such questions over which cultural tradition or medium of art was the one to articulate ideas and aesthetic values first and in the best ways has always been a matter of authority:

> Von Kind zu Kind ging die Sage fort…bis sie Kunst ward und diese Kunst hieß Dichtkunst. Das rohe Gold ward gepräget…Jeder Erzähler nämlich will gut erzählen und da er als Unterrichter der Weisere ist, so will er auch seinen Unterricht angenehm, lebhaft, kurz und auf die vollkommenste Weise einprägen. Hiermit war die Dichtkunst erfunden. Dieser Erzähler nämlich erfand seinen ererbten oder erworbenen Gedanken neue, stärkere, lebhafte, liebliche Bilder und Worte; jener den Worten abgemessene Sylbenmaße, liebliche Töne. Die Gebärdensprache brachte den Akzent, die Modulation des Tanzes ausgesuchte Metra in die Rede und so war, ohne dass man beinah wußte durch wen? die Dichtkunst da. Jede Nation, die sie nicht aus der Eltern Hause mitbrachte, erfand die Ihrige und mit jeder neuen Form nahm Bild, Sage und Dichtung auch eine neue schönere Gestalt an. (*FA* 4:646)

The subject who masters “Prägekunst,” the art of coining, of crafting his narrative in the most vivid and compelling fashion has the authority of telling where and through which medium humans first invented art for themselves. From the beginning, such narrators found themselves in highly competitive company where everyone seeks recognition and approval for his individual way of telling: “Jeder Erzähler nämlich will *gut* erzählen” [emphasis added]. “einprägen”—that is to employ the best possible method for literally impressing one’s story on the audience’s mind in a memorable fashion – is everyone’s objective. In pursuit of this goal, the narrator selects a medium – be it sound, image, poetic meters or dance – and crafts selected elements from his own thinking and from the body of inherited stories into a new narrative. His motivation is to assemble and represent "seine ererbten oder erworbenen Gedanken" in ways that are more beautiful, stronger, and more inspiring than previous ones. "Und so war, ohne dass man beinah wusste durch wen? die Dichtkunst da" – there is no single origin; multiple origin narratives compete with one another, and the battle is carried out between modes of representation, between individuals, institutions, and between cultures.

As long as Herder remains in a descriptive mode, acquainting his readership with practices of human sense making and plural narratives within which cultural traditions invented themselves, the origin question remains a matter he leaves to the authority of others. Things, however, become immensely more complex when he takes up the same discussion over the roles and functions of poetry in the context of his writings on and translations of Hebrew literature. Given his own professional background, no other literary tradition was more important to Herder; the contemporary revival and future survival of these ancient Hebrew writings was Herder's most pressing concern. In the next section, I first concentrate on how Herder imagines that one should read the Old Testament and work out the characteristics of his treatment of sacred literature. In a second step, I focus on the characteristics his position regarding the question of poetic beginnings undergoes in his most distinguished theological work *Vom Geist der Ebräischen Poesie* (1782-83).

Origin as Contest and Creation in *Vom Geist der Ebräischen Poesie*

Herder's prolific literary output covers multiple fields, ranging from aesthetics, comparative literature, and linguistics to philosophy, history, and politics. What occuppied his thinking and determined his life more than any of these fields, however, was theology and the study and practice of religion. From his early years, Herder's primary calling was the ministry. After graduating in theology from the university of Königsberg, he accepted a position in Riga at a "Domschule" where he served as a teacher and preacher from 1764 to 1769. Following his "Reisejahre" through France, he held a post as court preacher and general superintendent in Bückeburg, the capital town of a rural principality in Lower Saxony ruled by Graf Wilhelm zu Schaumburg-Lippe. In 1776, Goethe arranged for him to come to Weimar where he accepted a multifaceted position as senior pastor to the court, general superintendent, councilor of churches, and *Ephorus* (professor and supervisor) of all *Gymnasien* and schools in the region.[114] All his life, Herder saw himself as a theologian, and he spent his entire professional career in active church service; theology was to him "[das] Geschäft seines Lebens."[115]

His daily on-the-job challenges and experiences informed the manner in which he would pursue his ideas on education and *Humanität* in his writings. And, conversely, the extensive scholarly research and his philosophical-anthropological reflections on these themes inspired the measures he undertook to effect practical change in the areas of his professional activity.[116] Herder held multiple offices in schools and churches, and his endeavor to use these affiliations to push through and implement his agendas was an immensely laborious and often frustrating experience.[117] He worked hard to reform the Prussian Gymnasium and the Gymnasium in Riga, and used the sea voyage from Riga to France to detail the specific contents and principles of his ideas in the *Journal meiner Reise im Jahr 1769*. He developed and put into practice new student curricula and founded a teacher seminar aimed at preparing a new generation of teachers who would base their teachings on the contents and pedagogical practices he envisioned.[118]

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[114] Steven D. Martinson, "Herder's Life and Works," in *A Companion to the Works of Johann Gottfried Herder*, ed. Hans Adler and Wulf Koepke (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2009), 29.

[115] See Herder's introductory note to *Vom Erlöser der Menschen* (*FA* 9/1:611).

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[116] See Harro Müller-Michaels, "Herder in Office: His Duties as Superintendent of Schools," in *A Companion to the Works of Johann Gottfried Herder*, ed. Hans Adler and Wulf Koepke (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2009), 373-390; Martin Kessler, "Herder's Theology" in the same *Companion to the Works of Johann Gottfried Herder*: "[Herder] aimed to turn his ideals for the formation and education of humankind into practical impulses for reform" (262); and Martin Kessler, *Johann Gottfried Herder: Der Theologe unter den Klassikern: das Amt des Generalsuperintendenten von Sachsen-Weimar*, 2 vols. (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007). The most comprehensive biography which explores Herder's professional career in light of his works is Rudolf Haym's *Herder nach seinem Leben und seinen Werken*, 2 vols. (Berlin: Rudolph Gaertner, 1877-1885; numerous reprints and editions). Michael Zaremba's biography *Johann Gottfried Herder: Prediger der Humanität. Eine Biographie* (Köln: Böhlau, 2002) makes a particular effort to bring into view Herder's theological studies as the nodal point for his practical reform projects.

[117] Translating and summarizing from Karoline Herder's *Erinnerungen aus dem leben Joh. Gottfrieds von Herder*, ed. Johann Georg Mueller (Tübingen: Cotta, 1820), Müller-Michaels provides a cogent overview of Herder's tasks in "Herder in Office: His Duties as Superintendent of Schools,": "As a minister he held sermons, accompanied the members of the parish from baptism to the grave, performed and dissolved marriages, supervised the Weimar schools in his capacity of superintendent, appointed directors and instructors, jumped in as substitute teacher when necessary, administered teacher certification and exams, proctored the students' exams, gave speeches at the end of each school year, administered salaries and oversaw the continuing education of teachers (especially those in rural areas), drafted textbooks, syllabi, and new forms of instruction, prepared (beginning in 1789) the sessions of the consistory, which he led from that point on, kept track of all the expenses in his diocese, held his colleagues accountable for their actions, listened to complaints, oversaw the budget for agricultural operations, and doled out professional advice. He accomplished all of this in a reliable manner and with great success, as confirmed by his contemporaries. But Herder himself was dissatisfied: his suggestions for the reorganization of church, school and state were being implemented too slowly, half-heartedly, or not at all…Thus he complained just two years after his arrival in Weimar about the exhausting daily duties, imagining himself stretched 'auf die hölzerne Folterbank' (on the wooden torture track) wallowing 'unter dem alten sächsischen Dreck' (under the old Saxon mess)" (373).

[118] On the details of Herder's curriculum for a new type of secondary school, see Müller-Michaels, "Herder in Office: His Duties as Superintendent of Schools," 376-379; and also Kessler, "Herder's Theology," 261-264.

One of his core concerns was to strip school syllabi of sections centered on expanding students' knowledge by means of memorization and the recitation of sources. Instead, he demanded that the learning goals in all fields of study should concentrate on developing the students' self-learning capabilities.[119] The school address "Von Schulen als Übungsplätzen der Fähigkeiten der Seele" which Herder gave in 1799 records this objective succinctly: "Unser ganzes Leben ist für uns Gymnasium; was aus uns werden soll, muss in uns durch Übung werden...alle unsre Kenntnisse, Gewohnheiten und Fertigkeiten, sind Resultate unserer Übung" (*FA* 9/2:783-784). In his eyes, a school's primary mission should consist in developing a curriculum and in exercising teaching methods directed at equipping its pupils with a variety of tools useful for their self-learning and "Selbstschöpfung," their self-creation (*FA* 9/2:785). The *Pädagogische Schriften* clearly reveal Herder's efforts to model his educational reform project on the insights which undergird his concept of how humans create meaning, of how they need to identify and work out their sphere of activity and impact in the cultures they live in. The "Entwurf der Anwendung dreier Akademischer Jahre für Theologen" (*FA* 9/2:418, 1782) suggests that the phase in which students learn how to learn and in which their minds are stimulated by a variety of different subjects should be extend beyond the school years. Herder envisioned the first years at the university to be centered on continuing, deepening, and expanding the fields of study and modes of learning familiar to students from their Gymnasium education. Today, the liberal arts college education in the United States resonates perhaps closest with Herder's model for the first years of university education.[120]

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[119] See Müller-Michaels, "Herder in Office: His Duties as Superintendent of Schools": "The teacher should stimulate the students' self-learning by, first, getting the students' attention; second, by having them translate literary works; third, by stimulating them through reading to engage in free-writing and to each collect their work in a kind of notebook or literary anthology; and fourth, by encouraging them to engage in debates about topics and texts, generally in their free time, in order to prepare themselves for university" (385).

In the context of these reform activities, Herder found it a particular challenge to gain support for establishing the study of the Bible as the main vehicle for public education. He witnessed with sadness and disappointment that friends as well as example-setting figures of rank and distinction like Goethe and Duke Carl August von Sachsen-Weimar rarely visited the church.[121] At the university level, he found the academic status of theology to be declining and pushed into the background, especially by philosophy. He was highly concerned about the field's rising popularity and observed with unease that people preferred to read Kant instead of the Bible.[122] He feared that theology would degenerate to becoming a "Wissenschaft," a mere academic subject, removed from society and without practical impact on people's ways of life and thinking.[123] To improve and strengthen the role of theology, Herder tried to foster communication between schools, the church, and the university in Weimar; he envisioned "more church supervision of the university and schools." With this impulse to expand the church's sphere of influence and to prepare young people for their services in churches and schools, he designed a seminary for preachers in the early 1780s whose mission and vision is laid out in the *Briefe, das Studium der Theologie betreffend* (1780/81). The *Briefe* are Herder's attempt to determine a central and sustainable place for the Bible in a competitive environment where its authority was prone to becoming increasingly marginalized. The project was to have the faculty of theology and, ideally, also the members of the department of philosophy collaborate and set up a seminary focused on training students' practical expertise of doing ministerial work in public institutions.[124]

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[120] See Müller-Michaels, 386-387.

[121] Zaremba, *Johann Gottfried Herder: Prediger der Humanität*, 164. On Herder's impression that his ministerial job did not receive the kind of public support and recognition it deserved, see also Martin Kessler, *Johann Gottfried Herder-der Theologe unter den Klassikern. Das Amt des Generalsuperintedenten von Sachsen-Weimar*, vol. 2, 979-990.

[122] "Spätestens seit den achtziger Jahren spürte [Herder], dass sein Fachgebiet, die Theologie, zunehmend zu einem bloßen Anhängsel der Philosophie verkam, dass die Kandiaten lieber Kant lasen als die Bibel" (Zaremba, *Johann Gottfried Herder: Prediger der Humanität*, 214).

[123] Regarding Herder's concern about a purely scientific and critical Bible interpretation at the university, see esp. the 1st and 13th letter of the *Briefe*. And regarding his critique of dogmatic Bible interpretations in the church, see the 12th, 13th, and 26th letter.

While these specific plans remained unrealized, the works growing out of Herder's project to draw people into a fresh engagement with the Bible were successful. Both his unfinished study *Vom Geist der Ebräischen Poesie* as well as its preparatory work the *Briefe, das Studium der Theologie betreffend* became guides to reading the Bible for ministers and students of theology as well as for a wider educated public. As Wulf Köpke has pointed out, it is hard to classify *Vom Geist* because it is neither an exegesis in the traditional sense nor a scholarly examination with footnotes and a bibliography.[125] The title varies Robert Lowth' Oxford lectures *De Sacra Poesi Hebraeorum Praelectiones* by replacing "sacred" with "Geist," and suggests thereby that Hebrew poetry belongs in the realm of human thinking. The subtitle makes the human connection even more explicit by announcing that what follows is *Eine*

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[124] Kessler, "Herder's Theology," 264. On this project see also *SWS* 30:488-501 and Kessler, *Johann Gottfried Herder-der Theologe unter den Klassikern. Das Amt des Generalsuperintedenten von Sachsen-Weimar*, vol 2, 994-1000.

[125] See Wulf Koepke, "Vom Geist der Ebräischen Poesie: Biblisch-orientalische Poesie als alternatives Vorbild," in *Herder-Jahrbuch*, 7 (2004): 89-101.

Anleitung für die Liebhaber derselben und der ältesten Geschichte des *menschlichen* *Geistes* [emphasis added]. The text is an introduction and a guide to the writings of the Bible for people who love these texts, and who are interested in exploring the history of human spirituality through the lens of humanity's oldest documents.

Vom Geist brings together historical narratives and translations of poetry from the Old Testament as well as from other Oriental literatures like the Persian and Arabic tradition, and it encourages its readers to study these documents as varied expressions of human experiences of the divine: "Studiere man also das Alte Testament, auch nur als ein menschliches Buch voll alter Poesien, mit Lust und Liebe" (*FA* 5:670).[126] Rejecting any orthodox interpretation of the Scriptures, Herder makes a strong case against the assumption that they articulate a system of divinely revealed truths. As Goethe notes in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, the most prominent feature of Herder's treatment of the Scriptures is that he understands them as "Dichtkunst" and "Welt- und Völkergabe."[127] The *Briefe* and *Vom Geist* suggest that the language of the Bible is a human language; it is historically explicable and within reach of humans. It conveys in myriad ways how people have felt and expressed the existence of God through their senses.

As in the *Briefe*, Herder arranges his materials in *Vom Geist* in an open form and chooses an equally open and undogmatic style of writing to ease his readers' way into the world of the ancient Hebrews.[128] The first part consists of ten lively and free thinking conversations between two friends, Alciphron and Eutyphron, which Herder invites his readers to join in. In a way, Eutyphron acts out Herder's ideal of a modern teacher and preacher: he avoids the "Kanzelton," "[den] Ton der Lehre" (*FA* 5:668-669), that is a top-down model of religious instruction. Rather, he assists his friend to overcome prejudices and resentments against what Alciphron regards as the primitivism and barbarism of the Hebrew language. It is not Eutyphron's objective to tell his friend how he ought to understand certain images, poems, parables or hymns, but rather to help him appreciate their linguistic and aesthetic peculiarities as unique manifestations of what the world looked like to the members of Hebrew culture: "Alte Sprachen…sind die Form, in der sich menschliche Gedanken, gut oder schlecht, gebildet haben: sie geben die unterscheidensten Züge vom Charakter und der Sehart einzelner Völker" (*FA* 5:673). Eutyphron enables Alicphron to see the parallel structure of ancient Hebrew, its lack of rigid divisions between tenses, its overflow of verbs, synonyms and personifications not as shortcomings but as expressions of a lively, sensuous and continuously active and changing experience of the world.

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[126] The introduction to Vom Geist recalls the first letter of the *Briefe*: "Menschlich muss man die Bibel lesen: denn sie ist ein Buch durch Menschen für Menschen geschrieben: menschlich ist die Sprache, menschlich die äußern Hülfsmittel, mit denen sie geschrieben und aufbehalten ist" (*FA* 9/1:145).

[127] "Die hebräische Dichtkunst, welche er [Herder] nach seinem Vorgänger Lowth geistreich behandelte, die Volkspoesie, deren Überlieferung im Elsaß aufzusuchen e runs antrieb, die ältesten Urkunden als Poesie gaben das Zeugnis, daß die Dichtkunst überhaupt eine Welt- und Völkergabe sei, nicht ein Privatteil einiger feinen, gebildeten Menschen," Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, 3 vols., ed. Jörn Göres (Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 1975), 2:455. Hereafter *DW*.

By helping Alciphron to appreciate Hebrew culture in its own right and by encouraging him to engage with it in an empathic and sensuous manner (see *FA* 5:674), Eutyphron ultimately enables his friend to read the Bible and experience religion in new and unexpected ways. He begins to rediscover the texts as sources from which he can learn that the revelation of God is not a privilege of past generations but that every individual, every generation, and every culture can discover him anew and in multiple ways.[129] For their second conversation, the two friends meet in the early morning hours on a mountain top to witness the birth of a new day in light of their understanding of revelation as a matter of the present.[130]

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[128] The form of the *Briefe*, *das Studium der Theologie betreffend* is modeled on the *Briefe, die neueste Litteratur betreffend*, which Lessing, Mendelssohn, Nicolai und Abbt published between 1759 and 1765 on a weekly basis so as to stir the interest of a broad, educated audience for literary topics and questions.

This brief introduction to *Vom Geist der Ebräischen Poesie* should suffice to demonstrate the close proximity between how Herder treats and determines the function of profane and religious literatures. He severs the texts from the idea that they represent any sort of fixed moral, didactic or aesthetic function which the modern subject ought to recover and follow. In light of his wide-ranging anthropological reflections, cultural historical investigations and empathic engagements with these ancient traditions, he proposes that the active practice of the subject's self-learning capacities and his self-creation should always be the main focus when one interprets and teaches these literatures. He never grew tired of communicating this objective through his written work as much as through his teaching and preaching—famously, he states in the 40th letter of the *Briefe* that the exegesis of the Bible is the best sermon: "[die] Auslegung der Bibel halte ich also für die vornehmste, beste Predigt" (*FA* 9/1:507).[131] Today we do not have too many of Herder's sermons because he was reluctant to publish them, fearing that the flowing language of time and life would loose its immediacy and liveliness if written down. The reminiscence of a congregation member who attended one of his early sermons in Riga, however, suggests that Herder lived up to his own principles: the audience member recalls Herder as an inspiring preacher, highlights his ability to fill religious forms with new life and describes the effect his preaching had on him as uplifting, animating you to make your contribution to the greater good of human welfare: "Mit Geist, Herz und wahrer Religiosität belebte er…die alte Form, aufmunternd zur Ausübung jeder menschlichen Tugend…."[132]

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[129] Eutyphron tells his friend that while one can certainly no longer write poetry like the Hebrews, their animated mode of perception is worthy of study and imitation: "Niemand solls [imitate the Hebrews]: denn jede Sprache, jede Nation, jedes Klima hat ein eignes Maß und eigne Quellen seiner Lieblingsdichtung. Es zeigte elende Armut an, wenn man von so entlegnen Völkern borgen wollte; aber denselben Weg gehen, müssen wir! und aus eben den Quellen schöpfen. Vor wessen Auge und Empfindung sich die Natur nicht belebt, zu wem sie nicht spricht, wem sie nicht handelt; der ist nicht zu ihrem Dichter geboren" (*FA* 5-748-749).

[130] See *FA* 5:695. To exemplify his point that an animated, personified mode of seeing is not a sign of primitivism but the way in which humans process experience, Eutyphron tells Alciphron about Jonathan Carver's spiritual encounter in *Travels through the interior parts of North-America* (1778): "Haben Sie in einer der neuern Reisen die Geschichte jenes Amerikaners gelesen, der den großen Wasserfall zu sehen reiste? Von fern schon, da er das erhabene Geräusch hörte, sprach er mit dem großen Geist: als er näher hinzu kam, fiel er nieder und betete an. Nicht aus knechtischer Furcht oder dummer Stupidität, sondern im Gefühl, dass in einem so wunderbaren, großen Werk der große Geist ihm gleichsam näher sei...Sein Gefühl ist die Geschichte aller alten Völker, Sprachen, Hymnen, Namen Gottes und Religionsgebräuchen, wo aus Trümmern der Urwelt Ihnen eine Schar von Denkmalen und Beweisen bekannt sein wird" (*FA* 5:698).

Herder's liberal mode of preaching, the publications on how to teach the Bible, and the translations from the Old Testament which highlight that human beings stand at the origin of the Bible – these are all different components of his overall project to secure the Bible's place in the public sphere.[133] And to be sure, these interpretations attracted his audience and facilitated fresh ways of engaging with religious texts. Herder’s research brought to bear an undogmatic understanding on the heavily debated question of divine revelation, and his writings and modes of public address opened up a whole new range of perspectives on questions of revelation and religious experience. At the same time, however, these same interpretations through which he sought to reconstitute and stabilize the role of the Bible also contributed significantly to the destabilization of its authority. The close ties between Herder’s understanding of religious texts and non-religious literary works clearly draw attention to this dehierarchization of the Bible’s superior status: both sorts of texts function as nodal points for training the subject’s self-learning and self-creating capacities in Herder’s discussions. Against the backdrop of Herder’s exegesis, it is not clear why one should turn to the Bible and not to other texts; it is not obvious what the Bible can do for the reader that other texts cannot. In fact, the proximity between Herder’s treatment of religious and profane writings has led a variety of critics to the assumption that his primary concern lies in aestheticizing the Hebrew texts, turning them – just like other ancient literatures – into a vital sources for Bildung, and putting them forth as models for eighteenth century literary innovation.[134]

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[131] For Herder's detailed instructions on how to preach, see *FA* 9/1:508-511.

[132] Cited in Michael Zaremba, *Johann Gottfried Herder: Prediger der Humanität*, 60. On the transmission of Herder's sermons, his congregation, and his self-understanding as a preacher, see also Kessler, "Herder's Theology," 262 and especially the following two book volumes by Kessler: *Johann Gottfried Herder-der Theologe unter den Klassikern* and *Das Amt des Generalsuperintedenten von Sachsen-Weimar*; *Herders Kirchenamt in Sachsen-Weimar in der öffentlichen Wahrnehmbarkeit von Stadt- und Hofkirche*.

[133] See Koepke, "Vom Geist der Ebräischen Poesie: Biblisch-orientalische Poesie als alternatives Vorbild," (95) for another interesting observation of how Herder communicates to his readers that humans stand at the origin of the Bible in the second part of *Vom Geist der Ebäischen Poesie*. Koepke notes that Herder focuses on individual narratives like Moses' stories, King David's psalms, the prophets, the Book of Job, and the Song of Solomon. According to Herder, what these characters all share in

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common is they are bound to time and place; and when God speaks to them their individual responses suggest that revelation is a human affair, expressed in ways that correspond to the specificities of their respective life situations.

[134] Gerhard Sauder, “Altes Testament – neue Literatur der siebziger Jahre,” in *Johann Gottfried Herder Aspekte seines Lebenswerkes*, ed. Martin Kessler (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2005), 29-45; Grit Schorch, “Das Erhabene und die Dichtkunst der Hebräer. Transformationen eines ästhetischen Konzepts bei Lowth, Mendelssohn und Herder,” in *Hebräische Poesie und jüdischer Volksgeist. Die Wirkungsgeschichte von Johann Gottfried Herder im Judentum Mittel- und Osteuropas*, ed. Christoph Schulte (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2003), 68-92; Marcia Bunge, “Herder’s Historical View of Religion and the Study of Religion in the Nineteenth Century and Today,” in *Johann Gottfried Herder: Academic Disciplines and*

Other critics, by contrast, have claimed that the relationship between the Bible and other literatures in Herder's theological writings exhibits fundamental tensions which by no means resolve themselves in a straightforward "poetry instead of theology" formula—they argue against the idea that a secularization of the Bible gives rise to the sacralization of poetry.[135] Both Bultmann and Weidner show that Herder does not simply reimagine religious ideas aesthetically within a secular framework of thinking. Rather, they propose that Herder sought to reconstitute the elevated and special role of the Bible by imagining its origin as a contemporaneously human *and* divine affair. Bultmann's book-length study details how Herder develops a model of the Bible's origin that is premised on a "Gleichursprünglichkeit von Offenbarung und natürlicher Religion."[136] By the same token, Weidner suggests that the vexed dynamic of Herder's origin discussion in *Vom Geist* hinges upon his unfolding of a human-divine "Doppelursprung." Moreover, he brings into view how Herder unfolds this human-

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the Pursuit of Knowledge, ed. Wulf Koepke (Camden House 1996), 132-244. Sauder explores the significance of Herder's revaluation of the aesthetic quality of the language and poetry of the Old Testament for the development of late eighteenth century literature. Schorch claims that by reading the Bible as literature, Herder was able to secure a place for it; without such an appreciation of its aesthetic qualities, the Bible would have disappeared from modern secularized discourses. Bunge argues that Herder's approach to the past can best be characterized through the notion of Bildung.

[135] "Im Verhältnis der Literatur zu Bibel hat man um 1800 eine Art Umkehrung feststellen wollen, indem zunächst das Religiöse zum Erlebnis werde, dann das ästhetische Erleben das religiöse ersetze und schließlich die Ästhetik zu einer Heilung der Poesie hypostasiert werde: 'einer Säkularisierung der Bibel entspricht dann die Sakralisierung der Poesie'" (Daniel Weidner, "Einleitung" to *Urpoesie und Morgendland: Johann Gottfried Herder: Vom Geist der Ebräischen Poesie*, ed. Daniel Weidner [Berlin: Kadmos, 2008], 12).

[136] Drawing on the *Älteste Urkunde des Menschengeschlechts* (1774/76), *Briefe, das Studium der Theologie betreffend* (1780/81) and *Vom Geist der Ebräischen Poesie* (1782/83), Bultmann concludes: "Das ideale Modell, das [Herder] zu etablieren strebt, ist das einer Koinzidenz von natürlicher und offenbarter Religion; es soll erlauben, Offenbarung 'menschlich' zu verstehen und gleichzeitig eine natürliche Erkenntnis Gottes in einer Offenbarung zu verankern. Das theologische Ziel ist also einerseits die anthropologische Entschränkung der Offenbarungstradition, andererseits die offenbarungstheologische natürlichen Religion" (Christoph Bultmann, *Die biblische Urgeschichte in der Aufklärung: Johann Gottfried Herders Interpretation der Genesis als Antwort auf die Religionskritik David Humes* [Tübigen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999], 154-156).

divine double origin simultaneously in different media, genres, and modes of representation (Bildspruch, Personifikation, Fabel, Sage, Musik). Ultimately, Weidner demonstrates how Herder concentrates these ramified and widely distributed human-divine double origins in one focal point, in what he calls משל (m š l), the *maschal*: “Im *maschal* wird *der* Ursprung der Poesie ausgedrückt.”[137] Herder argues that the complexly interwoven origins of poetry all share a common ancestor in the Hebrew stem word משל.

Building and expanding on Weidner’s research, Andrea Polaschegg has worked out the problematic status of Herder’s discussion in *Vom Geist der Ebräischen Poesie* of the peculiarities of ancient Hebrew, claiming that his core argument remains jarringly contradictory. Polaschegg claims that he grounds his idea of a universal origin of poetry in the specific linguistic structures of the Hebrew language. By assigning it a distinguished, exceptional status, Herder sets the language apart from other languages, ancient Egyptian in particular, and subverts thereby the universal gesture of his claim.[138] Herder sets up ancient Hebrew as *the* “Urspungssprache” not just with reference to the

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[137] Daniel Weidner, “Ursprung und Wesen der ebräischen Poesie. Zu Figuren und Schreibweisen des Ursprünglichen bei Herder,” in *Urpoesie und Morgendland: Johann Gottfried Herder: Vom Geist der Ebräischen Poesie*, ed. Daniel Weidner (Berlin: Kadmos, 2008), 113-151; for Weidner’s analysis of the *maschal*, see 127-131.

[138] “Einerseits entwirft Herder nämlich die orientalische Poesie der Hebräer tatsächlich als Ausgangspunkt und Nucleus einer menschheitsgeschichtlichen Gesamtentwicklung und ‘entschränkt’…diese spezifsche morgenländische Dichtkunst zu einer anthropologischen Universalie. Als Ausweis des ursprünglichen Charakters der hebräischen Poesie aber führt er andererseits gerade die spezifische Struktur der hebräischen Sprache und Schrift an, grenzt sie dabei innerhalb der morgenländischen Ursprungsregion dezidiert von anderen – namentlich der altägyptischen – ab und torpediert damit seine eigene argumentative Bewegung einer Entgrenzung der hebräischen Poesie zum allgemeinmenschlichen Uranfang” (Andrea Polaschegg, “Die Verbalwurzel der Hieroglyphe. Herders Vom Geist der Ebräischen Poesie als Text zwischen zwei wissensgeschichtlichen Paradigmen,” in *Urpoesie und Morgendland: Johann Gottfried Herder: Vom Geist der Ebräischen Poesie*, ed. Daniel Weidner [Berlin: Kadmos, 2008], 201-202).

maschal but on the basis of a whole range of other structural and morphological characteristics: crucially, what makes the language poetic, musical and infinitely lively is that all words have derived from a single verbal root lacking consonants and nouns.[139]

Polaschegg and Weidner belong to a small group of scholars who have recently begun to explore the multidimensional strands of Herder's paradoxical arguments in *Vom Geist der Ebräischen Poesie*, and they both point out that their examinations mark just the beginning of a larger, barely tapped research field. What Weidner concentrates on in the first place is isolating, unpacking and contextualizing Herder's parallel unfoldings of origins in a number of close readings. Building on these findings, I propose that we can begin to better understand the significance of these different origin narratives if we compare and contrast them with those in his non-theological writings. Such comparisons cannot solve *Vom Geist*'s contradictions, but they enable us to place them within a larger context of Herder's thinking. His location of *the* origin of poetry in a Hebrew stem word, I want to propose, could be interpreted as his creation of a fable among other fables. A reason for the tensions inherent in *Vom Geist*, in other words lies in this double move on Herder's part: he does not only *describe* and introduce his readers to multiple versions of the human-divine double origin of poetry but contributes his own narrative. He *intervenes* in the battle over poetic beginnings.

Herder's switching from an observing and describing into a narrating mode comes into clear focus for readers familiar with his philosophical anthropology. He discusses the origin question most compactly in the opening chapter of the second part of *Vom Geist* titled "Vom Ursprung und Wesen der Ebräischen Poesie." In this key chapter, he first sets out to develop the origin of poetry in exactly the same way as in *Über Bild, Dichtung und Fabel* or the *Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache*: he lays out how the subject zeroes in on the multiple images of perception that address and stimulate his senses perpetually, how he singles out specific characteristics and fashions them with the aid of his "Prägekunst" into multiple media of representation.[140] And as in *Über Bild, Dichtung und Fabel*, he then proposes that these acts of crafting order and meaning into different artistic media follow an analogical principle of structuring: given their bodily existence and the organization of their senses, he writes, humans process all experience in correspondence to their own self-understanding – this process explains why humans animate and personify the world, and why they assign gender categories and assume affective relationships among beings different from themselves.[141]

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[139] Polaschegg, "Die Verbalwurzel der Hieroglyphe. Herders Vom Geist der Ebräischen Poesie als Text zwischen zwei wissensgeschichtlichen Paradigmen," 207-209, 219-222. See also *FA* 5:675-691.

In yet another step, he adds a transcendental dimension to the principle of analogy which was already in the *Abhandlung* but is missing from *Über Bild, Dichtung und Fabel*:

> Man kann diesen [den Ursprung] also menschlich und göttlich nennen, denn er ist beides. Gott wars, der die Quelle der Empfindungen im Menschen schuf, der das Weltall mit seinen Strömen rings um ihn her setzte, der diese Ströme auf ihn leitete, und mit den innern Empfindungen seiner Brust mischte…Himmel und Erde, Nacht und Tag, Tages- und Nachtgestirne, Geschöpfe auf Meer und Land

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[140] "Von außen strömen Bilder in die Seele: die Empfindung prägt ihr Siegel drauf, und sucht sie auszudrucken durch Geberden, Töne und Zeichen…Was also auf ihn strömet, wie erst empfindet und mit Empfindung bezeichnet, das macht den Genius der Poesie in ihrem Ursprung" (*FA* 5:962).

[141] "Es ist die Natur der menschlichen Seele, alles auf sich zu beziehen, also auch sich ähnlich zu denken. Was uns angenehm ist, muß uns lieben; was uns zuwider ist, hasset uns, wie wirs hassen: mit dem wir gern sprechen möchten, das spricht auch mit uns…Hierin sind alle alte Nationen einander gleich; ihr Wörterbuch konnte nicht anders gesammlet, ihre Grammatik nicht anders geordnet werden, als das Namen in beiderlei Geschlechtern, daß Begebenheiten als Wirkungen und Handlungen lebendiger Wesen nach der Analogie des Menschen gedichtet wurden" (*FA* 5:967).

> sind Ausmessungen des menschlichen Auges, der Bedürfnisse, der Empfindung- und Ordnungsgabe des Menschen…Indem er alles nennt, und mit seiner Empfindung auf sich ordnet, wird er Nachahmer der Gottheit, der zweite Schöpfer…Mit je reinerm Blick wir indes die Gegenstände der Schöpfung sehen und ordnen,…unsrer Analogie mit Gott zu bezeichnen: desto schöner, vollkommener und auch desto kräftiger wird unsre Dichtkunst. (*FA* 5:963-964)

The origin of poetry is divine as much as it is human. God has equipped man with a set of sensuous capacities in such a way that it empowers him to engage and communicate with his surroundings in a productive and highly dynamic fashion. He has different perceptive devices at his free disposal and may use them according to what he regards as right and appropriate. The multilayered history of the different versions of the Bible testifies to the richness and diversity in which humans across cultures have constructed and mapped out the world (see *FA* 5:964). As world-creators and organizers, they all stand in an analogous relationship to God.

In the passage that follows, however, Herder suddenly changes his perspective. He no longer describes in a general fashion the human-divine double origin of poetry, leaving it up to other people's judgments to make the call and to determine who emulated God best and made poetry "schöner, vollkommener und…kräftiger." Now he enters the discussion and tells his readers "*die* Geschichte des Ursprungs und des *kräftigsten* Teils der Dichtkunst" [emphasis added]. By choosing the superlative form "kräftigsten," he elevates one particular narrative above others:

> Ich zweifle, ob dieser Ursprung der Poesie schöner, als durch das Ebräische משל ausgedruckt werden könnte? Das Wort heißt drücken, prägen, ein Bild, ein Gleichnis prägen: sodann in Sprüchen reden…sodann entscheiden, ordnen, sprechen wie König oder Richter: endlich regieren, herrschen, mächtig sein durch das Wort des Mundes. Siehe da die Geschichte des Ursprungs und des

> kräftigsten Teils der Dichtkunst. (*FA* 5:964)
>
> Wir haben jetzt Stufenweise eine Reihe Gattungen der Dichtkunst betrachtet, die alle vom משל, der Rede voll Bild und Empfindung ausgingen: denn das siehet ein jeder, dass auch die Personendichtungen, die Fabelzüge, Rätsel, Sinnsprüche, endlich die eigentlichen Dichtungen…zum משל gehören. (*FA* 5:976)

He recalls in "Vom Ursprung und Wesen der Ebräischen Poesie" what Eutyphron also communicates to Alciphron, namely that *the* origin of poetry is located in the unique structure of the Hebrew language.[142] Herder proposes that the universally shared anthropological process of creating meaning by gearing one's sensuous "Empfindung" toward isolating a particular "Bild" from the constantly moving stream of perceptions manifested itself for the *first* time in the Hebrew משל (m š l), the *maschal.* All genres and forms of artistic expression point back to this Hebrew stem word.

Weidner relates the explanation of the history and meaning of *maschal* that Herder lays out in *Vom Geist* and other texts to those of his contemporaries and predecessors (Michaelis, Locke, Condillac, Lowth) as well as to modern linguistic research. He discusses the characteristics of ancient Hebrew and concentrates specifically on the structure and semantics of its verbal roots. He points out that the semantic connections Herder establishes between *maschal* and "drücken, prägen" is highly speculative and can hardly be found in the history of the word. Moreover,

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[142] Compare especially the first conversations between Alciphron and Eutyphron: "Und wenn Sie [Alciphron] sich in die Zeit des Wanderns, des Wegziehens, in allen Situationen des Hirtenlebens versetzen: so tönet auch noch in der entferntesten Bedeutung etwas vom Urklange des Wortes, dem Bilde der ersten Empfindung" (*FA* 5:682).

Herder's assumption that the roots constitute the oldest elements of Hebrew words are a misconception.[143]

There is no need at this point to go any deeper into the history of ancient Hebrew, because this brief synopsis of Weidner's research already suffices to highlight the fictive character of Herder's origin account. His strategy of dovetailing the origin of poetry and the *maschal*, I suggest, can be interpreted as his contruction of a fable. In "Vom Ursprung und Wesen der Ebräischen Poesie" he does not just describe how other individuals and civilizations have constructed contested narratives over the beginnings of poetry, but he contributes such a story himself. If we approach the narrative about poetic beginnings as growing out of a Hebrew stem word within the larger context of his anthropological understanding it becomes more comprehensible.

We already saw in the *Denkmal* essay that Herder was deeply concerned with how the ways in which individuals shape history impacts themselves, disciplines, and cultures. In fact, he explores throughout a variety of writings how specific "Ideen," "Ideale" or "Idealgebäude" form subjects, scholarly and educational projects, and a culture's self-understanding. The essay "Haben wir noch das Publikum und Vaterland der Alten" published in the *Briefe zur Beförderung der Humanität* investigates these themes. He, for instance, draws attention to the power the ancient philosopher had over the souls and actions of his audience by virtue of establishing certain ideals and axioms.[144] And in an introduction to a collection of Oriental stories, *Palmblätter. Erlesene morgenländische Erzählungen für die Jugend* (1786), he suggests that it is necessary to craft ideals, models and coherent, orientation-giving narratives out of the messiness of history "damit sie [die Geschichte] zur Bildung des Geistes und des Herzens Gutes enthalte."[145] So too does he in a conversation between Alciphron and Eutyphron: Alciphron questions the historical reality of the paradise stories and suggests that they are probably nothing more than idiosyncratic and naive inventions of the human mind. Eutyphron advises him not to fixate so much on questions regarding these stories' reality status and historical accuracy but to inquire how much good they did for the development of humanity and how they helped humans to define their place and goal in life.[146] "Vom Ursprung und Wesen der Ebräischen Poesie," however, shows that Herder does not just describe constructions of history but also participates in the process by creating stories.

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[143] Daniel Weidner, "'Menschliche, heilige Sprache': Das Hebräische bei Michaelis und Herder," in *Monatshefte für deutschsprachige Literatur und Kultur* 95 (2003): 2.171-206. On the semantics of *maschal*, see especially 195-196 and also Weidner, "Ursprung und Wesen der ebräischen Poesie," 128-129.

Conclusion

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[144] "Ein Lehrer der Philosophie, wie er sein soll, hat ein Reich über menschliche Seelen, in welchem er mächtiger als ein König gebietet. Er pflanzt Grundsätze, er gibt Ideen, er stellt Ideale fest, die nachher auf tausend Gedanken und Handlungen seiner Zuhörer, ja aller derer, auf welche sie wirken, erkannten und unerkannten Einfluß haben" (*FA* 7:314).

[145] *Palmblätter. Erlesene morgenländische Erzählungen für die Jugend*, collected by August Jacob Liebeskind with an introduction by Johann Gottfried Herder, edited by Dieter Laux (Leipzig: Insel Verlag, 1976), 5-13.

[146] See for instance Eutyphron's response to Alciphron's skepticism in this text part: "Alle Ideen, die dazu beitrugen, trugen zu seiner Besserung bei; die Bilder des Paradieses von Unschuld, Liebe und Vergnügen im Schoße der Natur haben dies unstreitig getan….Lassen sie mich, wenn meine Zunge durch keine Erdenfrucht mehr erquickt wird, mit der geistigen Idee dieser Hoffnung [des Paradieses] sterben" (*FA* 5:786).

The purpose of this chapter was to investigate Herder's way of fashioning the modern use of ancient Greek and Hebrew literature in the context of his anthropological thinking. I hope to have shed light on facets of Herder's thinking which recent critical literature on this topic has not paid attention to. In different ways, critics have assumed that Herder's main objective lies in saving his readers from the illusion of identifying with the past and in honing their acquisition of a shrewd consciousness for the limits of understanding the life worlds and works of others. As I have demonstrated, however, Herder does not specify how one ought to engage with the texts he collected, translated and reworked from multiple national origins. He untethers them from any sort of specific purposes, be they aesthetic, moral, or didactic.

Against the backdrop of his idea of man and his understanding of the development of knowledge, the principal aim of his work is the sharpening of his contemporaries' awareness for the plurality of human forms of "Selbstschöpfung" and aiding them in developing the cognitive, affective and imaginary capacities of their senses so that they can become better agents of their own self-fashioning. The specificities of the goals toward which individuals work and for which they practice their talents lie in their own free discretion. Herder perceives his task and the task of other scholars, teachers, and ministers as creating environments congenial to the unfolding of individual objectives.

I investigated at different points in the chapter what Herder's liberal, non-restrictive attitude implies practically for the ways in which individuals, institutions, disciplines and cultures engage with ancient texts and objects. Most importantly, by severing profane and religious literary texts from the goal of serving a defined set of purposes, Herder opens up the field in such a way as to allow the exploration of literatures of the past on a global scale. And their concrete modern use, value and degree of importance comes to depend on such components as the authority, talent and public and institutional influence of the subject engaging these poetic texts and other artworks. Herder's memorial essay on Winckelmann gives insight into this shift toward individual and disciplinary authority. He links the truth and value of Winckelmann's "Idealgebäude" of Greek culture to the ways in which it authorized a specific classical discourse and became a chief point of orientation for his self-understanding.

The chapter's final part focused on Herder as a historical figure, as a professional theologian and reformer who sought to secure the Bible a central place during a time in which its authority had come under attack. His discussions about the human-divine origin of poetry in *Vom Geist* demonstrate his deep concern to maintain the Bible's status as a book whose compositions are not like those of any other. As critics have shown, however, the claim that the beginnings of poetry are rooted in the unique structure of the Hebrew language contradicts his general propositions about poetic compositions as diverse human-divine creations. In light of his non-theological and anthropological origin discussions, I suggested interpreting his location of all poetic beginnings in the Hebrew stem word *maschal* as a fable, as Herder's own creation among all the others he had collected and translated.

Chapter III

Transcendentalism's Critical Instruments: German Historical Scholarship and the Transformation of Religion and Classicism in New England

Introduction

For anyone concerned with the thriving of key ideas and texts of German Romanticism beyond German speaking territories in the nineteenth century, the literature of American Transcendentalism provides extensive resources. There one finds them in myriad forms—translations, literary reviews, references in essays, treatises, lectures, sermons—and refracted in modes of thinking and arguing.[147] In fact, the latest history of the country's first major cultural movement suggests that it was the sweeping interest in all aspects of eighteenth century German intellectual activity that unified the Transcendentalists in their early years. In the introduction to *American Transcendentalism: A History*, Philip Gura identifies three principal traits the group's members shared in common: almost all of them were New Englanders associated with

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[147] For the most comprehensive overviews see Henry A. Pochmann, *German Culture in America: Philosophical and Literary Influences 1600-1900* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1957); Henry A. Pochmann, ed., *Bibliography of German Culture in America to 1940* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1953); Bayard Quincy Morgan, *A Critical Bibliography of German Literature in English Translation, 1481-1927* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1938).

Harvard and the Unitarian church, and almost all had "a distinct philosophical bent toward German idealism."[148]

Critics have focused on this penchant for idealist thinking with regard to the group's preoccupation with the philosophies of Fichte, Schelling and, above all, Kant. The other object of critical scrutiny regarding the Transcendentalists' engagement with idealist concerns has been their reception of historical Bible criticism, in particular their translations and discussions of works by critics like Johann Gottfried Eichhorn, J. A. Ernesti, J. D. Michaelis, Johann Gottfried Herder, Friedrich Schleiermacher, and Wilhelm de Wette. Besides Samuel Taylor Coleridge's discussions of Kantian thinking in the *Aids to Reflection* and Thomas Carlyle's reviews of German literature in British quarterlies, the two latest histories of Transcendentalism refer to the first English publication of Mme de Staël's *Germany* in 1814 in New York as the key English-language conduit for the rising interest of New England's intellectual circles in German philosophy, literature, and historical criticism.[149]

Gura's *American Transcendentalism* and Barbara Packer's *The Transcendentalists* both evaluate the group's orientation toward eighteenth century

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[148] Philip F. Gura, *American Transcendentalism: A History* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007), 6.

[149] Given that Transcendentalism first began as a religious movement, Gura's *American Transcendentalism* places particular emphasis on the reception of German biblical criticism. On his assessment of Staël's role in the reception process, see 26-27. The other recent major history detailing both the movement's philosophical and theological orientations with regard to the import of German texts is Barbara L. Packer's *The Transcendentalists* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 2007); on Staël, see 21-24. On Staël's mediating role in America see also Mueller-Vollmer's chronology of German-American culture transfer in *British America and the United States* 93-97, the book's chapter "The Significance of Anne Germaine de Staël's *Germany* for a New Program and a New Direction of Anglo-American Literature," 201-221, and also his essay "Staël's *Germany* and the beginnings of an American national literature," in *Germaine de Staël: Crossing the Borders*, ed. Madelyn Gutwirth (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1991), 141-158.

German thinking and Staël as one of its central intermediaries as integral to the intellectual development of the movement. Such a transnationally oriented depiction of America's rise as a culture of modernity, however, has by no means always been the norm. In evaluations of the role of German culture in New England, earlier studies usually follow two lines of argumentation that often intertwine: Some suggest that the German influence resides in authorizing and buttressing native intellectual impulses and conclude that the Transcendentalists' engagement with Germany contributed nothing that transformed the group's own nascent impulses in significant ways. Others focus on the distortions that philosophical concepts underwent in the reception process and highlight the Transcendentalists' shortcomings in grasping them in their complexity. But in either case, such studies come to the conclusion that German philosophy played a marginal role during the movement's formative period.[150]

The works by Gura, Packer or Mueller-Vollmer differ significantly from these earlier approaches: they neither revert to the Transcendentalists' preoccupation with

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[150] Stanley Vogel's *German Literary Influences on the American Transcendentalists* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955) provides a classic example for the assessment of German traces in Transcendentalist literature as a confirmation of the country's own intellectual impulses. Whatever New England writers may have discovered by reading German philosophers and theologians through the works of Coleridge and Carlyle was never more than the conception of their own preconceived ideas: "The value of this German philosophy to these New Englanders, however, lay not in obtaining an exact doctrine but in the authorization it gave to their own ideas, and especially the presence of God in the individual heart. …Transcendentalism was a faith rather than a philosophy, and it went to Germany to find confirmation of that faith," (see the inroduction to this chapter). Pochmann's *German Culture in America* strictly concentrates on the correct appropriation of the information that was received from Germany and finds, for example, fault with Emerson's misunderstanding of Kant (607/n.430). Sigrid Bauschinger's *Posaune der Reform: Deutsche Literatur im Neuengland des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1989) also highlights the faulty American adaptations of works by Kant, Fichte, and Schelling and seeks to prove that the "persistently progressing myth of American Transcendentalism as descending from German idealism is unfounded" (60). For a more detailed overview of the different appraisals of German culture in America, see Mueller-Vollmer, *British America and the United States*, 75-92. On American misconceptions of German historical scholarship, see Carl Diehl, *Americans and German Scholarship, 1770-1870* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978).

German thinking so as to highlight the originality and independence of American culture, nor are they concerned with centering their examinations on questions of the degree of the "correctness" of adaptation processes. Rather, their focus lies on representing the emergence of Transcendentalism as a process shaped by global cultural forces within which Germany played the major role in the early years.[151] Mueller-Vollmer aligns the rise of Transcendentalism directly with European and particularly German Romanticism and suggests that American's leading intellectuals reiterated in their own ways the processes of thinking that propelled European Romantic debates decades earlier.[152]

This mode of regarding Transcendentalism as a movement that took shape within an extensive network of cross-cultural correspondence, reception and transformation processes has sparked a continuously growing accumulation of sources in the field of transnational German and American studies. These source studies, however, rarely deploy their findings to provide perspectives on the role of the German impact that go beyond familiar insights. Regardless of whether their focus lies on the reception of historical Bible criticism or on Transcendentalist reworkings of the Kantian critiques, the investigations draw the same general conclusion: German idealist thinking, so the story always goes, manifests itself in a "subjective turn" that becomes the Transcendentalists' distinguishing characteristic. Their perceptions of the world are "centered on individual consciousness rather than external fact"; they regard their ideas not as coming through the senses, not as stimulated externally but find themselves knowing intuitively and internally what is true and good. In short, the same argumentative patterns that dominate critical assessments of Staël's representation and mediation of German culture also underlie the overall appraisal of the role German Romanticism for the formation of American Transcendentalism.[153]

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[151] Mueller-Vollmer's work is hardly ever cited by the critical literature on German culture in nineteenth century America even though *British America and the United States*, *1770s-1850s*, vol. 2 of *The Internationality of National Literatures in Either America: Transfer and Transformation* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2000) is still the book that provides the most comprehensive recent overview of the different roads of the reception of German literature in the nineteenth century and provides a comprehensive review of the critical literature in the field. Mueller-Vollmer notes that assessments by such critics as Krusche or Bauschinger have been "cultivated by several generations of literary and cultural historians. These, with few exceptions, have described Transcendentalism as a product home-grown from native American soil and seed and have maintained that its supporters' international and transcultural aspirations were virtually insignificant and of no real consequence for American cultural and literary history" (77). Mueller-Vollmer has made issues of transatlantic influence of utmost importance to any understanding of Transcendentalism and demonstrates that American intellectual culture during the decades from the 1820s through about the 1840s is unthinkable without taking into account the pivotal role German texts played in shaping it.

[152] Mueller-Vollmer makes that claim particularly with regard to Emerson, arguing that he is neither "an original author of truly American genius" nor can he be said to have derived his ideas "ready-made from European sources." Instead, Emerson's writing is part of the literary corpus of Romanticism which reveals an American distinctiveness: "Emerson's allegedly subservient relationship to European sources cannot be treated differently from the relationship in which Novalis and Coleridge find themselves with regard to Kant, Fichte and Schelling, or in which de Staël stands with the theories of poets of German Romanticism. Consequently, the interpreter of Emerson's inaugural work *Nature* must view this text as belonging to a literary province within the larger realm of European Romanticism" (214). The Transcendentalists, developing their aesthetics and nature philosophy, repeat in their own way the very process of thought which we can observe in Europe some decades earlier.

Works concentrated on the reception of Biblical criticism arrive at the same conclusion via a different route: they demonstrate how the translations and reviews of German theological texts by Transcendentalist critics like James Marsh or George Ripley transfer the idea of divine authority from the letter into the interior world of the subject. Under the influence of German historical criticism, American critics begin to treat religious texts no longer as infallible testimonies of divine revelation but as historical records that tell in different ways how humans have experienced the spiritual world. Against the backdrop of their reception of German critical efforts, Transcendentalists install the subject's soul as the resource we ought to tap so as to develop an intuitive understanding of religious truth.[154]

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[153] Compare Gura, *American Transcendentalism*, 8; Kurt Mueller-Vollmer, "Translating Transcendentalism in New England: The Genesis of a Literary Discourse," in *Translating Literatures, Translating Cultures: New Vistas and Approaches in Literary Studies*, ed. Mueller-Vollmer (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1998), 81-106; Barbara L. Packer, "Romanticism," in *The Oxford Handbook of Transcendentalism*, ed. Joel Myerson (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 84-101. On the correspondence between the argumentative patterns dominating the critical literature on Staël's *De l'Allemagne* and the reception of German Romanticism in America, see the introduction to my first chapter on Staël.

Drawing on a wealth of rarely discussed and unexamined translations, reviews and addresses concerned with historical criticism in the fields of religion and classicism, this chapter proposes that we need to go beyond such indiscriminate appraisals regarding the function of German texts during the formative years of America's first major cultural movement. Through close examination of different texts, I ask what such a shift of authority in favor of the individual's inward consciousness and capacities really means. The chapter's first two parts investigate this question through the resonance of Herder and Schleiermacher in Transcendentalist works. A variety of translations and reviews testify to the widespread interest the writings of the two German theologians sparked among New Englanders; they explain Herder's and Schleiermacher's popularity with the particular ways in which they put scholarly inquiries and learning practices into the service of a new understanding of divine revelation and experience.

What, however, are the characteristics of a modern notion of religion whose formation is linked to processes of learning and the deployment of critical instruments?

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[154] See Gura's chapter, "Reinviogorating a Faith," in *American Transcendentalism*, 46-68.

The subject American critics introduce vis-à-vis Herder and Schleiermacher, I argue, hones his religious integrity through continual critical labor centered on strategies of self-abandonment, empathy, recognition, and the cultivation of a poetic-philological mode of engaging with religious texts. The chapter's second part extends the scope of inquiry by examining the role of the social sphere, of structures of communication between a preacher and his congregation, for the formation of such a subject. I demonstrate in both parts how this connection between religious revival and learning processes fundamentally changes our perspective on the impact of German biblical criticism on the formation of Transcendentalism.

Finally, I turn to the domain of classicism and ask how the adoptions of German critical instruments transformed the ways in which American scholars imagined their relationship to ancient Greek culture. I thereby focus on writings of both Transcendentalist critics and classicists such as Robert Patton and Cornelius Conway Felton who were exposed to German scholarship in different contexts and refashioned educational institutions in the Boston area. An examination of the reforms of classical studies in the classroom undergirds the chapter's central claim that the introduction of historical scholarship gave rise to a notion of individual authority centered on self-transformative activities of learning. The practices of reading, writing and discursive interaction in classes and lectures on classical works parallel those exercised in theological seminars and congregational addresses. The educational goal of these activities in the field of classical studies, however, is not cast in religious terminology but defined more broadly as a secular path toward self-culture.

With my concentration on how the Transcendentalists developed their positions on religious and educational matters through detailed explorations and translations of German scholarly practices, I obviously build on critical works by Americanists and Germanists who have sought to make a strong case for the use and value of transnational studies. Whether through examination of Staël's and Herder's works or the migrations and transformations of historical critical practices in early Transcendentalism, my central objective throughout is to bring to light cross-culturally shared interests and questions regarding modern functions of ancient sacred and profane cultures and their works. Figures like George Ripley, James Marsh or Cornelius Conway Felton, who usually play a tangential role (at best) in critical work on these issues, move thereby into the center, because their writings and translations articulate concerns that occupied the thinking of leading intellectual figures on both sides of the Atlantic. And as chapter four will show, an investigation of their treatment of German criticism forms an important backdrop for a better understanding of Emerson's public lecturing and thinking about forms of religious revival in a transnational context.

To the field of Transcendentalist studies, such research contributes a more nuanced perspective on how the movement's early critics participated in crucial German debates; and to the field of German eighteenth century studies this research focus contributes a better understanding of how key critical questions and practices that developed in a particular situation in Germany travelled, thrived, and were transformed beyond German-speaking lands. By letting the topics under investigation motivate my transnational research approach, however, I motivate it in ways that differ fundamentally from the ones that have propelled the majority of transnationally oriented scholarly productions in the field of American Studies over the past years. To prevent confusion, it is therefore necessary to briefly review the approach's career in the discipline, and explain why I suggest pursuing it differently.

As Winfried Fluck has pointed out, the term "transnational" carries nothing less than the hope for a radical deconstruction of what scholars have perceived as a set of coercive power structures holding together ideals that make up the American Dream. The "transnational turn" marks the current culmination of a long tradition of revisionist criticism that has constituted the history of the field. For the past four decades, critics of American literature have set themselves the task to deconstruct what they refer to as the myths of American exceptionalism. In ever more radical and rhetorically highly sophisticated models of interpretation, they have been trying to carve out spaces of opposition strong enough to escape the forces of the nation state and to "counter the ideological hold of the idea of America." In these critical projects, race, class, and gender studies or, more recently, also queer, disability, and animal studies are invested with the promise to construct identities of "cultural otherness." The figure of the margin bears the hope of escaping "the homogenizing pressures of national identity" by actively cultivating the attributes of its otherness, and by defining them in what is designated alternatively a transnational, global, hemispheric of planetary context.[155]

One of Fluck's crucial points of critique of this body of revisionist studies is that methodological concepts such as "transnational" remain "empty box[es]" in their treatments of literature. That is because it is not the topic under scrutiny that motivates the scholar's interpretive extension across national boundaries but rather the idea of undermining an American ideology. Such operations cannot but fail; in fact, they end up buttressing the exceptionalist vision of America they set out to destroy. According to Fluck's analysis, the problem is that instead of examining the elements that constitute the American Dream in their historical frames of reference, scholars treat stories of the frontier, of American democracy and independence as given, self-evident realities. In the act of criticizing, they base their critique on the same hermeneutical premises that consolidate the ideals they wish to dismantle.[156]

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[155] Winfried Fluck, "The Romance with America: Approaching America Through its Ideals," *American Studies/Shifting Gears*, ed. Birte Christ (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag, 2010), 307, 309; 1-18.

While modes of analysis that advocate for the liberating powers of denationalization and exterritorialization still dominate the academic publishing market (at times "urg[ing] on us the entire planet as a unit of analysis"), *A New Literary History of America* from 2009 changes the tune.[157] With the publication of this history, American scholars follow in the wake of Harvard University Press' other national literary histories, *A New History of French Literature* (1989) and *A New History of German Literature* (2004). To be sure, these histories each introduce their approach to narrating literary history differently, but they also share a common goal manifest in the use of the indefinite article in their respective titles: instead of laying claim to being *The New History of…*, the publishers market the respective volume as *A History of…*, thereby drawing attention to the coexistence of a variety of ways of assessing the literary developments of a country. In the introduction to the German history, David Wellbery states that the volume "has no single story to tell, but sets many stories in relation to one another" and provides "multiple points of entry" that "allow[…] for various reading agendas" to unfold.[158] Similarly, the American history defines the book's goal as "to set many forms of American speech in motion, so that different forms, and people speaking at different times in sometimes radically different ways, can be heard speaking to each other."[159]

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[156] Fluck, "The Romance with America," 303. As Fluck notes: "Key terms like 'democracy,' 'equality,' or 'freedom' do not simply refer to a given, self-evident reality. They are imaginary constructs attached to particular historical situations and phenomena. Thus, we have to find out ever anew what their substance is. The assumption that we already know what American democracy is, because the term appears to be self-explanatory, is one of the exceptionalist illusions that we should throw overboard" (321).

[157] Fluck takes Wai Chee Dimock's suggestion to render the planet "a unit of analysis" as exemplary of the radicalization of the search for resistance and opposition to the powers of national ideology, "American Literary History and the Romance with America," *American Literary History* 21, no. 1 (2009), 13; Wai Chee Dimock, "Literature for the Planet," *PMLA* 116 (2001), 175; *A New Literary History of America*, ed. Greil Marcus and Werner Sollors (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009).

In light of these projects, a manner of employing the category of the transnational to facilitate the uncovering of literature's adversarial functions does not seem cutting edge but rather dated. The revisionist criticism that has driven the popularity of transnational approaches in American Studies would fall under what Wellbery calls traditional literary history writing; that is, a mode of "treat[ing] individual texts and performances not as singular occurrences, but as illustrative instances of some force, tendency, or norm such as the spirit of an age or a nation…. To grasp the historical character of a literary text is, according to this way of thinking, to see the individual case as typical of something else, and therefore as replaceable." Such inherited strategies gloss over and harm the "temporal center around which it [each work] crystallizes."[160] In distancing itself from these strategies, *A New History of German Literature* proposes treating the text as a literary glass that grew out of and refracts in singular ways a particular moment in history. To such an end, the following chapters employ a transnational approach to analyze early nineteenth century American texts concerned with questions of religion and classicism, and to illuminate measures that were taken to reform educational institutions and the ministry in New England.

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[158] "Introduction," *A New History of German Literature*, eds. David E. Wellbery, Judith Ryan (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), xxii.
[159] "Introduction," *A New Literary History of America*, xxiv.

Transcendentalism and the Power of Philology: Herder, Schleiermacher and the Transformation of Biblical Scholarship

While Herder's works were discussed in the earliest histories of Transcendentalism, only the recent scholarship by Philip Gura and Ernest Menze has begun to uncover more fully the wide extension of his New England reception and assigned him a vital role in the period's formative years.[161] Gura assembles a number of key journal reviews by New England theologians seeking to revolutionize Unitarian models of spirituality by popularizing an intuitive approach which they explicitly align with Herder.[162] His history of American Transcendentalism suggests that the many reviews, translations, and addresses grappling with finding timely forms for expressing religious faith are *the* source for us to understand how Transcendentalism began.[163] Drawing on a variety of Transcendentalist discussions and translations of Herder's theological writings, Menze maintains that a Herderian statement like "Religion…is a matter of the inward nature, the higher consciousness of man" would have been a fitting first article "if the Transcendentalists had ever drawn up a creed."[164]

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[160] "Introduction," *A New History of German Literature*, xvii.

[161] Octavius Brooks Frothingham's *Transcendentalism in New England from 1876* (New York: Harper Brothers, 1959) is the period's earliest history and mentions Herder, see 47-48. On Frothingham's assessment of Herder's role, see Ernest A. Menze, "On the Reception and Influence of Herder's *On the Spirit of Hebrew Poetry* in North America: Preliminary Observations," in *Urpoesie und Morgendland: Johann Gottfried Herder: Vom Geist der Ebräischen Poesie*, ed. Daniel Weidner (Berlin: Kadmos, 2008), 341. See also Perry Miller, *The Transcendentalists: An Anthology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1950), 89-96.

In his essay contribution to *Transient and Permanent: The Transcendentalist Movement and Its Contexts*, Robert Richardson makes a similar claim with regard to Schleiermacher. Although the movement has widely branching roots reaching back to different traditions such as liberal Platonism or the Scottish common sense philosophers, Richardson finds that "the central religious impulse of Transcendentalism most nearly resembles the early religious position of Friedrich Schleiermacher." This is – and here we can draw direct parallels to critical assessments of Herder's function in early Transcendentalism – because "Schleiermacher locates true religion not in doing or in knowing, but specifically in feeling."[165] The Schleiermacher who has made it into American literary histories and the *Encyclopedia of Transcendentalism* broke new ground in people's spiritual lives because he located the source of religious sentiments in the individual's emotions.[166]

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[162] See especially Gura's discussion of James Marsh's translation of *Vom Geist der Ebräischen Poesie* and George Ripley's reviews of this translation in *American Transcendentalism*, 39-40, 48-49, and 66-68.

[163] Discussing the *Sketches of Modern Philosophy*, "a lengthy analysis of the rise of German Idealism that concludes in a discussion of its American incarnations" by James Murdock (professor at the Andover Theological Seminary), Gura moves Transcendentalism's religious roots to center stage: "As much as Idealist philosophy was central to the movement's coalescence, Transcendentalism began as a religious demonstration. No American Transcendentalists were 'philosophers by profession,' Murdock noted, and nearly all of them were clergymen 'of the Unitarian school.' As a result, their 'habit of thought, their feelings, and their aims' were 'manifestly theological'" (Gura, *American Transcendentalism*, 13).

[164] Menze, "On the Reception and Influence of Herder's *On the Spirit of Hebrew Poetry* in North America: Preliminary Observations," 347.

For anyone not familiar with the religious turmoil and heated controversy dominating the decades around the turn of the century, it is easy to overlook why proclamations of the power of intuition and inward faith were revolutionary and posed an enormous provocation in America's intellectual climate. The chapter therefore begins with a brief introduction of the religious historical background crucial for understanding how and why the Transcendentalists' enthusiasm for a religion centered on feeling formed. Drawing on reviews, writings, and translations by George Ripley, James Marsh, Frederic Henry Hedge, Samuel Osgood, and George Bancroft, I then examine what such a subject-focused notion of religion really means in the context of American engagements with the theological writings of Herder and Schleiermacher.

While Gura, Menze, and Richardson have noted many of the general debts to German theology that I will examine here, I have found that the existing critical literature still leaves us with an insufficient and misleading impression of the characteristics of the spiritual restoration that Transcendentalist reviewers introduce with their texts on the two German scholars. That is because the terms and phrases critics have isolated to describe the role of German scholarship convey a limited notion of the characteristics of religious truth that American critics work out with Herder and Schleiermacher. Without further explication, designations like “inward nature” or “individual consciousness of truth” evoke subjective faith as a phenomenon that exists removed and disconnected from currents of time and history. The problematic nature of such a representation of religious integrity come into view when we examine the ways in which the Transcendentalist critics direct attention to the *relations* Herder and Schleiermacher set up between religion and practices of scholarship.

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[165] Robert D. Richardson, "Schleiermacher and the Transcendentalists," in *Transient and Permanent: The Transcendentalist Movement and Its Contexts*, ed. Charles Capper and Conrad E. Wright (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1999), 121, 123.

[166] *Encyclopedia of Transcendentalism*, ed. Tiffany K. Wayne (New York: Facts On File, 2006), 252-253; Gura, *American Transcendentalism*, 80-83. On the reception of Herder and Schleiermacher by Transcendentalist critics, see also Barbara Packer, "Romanticism," in *The Oxford Handbook of Transcendentalism*, ed. Joel Myerson (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 84-101.

Tracing the relations between philological modes of inquiry and the formation of a subject that perceives religion as internal to its mind and soul is this chapter’s central objective. To be sure, the Transcendentalists regard the distinction Herder and Schleiermacher set up between religion as a form of higher consciousness and its specific historical manifestations as foundational to the rise of a modern, doctrine-free and subject-focused understanding of divine revelation. At the same time, however, Ripley and his intellectual circle also suggest that this distinction does not imply a hierarchical relationship between a timeless idea of religious essence towering over its timely articulations in the form of sacred texts and theological doctrines. Rather, the reviews and translations propose that the German critics fundamentally reorganize this relationship.

The subject that American critics introduce with Herder and Schleiermacher regards itself as fallible. Progress and truth depend on the self’s ability to incessantly express, revise and transform its spiritual sentiments and to bring to bear the same questioning attitude towards the religious articulations of other individuals and cultures. Through the lens of Herder's and Schleiermacher's philological techniques, critics like Ripley, Marsh, Hedge, and Bancroft articulate notions of modern revelation premised on education. And I argue that this connection between religious revival and learning processes fundamentally changes our perspective on the impact of German Biblical criticism on the formation of Transcendentalism.

A number of Transcendentalist critics identify Herder's and Schleiermacher's concept of empathy as a conduit for religious revival structured around learning practices. Through exercises of self-abandonment, the individual opens up, feels himself into plural modes of religious expression and encounters language as a medium that does not ossify but record human experiences of the divine in boundless poetic ways. In light of this timely nature of religious expressions, the subject begins to discover and hone the capacities of his own "higher consciousness." He fashions himself as a "God-Man" vis-à-vis his poetic-philological activities. Drawing on recent scholarship focused on the creative facets of the science of philology, I spell out the details of what I call poetic-philology.[167] The "God-Man" that materializes in this cross-cultural discursive matrix is anything but withdrawn and aloof from the currents of his time; he hones his religious integrity through continual critical labor and activity. He employs strategies of selection, amplification, personalization and an affective style of writing, and he thereby seeks to fashion an independent religious persona that gains recognition and is authentic enough to withstand critical attacks.

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[167] George Ripley, "Review of Johann Gottfried Herders sämtliche Werke zur Religion und Theologie" *Christian Examiner and General Review* 19 (1835), 203.

The promotion of revelation as something that lies potentially within everyone's reach conflicted in every respect with the Calvinist doctrine adhered to by the orthodox wing of New England Congregationalism. Already the liberal theologians of the Transcendentalists' fathers' generation had vigorously revolted against Calvinism because they perceived the Calvinist idea of man born sinful and fully dependent on God's mercy as humiliating and detrimental to individual progress.[168]

For Ripley, Emerson and many others of their generation, however, the Unitarian dissociation from Calvinist doctrines and association with the Protestant tradition was not radical enough. They found fault with and rejected even the opinions of the liberally minded members of the Unitarian church. The most polarizing issues among the affiliates were the unresolved contradictions posed by the distinction Unitarianism drew between natural and revealed religion. Following John Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, they held fast to the thesis that humans receive all knowledge through the senses. According to sensationalist philosophy, natural religion relied on the idea that whatever we can learn about God, immortality, and morality we learn through observing and interacting with the world around us. Revealed religion, by contrast, resulted from God's violations of the laws of nature; Unitarians considered Biblical miracles, testimonies in the Gospels and Jesus' resurrection as infallible credentials for God's ability to rise above natural laws. Because of its capacity to objectively prove divine interventions, revealed religion inhabited a higher rank than natural religion among the majority of Unitarians.[169]

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[168] On the intricacies of the Unitarian revolt against Calvinism, see Packer, *The Transcendentalists*, 2-6.

When young American intellectuals begun to learn about German historical criticism, their hope was that the latest findings in Biblical scholarship would help settle the controversy over the nature of religion by confirming the authenticity of miracles. In 1812 the orthodox Revered Moses Stuart, head of Harvard's Andover Theological Seminary, and the Harvard graduate Edward Everett became involved in a bidding war over the four volumes of J.G. Eichhorn's *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (1780-83). Joseph Stevens Buckminster, one of New England's most influential and recently deceased ministers, had brought the Eichhorn volumes back from Europe. Stuart won the auction but he gave Everett the permission to borrow his purchase. And Stuart had another book that he wanted to makes accessible for a larger circle of readers and for which he was trying to find a translator; that book was Herder's *Vom Geist der Ebräischen Poesie*. Everett turned the request down and focused on translating sections from Eichhorn instead. Stuart, however, did not give up and was able to win over his student James Marsh to take on the challenge. With few exceptions, critics rarely note his contributions to the spreading of Herderian thinking with his complete translation of Herder's incomplete *The Spirit of Hebrew Poetry* (1833). Rather, he is best known for his edition of Coleridge's *Aids to Reflection*.[170] Marsh would later become a Congregationalist minister and a key figure of the Vermont Transcendentalists; he served as president of the University of Vermont and took a chair in philosophy.

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[169] On the Unitarian distinction between revealed and natural religion, see Dean Grodzins, "Unitarianism," in *The Oxford Handbook of Transcendentalism*, ed. Joel Myerson (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 50-69; Packer, *The Transcendentalists*, 7-9.

Stuart, Everett and Marsh are prominent examples of a growing interest in the methods of historical inquiry prevalent in Germany. When Harvard appointed Everett as the first professor of Greek literature, he was first sent him off to study for two years at the university in Göttingen before taking up duties in Cambridge. Everett left in 1815 and was the first American to earn a German doctoral degree. Many others who would later occupy important positions in New England's intellectual life followed his lead, among them George Ticknor, Frederic Henry Hedge, George Bancroft, and Emerson's older brother William. Through studying with the Orientalist Eichhorn and the historian Arnold Hermann Ludwig Heeren, these Americans became familiar with the scholarship of figures such as Herder, Schleiermacher, Christian Gottlob Heyne and with F.A. Wolf's groundbreaking *Prolegomena ad Homerum*.[171]

The critical discoveries New England's intellectual pioneers brought home from abroad, however, were not the ones they had set out to find. The techniques of historical interpretation they studied and learned to employ uncovered unsettling insights into the nature of miracles upon which the Unitarian understanding of the truth of revelation rested. Eichhorn's literary and historical analysis of writings of divine inspiration suggested that religious texts could not be regarded as belonging to a special category of texts requiring critical methods that differ from those scholars employ for interpreting other literatures. In the *Prolegomena* Wolf explicitly transferred the methods of Eichhorn's higher criticism to the field of classical studies, and the American Göttingen students found in Wolf's text a powerful demonstration of the proximity between ancient pagan and religious texts. They discovered the analogous relationship between Eichhorn's treatment of the Bible as a collection of human literary texts stemming from multiple origins and Wolf's deconstruction of the unity of Homer's poetry.[172] In light of such insights it dawned on Everett and his intellectual circle that they would have to give up on the idea that German historical methods would ever help them make a convincing case for miracles as objectively verifiable bedrocks of divine truth.

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[170] There is no mention of Marsh's Herder translation in Louis Menand, *The Metaphysical Club* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2001). Menand concentrates on Marsh's Coleridge edition, 245-248. Marsh wrote a "Preliminary Essay" to his edition of the *Aids to Reflection*, explaining why he regards Coleridge's Kant adaptations as an ideal demonstration that philosophy and empirical inquiry are by no means inimical to proving the truth of religious faith. The edition advanced as one of the movement's founding texts and became a main vehicle for the popularization of Romanticism in America.

[171] On the American reception of German historical scholarship in New England and at German universities, see Kurt Mueller-Vollmer, "American Students at the Center of Herderian Humanities in Germany," in *British America and the United States, 1770s-1850s*. Vol. 2 of *The Internationality of National Literatures in Either America: Transfer and Transformation* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2000), 159-162; Packer, *The Transcendentalists*, 14-19; Gura, *American Transcendentalism*, 21-23, 25-31.

In fact, many felt that the threat that such criticism posed to the stability and legitimacy of Unitarian faith went beyond what they could handle. Everett did not continue to pursue the research on sacred texts after he had returned to Harvard; rather, he followed Wolf's lead in his attempt to graft the philological methods he had learned from Eichhorn onto the study of classical texts. Bancroft switched careers and found an outlet and field of experimentation for his critical insights in secondary school teaching. Upon returning to America, he founded Round Hill School in Northampton, which he modeled on the German gymnasium.[173] William Emerson noted in a letter from Göttingen to his brother Waldo: "my mind seems to have undergone a revolution which surprises me. I cannot avoid tracing much of this to the books and lectures of Eichhorn."[174] The intellectual revolution he had undergone abroad was so strong that he felt incapable of returning to his ministerial duties. Uncertain of what to do, he asked Goethe for advice but, contrary to what William had hoped for, Goethe told him not to retire from the pulpit but to regard his clerical post as a forum for teaching people. William, however, did not follow Goethe's recommendation; he renounced the ministry and begun to study law.[175]

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[172] On the Göttingen students' studies with Eichhorn, see Elizabeth Hurth, "Sowing the Seeds of Subversion: Harvard's Early Göttingen Students," *SAR* 1992: "[in] Eichhorn's 'higher criticism' the time-honored doctrines of scriptural inspiration and authenticity were questioned by a literary and historical analysis which studied the Bible as a collection of literary documents presenting the same problems as any other ancient writing. Eichhorn's interest in the Bible as the product of a particular historical and cultural conditioning not only undermined the alleged uniqueness of the biblical narratives but, more importantly, also brought the factual question about the historical accuracy of the Bible into the arena of theological debate" (93-94); Hurth, *Between Faith and Unbelief: American Transcendentalists and the Challenge of Atheism*, Studies in the History of Christian Traditions, vol. 136 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 5-30. Packer points to the Göttingen students' parallel investigation of Eichhorn's higher criticism and Wolf's *Prolegomena*; see *The Transcendentalists*, 15.

This skeptical withdrawal and professional reorientation of many of the Göttingen students, however, did not impede the rise of a fundamentally new understanding of the nature and modern role of religious writings in New England; feelings of anxiety coincided with an enthusiastic embrace of German higher criticism. Above all the translations and reviews of Schleiermacher, Herder, and their student and friend Wilhelm Martin Leberecht De Wette reflect that the German expositions of the historicity of divine texts did much more than spread doubts and spiritual alienation among Transcendentalists.

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[173] Gura, *American Transcendentalism*, 28-29.
[174] Cited in Ronald A Bosco and Joel Myerson, eds., "William in Germany," in *The Emerson Brothers: A Fraternal Biography in Letters* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 96; and Hurth, *Between Faith and Unbelief*, 13.
[175] Bosco and Myerson, "William in Germany," 106.

The Unitarian minister and Transcendentalist Samuel Osgood regarded De Wette as "the rightful successor of Herder and Schleiermacher, the third of an illustrious trio, who more than all others have rebuked the dead supernaturalism of the old school, and the skeptical rationalism of the new, and sought to kindle a living faith congenial with the age."[176] De Wette gained popularity among Transcendentalists not just through his theological works but, more importantly, through his autobiographical two-volume novel *Theodore; or, the Skeptic's Conversion. History of the Culture of a Protestant Clergymen* which was translated by James Freeman Clarke.[177] A discussion of the reception of De Wette's literary and theological works would exceed the limits of this chapter. The reviews and translations of Herder and Schleiermacher, however, show many parallels to the Transcendentalists' discussions of De Wette which I will point out.

Among the American critics dedicated to evaluating German theological works, George Ripley stands out. His two reviews of Marsh's translation of *The Spirit of Hebrew Poetry* are the most nuanced and learned American investigations of Herder's thinking. They were published in the May and November issue of the *Christian*

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[176] Samuel Osgood, "Lehrbuch der Christlichen Dogmatik in ihren historischen Entwicklungen dargestellt. Von D. Wilhelm Martin Leberecht De Wette," *Christian Examiner and General Review* (May 1838), 140.

[177] Martin Leberecht De Wette, *Theodore, or, the Skeptic's Conversion. History of the Culture of a Protestant Clergymen*, trans. James Freeman Clarke, 2 vols. (Boston: James Munroe and Company, 1856).

Examiner and General Review in 1835.[178] The journal was the most important mouthpiece of Unitarianism and the intellectual forum for the publication and broader circulation of key concerns of the Transcendentalist movement in the early years.[179] In 1836 Ripley familiarized the readers of the *Christian Examiner* with Schleiermacher's thinking by introducing and translating Friedrich Lücke's reminiscences of his teacher "Erinnerungen an Friedrich Schleiermacher."[180] The Unitarian minister Ripley was a core figure of the Transcendentalist group. He had attended Harvard together with his cousin and friend Emerson, helped to found the Transcendental Club – a regular meeting point for anyone concerned with rethinking the premises of Unitarian theology in the movement's early years –, and was a major force in translating and promoting German Biblical scholarship, literature, and philosophy among his contemporaries. He owned most of Herder's and Schleiermacher's works in the original. Most famously, he edited a 14 volume series titled *Specimens of Foreign Standard Literature* between 1838 and 1842 which contains translations of what he considered canonical French and German writings.[181]

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[178] George Ripley, "Review of *The Spirit of Hebrew Poetry*. By J. G. Herder. Translated from the German by James Marsh, 2 Vols., Burlington 1833," *Christian Examiner and General Review*, 18 (1835), 167-221; "Review of Johann Gottfried Herders sämtliche Werke zur Religion und Theologie. Ed. By Johann Georg Müller. 18 Theile, Stuttgart-Tübingen 1827-1830," *Christian Examiner and General Review* 19 (1835), 172-204.

[179] On the journal's history, see *Encyclopedia of Transcendentalism*, 47-48.

[180] Ripley, "Schleiermacher as a Theologian," *Christian Examiner and General Review* 20 (March 1836): 1-46; Gottfried Christian Friedrich Lücke, "Erinnerungen an Friedrich Schleiermacher," *Theologische Studien und Kritiken. Eine Zeitschrift für das gesamte Gebiet der Theologie* 4 (1834): 745-813.

[181] Henry L. Golemba*, George Ripley* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1977). On Ripley's familiarity with Schleiermacher's works, see Richardson, "Schleiermacher and the Transcendentalists": "Ripley's library, when it was sold in 1846, had come to include most of Schleiermacher's works, in German, as well as six volumes of German criticism and commentary on Schleiermacher" (134).

Ripley's reviews are eclectic compositions. The author intermingles lengthy autobiographical sketches with evaluations of the significance and value of the reviewed texts. Moreover, he uses the review format as a forum for his own reflections on the authors under discussion and inserts excerpts from his translations of their works. Both the Schleiermacher and Herder reviews highlight the distinction the two critics draw between religion and theology as foundational to the restoration of spirituality. The division, Ripley writes, inaugurated "a new era in the history of science" by making a peaceful coexistence of faith and its historical manifestations possible:

> Religion, [Herder] argued, even according to its etymological signification, is a matter of inward nature, the higher consciousness of man…It was the grand central point, around which clustered the holiest feelings of the man, the citizen, and the friend, the most sacred bond of his inward consciousness, the altar of his purest and strongest affections.[182]

According to Ripley's summary of Herder's position, religion designates moments in which humans perceive a strong bond between themselves and a higher being. Their feelings and affections uphold this bond that anyone can build regardless of the position or rank he inhabits. Translating and paraphrasing Herder, Ripley locates God's "kingdom…among us" and emphasizes that it was Herder's central project "to bring the conviction of its truth to the individual consciousness of man." By the same token, he states that Schleiermacher's primary merit lay in regarding "religion in its essential elements," that is as a form of feeling and a state of human consciousness.[183]

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[182] Ripley, "Review of Johann Gottfried Herders Sämtliche Werke" (Nov.1835),180; see also Ripley, "Schleiermacher as a Theologian" (March 1836), 2-3.

[183] Ripley, "Review of Johann Gottfried Herders Sämtliche Werke" (Nov.1835), 196-197; Ripley, "Schleiermacher as a Theologian" (March 1836), 4.

Crucially, such states are not to be conflated with "religion in its outward manifestations."[184] Historically distinct expressions of human spirituality such as miracles belong to the field of theology. Ripley points out that both Herder and Schleiermacher were concerned with depriving theology of its exceptional status and desired to integrate it in the canon of the other sciences. He upholds that theology is not a field of inquiry "invested with any peculiar rights" but a science like any other with sets of "propositions for and against which we may dispute" and which need to be scrutinized and questioned like those of any other science.[185]

By introducing religion as a human disposition whose credibility is severed from specific historical incidents, Ripley takes the edge off of Unitarian disputes over the truth status of Jesus' miracles. The reviews discuss them as authentic recordings of Jesus' divinity but not as authoritative ones. The historical figure of Jesus was human like anyone else but distinguished himself by his exceptional ability to bring the human and divine world together. His divinity "consisted in the divine attributes which were manifested in his person." Like nobody else before and after him he unfolded the divine qualities that are potentially accessible to anyone at any time and became a "God-Man" who made the “constant and intimate connection between the human soul, and the Spirit of God” an integral part of life.[186]

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[184] The whole passage reads: "[Schleiermacher] admitted the validity of critical investigations to their fullest extent. These…had abolished the foundation on which the prevailing views of the Bible had reposed. Hence, it was necessary to draw the sharpest line of distinction between *religion it its essential elements, and religion in its outward manifestations.* Instead then of taking his stand in the written letter, he commenced with the *religious consciousness of human nature*. He aimed not so much to carry over the spirit of Christianity into the soul, as to awaken the soul itself to a sense of affinity with the essential revelations of the Gospel, and to lead it to embrace them with a consciousness of sympathy and relationship" [my emphasis], Ripley, "Schleiermacher as a Theologian" (March 1836), 4.

[185] Ripley, "Review of Johann Gottfried Herders Sämtliche Werke" (Nov. 1835), 180.

Ripley concludes that Herder’s and Schleiermacher’s mode of distinguishing sharply between Jesus’ godly qualities as a human being and his ways of transforming them into actions and molding them into methods of teaching is of major importance for the renewal of faith in early nineteenth century America. The distinction opens up the Bible to rigorous and unrestricted critical examination without weakening the subject’s trust and hope in the power of revelation in both past and present times: “Revelation pervades every age….Every age has had its mission in the unfolding of truth, and contributed its share towards the spiritual culture or man.”[187]

Recent critical inquiry into the role of German Biblical scholarship for Transcendentalism’s propagation of a new religious consciousness normally stops here. By not taking this investigation any further, however, it leaves us under the impression that the Transcendentalists’ approval and adoption of scholarly instruments and practices from abroad went hand in hand with the rise of the idea of the individual as a self-sufficient and inward-looking being. The critical literature suggests that the individual gains integrity by reverting to interior sources of empowerment, and critics undergird the claim by citing passages in which translations and reviews refer to these sources alternatively as man's inward nature, his mind, soul, higher consciousness or reason.[188]

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[186] Ripley, “Review of Johann Gottfried Herders Sämtliche Werke” (Nov.1835), 203; see also “Review of Johann Gottfried Herders Sämtliche Werke” (Nov. 1835), 195: “We are not, however, to rest the divine authority of Christianity upon the evidence of miracles…it is in fact impossible, argues Herder, to establish the truth of any religion, merely on the ground of miracles…[Jesus] announced truth, which should make the heart of man alive and free. And the proof of this, he placed in the experience of every individual. To this, outward miracles could contribute nothing.”
Ripley makes similar observations in his review on Schleiermacher (March 1836), 5:“[Schleiermacher] regards the spirit of Christ as having been filled with all the fullness of God, and, at the same time, he remembers the human relations in which this spirit was manifested. Schleiermacher thus reconciles some of the most perplexing antitheses between the two opposing systems, and lays a broad foundation for a faith which is equally in accordance with the results of science and the wants of the heart.”

[187] Ripley, “Review of Johann Gottfried Herders Sämtliche Werke” (Nov.1835), 183.

The Transcendentalists, however, go far beyond making abstract references to man's soul and mind as conduits of divine revelation in modern times. In conversation with Herder and Schleiermacher, they demonstrate that the distinction between man's spiritual qualities and their historically specific articulations brings with it fundamentally new ways of thinking about the *relations* between the spirit and the letter. More specifically, they suggest that revelation is not simply planted in the human mind and soul but gains shape in critical and creative engagements with Scripture.

Frederic Henry Hedge's *Reason in Religion* lucidly exemplifies the dependence of the subject's religious feelings on their continuous realization in material and written formats. A Unitarian minister, writer, critic, and translator, Hedge also belonged to the group of Göttingen students, and he was, like his friend Ripley, a prominent figure who, in the early years of Transcendentalism, made German literature accessible for an American audience through numerous translations. *Reason and Religion* as well as many of his other writings make recourse to arguments put forth by German theologians, especially by Schleiermacher.[189] Reflecting on how historical inquiry has changed the status of the Bible and the Church, he asks to what sort of source the individual can now resort to find an "expressed and unmistakable answer of God" and provides an answer: “However desirable infallibility is…we have not been so constituted as to see infallibly or to act infallibly” and even if we could have “infallible authority in religion” such a state would be undesirable. Uncertainty, he writes, “is very essential to our growth, as individuals and as society.” In that sense, Hedge suggest that the way for the individual to experience revelation is through continues explorations of how religious feelings gain shape through different modes of expression: “no existing letter can endure for ever…every form in which the spirit clothes itself, every body it puts on, is transient.” Revelation, he writes, is a lifelong education.[190]

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[188] Compare the quotations and references in this text's introductory paragraphs.
[189] Richardson, "Schleiermacher and the Transcendentalists," 129-131, 138-140.

Similarly, Ripley links the characteristics of the human mind and soul that gain prominence with the rise of historical criticism to the project of education: “A ship on the ocean needs the wind; the human mind demands continued inquiry and discussion on both sides.” This Herderian analogy illuminates in the most condensed fashion what Ripley regards as foundational to Herder’s understanding of the subject. What the individual needs for its divine potentials to unfold and to keep its modes of thinking from falling into stagnation is an environment that acts on it like wind and water act on a ship: to remain afloat and in motion, the subject has to expose itself and open up to the challenges posed by interrogations and debates.

A powerful “aid” that helps the subject to cultivate mental plasticity is “sound philological learning.” One ought to bring an inquisitive and skeptical mindset to the writings of the Bible and all religious doctrines and “sacred records”:[191]

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[190] Frederic Henry Hedge, *Reason in Religion* (Boston: Walker, Fuller and Company, 1865), 205-206, 209, 304.

[191] Ripley, “Review of Johann Gottfried Herders Sämtliche Werke” (Nov.1835), 177.

> [Herder] desired to have all opinions confronted together, that their genuine character might be ascertained. The only security of the progress of science and the ultimate establishment of the truth was to be found, according to his view, in the calm comparison of different opinions, without excitement and without prejudice. He carried this principle so far, as to suppose that the best interests of religion were promoted by the free utterance of any doubts that were felt, either with regard to the received dogmas of the church, or the origin and character of Christianity itself.[192]

The individual gains freedom and integrity in matters of faith by comparing and critically scrutinizing different opinions about religious records and by questioning them. A person who calls into doubt his own propositions and the propositions of others acts in accordance with “the best interests of religion.”

Hedge and Ripley introduce a notion of religious integrity that places high demands on the individual. To be true to religion, to this “higher consciousness” of oneself means to choose a life path paved by continuous trial and error. Hedge—whose fascinating observations deserve a much more elaborate treatment than my own and other critics’ cursory ones—explores this dynamic with regard to the subject’s attempts to bring spiritual experience into written and material forms. He argues that the formation of one’s higher self is underwritten by alternating modes of expressing, revising, destroying and recreating one’s experience through different media. Ripley identifies in Herder’s texts a similar process in the context of his discussion of how one ought to engage with existing records of human spirituality. Herder links the vitality and progress of man's "higher consciousness" to the cultivation of a critical stance that does not settle on propositions and established doctrines.

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[192] Ripley, “Review of Johann Gottfried Herders Sämtliche Werke” (Nov.1835), 175.

Throughout his reviews, Ripley probes deeply into the details of *how* Herder seeks to accomplish the formation of a mind that integrates the unsettlement of propositions into his modes of spiritual revival, into his return to "the consciousness of his own nature."[193] Ripley identifies Herder's concept of empathy as a conduit for the formation of such a mind-set, and thereby picks up on what Marsh's "Translator's Preface" to *The Spirit of Hebrew Poetry* introduces as *the* lens for us to understand the characteristics of Herder's notion of religious recovery:

> The work, of which a translation is here offered to the public, has long been celebrated in Germany, as one of distinguished merit…It taught them [the Germans], too, in the study of Hebrew antiquity and Hebrew poetry, as the works of Lessing, Winkelmann, and others had done in regard to Grecian antiquity, to divest themselves of the conceptions, and modes of thought, which are peculiar to their own country and institutions, and of the peculiar spirit of their own age; by the force of imagination to place themselves in the condition of those ancient patriarchs and prophets…to see the world as they saw it, to feel as they felt, to imbibe and to express their spirit in its truth and simplicity.[194]

What makes up the practice of empathy in the field of both classical and theological studies are exercises of self-abandonment. Throughout the preface Marsh details what such acts of displacement mean for the modern reader and critic. He has to divest himself of everything he takes for granted and regards as normative in his own life world. He has to depart from habits and modes of thinking with which he is comfortable and try to abandon the range of emotions accompanying them.[195] By the same token, Ripley elaborates on Herder's modes of self-abandonment as the precondition for the modern mind's "pursuit of truth."[196]

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[193] Ripley, "Review of Johann Gottfried Herders Sämtliche Werke" (Nov.1835), 201.

[194] James Marsh, "Translator's Preface" to Johann Gottfried Herder, *The Spirit of Hebrew Poetry*, (Burlington: Edward Smith, 1833), 3.

According to Marsh and Ripley, it is by means of his practice of imaginary displacement that Herder sets himself apart from the text on which his reworkings of the Old Testament are modeled, Robert Lowth's *De Sacra Poesi Hebraeorum Praelectiones*.[197] Marsh writes that Lowth' text, though valuable, does not meet the same high standards as Herder's "classical standard work" because of "the point of view, from which it contemplates the subject…it treats."[198] What diminishes the quality of Lowth's *De Sacra Poesi Hebraeorum* in Marsh's eyes is that he forms his opinions about Hebrew poetry too much against the backdrop of Greco-Roman standards of composition. With their promotion of Herder as a Biblical critic who made himself a name with a particular method, Ripley and Marsh could count on a readership having already heard of Lowth's and Herder's treatment of the Old Testament. In an anonymous review that appeared in the *North American Review* in 1830, the author writes that Michaelis' acquaintance with Lowth's lectures in Oxford gave the first impulse to a new reading of the Old Testament among German theologians, "open[ing] their eyes on a new scene of the most interesting research" and "form[ing] absolutely a new era in intellectual activity." The article also introduces the work that took its point of departure from Lowth, Herder's *Vom Geist der Ebräischen Poesie*.[199]

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[195] "Unless it have the higher power of divesting itself of all that is peculiar in its acquired forms of thought, and in those conceptions by which it takes cognizance of the objects of its knowledge, of clothing itself anew in the forms of thought peculiar to another people, and of so adopting their conceptions for its own, as to contemplate the world around them under the same relations with them, the man can never participate in their emotions, nor breathe the spirit of their poetry. He must not only be acquainted with the facts of their history, the modes of life, and the circumstances of every kind, by which their habits of thought and feeling were moulded…but must learn to place himself entirely in their point of view…and if he have the feeling and inspiration of the poet, he will sympathize with their emotions, and the living spirit of their poetry will be kindled up in his own imagination" (Marsh, "Translator's Preface," 5).

[196] "When we hear mention made of the Spirit of God, which is in them [Oriental writings], we must place ourselves in the condition of the people among whom they were written…If then, we give to expressions of this kind an arbitrary signification, or explain them according to the modern use of language, we throw great confusion over the history of the early ages, and embarrass our own minds in the pursuit of truth," Ripley, "Review of Johann Gottfried Herders Sämtliche Werke" (Nov.1835), 183.

[197] On the relationship between Herder's *Vom Geist* and Lowth's *De Sacra Poesi Hebraeorum*, see the previous chapter.

[198] Marsh, "Translator's Preface," 3-4.

The comparisons with Lowth's text help the American critics bring into focus the highly demanding nature of Herder's approach to the Hebrew scriptures and demonstrate the method's advantages at the same time.[200] Ripley, above all, is concerned with exemplifying why Herder's "path of inquiry" is worth adopting and leads "students of the Bible" to "excellent success." Drawing on passages from Herder's genesis interpretation, he shows that approaches to the text that are not underwritten by strategies of empathy and self-abandonment are detrimental to our understanding of the story of creation. Instead of trying to excavate and recreate the text in its larger context, we press it into "foreign systems" and "preconceived theories"; we do nothing but "blindly cling to the letter" and turn it into a "definite and formal fulfillment" of our preconceived propositions. By violently imposing ourselves "we rush into innumerable follies…into a world of dreams and shadows."[201]

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[199] Anonymous, "Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews. By Robert Lowth D. Lord Bishop of London," *North American Review* (Oct. 1830): 372, 375.

[200] Marsh elaborates on the difficulties of Herder's empathetic approach: "When we place ourselves in the tents of the Hebrew patriarchs…every thing is to be learned anew. The language, habit of life, the modes of thought and of intercourse, the heavens above, and the earth beneath, all are changed, and present to us a strange and foreign aspect…it is as difficult has returning to one's childhood: and when we reflect, too, how difficult it is for us to return upon our own childhood, and revive the faded conceptions and forgotten feelings…we may apprehend something of the difficulties which an author has to overcome, who would fully enter into the spirit of Hebrew poetry. We may understand too how impossible it would be by the method, which Lowth has pursued" (Marsh, "Translator's Preface," 6-7).

If, by contrast, we resist corseting biblical stories into modern systematic frames and follow instead "the genius of the passage, of the language, of the nation…in which it was produced" the text will resound as beautiful poetry in our ears.[202] The exercise of divesting ourselves of what we take to be normative habits, emotions, and modes of thinking helps us to see the Hebrew verses as lively records, telling us of the ways in which ancient Hebrews experienced God's presence in their lives in numerous ways.

Against the backdrop of Ripley's and Marsh's explications of Herder's empathetic method, we gain a good sense of what kind of labor is needed on the part of the subject to hone his mental flexibility and avoid the pitfalls of doctrinal imposition. The question still open, however, is in what ways such intellectual labor serves what the American critics identify as the main goal of all critical inquiry: the restoration of man's faith in feeling and experiencing the divine and act as a "God-Man."[203] Or, to put it differently, in what ways does Herder not just *say* but also *perform* his claim that the gift of revelation was no privilege of the past but is potentially available to everyone at anytime?

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[201] Ripley, "Review of Johann Gottfried Herders Sämtliche Werke" (Nov.1835), 189-192.

[202] Ripley, "Review of Johann Gottfried Herders Sämtliche Werke" (Nov.1835), 191.

[203] Translating from Herder, Ripley proposes the goal of reviving a spirit of divine revelation in modern times in the most emphatic manner: "Why should we not, then," [Herder] asks, "rejoice in our ancestry, and with all the zeal and love, with which the poets, prophets, and sages of ancient times announced to the world the lofty truths, which they dimly saw, why should not we set them forth in a brighter and purer light, and with more sublime enthusiasm? If Orpheus and Homer, Pythagoras and Plato, Hesiod and Pindar, extolled with such rapture the birth and glory, the dominion and miracles of their gods…why do we cast down our eyes like slaves, when we speak of the true and everlasting God," ["Review of Johann Gottfried Herders Sämtliche Werke" (Nov. 1835), 179].

This question leads to the heart of Ripley's review where he evaluates Marsh's translation. Ripley acknowledges "the literary enterprise and industry of an American scholar in undertaking and completing such a difficult task." At the same time, however, he is highly critical of the quality of Marsh's work as a translator:

> In justice to Herder it ought to be stated, that he suffers much under the hands of Professor Marsh. The vivacity and animation which breathe from every page of the original are evaporated in the translation. The spirited and graceful style of Herder, in the composition of this work, would hardly be recognized in the new costume which is given to his thoughts...[Marsh] often overlays the breathing life of the original with a thick shroud of words.[204]

Marsh's English fails to bring out the vivacity of the original language. In large bodies of footnotes running over several pages, Ripley places his own translation side by side with Marsh's to exemplify his point. He shows how Marsh covers up Herder's "graceful" and "spirited" style that is "breathing with life" with a wordy translation, exhibiting grammatical flaws and a faulty diction. In short, Ripley resumes that "Herder's spirit is not in it."[205]

Ripley's critique draws attention to the restorative and creative side of Herder's philological practice. What Marsh's translation fails to convey is that Herder combines the exercise of self-abandonment with a strong formative impetus. Drawing on Madame de Staël's discussion of Herder's work in *Germany*, Ripley provides a detailed introduction to this creating dimension of Herder's approach to Hebrew poetry:

> It is seldom that we meet with a writer, whose soul is so penetrated with the true spirit of antiquity, and who is so capable of bringing up the faded past in vivid

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[204] Ripley, "Review of *The Spirit of Hebrew Poetry*" (May 1835), 170.
[205] Ripley, "Review of *The Spirit of Hebrew Poetry*" (May 1835), 173.

> reality before the eye. “It seems, in reading him,” says Madame de Staël, “as if we were walking in the midst of the old world with an historical poet, who touches the ruins with his wand and erects anew all the fallen edifices.” He brings to his subject a freshness, a gushing enthusiasm, which spreads a charm over the driest details, and reminds us more of the eloquent conversation of a friend than of the learned discussion of a critic. Every thing is in motion, every thing has life, he is never languid himself, and he never permits languor in others; and we are led on from page to page of profound learning, of curious research, of wide and scholar-like investigation, with as little feeling and satiety or fatigue, as if we were reading a fascinating novel. He is unrivaled in the power of giving a picturesque beauty to the most barren subjects, so that the wilderness springs up into bloom and luxuriance under his magic touch. His own pure and noble spirit breathes through his productions. They seem to bring us into the presence of the author, where we hear his deep and thrilling voice, gaze upon his serene brow, and receive a revelation of his inmost heart. We cannot read them without knowing and loving the mind, from whose inspiration they proceeded. The great object of his life was the spiritual elevation of humanity; and, in his view, the means of his accomplishment was to infuse the spirit of Christ and his religion into the hearts of men. Such fervent love of man, such deep sympathy with Christ…these are so distinctly impressed on the whole face of his writings, that, in reading them, we feel that we are enjoying the intimate communion of an exalted and holy mind.[206]

Ripley demonstrates through the lens of Herder’s critical techniques how the modern reconstruction of a religious text can be turned into an instrument for man’s “spiritual elevation.” The passage details how Herder realizes his life’s objective, the infusion of “the spirit of Christ into the hearts of men,” by rendering the text a site for the critic to act as a “God-Man.” Obviously convinced by the success of Herder’s efforts, Ripley concludes that in reading *Vom Geist der Ebräischen Poesie* he feels as if he were witnessing an “intimate communion of an exalted and holy mind.”

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[206] Ripley, “Review of *The Spirit of Hebrew Poetry*” (May 1835), 169.

It is illuminating to discuss the individual characteristics of the innovative facet of Herder's approach against the backdrop of recent critical literature on the practice of philology. Ripley's enthusiastic championing of Herder's infusion of his spirit into his writings in some ways meshes with an aspect that Gumbrecht's *Die Macht der Philologie* and Güthenke's "German Classical Scholarship and the Language of Love" consider integral to the science of philology.[207] Güthenke examines the artistic component of critical inquiry specifically in eighteenth century classical scholarship, while Gumbrecht extends his observations concerning the imaginative qualities of scholarship to the science of philology in general.

Gumbrecht argues that philological activities – that is the identification of fragments, editing, and the composition of commentaries – always resemble the creative work of writers and poets to a greater or lesser extent. Translations, collections, and editions bear their author's signature. This affinity between poetic arts and scholarly investigations stems from the fact that any philological practice is underwritten by a structure of desire. Driven by the impulse to render the object and author under investigation present, the philologist seeks structures of coherence between textual fragments and attempts to give them shape. He draws on his imagination to fill out empty spaces surrounding his materials and thereby exercises power over them. Drawing on the Benjamin philology, Gumbrecht argues that the critic endows the objects he singles out over the course of his inquiries with an aura of exclusivity and turns them into sacred objects.

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[207] Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, *Die Macht der Philologie: Über einen verborgenen Impuls im wissenschaftlichen Umgang mit Texten*, transl. Joachim Schulte (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2003). I adopt the link Gumbrecht draws between philology and power for my own title; Constanze Güthenke, "The Potter's Daughter's Sons: German Classical Scholarship and the Language of Love Circa 1800," *Representations* 109 (2010): 122-147.

Gumbrecht in *Die Macht der Philologie* points out that this link between the practice of historical reconstruction and imagination has been considered problematic and frowned upon by scholars, because it suggests a lack of control on the part of the critic and a mode of researching that appears insufficiently scholarly. He insists, however, that we need to view the unique characteristics of a critic's historical text reconstructions as a vital component of his philological work. In their distinctiveness these reconstructions have given rise to a variety of different styles of philological inquiry in the disciplines that call for investigation.[208]

Building on insights like Gumbrecht's that draw attention to the significance of the creative side of scholarship, Güthenke makes the stylistic and linguistic manifestations of the subjective dimension of philology the focal point of her investigations of eighteenth century classical scholarship. She argues that the period's leading classical scholars preferably employ a language of love, interpersonal affection and emotionality in their writings. Throughout her essay she examines how the language of love impacts and shapes the historiography of the field of classicism, our perception of the past, and the scholar's self-understanding. Drawing on a large body of classical criticism, she shows how the discourse of interpersonal affection personalizes and enlivens the past in intimate ways and exemplifies how scholar like Winckelmann, F.A. Wolf, Schlegel or Herder invest the objects they examine with human characteristics and emotions. This individualizing mode of inquiry, in turn, has powerful feedback effects on the scholar himself: a past "invested with the characteristics of a human figure" can become a "correlative to the figure of the scholar" and crucial for his self-representation as a researcher and as an individual. Moreover, such personal acts of figuration shape the scholarly discourse and determine its place in conceptualizing modernity.[209]

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[208] Gumbrecht, *Die Macht der Philologie*, esp. 12-13, 46-47, 102. With their focus on the impact and functions of the "unscientific" facets of philological research, Gumbrecht's and Güthenke's works share similar research interests with publications like Sheldon Pollock's "Future Philology: The Fate of a Soft Science in a Hard World," *Critical Inquiry* 35 (2009): 931-961. Pollock argues that "a truly critical philology must acknowledge the claims the past is making upon us" and advocates for recognizing the field's humanist roles (958). Pollock takes his cue for this line of argumentation from Edward Said, "The Return to Philology," *Humanism and Democratic Criticism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 57-84. See also Thomas Steinfeld, *Der leidenschaftliche Buchhalter: Philologie als Lebensform* (München: Hanser, 2004).

Gumbrecht's and in particular Güthenke's observations are useful for analyzing Ripley's representation of Herder's mode of inquiry. In Ripley's eyes, Herder accomplishes his goal of making his readers feel that the divine resides in man himself by performing how to go beyond being a "learned critic" toward becoming a "historical poet" or what I call a poet-philologist. In that function Herder unfolds powers that Ripley compares to those of a magician: like the magician with his "wand," the poet-philologist touches "the most barren subjects" and turns them into magnificent ones; he erects "ruins" and transforms the "wilderness" into a blossoming landscape. He endows the objects he singles out with a magical aura of exclusivity.

Through such acts of transformation, the past not only comes vibrantly alive, radically altering our perspective on it, but it also moves closer and becomes thereby more personal and accessible. Ripley writes that Herder's way of approaching his subjects reminds him of a conversation he would have with a friend. The author of the ancient writings himself seems to emerge as a friend, as a “mind” we cannot but love; through Herder’s style of writing the author materializes as a person with physical characteristics, revealing his most intimate emotions to us: we can “hear his deep and thrilling voice,” “gaze upon his serene brow” and gain insight into “his inmost heart.”

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[209] Güthenke, "German Classical Scholarship and the Language of Love Circa 1800," 126.

As Güthenke points out, such personal, affective and selective strategies of configuring the past have a feedback effect on the scholar himself. Ripley observes that Herder impresses his “sympathy” and “intimate communion” with the divine “on the whole face of his writings” and thereby fashions himself as a “God-Man.” Herder exhibits the scholar’s ability to bring out his affinities with God vis-à-vis his activity as a poet-philologist. Through his intimate language and style, his strategy of zeroing in on individual objects he forges a personal perspective on the past which, in turn, enables him to fashion himself as a modern theologian able to turn religious records of the past into instruments for a timely and subject centered mode of practicing religion.

In his review “Writings of Herder” in the *North American Review*, George Bancroft also regards Herder’s poetic-philology in the field of biblical criticism as his works’ distinguishing trait. Herder, Bancroft states, did not gain recognition as a writer but “he knew how to estimate the excellence of others”:

> He could hold his mind aloof from the objects by which he was immediately surrounded, and enter upon the study of a foreign work, as if he had been of the country, for which it was originally designed…He did more than translate. Wherever he found a beautiful idea, a just and happy image or allegory, he would seize upon it, and, giving it a form suited to his own taste, present it to the world anew. Deeply versed in biblical criticism, he often met amidst the rubbish of verbal commentators and allegorical expositors, many curious instructive

> fables, narrations, proverbs, and comparisons. These he did not fail to select, to amplify and arrange, and thus put in currency again many a bright thought, which day covered with the rust of learning, or buried under a mass of useless criticism.[210]

Herder's strength lies in singling out a "beautiful idea," an "image," an "allegory" or a small literary genre from the mass of ancient fragments and present his findings "to the world anew" by skillfully employing the instruments of philology. He fills out the empty spaces around fragments by amplifying and arranging them; he renders his materials contemporary and appealing to his readership by "giving [them] a form suited to his own taste."

Concerning his philological method in the field of Biblical criticism, Schleiermacher holds the same position as Herder among American intellectuals. In fact, Ripley's review casts the double focus of "the power of interpreting" into even sharper relief than in the articles on Herder. In confronting the critic's "renunciation and surrendry of self" with strategies of "personal appropriation," Ripley relies on his translation of Friedrich Lücke's "Erinnerungen an Friedrich Schleiermacher." The Göttingen theology professor had published his recollections of his teacher only a few months after Schleiermacher's death in 1834 in the journal *Theologische Studien und Kritiken*.[211] Ripley's translation is interesting not just because of being yet another indication for the strong footprint that German scholarship left on the

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[210] George Bancroft, "Johann Gottfried von Herder's sämtliche Werke," *North American Review* 20:1 (1825): 139.

[211] Gottfried Christian Friedrich Lücke, "Erinnerungen an Friedrich Schleiermacher," *Theologische Studien und Kritiken. Eine Zeitschrift für das gesamte Gebiet der Theologie* 4 (1834): 745-813; Ripley, "Schleiermacher as a Theologian" (March 1836), 24-25.

Transcendentalists' critical thinking. Rather, the translation of Lücke's text and its further discussion by Samuel Osgood in his review of De Wette reveal the formation of a contested discourse over both the powerful potentials of a poetic-philology and its equally powerful pitfalls.

Lücke singles out Schleiermacher's "Critical Letter on the First Epistle to Timothy" (1807) ["Ueber den sogenannten ersten Brief des Paulos an den Timotheos"] as exemplary of both the strong appeal of his "artist-like, graceful" style of criticism and of the objections it raised among his colleagues.[212] When Schleiermacher took up the letters, they had been the object of contested discussions among theologians who had serious doubts about their authenticity; Eichhorn, for instance, had rejected the letters as false.[213] Regardless of their doubtful origin, however, Schleiermacher made them the object of his research and introduced with his findings a new critical voice in the discipline:

> He loved him [Paul] above all others…but as it often happens with the love exercised by commanding characters, Schleiermacher insensibly transformed the Apostle into himself. He made him reason with logical precision as well as write with rhetorical skill. While he saw himself in Paul rather than Paul in himself, it is certain that, with all his rare sagacity and almost magical power in his exegetical reasonings and statements, he presented an interpretation of himself rather than of the Apostle. But this cannot prevent us from attaching a high value to his services in exegetical theology; since, even in the very instances in which the ascendency of his own mind led him to err, he was able to awaken a greater degree of life and of scientific activity, in this sphere of exertion, than a hundred ordinary individuals, whose want of a strong and original character renders them incapable of ever making a mistake.[214]

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[212] Ripley, "Schleiermacher as a Theologian" (March 1836), 19.
[213] Compare Ripley, "Schleiermacher as a Theologian" (March 1836), 21-22.
[214] Ripley, "Schleiermacher as a Theologian" (March 1836), 25-26.

According to Lücke's recollections, Schleiermacher reconstructed the writings and the life story of Paul as a site for narrating his own biography and scholarly development. Driven by his strong affections for the apostle, his scholarly examinations become in the first place a sounding board for Schleiermacher's own reasoning and rhetorical practices. Lücke comments on the potential dangers of such a self-reflective mode of criticism and warns that it can surely not be "entrusted in the hands of everyone." Such "conjectural criticism" rests on thin ice and is too heavy on the "appropriation" side of philology. At the same time, however, Lücke also notes the powerful appeal of his teacher's revivals of Paul; even "students of classical philology," he recalls, "envi[ed] us this production" and thereby raised the popularity of biblical studies more than any other scholarly examination, eagerly attempting to avoid the dangers of conjecture and imaginative recovery.[215]

Lücke's assessment of the value of Schleiermacher's theological scholarship, however, did not receive approbation everywhere. Osgood picks up on Ripley's introduction of Lücke's "Recollections of Schleiermacher" to demonstrate why De Wette was more than "the rightful successor of Herder and Schleiermacher." While all of them contributed in major ways to the transformation of scholarship into an instrument for the revival of "religion and revelation," De Wette's work surpasses those of his teachers in Osgood's eyes:

> [De Wette] seeks to revive the lives and times of the sacred writers, and throws himself into their feelings, and thus to judge all Scriptures by that same spirit in which it was written. To borrow the phraseology of Dr. Lücke in his

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[215] Ripley, "Schleiermacher as a Theologian" (March 1836), 21-22.

> recollections of Schleiermacher, De Wette, as a critical interpreter, has more of *abandonment* than *appropriation*; is more disposed to yield his own mind to the author, that to draw the author over to him…While Schleiermacher would make Paul "reason with logical precision and write with rhetorical skill," De Wette, although himself a philosopher, would leave the apostle to reason and write in his own way, and would try to find out that way.[216]

Osgood holds Schleiermacher's self-reflective criticism against him because it occludes and distorts the apostle's own voice too much. De Wette's writings on the same topic, by contrast, do not overturn the fine balance between "abandonment" and "appropriation" because he refrains from insensitively "stamp[ing] his own individuality upon everything."

Osgood's response to Lücke's representation of Schleiermacher's writings on Paul is telling in that it shows the extent to which American critics regard the restoration of man's religious authority in the context of critical techniques. Osgood judges the three major proponents of the new notion of faith that thrived in the early years of Transcendentalism by their poetic-philological methods. He measures the authority of their claim that God is internal to the self by their style of critical inquiry.

Against the backdrop of my analysis of texts by critics like Osgood, Bancroft, Marsh, Ripley and Hedge, it should be clear why we can only really begin to comprehend the functions and manifestations of German biblical scholarship in Transcendentalist discourses if we take the relationship between religious revival and instruments of textual investigation into view. In the works under examination, the subject who conceives religion as an integral part of his soul and consciousness is not empowered in the sense of being knowing, of being able to rely on a stable notion of faith. Rather, man is empowered in the sense that he begins to discover the capacities and functions of his faculties in wholly new ways. By working toward dissolutions of preconceived ideas and dogmas and by unsettling the authority of holy records, he gains a completely new perspective on the human role in shaping religion. He begins to see that he plays the main part in the project of modern revelation and identifies poetic-philological practices as a crucial vehicle to work toward the project's realization.

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[216] Samuel Osgood, "Lehrbuch der Christlichen Dogmatik in ihren historischen Entwicklungen dargestellt. Von D. Wilhelm Martin Leberecht De Wette," *Christian Examiner and General Review* (May 1838): 140, 153.

Religious Sociability and the Reinvention of the Ministry

The preceding examinations demonstrated how Transcendentalist critics articulate a notion of religious renewal premised on a set of learning activities through their probing into Herder's and Schleiermacher's poetic-philology. This part of the chapter broadens the scope of inquiry by arguing that the Transcendentalists investigate the relationship between modern revelation and strenuous educational efforts not only through practices of reading and writing but also in the social domain of public oratory. Drawing on letters, translations, and reviews engaging Herder and, more importantly, Schleiermacher, I focus on how Ripley develops the idea that a person becomes an authoritative source of religious revival through interaction with others in the sphere of social life.

The key text addressing the interdependence of religion and the social is Ripley's translation from the fourth speech of Schleiermacher's *Über die Religion. Reden an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern*. While Ripley provides multiple translations from the *Reden* and *Der Christliche Glaube* in letters and reviews, he singled out the fourth discourse "On the Social Element in Religion; or on the Church and Priesthood" to be published in the first American anthology of German fiction and criticism, Frederic Henry Hedge's *Prose Writers of Germany*.[217] So as to assess the extent and significance of the social element of religion for Ripley and his fellow ministers, I read the translation of the fourth discourse along with a series of pamphlets Ripley addressed to his mentor Andrews Norton, the leading professor of theology at Harvard Divinity School.[218]

I argue that Ripley's first letter responds to his teacher's orthodox views by representing the alumni of the Divinity School as an ideal religious community in the sense of Schleiermacher's fourth speech. A comparative analysis of the two texts shows that the members of Schleiermacher's imagined community and Ripley's group of

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[217] Richardson remarks on the interdependence of religious renewal and the social sphere in his essay on "Schleiermacher and the Transcendentalists": "communication of religious feeling in others is also a basic constitutive element of religion for Schleiermacher and for his American followers – for George Ripley in particular" (124). He points to Ripley's translation of the fourth speech from the *Reden* as the key text that "links religion with criticism, with hermeneutics, and with communal life. It lays the basis for a theology of community and communication. After the first three discourses establish the foundation of religion in human nature and in individual human experience, the fourth discourse extends the argument to the social level. It is the crucial step from religious feeling to religious community" (141).

[218] George Ripley, *A Letter to Mr. Andrews Norton. Occasioned by his "Discourse before the Association of the Alumni of the Cambridge Theological School"* (Boston: James Munroe and Company, 1839); *A Second Letter to Mr. Andrews Norton. Occasioned by his Defence of a Discourse on "The Latest Form of Infidelity"* (Boston: James Munroe and Company, 1840); *A Third Letter to Mr. Andrews Norton. Occasioned by his Defence of a Discourse on "The Latest Form of Infidelity"* (Boston: James Munroe and Company, 1840); Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher, "Discourse IV. On the Social Element in Religion; or on the Church and Priesthood," Frederic Henry Hedge, *Prose Writers of Germany*, trans. George Ripley (Philadelphia: Carey and Hart, 1852), 441-445.

Divinity School graduates conceive of religious truth as something no individual may lay an exclusive claim to. According to their views, man's feeling and higher consciousness of the divine is limited in that he can only seize it in partial ways; the community, however, is a setting congenial to the thriving of religion because the members broaden and enrich each other's personal perspectives through communication.

Both texts show how such a conception of religious revival based on reciprocal formation calls for a fundamental unsettlement and reorganization of church hierarchies. A community where every member has an equal claim to religious truth without possessing it in its entirety cannot be organized along set divisions between clergy and laymen. Instead, the legitimacy of leadership gets linked to the individual's spiritual capacities to revive religion, and to render this revival a communal experience on which the audience has a formative impact. While Schleiermacher and Ripley indicate that such a democratization of hierarchical structures gives rise to a plurality of new vantage points on religion, the egalitarian shift also places altogether new responsibilities on the preacher and his congregation.

On the one hand, the individual legitimates his elevated position within a religious community by making spiritual realms accessible in ways that meet the group's approval and initiate their participation and fellowship. On the other hand, however, he has to also maintain the infinite, non-conclusive character of religion by preventing the formation of an exclusive group closely attached to their leader and unified by a set of opinions. Ripley examines Schleiermacher's responses to the challenge through Lücke's representation of his teacher's activities as a preacher and lecturer. Moreover, Ripley highlights Herder's strategies of preaching as exemplary in how to uphold the fine balance between creating strong communal alliances and keeping alive religion's unfathomable nature. A central text addressing the new role of the preacher is Ripley's "Letter to a Theological Student," modelled explicitly on Herder's *Briefe, das Studium der Theologie betreffend* and published in the Transcendentalist journal *The Dial*, and, more importantly, Ripley's free translations from Herder's *Der Redner Gottes* in the *Christian Examiner*.[219]

The Harvard professor and conservative Unitarian Norton, who was the co-editor of the *Christian Examiner*, felt offended by the series of articles his student had published on German theological scholarship and attacked him publicly in a letter that appeared in the *Boston Daily Advertiser* on November 5, 1836.[220] The letter warns Ripley of destroying the foundations of the Christian faith by calling the status of miracles as secure evidence into question. The publication sparked a controversy between teacher and student that lasted over three years and found its most elaborate manifestation in Norton's *A Discourse on the Latest Form of Infidelity* and Ripley's response to it in the form of three book-length letters.[221]

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[219] George Ripley, "Letter to a Theological Student," *The Dial* 1 (Oct. 1840): 183-187; Ripley, "Review of *The Spirit of Hebrew Poetry* on Herder" (May 1835), 178-180, 191-194; Ripley, "Schleiermacher as a Theologian" (March 1836), 13-15, 34-38.

[220] Andrews Norton, [Letter to the Editor] *Boston Daily Advertiser*, November 5, 1836, 2, in Joel Myerson, ed., *Transcendentalism: A Reader* (New York: Oxford University Press), 160-162.

[221] Andrews Norton, *A Discourse on the Latest Form of Infidelity* (Cambridge: John Owen, 1839); Ripley, *A Letter to Mr. Andrews Norton. Occasioned by his "Discourse before the Association of the Alumni of the Cambridge Theological School"* (Boston: James Munroe and Company, 1839); *A Second Letter to*

The *Discourse* urges the “former pupils of the Theological School” to stand up for the conviction that the foundation of the Christian faith is “the belief that Christianity is a revelation by God of the truths of religion” and that “the divine authority of him whom God commissioned to speak to us in his name was attested…by miraculous displays of power.” Norton warns the Divinity School graduates of the “Modern German School of Infidelity” as articulated in the theological writing of Schleiermacher and De Wette; the German critics, he argues, propagate an atheistic world view, because in his eyes their “denial of the possibility of miracles” equals “the denial of the existence of God.”[222]

Ripley frames his first letter engaging with Norton’s conception of the foundations of faith and of German higher criticism not as a response to a personal controversy but to a deep conflict that has opened up between the Divinity School professor and his former students. Ripley assumes the position of a spokesperson for his fellow graduates by not signing the letter with his name but as “an Alumnus of That [the ‘Cambridge Theological’] School.” Throughout all three letters, he works toward two main goals: to meticulously disentangle and dispute the individual components of Norton’s position, and to reconstitute religious faith as a power that is “founded in the essential nature of man.”[223] The third letter pursues the reconstructive goal over a 129

Mr. Andrews Norton. Occasioned by his Defence of a Discourse on “The Latest Form of Infidelity” (Boston: James Munroe and Company, 1840); *A Third Letter to Mr. Andrews Norton. Occasioned by his Defence of a Discourse on “The Latest Form of Infidelity”* (Boston: James Munroe and Company, 1840).

[222] Norton, *A Discourse on the Latest Form of Infidelity*, 3-5, 39, 11. Also quoted and discussed more elaborately in Gura, *American Transcendentalism*, 110-111.

[223] This citation stems from Ripley’s discussion of Schleiermacher’s *Reden* in the first letter to Norton, Ripley, *A Letter to Mr. Andrews Norton*, 133.

page long discussion of Schleiermacher's theological thinking in which Ripley intersperses translations from Schleiermacher's works with critiques of what he regards as Norton's distortions, unqualified generalizations and mistranslations of them.

The first letter is the primary resource for us to specify the ways in which Ripley's religious revival project is linked to the domain of social interaction. His mode of arguing resonates in crucial aspects with Schleiermacher's fourth speech to which I turn first. In this speech, Schleiermacher encourages his readers to join him in his endeavor to fundamentally rethink the conception of religion and to "erect it again upon a new basis." This basis, he claims, has to be a social one: "If religion exists at all, it must…possess a social character." More specifically, he suggests that the reason for the social core of religion lies both in "the nature of man" and "in the nature of religion."

Religion's distinctive trait is its infinite nature which makes it impossible for a "single individual" to comprehend it in its entirety. Nothing, Schleiermacher writes, confronts the subject more directly and more powerfully with the limits of his capacities than religion. Man's "total inability to exhaust [religion]," however, does not imply that he cannot experience and express it.[224] On the contrary, religion unfolds and becomes alive only in moments it gets transformed from being "universal" and "indeterminate" into a specific material form or mode of expression. The spiritual world's flourishing is contingent upon the sphere of human life and activity.[225]

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[224] Hedge, *Prose Writers of Germany*, 442-443.

[225] "But you are aware, that as a general rule, nothing can be given or communicated, in the form of the Universal and Indeterminate: specific object and precise form are requisite for this purpose; otherwise, in fact, that which is presented would not be a reality but a nullity," Hedge, *Prose Writers of Germany*, 445.

Individuals in different times and at different places bring their religious experiences into a plurality of forms and thereby embrace and articulate "a small portion" of its infinity. To compensate for the limited grasp and incapacity to settle questions of religious truth alone, the subject seeks support in social surroundings: "that which he cannot immediately reach, he wishes to perceive, as far as he can, from the representations of others…he is anxious to observe every manifestation of it…seeking to supply his own deficiencies." Schleiermacher's speech renders the revival of religious feelings a communal effort in which each participant contributes toward a more comprehensive understanding of that which exceeds the individual's knowledge. Through dynamic communicative exchanges where "every one feels equally the need both of speaking and hearing," people complement each other.[226]

Schleiermacher's claim that the community is a space where religion finds expression in multiple forms through people's reciprocal formation resonates powerfully in Ripley's first letter. He attacks Norton for his hubristic declaration that "the truth of Christianity can be supported by no other evidence than that which appears satisfactory to [himself]." In light of the "immeasurable variety of mind which is found everywhere," Ripley writes, it is presumptuous of Norton to propagate a one-dimensional conception of religion and pressure his colleagues and congregation into following his lead.[227] In his eyes, Norton's adherence to a single doctrine runs counter to the nature of religion and man's experience thereof:

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[226] Hedge, *Prose Writers of Germany*, 443.

[227] "You [Norton] maintain that the truth of Christianity can be supported by no other evidence than that which appears satisfactory to yourself…you make no allowance for the immeasurable variety of mind

> A dead level of uniform opinions must be dreaded by every earnest speaker of truth, no man has the whole, but each a part, of reality; and a friendly comparison of ideas from different points of observation, as it is the most delightful mental exercise, is also the most certain means of avoiding error, and of building up a comprehensive faith on a strong foundation.[228]

The "earnest speaker" of religion knows that he will never find himself in possession of its "whole truth" but only of a fraction that he may build up and enhance through social interaction. The social sphere is essential for the healthy growth of a religious spirit; conscious of the limits of their individual conceptions of religion, the members of the community hone them by fostering an ethos of "a friendly comparison of ideas."

To this point, we gain the impression that Schleiermacher and Ripley unsettle the domain of orthodox criticism and the institutional structures of the ministry by propagating a radically egalitarian and pluralistic approach to religious and theological questions. If the members of a church assume that "no man has the whole, but each a part" of religious truth then that requires a fundamental democratization of ranks in the church that accommodate the coexistence of different views. Ideally, the reformed community is organized in such a way that

> Every man is a priest, so far as he draws around him others, in the sphere which he has appropriated to himself, and in which he professes to be a master. Every one is a laymen, so far as he is guided by the counsel and experience of another, within the sphere of religion, where he is comparatively a stranger. There is not here the tyrannic aristocracy…this society is a priestly people, a perfect republic, where every one is alternatively ruler and citizen.[229]

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which is found everywhere, for the different direction which early education, natural temperament, and peculiar associations impart on men's habit of thinking, for the shifting lights which the same evidence present, according to the circumstances in which it arrests the attention" (Ripley, *A Letter to Mr. Andrews Norton*, 25).

[228] Ripley, *A Letter to Mr. Andrews Norton*, 155.

[229] Hedge, *Prose Writers of Germany*, 444.

In Schleiermacher's vision, leadership is no longer contingent upon a person's pre-assigned position in a church hierarchy; he "comes forward before the rest…not because he is entitled to this distinction" but because he feels impelled by "a free impulse of the spirit." An individual legitimizes his elevated position within a church community by virtue of his abilities to access and acquire a sound understanding of a specific sphere of religion. While he may act as "a priest" in that region, he has to renounce his position of authority in another. He only serves his post truthfully if he abstains from claiming to rule over religion entirely. Its infinite spirit thrives best in an environment where people draw attention to the limits of their understanding and seek to colonize the spiritual world by inhabiting alternatively the position of a priest and layman.

While such democratic structures, however, grant every member of a community the same opportunity, Schleiermacher's dynamic conception of religious leadership is not pluralistic in the sense that everyone's approach is of equal value: "Every man is a priest," he suggests, only in "so far as he draws around him others." The subject needs to legitimize his position by gathering around himself others who find his mode of treating spiritual questions compelling and seek out his guidance: "It will rather be his [the preacher's] first endeavor, whenever a religious view gains clearness in his eye…to direct the attention of others to the same object, and, as far as possible, to communicate to their hearts the elevated impulses of his own" and to "effect them with…his own holy emotions." The subject becomes a preacher not simply on the basis of his own calling but once others begin to recognize his mode of practicing religion as authentic and as a way to learn from.

Those points in the text that link the individual's preaching to his congregation's recognition provide precise articulations of the parameters of Schleiermacher's new ideal of religious leadership. What poses a particular challenge to the preacher is that while he needs to seek people's attachment to and approval of the sphere of religion he has seized, he has to prevent the formation of a sectarian spirit and resist "the endeavor to make others similar" to himself. He may not suggest that what he preaches "is essential to all" and attempt to convert others with "that horrible expression 'no salvation except with us.'"[230]

Schleiermacher's ideal of leadership clearly places high demands on those following it truly. The religious community should organize itself in a way that makes the position of the preacher available to everyone. The individual who feels entitled to inhabit the role needs to create a sense of belonging among all members by gaining their trust in his ways of leading them into spiritual worlds. Yet while it is his duty to seek their fellowship for his vision of truth, it is also his responsibility to unsettle that very vision so as to maintain and safeguard religion's infinite nature. Ripley's letter lays out a similar model of religious authority. He is clearly concerned with representing the "Alumni of the Cambridge Theological School" as a group of people who regard themselves as members of a religious community organized along Schleiermacher's premises. On the letter's opening pages, Ripley introduces himself as writing in the name of an association that

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[230] Hedge, *Prose Writers of Germany*, 442-443, 445.

> [is] composed of ministers whose principal bond of union is personal respect and friendship; who are united by the sympathies of education and of devotion to similar pursuits; but who neither claim authority over each others' faith, nor profess to regard uniformity or speculative opinion, as desirable, even if it were possible. Many of them have been fellow-students at the same school; a common interest in theology first brought them together, and has not since divided them; others are connected by habits of social and professional intercourse; and all, it is to be presumed, are engaged in the investigation of truth, without being restrained by a creed which they have agreed to support…. Their mutual intercourse has been agreeable and salutary; they have shed light on each others' minds; they have warmed each others' hearts; the progress of truth has been advanced by their mutual endeavors; and it is seldom, indeed, that the widest differences of opinion have produced any interruption in the perfect bond of charity by which they are united.[231]

Ripley represents the divinity school ministers as an association whose modes of interaction are in harmony with Schleiermacher's claim that religious truth is not found in a single creed but becomes manifest in plural forms and articulations, growing out of social surroundings. What unites the group is what Ripley broadly defines as their shared interest "in the investigation of truth." In pursuing this goal, they cultivate a respectful and friendly manner of communication that refrains from building up a "broad line of distinction between the clergy and the rest of the community." They do not seek to exert authority over one another by forcing faith in a particular direction but rather aim at creating an environment that promotes the conversation between "intelligent and reflecting men of every pursuit and persuasion."[232] Instead of empowering one individual to settle religious questions for everyone, they pursue the solving of such questions as a “mutual endeavor” that thrives among people who “shed light on each others’ mind.”

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[231] Ripley, *A Letter to Mr. Andrews Norton*, 3-4.
[232] Ripley, *A Letter to Mr. Andrews Norton*, 11.

Like Schleiermacher’s speech, Ripley’s letter links the democratization of modes of interaction among members of the divinity school to the rise of a conception of religious leadership centered on the capacity of individuals to find support for their views:

> They [the members of the Theological School] never disguised the results to which they had come; they gave them a due proportion of attention in their public services; they rejoiced in their discussion, even when it was called forth by rude attacks…they were content to wait for the prevalence of their views….In the exercise of their ministry, they had been confirmed in the soundness of their ideas;…They saw their opinions rapidly spreading among the young members of the profession…a profession of faith in Christ, and a sincere and virtuous character were the conditions of fellowship, rather than any agreement in theological opinion.[233]

Through the process of exercising the ministry, the divinity school graduates hone the soundness of their religious understanding by holding their own in discussions over the adequacy of specific interpretations. Convinced by what they have found out to be true, the ministers patiently seek their listener’s enthusiasm for and adoption of their opinions. At the same time, however, Ripley also emphasizes in a Schleiermacherian fashion that the young preachers do not thereby attempt to mould those people feeling attracted to their views into servants of them. In their position of authority, the ministers act as those kind of teachers they would seek out for themselves, that is as "teachers, who, wise, honest, and competent, would refuse bondage."[234]

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[233] Ripley, *A Letter to Mr. Andrews Norton*, 13-14.

Regardless of whether one is in the position of the speaker or listener, of the preacher or layman, Schleiermacher's and Ripley's understanding of religious leadership and truth place the subject in taxing situations. How can a preacher win his congregation's trust, draw them into the world of his spiritual visions and concurrently unsettle their absorption in it? How is he to compose a speech that leads its listeners into new divine regions yet imparts to them a feeling that they are discovering something that both corresponds to and veers away from their preacher's view? Ripley follows up on these questions in translations and discussions focused on both Schleiermacher's and Herder's understanding of the new role and function of the preacher. One crucial resource for Ripley are Friedrich Lücke's recollections of Schleiermacher.

Throughout the letters to Norton, Ripley recalls verbatim or refers to what he states in the review of Schleiermacher in the *Christian Examiner*.[235] Schleiermacher as channeled through Lücke's representation provides him with answers to the question of how a preacher sets in motion speech that oscillates between authoritative statements and their subversion. About his experience of Schleiermacher as a "preacher and teacher of theology" in Halle, Lücke recalls that through his particular ways of selecting and representing "various elements of theology," and through organizing them "according to the laws of his peculiar individuality" he had a significant impact on his audience:

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[234] "Entertaining such views as these of the sacredness of religious freedom, they [members of the Theological School] would never call on the instructors of a school of theology to subscribe allegiance to a long list of doctrines, but would rather select those men for teachers, who, wise, honest, and competent, would refuse bondage, even as they themselves would refuse it. A liberal theology is generous as well as free. It will no more attempt to enslave, than it will submit to be enslaved" (Ripley, *A Letter to Mr. Andrews Norton*, 8).

[235] Ripley, "Schleiermacher as a Theologian," *Christian Examiner and General Review* 20 (March 1836): 1-46.

> He fathered around him a crowd of hearers, filled with enthusiasm and reverence, whom he firmly attached to his person, and who, quickened and excited by the influence of his writings and discourses, have since labored and still continue to labor in the spirit of their master. His influence is presupposed in the formation of every one.[236]

In that sense, Lücke resumes, one could say that Schleiermacher "founded a school." Those he engaged with his speaking felt so attracted and illuminated by his mode of making the realm of religion accessible to them that they would direct their striving toward a continuation of their teacher's legacy. In "another sense," however, Lücke brings to mind that Schleiermacher concentrated all his energies on overturning his own findings so as to prevent the formation of "a school which would appear with a distinct party purpose."

Regarding himself a life-long "seeker," he was "always anxious…to form every one as a seeker for truth" and to surround himself with "free, self-acting, independent scholars" instead of "followers." In pursuing this goal, Schleiermacher developed a number of strategies directed at avoiding too close of an attachment between himself, the topic, and his audience. Translating from Lücke, Ripley introduces individual elements of these strategies, referring to them as Schleiermacher's "pulpit eloquence." In his eyes, such eloquence is the way toward a reform of preaching in New England that he finds already well underway. Schleiermacher's mode of public address demonstrates how to cast off the "shackles of memoriter preaching" and popularize innovative forms of communication between preacher and congregation that Ripley also discovers spreading among his fellow ministers. In particular he highlights the sermons of New England's popular minister Joseph Stevens Buckminster and exclaims that his addresses even surpass Schleiermacher's.[237]

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[236] Ripley, "Schleiermacher as a Theologian," 13-14.

A distinguishing characteristic of the "pulpit eloquence" that Ripley discovers in Lücke's text is that the preacher treats the genre of the sermon as a "living product." Prior to every Sunday mass, Lücke recalls, Schleiermacher had the broad outline of his sermon in mind,

> but he wrote nothing down until Saturday evening, and then only the text and the theme, or at the utmost a brief sketch of the divisions of his discourse. Thus prepared he went into the pulpit. Here arose his discourse, in respect to its form and execution, as the living product of his previous meditation, of the exciting influence of the assembled church, and of the constant command of his mind over the arrangement of his thoughts and language.[238]

Instead of addressing his hearers with pre-conceptualized interpretations of a particular theme corseted in set phrases, Schleiermacher let the topic gain shape in the communicative situation that unfolded between him and his audience. The sermon developed under the formative impact of elements that exceeded his control such as

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[237] "They [Schleiermacher's sermons] are a rich mine of thought, in which we discover no merely scattered grains of gold, but thick masses. Neither the published discourses of Schleiermacher, however, nor those of any preacher, which have fallen under our eye, contain specimens of pulpit eloquence, which, for soundness and fertility of thought…can be compared with the first volume of Buckminster's Sermons, or many others, which delicacy to the living will not allow us to name" (Ripley, "Schleiermacher as a Theologian," 37-38).

[238] Ripley, "Schleiermacher as a Theologian," 35.

"the influence of the assembled church" and the twists and turns his own thinking was taking during his performance.

In the weekly Sunday addresses, Lücke remembers, Schleiermacher would always first assemble the elements of his speech in "tones of ordinary conversation," then arrange them in a web of ideas and let those flow into "a rich stream of arousing and quickening appeals." Throughout this performance, he guided his audience into new spiritual regions while letting them participate in the process of finding the way. Another strategy he employed to animate his listener's participation was through the building of thematic bridges between "the most profound religious ideas" and their own "practical life," "the circumstances of the church, the family, [and] the country."

If he felt, however, that one or more persons of his cohort were tending too strongly to a specific point of view, he would make an effort to break up the forming of a sectarian spirit by becoming intentionally provocative: "Schleiermacher, from the living centre on which he stood, could not fail to perceive the partial and exclusive direction of the day, and whenever they threatened to obtain preponderance, held it his duty to contend against them, by indirectly adding to the weight of the opposite side."[239] He always tried to balance out any form of exclusivist religious understanding, often by completely dismantling the propositions around which he had organized his own lectures and sermons. Lücke writes that some of his adherents in church and at the university reproached him therefore for being inconsistent, while Schleiermacher himself responded to such accusations by claiming that his interventions were the only way to serve the essential spirit of religion in a consistent fashion.

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[239] Ripley, "Schleiermacher as a Theologian," 35, 38, 15.

Ripley brings to light a comparable form of "pulpit eloquence" in Herder's work. Through translations from and discussions of Herder, he introduces preaching as a discursively open event that posits new challenges to both speakers and listeners. A year after he wrote the first letter to Norton, *The Dial* published his "Letter to a Theological Student" that takes recourse to Herder's *Briefe, das Studium der Theologie betreffend*;[240] through the publication of earlier translations, the New England reading public was already familiar with Herder's *Briefe*.[241]

Unlike the letter to Norton, the "Letter to a Theological Student" imparts to its addressee a disillusioning assessment of the current state of the ministry and theological training in New England. Ripley warns the student determined to enter the profession of the deceptive nature of the liberal spirit people advocate. While nearly everybody claims to be a "liberal Christian" and propagates freedom of thought, he writes, the ministers who actually attempt to exercise free expression in their professional activities find themselves in deep trouble and confronted with cries of outrage that are "by no means musical."

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[240] George Ripley, "Letter to a Theological Student," *The Dial* 1 (Oct. 1840): 183-187.

[241] Ernest A. Menze provides detailed references to the American translations of Herder's *Briefe*. The first six letters had been translated by Nathaniel Langdon Frothingham for the *Christian Disciple* as early as 1820/21; see Menze, "On the Reception and Influence of Herder's On the Spirit of Hebrew Poetry in North America: Preliminary Observations," 341. Ripley himself had translated from and paraphrased the 26th and 27th letter in his review of Marsh's translation of *Vom Geist* from November 1835; see Ripley, "Review of Johann Gottfried Herders Sämtliche Werke" (Nov.1835), 182-183, and Menze, "Herder and American Transcendentalism: Reception and Influence on the Religious Dimension of the Movement," *Herder Yearbook* 8 (2006): 33-34.

In light of this backward state of the profession, even an ambitious neophyte with strong reformating impulses is quickly lured into following a “safe and approved path, rather than one which suits his own ideas.” To become a true preacher, however, he has to find ways to resist preaching “what he finds in books” and go beyond being “a good mechanic in the pulpit.” “No man can preach well,” Ripley tells his student in a Herderian fashion, “unless he coins his own flesh and blood, the living, palpitating fibres of his very heart, into the words which he utters from the pulpit.”

As in the Schleiermacher discussions, Ripley addresses the challenges posed by a new mode of preaching centered on the preacher’s authority. Through forms of “coining,” of inscribing himself in the story his sermon tells, the preacher renders transcendental realms accessible to himself and those he engages. He should thereby, however, not put his listeners into a position where they feel that their speaker reigns autonomously over the realm he narrates. Rather, the theological student should aim at attaining “a clear and living system of truth” in communication with his audience. In closing the letter, Ripley recommends to his student the *Briefe* as *the* manual detailing for ministers how to accomplish such a goal and reform the clerical profession.[242]

Ripley himself examines through Herder’s “The Preacher of God” [“Der Redner Gottes, 1765] how the new model preacher may both inscribe his signature on the sermons while making their unfolding contingent upon the audience’s contributions. In the passages that Ripley translates freely in his review, Herder imagines the role of the ideal preacher from the perspective of a listener: “The Preacher of God! Where is he?...

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[242] Ripley, “Letter to a Theological Student,” 183-184.

I have found him, even among us. More than one, few indeed, I have found…. I see him before me. He stands in the midst of his friends and children." As in Schleiermacher, Ripley discovers in Herder's work a fundamental dehierarchization of the relation between the preacher and his congregation. The listener imagines his preacher as someone being on a same level with other members of the community and describes him as someone he "should choose for [his] friend."

These structures of equality are also reflected in the preacher's un-authoritarian way of addressing his audience. In a number of rhetorical questions, the listener reflects on how best to describe his preacher's style and concludes that none of the familiar categories suffice to capture it because he detects "no dogmatic articles, no scholastic explanations and divisions, no skeletons of a formal method." Rather, what comes to mind when he attempts to characterize the sermons is the image of a man and a friend:

> I see his image now. The image of a man, whom…I should choose for my friend, to whom I could freely give my whole heart…. [H]e began with presenting an instance taken from the experience of life, which he accompanied with one or two observations. The fact was not unknown to me, but I had never before regarded it in that light. I inwardly thanked him for the discovery. So did all his hearers; for the circumstance he alluded to was before our eyes, yet we had never seen it. We felt that we must listen to such a man, for he saw more than we. But he did not chide us for our blindness. He proceeded, like the teacher who gives his pupil the joy of making a discovery for himself. He merely led us into our own little world, into our sphere, and into our hearts. He showed us truth, as if he showed it not; so that we felt…."[243]

The preacher gains his listener's respect and trust by virtue of a highly developed sense of perception: "we felt that we must listen to such a man, for he saw more than we." He establishes his leadership by honing the community's awareness for the religious nature of the everyday and common, by turning a familiar "circumstance…before [their] eyes" into a site of divine revelation. Crucially, the preacher thereby upholds his position of authority without becoming authoritative; instead of imposing a particular mode of seeing on his audience he gives them "the joy of making a discovery for [themselves]." In this regard, Herder's preacher resembles Schleiermacher's because both safeguard the infinite spirit of religion by abstaining from telling people what religious truth is and from suggesting that they adopt a specific point of view. What distinguishes a good sermon, in the eyes of Herder's listener, is one that travels beyond the preacher's control and unfolds in the individual hearts and spheres of activity of those absorbing it.

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[243] Ripley, "Review of *The Spirit of Hebrew Poetry*" (May 1835), 179-180.

Ripley's letters and translations provide a window into how Herder's and Schleiermacher's theological thinking contributed to the rise of a new understanding of religious truth and authority in New England. The way for the individual to develop his spiritual nature is through social interaction. Whether it is the excerpt from Schleiermacher's fourth speech, Lücke's recollections of his teacher, Herder's introduction of the preacher of God or Ripley's letters to Norton and his student – each one of these texts is concerned with exploring institutional conditions and modes of address and communication that best foster the individual's spiritual growth and development. Through linking matters of spiritual revival to forms of social interaction, Ripley not only casts a new light on how individuals negotiate questions of religious truth but also of religious leadership. Not rank or the adherence to doctrines legitimize a subject's position within a community but his subtle skills to center his speeches around the twin gestures of making spheres of spiritual life accessible and of promoting other people's independent discovery of them.

Classicism, Self-Culture, and the Rise of the Art of Liberal Education

With its focus on American scholars' concern with historical criticism, the preceding examinations brought to light new facets of the nature of the transformations that the understanding of religion underwent in the early years of Transcendentalism. I demonstrated that the subject Transcendentalists introduce in conversation with such figures as Herder or Schleiermacher hones religious dispositions through continual practice in the domains of reading, writing, and social interaction. The chapter's final part shifts the focus from the field of religion to classicism. I examine how American classical scholars' investment in adopting German historical methods transformed their modes of relating to and aligning the contemporary age with the world of antiquity.

As in the domain of religious studies, the dissemination of new historically informed translations, critical editions of the classics, and Greek dictionaries led American scholars to fundamentally rethink and reform their methods of making the literatures of the ancient past integral to educational curricula and of communicating classical values to the broader intellectual public. For instance, Alpheus Crosby, a teacher of Greek and Latin at Dartmouth College, derides classicists ignorant of the historical particularities of the sources they are engaging with; his essay "Classical

Study, as Part of Liberal Education" warns its readers not to follow the lead of those "lovers of the classics" who "seem to regard the whole business of classical study, as a sort of magic, in which it is only necessary that at particular times they should repeat certain formulas, and the shades of the mighty dead…will come and confer upon them the highest intellectual endowments." Instead, Crosby proposes treating the study of antiquity as "a plain honest art" that "will reward all according to their efforts."[244]

What follows zeroes in on the nature and function of such critical efforts by nineteenth century American scholars, seeking to interpret classical works within the cultural historical contexts of their origin. The main argument is that the avant-garde of America's classicists worked toward establishing classical philology as a mode of learning most useful to the education of a citizenry that conceives of the modern subject as a product of self-culture. The leading Unitarian preacher and Transcendentalist William Ellery Channing famously coined the term "Self-Culture" in his introductory address to the Franklin Lectures in Boston in 1838. In its most basic sense, Channing describes forms of cultivation directed at the self as "the care which every man owes to himself, to the unfolding and perfecting of his nature." According to his understanding, a subject who conceives of itself as a product of self-culture feels the duty to continuously "act upon [itself]," to "engage in the work of self-improvement," and to "strenuously…form and elevate [its] mind."[245] To be sure, the details of Channing's understanding and treatment of self-culture in the antebellum contexts in which he found such efforts of cultivation flourishing are a complex and contested subject matter. It is therefore important to mention up front that I use the term in the most basic sense that Channing lays out—that is, as an umbrella term for strategies the self employs in order to work on itself. Self-culture, I suggest, sums up best the goal of the learning techniques a new generation of classicists employs to highlight the benefits of classical studies and to consolidate their place at the heart of liberal education.

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[244] Alpheus Crosby, "Classical Study, as Part of Liberal Education," *American Quarterly Observer* 1 (1833): 239-240.

[245] William Ellery Channing, *Self-Culture. An Address Introductory to the Franklin Lectures. Delivered at Boston, September, 1838* (Boston: Dutton and Wentworth Printers, 1838), 11-12.

By suggesting, however, that classicism's primary objective lies in facilitating students' self-forming abilities, scholars bestow upon their field both new significance while decentralizing it at the same time. The writings central to this chapter by Harvard's Greek professor Cornelius Conway Felton, by Robert Bridges Patton—himself a teacher of Greek and Latin at Middlebury College—and by James Marsh all share this aspect in common: in these texts, the introduction of new methods of classical philology coincides with a turn toward other literary traditions. Explicitly or implicitly, these scholars suggest that serving as a path toward self-culture is not a privilege of classical studies alone, but rather that other languages and literatures can potentially fulfill the same function. Moreover, they propose that such a broadening of the spectrum of philological inquiry not only benefits the realm of education but also modern culture at large. Students' critical engagement with different editions of literary works, collections, translations, and dictionaries, these scholars write, can be inspirational and stimulate the new generation to contribute to the advancement of modern American culture.

Drawing on my discussion of Staël's *De l'Allemagne* in chapter one, I demonstrate that the German recasting of the Ancient-Modern debate and its mediation by such figures as Staël and the Schlegel brothers forms a crucial intellectual historical backdrop for this interest of American scholars in establishing philology as a practice that serves both educational and broadly gauged cultural concerns. Particularly the writings by Marsh and Felton suggest strong connections between American engagements with questions of the Ancient-Modern debate and the rise of a new understanding of philology as central to self-culture and the invention of a modern American cultural tradition.

The chapter's overall framework and focus on marginal figures of the antebellum period takes its cue from Caroline Winterer's research in *The Culture of Classicism: Ancient Greece and Rome in American Intellectual Life 1780 – 1910*. Beginning in the 1820s, Winterer writes, a new generation of American classicists with ties to the Boston area and Harvard College eroded old methods of classical learning by introducing German historical methods into the American College curriculum.[246] She proposes that the best way for us to understand the characteristics and the impact of this erosion is to examine the writings of classicists such as Felton, Bridges, or Patton among a number of other figures who shaped educational institutions and who have otherwise been left out of scholarly inquiries.

Winterer explains this neglect of the works of these classical scholars with our own fixation on original scholarship rather than pedagogy and teaching. Such concerns, however, are anachronistic because they disregard the fact that "until the late nineteenth century, American scholars would not have made such distinctions between scholarship and teaching. Their chief avenues for scholarly output were college textbooks, articles in literary and popular journals, and lectures directed at the learned public. In these venues they did not display the results of their own new research; rather, they distilled the fruits of German and English scholarship for a broadly educated American readership."[247] In other words, Winterer's research suggests that we can only comprehend the roles and functions of the productions of nineteenth century American scholars if we refrain from evaluating them as scholarly contributions, aimed at sharing new findings. Rather, we need to regard them as windows into the period's ideas of pedagogical reform and treat them as materials that give insight into how teaching practices and goals in classical studies were transformed under the impact of historicism.

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[246] Caroline Winterer, *The Culture of Classicism: Ancient Greece and Rome in American Intellectual Life, 1780 – 1910* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 3.

Winterer's main argument is that during the antebellum period, classical scholars and other educated citizens shifted their attention from "words" to "the worlds" of antiquity. Prior to this shift, the study of the Greco-Roman past had been focused on language acquisition structured around practices of repetition, scanning, rote memorization, recitation, and translation. The *Collectanea Graeca Majora*, the period's most popular textbook for students and teachers of Greek, suggested that the way toward gaining insight into the past was through the internalization of grammatical rules. The circulation of new textbooks, editions of the classics, and dictionaries from

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[247] Winterer, *The Culture of Classicism*, 6.

Germany, however, expanded upon this exclusively linguistic focus toward the world of Greece as a whole. American Classicists began to practice the historical study of the Greek language and culture and encourage their students to employ philological methods.[248]

Crucially, Winterer highlights the reader's immersion into the past as the most significant aspect responsible for the increase of the popularity of classical studies in antebellum college curricula. My own examinations of several of the texts Winterer investigates, as well as some she neglects, lead me to draw a rather different conclusion from her. Winterer claims that

> Under the influence of German historical scholarship, they [classical scholars] encouraged students to reimagine their own relationship to antiquity, seeking not so much to imitate the ancients as to absorb their spirit through the critical, historical study of authentic ancient texts….[T]hey imagined the shift from words to worlds as a process of becoming Greek, literally of self-transformation through a historicized encounter with the classical past.[249]

According to Winterer, the pedagogical goal of imbibing the spirit of the past and of "becoming Greek" is for the student to achieve a purifying effect. She argues that American intellectuals recruited the past for the purpose of resisting the ills of modernity: "they looked to the remote past as a way to combat such cancers of modernity as materialism, civic decay, industrialization, and anti-intellectualism. The new way of reading texts in the classical classroom was a way for students to enter fully into the classical past, to shed their modernity and imbibe the purifying spirit of antiquity."[250]

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[248] Winterer, *The Culture of Classicism*, 3-4, 32.
[249] Winterer, *The Culture of Classicism*, 77-78.

Winterer points out that the popularization of classicism as a form of anti-modernism coincided with another major development, namely the rise of the humanities: "the word *humanities* emerged after 1850 in America as a neologism to describe a kind of elevating, holistic study of literature, music, and art." Instead of gearing student training early on to a clearly prescribed area of expertise, the humanities proposed to educate students at a higher and more broadly gauged level. The shared goal of the different fields was thereby the formation of a well-rounded "cultured person" familiar with a wide rage of subjects.[251] Until this day such an ideal of education is still retained in the institution of the liberal arts college.

My own examination of these key texts suggests, however, that the chief works that classicists published during the antebellum period demonstrate a strong commitment to clearly delineating how and why the study of languages and literatures should lie at the core of the overall project of the humanities to produce a "cultured person." In light of this commitment, the anti-modernist project Winterer highlights appears less central. In fact, I would argue that the writings by Marsh, Felton, and Bridges pursue a decidedly pro-modernist agenda. As I mentioned before, their shared aim is to establish philology as a mode of learning most beneficial to the education of a subject capable of confidently facing and forming the challenges of modernity as a man and citizen.

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[250] Winterer, *The Culture of Classicism*, 4.
[251] Winterer, *The Culture of Classicism*, 117, 6.

Marsh's writings are the natural starting point for any investigation of how American critics developed this stance. Although not a classical scholar in the professional sense, his expertise and thematic interests connect his work in major ways to the realm of classical knowledge, and his influence runs deeply and broadly throughout New England intellectual and pedagogical circles. In 1822 he published an essay on "Ancient and Modern Poetry" in the influential *North American Review.*[252] His objective throughout is to introduce his readers to the longstanding controversy over the relation between ancient and modern cultures. Referring to Staël, he explains that in the second half of the eighteenth century German critics fundamentally altered the debate by proposing a thoroughgoing historicism in which cultures differ fundamentally from one another; they thereby made a strong case against the modern adherence to outmoded classical rules and art forms.

"Ancient and Modern Poetry" reviews the major arguments of the "general controversy" between Ancients and Moderns as Marsh had encountered it in a pamphlet by the Italian scholar Ludovico Gattinara di Breme (1780-1820). Marsh's essay is a perfect example of the tangled trajectories of intellectual historical discourses: di Breme was friends with Staël and August Wilhelm Schlegel, with whom she traveled Italy. And di Breme, as Marsh notes, wrote the pamphlet to defend Staël's position in a controversy she had with Italian journalists about the relation between ancient and modern cultures:

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[252] James Marsh, "Ancient and Modern Poetry," *North American Review* 6 (July 1822): 94-131.

> The little work before us [di Breme's]…stands intimately connected with this subject….It was called forth by the attacks of certain journalists on the opinions and conduct of Mad. de Staël. Their national pride…seem to have been wounded by the contrast which she drew, when among them, between their ancient and modern writers. In defending her opinions Signor di Breme enters into the distinctions, of which we have spoken, and it is on this account chiefly, that his work has attracted our notice…. The point, upon which he has expressed himself most fully, is the difference in form and structure between the ancients and the moderns, and the question, whether the system of rules, to which the Grecian productions were conformed in this respect, be the only and unchangeable principles of the arts.[253]

Throughout his essay, Marsh recapitulates Staël's arguments against the adherence to the "*form* and *structure*" of classical art and draws attention to the "very essential difference in the characteristics of ancient and modern literature." While the ancient art forms were harmoniously embedded in the cultural communities within which they emerged, their modern neoclassical reconstructions bear no relation to the current cultural historical situation: "the so called golden age of French literature," Marsh suggests by quoting di Breme's text, "cannot…boast a single poem that is characteristic and truly indigenous." In a Staëlian manner, Marsh "adopts some of the boldest German notions respecting the nature of the arts and of creative genius" and introduces his American readership to what he refers to as the romantic principle—the idea that the value of art hinges upon the degree to which it manifests an organic relationship to the life world and people it engages.

The essay exemplifies the transformation of the role of classical culture. Marsh brings into focus the manner in which classical aesthetics changed from being a model of "*form* and *structure*" or "system of conventional rules" to becoming an example for the organic principle of art. Referring to works by Friedrich Schiller and Schlegel, he locates the cause for the harmoniously unified impression the culture of antiquity conveys in people's affective response to their environment: "We must conceive them [the Greeks] as cast, in the full possession of their senses, imagination, and feeling, among the wonders of external nature. Their minds, of course, would be open to the entire…influence of the objects around them."[254] Such openness and finely tuned perceptiveness of mind fostered, Marsh writes, ideal conditions under which a vibrant artistic life could thrive. Echoing critics like J. G. Eichhorn, Herder, and Staël, he identifies similar conditions in the Germanic mythological tradition and in ancient Hebrew writings;[255] and he proposes that the revival of these literatures would counterbalance the current overemphasis on science and reason and stale imitation by inspiring people to engage more affectively with ancient texts and their own times.[256]

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[253] Marsh, "Ancient and Modern Poetry," 100-101.

At this point, we can see how core issues that gained prominence with the historical turn of American classicism developed out of a critical involvement with outcomes of the German Ancient-Modern debate: Taking ancient cultures as models, Marsh's discussion suggests that the cultivation of an affective and engaged response to works of the past as well as to one's immediate surroundings has revitalizing effects on oneself and on the development of a modern art and literature. Moreover, it becomes clear that the literature and language of ancient Greece is by no means the only resource able to facilitate such processes of individual and artistic revitalization. Reviewing such works as Herder's writings on myth or Eichhorn's introduction to the Old Testament, Marsh highlights a whole range of other literatures as potentially suitable.

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[254] Marsh, "Ancient and Modern Poetry," 101-106.
[255] Compare esp. 116 and 122.
[256] Compare 123.

After "Ancient and Modern Poetry," Marsh published a "Review of Stuart on the Epistle of the Hebrews," using the discussion of Stuart's work as a forum to establish philology as *the* practice that serves the subject best to hone his emotional and cognitive faculties. In his assessment, philology figures as the most productive means for the subject to form itself in the process of exploring and reimagining the relation between different cultural traditions. He argues "that every scholar, who is aiming at a liberal education, should be essentially a philologist," and thus seeks to secure that field of inquiry a central place at the heart of liberal learning.[257]

In pursuing this objective, Marsh detaches the practice of a historically informed criticism from any specific field of study. He advises his readers to treat philology as an exercise whose usefulness is not contingent upon selected fields of application: "Let the question then be, whether philological pursuits and the critical study of language be *in themselves*, and without regard to the individual merits of the work or author read, a comparatively useful method of attaining knowledge and mental culture."[258] His primary interest lies in bringing into view and in promoting the value of the process of interpretation as such for the individual's development: "With this question [the question regarding the intrinsic use of philological pursuits] before us, we might…inquire whether the process, by which the meaning of the author's words is therein determined and knowledge acquired, be not as well suited as any other process, for developing and cultivating the best faculties of the mind."[259]

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[257] James Marsh, "Review of Stuart on the Epistle to the Hebrews," *Quarterly Christian Spectator* (March 1829): 117.

[258] Marsh, "Review of Stuart on the Epistle to the Hebrews," 115. Marsh also suggests that there is no difference as to whether one employs philological methods in the realm of sacred or profane literature: "Philological pursuits, indeed, in their general character, are the same, whether connected with sacred or with profane writers, whether directed to the illustration of Aeschylus and Plato, or of the…mysteries of Isaiah, of Paul, and of John. Where a general taste for these pursuits, therefore, is not found and cultivated by the prevailing system of education, we cannot expect to witness its effects extensively in any department of learning" (112-113).

What, then, are the characteristics of textual criticism that lead Marsh to hold it in such high esteem? Significantly, he proposes that the activities of "the philologist, the critical student of words" open up his mind to the relationship between how human modes of forming language have altered frameworks of human life throughout history. Reminiscent of Staël's explications in *De l'Allemagne*, Marsh introduces the notion of words as archives, containing

> the notices of the senses generalized by the understanding, the collected results of the experience, not of one generation only, but of ages, the products of art, the acquisitions of science, the principles and ideas, which their philosophic minds may have unfolded, and which have a living and life-giving energy for the minds of every succeeding age.[260]

Languages are repositories of human experience and invention, telling those capable of unlocking them stories of the flourishing, decline, and transformation of human activity. The passage clearly indicates where the interests of a nineteenth century American scholar engaging with foreign languages and literatures lie. Marsh's primary question is not how such critical endeavors contribute to an existing body of philological scholarship but rather in what ways the works of others act upon the minds of those engaging them. He is interested in how a text's "living and life-giving energy" resonates with and forms the mind. So the objective of critical exercises such as immersing oneself in the past and of trying to "see with their [the ancients'] eyes and hear with their ears" is in the first place a pedagogical one. Given that words record "the progress of the mind," Marsh declares, nobody can dispute that "these words and organized forms of language are necessary or useful to us in the cultivation of our minds."[261]

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[259] Marsh, "Review of Stuart on the Epistle to the Hebrews," 115.
[260] Marsh, "Review of Stuart on the Epistle to the Hebrews," 116.

Besides its enriching functions, philological studies also confront students with the delimiting characteristics of language: "situated as we are in society, we unavoidably learn words before we can have much insight into the meaning of them and the consequence is, that we acquire a habit, of which the most critical and philosophical minds hardly divest themselves, of using them often without any definite and precise meaning." According to Marsh, drawing attention to such instances—and working toward the active dissociation of the semantic field a particular set of words has come to be associated with—forms an essential part of education.

Finally, Marsh touches on the broader cultural implications of making philology the cornerstone of liberal learning. He proposes that American culture at large benefits from turning a vast variety of literatures and languages into objects of critical investigation: "Even the most uncultivated dialects of our western forests, or the islands of the Pacific, exhibit in their structures new and striking combinations of mental phenomena, which cannot but increase our admiration of those principles of intellectual organization."[262] Observations such as these implement philology as a practice that uncovers the value of languages, dialects and literary traditions of cultures that have so far been considered unworthy of becoming vital ingredients for the thriving of America's modern cultural life.

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[261] Marsh, "Review of Stuart on the Epistle to the Hebrews," 115-116.

In his efforts to implement philology at the center of liberal learning, Cornelius Conway Felton pursues a similar line of argumentation as Marsh. Felton's "Lecture on Classical Learning" opens with a summary of the Ancient-Modern debate, forming the intellectual historical backdrop against which the author established the reasons why current methods of teaching the classics need to be reformed and how that reform can take shape: "we bring them [the ancients] to the standard of modern tastes…instead of transporting ourselves back to the time when they lived." Like Marsh, Felton introduces immersion, self-abandonment, and historical contextualization as the new crucial instruments for a critical engagement with classical literature.[263]

It is also obvious from the outset that Felton's interest in promoting these critical instruments to his audience is pedagogical rather than scholarly. What these historical methods help students to uncover are the subject and reality-forming capacities of words. Language, Felton writes, is "that power by which all other powers are guided and fashioned, by which all emotions are described, by which all playful efforts of fancy are made distinct to the perceptions of others, by which, more than by all our powers besides, the creations of genius are illustrated." Philological pursuits teach the student that language is "the most essential [mode] by which the operations of intellect are distinctly made visible. In studying language, therefore, we are in fact studying *mind*, through the agency of its most purely intellectual instrument." Languages make us aware that we are "fearfully and wonderfully made."

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[262] Marsh, "Review of Stuart on the Epistle to the Hebrews," 116-117.

[263] Cornelius Conway Felton, "A Lecture on Classical Learning, Delivered before the Convention of Teachers, and Other Friends of Education" (Boston: Hilliard, Gray, Little, & Wilkins, 1831), 18. On Felton's recapitulation of the Ancient-Modern dispute, see 7. Here is Felton on the practice of immersion and abandonment: "The student who would enter fully into the merits of a classical author, must take himself out of the influences immediately surrounding him; must transport himself back to a remote age; must lay aside the associations most familiar to him; must forget his country, his prejudices, his superior light, and place himself upon a level with the intellect whose labors he essays to comprehend" (16-17).

The educational and cultural benefits of learning about the relationship between language and processes of world formation take center stage in Felton's lecture: "In mastering language, we…attain the power of wielding this most efficient instrument," and students learn "to act with energy, dignity and success, upon the various objects presented to us in life."[264] Moreover, their concentration on the dynamic relationship between language and cultures in different times and places refines their attentiveness to the dangers of bringing this dynamic relationship to a standstill, and of letting "our thoughts and feelings…repose too much upon the objects nearest to us" and of permitting "a constant reference to self become the habitual direction of our thoughts."

Felton concludes from these observations that while such laborious critical training in the classroom "may not lead to the invention of a single new mechanical agent…[and] increase[…] our fortunes a single dollar…it will give us an enlarged view of our nature; it will disclose the workings or our common powers under influences widely different from any that have acted upon ourselves."[265] Furthermore, Felton joins Marsh in his remark that this focus on historical method in the field of classical learning has opened up new areas of investigation, urging us to rethink categories of artistic value: "the endless field of modern literature is opened to the student of polite letters; and he is taught that taste and genius were not the exclusive possession of the Greeks and Romans."[266]

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[264] Felton, "A Lecture on Classical Learning," 10-11.
[265] Felton, "A Lecture on Classical Learning," 17-18.

More explicitly even than his colleagues Felton and Marsh, Robert Patton calls attention to the disparity between the kind of citizen modern America asks for and the citizen that school and college instructors produce by employing antiquated methods in the classroom. According to Patton's "Lecture on Classical and National Education," the old models of classical education have failed to "keep up with the progress of society" by falling short of contributing to the education of a "self-governing people" crucial for the progress of a liberal nation.[267] To improve this situation, Patton asks for more public libraries that give people free access to a broad range of reference works and dictionaries, and he also proposes that instructors incorporate these materials into their college teaching curricula. According to Patton, "the possession and use of these very means of research are calculated to expand the mind, raise its standard of literary attainment and merit, whet the curiosity, and give a keener edge to the mind in all our inquiries."[268] Critical investigations based on a range of reference works have an empowering effect on the student:

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[266] Felton, "The Alcestis of Euripides," *North American Review* 42 (April, 1836): 370.

[267] Robert B. Patton, *A Lecture, on Classical and National Education* (Princeton: D.A. Borrenstein, 1826), 4-6. Throughout his lecture, Patton highlights the intellectually deadening effects of traditional methods of classical instruction: "I may safely say, therefore, that partly from necessity, partly from a mistaken method of conducting the study, such as it is, on the part of the instructor, our youth find themselves, at the close of their college labours, furnished with a very scanty stock of Greek and Latin words, with very contracted views of the respective literatures, and scarcely any taste for the prosecution of the study, I might even say, with an unconquerable disgust and aversion for the pursuit" (11).

> I appeal to the ingenious student. When has he felt the keenest relish for knowledge, the greatest degree of literary impetus, the most generous aspirations, and the most rigorous resolutions? After plodding heavily through a page of the "Majora," formally, mechanically, and doubtingly; confining his attention to the single page, and a common dictionary; with no other view, than to elicit a general meaning to each sentence, which may pass current in a recitation room? Or when all the works of reference which illustrate the author, have been put in requisition to satisfy his prying mind…leaving the mind in that delightful command of the whole portion.[269]

By contrasting the old with the new method of interpreting ancient texts, Patton demonstrates clearly why he rejects one strategy and promotes the other. The comparative approach to critical research puts the subject into a position of power, challenging his faculties of judgment and discrimination. Highlighting his own teaching practice as an example, Patton suggests that the instructor's primary task is to facilitate and support such a comparative and critical mode of investigation and learning. He regards it as "one of the best means" to produce "a well disciplined mind," and by that Patton means a subject who "is able to apply its powers, at pleasure, at any time, and on any subject."[270] Patton's other crucial text, the "Address to the Philological Society of Middlebury," elaborates on these same themes. The author's main concern is to make a strong and convincing case for the advantages of philological learning. He argues that "philological pursuits, when properly directed" induce such faculties as "clearness and distinctness of thought…habits of discrimination" and introduce students to "the subtle workings of the soul…and the ever varying tones of feeling." In short, the advantages one derives from such studies resides in their comprehensiveness, in the "consistent and proportionate exercise of all our mental powers."[271]

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[268] Patton, *A Lecture, on Classical and National Education*, 16-17.

[269] Patton, *A Lecture, on Classical and National Education*, 17.

[270] "I propose, for example, a subject for inquiry or a question to be solved, which requires research, an investigation of facts, an exercise of judgment, and a consistent exertion of all the mental powers. I find myself gradually engrossed with the investigation, my curiosity is awakened, my love of novelty is gratified, my ambition is fired as I become acquainted with the labors and opinions of others…[T]his demands a concentration of mental energies, and a fixation of attention, accompanied with a degree of intellectual enjoyment which the performance of a mere task, without our own mental co-operation, can never furnish" (Patton, *A Lecture, on Classical and National Education*, 18-19).

At this point we can see that we would miss the most pressing concerns of the writings by scholars such as Patton, Felton, or Marsh if we were to treat their texts as research materials that sought to compete with and contribute to the extensive body of classical research from Britain and Germany. The scholars of the antebellum period had neither the necessary resources nor the institutional infrastructure and training that the conducting of research on a scale comparable to Europe would have required. Their interests in engaging with the latest findings in the field of classicism from abroad clearly lay in a different domain. For all three of them, the historical turn figures as an event that caused them to rethink the ways in which the rise of philology, and its integration in college curricula, could contribute to the overall project of self-culture.

Conclusion

This chapter has developed a different approach to understanding the role of German culture in the formative years of Transcendentalism. While there is a consensus among critics with regard to the emancipatory force of transnational German Romanticism, I have argued that we need to scrutinize more carefully the nature, uses, and manifestations of such terms as higher consciousness or intuition that began to colonize American texts with the arrival of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century German works. My research on different lines of transmission of historical criticism in the domains of religion and classicism has shown that the notions of the subject's liberation and independence associated with the historical critical strand of German Romanticism are linked to complex processes of critical labor in the areas of reading, writing, preaching, and teaching.

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[271] Patton, *Address, Delivered before the Philological Society of Middlebury College* (Middlebury, Vt.: J.W.Copeland, 1823), 4-5, 11.

Through the lens of the German scholars' philological techniques, critics like Ripley, Marsh, or George Bancroft articulate notions of revelation premised on demanding educational efforts. The subject they introduce works toward religious integrity through constant critical effort centered on strategies of self-abandonment, empathy, recognition, and the cultivation of a poetic-philological mode of textual engagement. The chapter's second part examined a similar set of critical techniques and exercises in the social sphere of preaching and lecturing. Finally, I turned to the domain of classicism and demonstrated how the rise of these critical methods transformed modes of instruction in the college classroom, and how scholars such as Patton, Marsh, and Felton promoted philology as bestowing on students a set of core capacities crucial to facilitating the project of self-culture.

I suggest that my focus on these rarely discussed reviews, writings, and translations by Transcendentalist critics, educated citizens, and classical scholars modify our perspective on the impact of German historical criticism during the antebellum period in fundamental ways. Moreover, I claim that these findings are crucial to reevaluating the characteristics of the transnational modes of thinking, writing, and lecturing of the period’s major spokesman Emerson, to whom I turn in the final chapter.

Chapter IV

Emerson in his Time

Introduction

We know Emerson best today as a thinker of transition, as someone who regards human life as a ceaselessly revising process. His renowned epigrammatical exclamations suggest that the individual “in the right state” needs to be “Man Thinking” (*CW*, vol. I, 53) and to respond to life’s insecurities and “slippery sliding surfaces” (*CW*, vol. III, 28) with an always active, alert and self-corrective mind.[272] Several of the most influential contributions to Emerson scholarship of the past decades focus on teasing out the incessant ambiguities of a mode of thinking centered on continual change. Critics such as Richard Poirier or Jonathan Levin examine the transitional dynamic of Emerson’s thinking as a precursor to pragmatism,[273] while in Stanley Cavell’s writings, Emerson figures as a founder of an American philosophy revolving around self-reliance or on what Cavell describes as a notion of "moral perfectionism" that is not driven by "a state of being but a moment of change, say of becoming."[274]

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[272] Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. Alfred R. Ferguson et al., 7 vols. to date (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971-). If not indicated otherwise, all further references are to this edition and will be provided in the text parenthetically [*CW*].

[273] Jonathan Levin, *The Poetics of Transition: Emerson, Pragmatism, and American Literary Modernism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999). Richard Poirier writes in the introduction to *Poetry and Pragmatism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992): “if you want to get to know [Emerson], you must stay as close as possible to the movements of his language, moment by moment, for at every moment there is movement with no place to rest”, (31).

This figure of "becoming" has emerged as a powerful nodal point for critics to approach Emersonian thinking within transnational philosophical contexts. Cavell suggests that his writings anticipate Heidegger and Wittgenstein, and draws out lines of influence which Emerson's works had on Nietzsche.[275] Regarding Emerson's ties to German philosophers, the Emerson-Nietzsche relation has become an important topic among critics. Reviewing Jennifer Ratner-Rosenhagen's *American Nietzsche: A History of an Icon and his Ideas*, Ross Posnock refers to the relationship between the two thinkers as "one of the most significant acts of transatlantic cross-fertilization in Western intellectual history."[276] Compared to recent criticism which has put Emerson in dialogue with philosophers such as Nietzsche, Wittgenstein or Heidegger, and which has contributed to illuminating the continuously transformative thrust of Emerson's writings in multiple nuanced ways, criticism centered on his relations to German intellectual history in his own time seems rather unambitious or even dated.

The existing works on Emerson's relation to German thinkers of his generation are much like those reviewed in chapter three on ties between Transcendentalism and German classical and biblical scholarship. The primary merit of the research by critics such as Leon Chai, Robert Richardson, and Elisabeth Hurth resides in detailing the strong connections Emerson's thinking bears to biblical scholarship and religious historiography across the Atlantic. If we compare the conclusions these critics draw about the nature of Emerson's thinking to the criticism that has become most influential and productive in the field of Emerson studies, however, there is a significant discrepancy. To date, the Emerson that emerges from publications reconstructing the development of his thinking against the backdrop of the Transcendentalists' relation to German intellectual history does not share much in common with the Emerson whose primary interest lies in examining the dynamics of human life, religious experience, and nature as driven by continuous transformations.

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[274] Stanley Cavell, "Being Odd, Getting Even" (Descartes, Emerson, Poe)," in *In Quest of the Ordinary* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 111.

[275] See Cavell, "Aversive Thinking: Emersonian Representations in Heidegger and Nietzsche," in *Emerson's Transcendental Etudes* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 141-170.

[276] Jennifer Ratner-Rosenhagen, *American Nietzsche: A History of an Icon and His Ideas* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012); Ross Posnock, "American Idol: On Nietzsche in America," *The Nation*, Nov. 1 2011, http://www.thenation.com/article/164321/american-idol-nietzsche-america.

Rather, for the Emerson who inhabits these publications, moments of change and the gesture of becoming constitute temporary stages on the subject's way toward forming a stable, strong, and confident self. Turning to Emerson's philosophy of history and his notion of religion as an experience of feeling, Chai works out affinities to Herder's *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* and Schleiermacher's *Über die Religion*. These works and their popularity among Emerson's Transcendentalist cohort, Chai suggests, shaped his understanding of religion as a form of self-development, leading up to "the individual mind's consciousness of the Universal Mind within itself."[277] Similarly, in several articles Richardson demonstrates

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[277] Leon Chai, *The Romantic Foundations of the American Renaissance* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), 253. On the relation between Herder's and Emerson's philosophy of history, see esp. 247-257, and on the impact of Schleiermacher on Emerson's correspondence theory esp. 169-194. On Emerson's borrowing from Herder's *Ideen* and other works, see also Ernest Menze, "Herder's Reception and

Schleiermacher's and Herder's role in showing Emerson "how one might reinstate the individual as the center and starting point of history and cosmology."[278] Hurth offers the most in-depth survey of how Emerson's decision to resign from the ministry and his turn toward what she calls his "spiritual idealism" were formed by a long series of intense intellectual exchanges between Boston, Berlin, and Göttingen.[279] She demonstrates how these exchanges were accompanied by a rapidly growing distribution of translations and reviews of works by a large number of German scholars, among whom Herder and Schleiermacher inhabited an important but by no means exclusive role.

There is no need to probe more deeply into the research of these contributions because the resonances with the scholarship on the Transcendentalist movement reviewed in the previous chapter are obvious: the underlying assumption is that German criticism helped to authorize and consolidate Emerson's view of the individual as independent and powerful. Chapter three demonstrated that we need to reassess and modify our understanding of the characteristics of this shift in favor of the individual to which the dissemination of German scholarship contributed in America. Likewise, I

Influence in the USA: Exploring Transcendentalism," in *Herausforderung Herder/Herder as Challenge*, ed. Sabine Groß (Heidelberg: Synchron, 2010), 27-43.

[278] Robert D. Richardson, *Emerson: The Mind on Fire* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1995), 92-93. This biography contains a number of references and explications of the connections between Emerson, Herder, and Schleiermacher. See also Richardson's article "Schleiermacher and the Transcendentalists," in *Transient and Permanent: The Transcendentalist Movement and Its Contexts*, ed. Charles Capper (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1999), 121-147.

[279] Elizabeth Hurth, *Between Faith and Unbelief: American Transcendentalists and the Challenge of Atheism* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 72; "William and Ralph Waldo Emerson and the Problem of the Lord's Supper: The Influence of German 'Historical Speculators,'" *Church History* 62 (1993): 190-206; "Sowing the Seeds of "Subversion: Harvard's Early Göttingen Students." *SAR* (1992), 91-106.

argue that we need to reexamine how Emerson develops his stance on the individual in conversation with aspects of the transnational discourse laid out in chapter three.

The main focus of "Transcendentalism's Critical Instruments" was to demonstrate that the notion of subjecthood that Emerson's contemporaries introduce vis-à-vis their reception of German historical criticism is a connected and relational one. Transcendentalist critics link what they refer to as self-culture in a secular context and man's cultivation of a "higher consciousness" in a religious one to processes of learning and critical labor. I examined how these processes are recorded in textual practices and modes of lecturing and preaching. Drawing on these findings, this chapter argues that the cross-cultural intellectual landscape as it becomes manifest in addresses, reviews, and translations by Emerson's contemporaries forms a crucial backdrop for understanding his concern with life's contingencies and risks, compelling us to embrace them. This attitude is memorably inscribed in such statements as "People wish to be settled; only as far as they are unsettled is there any hope for them" (*CW*, vol. II, 189).

More specifically, the chapter's first two parts establish the connections between Emerson's thinking of mobility and the contemporary historical and scholarly discourse as it was unfolding most prominently in the fields of religion and classicism. His engagement with these discourses is illuminating because they provide a broad transnational context explaining *why* he promoted such unconventional and creative treatments of literatures that had been paradigmatic over centuries. As in Ripley's or Marsh's discussions of German scholarship, he introduces history as something that gets continuously remade and introduces ancient poetry and myths as vivid exemplifications of this human making and meaning. My argument is that we need to approach Emerson’s way of determining the use of literatures as sites for the continuous breaking and remaking of habits and traditions in light of his cultural explorations of ancient history and literatures. Contemporary conversations over methods of research and practices of preaching and learning played a major role in forming his belief that all engagements with the past – be they out of scholarly or private interest – ought to serve the subject here and now. They form the backdrop against which he develops his original practices of reading, writing, and lecturing. Moreover, I will demonstrate that it is this new perspective on the functions of the past for the present that authorizes Emerson’s valorization of the low and common as sites that are aesthetically as valuable as the impressions nature made on humanity’s earliest civilizations.

According to Emerson, the historical perspective on the past does much more than make us rethink the status of customs and habits and recast categories of aesthetic value; crucially, it paves the way to a fundamental rethinking of religious practices. It is no news, of course, that the latest scholarly findings helped buttress Emerson’s doubts over institutionalized religious forms and removed the Bible from its privileged place. In the critical literature focused on German influence, however, it remains unclear how these insights are related to his activities of writing and lecturing. Comparisons show that as with non-religious writings, he treats sacred texts not as authoritative documents but as models to learn from. In his eyes, we need to approach figures such as Jesus and Paul as men teaching us exemplary strategies of commemoration and as providing key insights into how to revive dead religious forms. Emerson’s approach is similar to the one his Transcendentalist colleagues would highlight as worthy of imitation in Schleiermacher's or Herder's interaction with such sacred authorities. For all of them, figures like Paul or Jesus demonstrate that true spiritual engagement can never be tied to a static set of rituals and symbols but needs to be reworked and renewed continuously. The key to religious revival lies in small individual acts the subject can participate in and perform in a variety of ways.

While the objective of the first two parts is to demonstrate that the historical discourse Emerson engages in helps to better understand *why* he would postulate the unsettling of customs, aesthetic standards, and religious forms, the third part asks what it really means to make the breaking of established ways of thinking and modes of living integral to one's way of life. I approach this question from two angles: I concentrate on the activities he suggests a true American scholar ought to exercise and on his role as a public lecturer. A number of critics have worked out connections between Emerson's style of thinking and the lectern, arguing that the institution of the lyceum had a major impact on the development of his writing and lecturing in such idiosyncratic and radically eclectic ways. By focusing on how the figure of the American scholar and Emerson's self-fashioning as a freelance lecturer are linked to his engagement with contemporary scholarship, I seek to add to and reinforce criticism that has treated him as a "connected critic," as someone whose "thought and action evolved immanently out of the society in which he lived."[280] There are a number of striking connections between the textual practices worked out in my previous chapters –

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[280] Johannes Voelz, *Transcendental Resistance: The New Americanists and Emerson's Challenge* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2010), 4.

abandonment of habits, the development of a language of love and friendship, poetic philology – and Emerson's statements regarding his lecturing activities and the tasks of a true scholar.

By bringing into focus ways in which contemporary critical discourses have formed Emerson's thinking, this chapter contributes a more nuanced understanding of the nature of his long established connection to German historical scholarship. To the field of Emerson studies more generally, it contributes a transnational perspective on a facet of his thinking that has sparked much controversy: my research shows that his concern with departing from and breaking with habits and traditions accompanies an equally strong sense that one can create and fully appropriate new forms of life and art or realms of religious experience. Especially those studies that have turned to Emerson's non-conformist writing as a way out of the pervasive ideology of American culture (on which see the introduction to chapter three) view such moments as evidence for Emerson's inability to escape America's systematic ideological power.

Johannes Voelz's *Transcendental Resistance: The New Americanists and Emerson's Challenge* seeks to dissociate Emerson from this influential strand of criticism, suggesting that such readings reintroduce "a form of idealism" because they are premised on the assumption that an uncorrupted ideological space exists. Dismantling this ideological takeover of Emerson step by step, Voelz argues that idealist exclamations in his texts that seem to disrupt and countermand their overall gist need to be understood as his response to the entirely new situation in which he found himself professionally. After his resignation from the ministry, he needed to carve out a space for himself as a public lecturer and make sure he attracted an audience for his thinking.[281] I align my own approach with critics like Voelz who seek to make the ambiguous nature of Emerson's writing and lecturing plausible by uncovering their relations to the intellectual landscape in which he lived and worked.

"*Man can paint, or make, or think, nothing but man*": On History and the Use of Books

While German intellectuals were quite popular in America well into the nineteenth-century, the reverse was clearly not the case. There is, however, one remarkable exception: Herman Grimm, son of Wilhelm Grimm and the younger of the Grimm brothers, compared his discovery of Emerson's writings to the discovery of a new continent.[282] A brief excursion into Grimm's observations on his long-term correspondent Emerson is a good introduction to the relationship between contemporary scholarly debates and the characteristics of Emerson's thinking about mobility. Interestingly, Grimm draws a direct link between Emerson's style of thinking, writing, and lecturing and the latest critical developments in modes of practicing research and teaching at nineteenth-century American educational institutions.

Just three days before his death on June 16, 1902, Grimm received the New York State lawyer Frederick William Holls in his home in Berlin and asked him to publish the letters he and Emerson had written to each other between 1856 and 1871. Holls was permitted to make copies from the manuscripts Grimm had given to the Goethe-Schiller archive in Weimar and published his translation of the correspondence in New York in 1903.[283] What had sparked Grimm's interest and motivated him to get in touch with Emerson in the first place was a random reading of his first major essay, *Nature* (1836):

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[281] Voelz, *The New Americanists and Emerson's Challenge*, 4, 11.

[282] Herman Friedrich Grimm, *Fünfzehn Essays. Erste Folge* (Berlin: Ferd. Dümmlers, 1884), 438.

> Bei einem mir befreundeten Amerikaner fand ich vor Jahren einen Theil der Essays von Emerson zufällig auf dem Tische liegen. Ich sah hinein, las eine Seite herunter und war erstaunt, eigentlich nichts verstanden zu haben, obgleich ich mir meines Englisch ziemlich bewusst war. Ich fragte nach dem Autor. Er sei der erste Schriftsteller Amerikas und sehr geistreich, aber manchmal etwas verrückt, und er könne sogar öfter seine eigenen Sätze nicht erklären. Aber niemand sei so angesehen als Charakter und Prosaist. Kurz, dies Urtheil lautete so wunderbar, ich sah wieder in das Buch: einige Sätze sprangen mir so einleuchtend in die Seele, dass ich eine Art Trieb empfand, es einzustecken und zu Hause genauer anzusehen....Ich nahm Websters Dictionary und fing an zu lesen. Der Satzbau erschien mir ganz außergewöhnlich. Bald entdeckte ich das Geheimnis: es waren wirkliche Gedanken, war eine wirkliche Sprache, ein reeller Mensch, den ich vor mir hatte...ich kaufte mir das Buch. Ich habe seitdem nicht aufgehört in Emersons Werken zu lesen, und jedesmal wo ich sie von neuem vornehme, scheint es mir als sähe ich sie zum erstenmal.
> ...alles erschien mir alt und bekannt als hätte ich es tausendmal gedacht oder geahnt, alles neu als lernte ich es zum erstenmal....und wenn ich dann wieder seine Sätze las, flog die zauberische Luft über mein Herz von neuem, es erfrischte sich das alte abgearbeitete Getriebe der Welt, als hätte ich niemals so reine Luft gekostet. Ich hörte neulich von einem Amerikaner, der Emersons Vorlesungen beigewohnt, es gebe nichts ergreifenderes, als diesen Mann zu hören. Ich glaube das. Es geht nichts über die Stimme eines Menschen, der aus tiefster Seele das ausspricht, was er für wahr hält.[284]

This passage from Grimm's essay "Ralph Waldo Emerson" (1861) documents a reading experience that many readers of Emerson are likely to share: his idiosyncratic syntax and style leave a puzzled and bewildered first impression, and yet there is something captivating about these sentences that keeps one coming back. His language appeals to Grimm because – to use one of Emerson's well-known sentences – he finds his own thinking returning to himself "with a certain alienated majesty" (*CW*, vol. II, 27). Thoughts that have crossed his own mind multiple times appear fresh, pure, and unique in Emerson's prose; Grimm's experience of the world seems to renew itself through Emerson's words. And according to the testimony of those who attended his lectures, his live readings were equally able to convey this almost magical feeling of renewal, of fresh insight into perceptions and experiences one thought to have fully uncovered.[285]

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[283] *Correspondence between Ralph Waldo Emerson and Herman Grimm*, ed. Frederick William Holls (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1903).

[284] Grimm, *Fünfzehn Essays*, 426-427, 430-431.

Excited about his discovery of this American author and the quality and energizing effects of his prose, Grimm attempts to translate individual pieces and win over a German audience for Emerson. His initial efforts, however, do not find the resonance he had hoped for. The explanations he gives for the lack of interest shown by German intellectuals in Emerson's works is crucial to my main argument in this chapter:

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[285] Grimm provides a number of perceptive and discriminating descriptions of his observations of Emerson's practice of writing and preparing for his lectures that have never been explored critically and comprehensively. See for instance his "Ralph Waldo Emerson – Ein Nachruf:" "Ich suchte Emerson kritisch zu untersuchen. Aber es gelang mir nie....Emerson hat eine unbegreiflich Art, den Leser in das Gefühl der Dinge hineinzuversetzen, ohne dass er sie beschreibt oder darstellt und ohne dass eine irgendwie sichtbare Kunst, wie er dies vollbringe, zu erkennen ist….Was er geschrieben hat, gleicht dem nicht abbrechenden Leben des Tages selber, wie er sich in ewig neu anschließenden Atomen und Ereignissen fortsetzt. Emersons Sätze fließen oft monoton und akzentlos. Es sind Gedankenreihen. Er scheint, wo er anhebt, nur wie nach einer Pause in einer Rede fortzufahren, deren Anfang wir nicht hören, und, wo er schließt, nur eine Pause machen zu wollen, um dann weiterzureden. Jemand berichtet, wie er Emerson einmal am Tage vor einer Vorlesung besucht und umgeben gefunden habe von Papieren, aus denen er seinen Stoff zusammenlas. Das Zufällige dieser Art zu schaffen beeinträchtigt den Wert seiner Schriften nicht....Jede Minute scheint bei ihm ihre besondere Frucht getragen zu haben. Emerson scheint nie mehr geben zu wollen, als was ihm im Moment vor die Seele tritt. Er hat nie ein System aufgestellt. Er hat sich nie verteidigt" (Thomas Meyer, ed., *Der Briefwechsel Ralph Waldo Emerson / Herman Grimm*, translated by Helga Paul [Basel: Perseus Verlag, 2007], 71-72).

> Emerson betrachtet die Welt wie sie um ihn lebendig ist; was vor ihm geschah und gethan ward, ist nur eine Stufe zu der Höhe, auf die er sich gestellt hat. Die Lebenden haben das Vorrecht vor den Toten. Und wenn die Griechen noch so schön gedichtet haben, gemeißelt, gedacht, gesiegt, geherrscht haben: sie sind tot und wir leben....Wozu soll ich meine Seele mit Kenntnissen beladen, die ich nie gebrauchen werde, oder über Dingen mich abarbeiten, deren Nutzen ich nicht einsehe?[286]
>
> Wie sehr Emerson hier das vorausgeahnt hat, was heute in Amerika der vorherrschende Gedanke ist, oder wie sehr jene Lehre Emersons dem heutigen Amerika in Fleisch und Blut übergegangen sei, zeigt die Beschaffenheit des dort sich regenden wissenschaftlichen Lebens. Bei uns geht man aus von dem, was die Wissenschaft für sich verlange – gewiss der höhere Standpunkt; in Amerika von dem, was den Lernenden dienlich sei – in vielen Fällen der praktischere und besser zum Ziele führende. Zuerst sollen die Lebenden zu ihrem Rechte kommen....Wer Gelegenheit gehabt hat, amerikanische Professoren und Studenten kennenzulernen, wird die einfache Art bemerkt haben, mit der sie auf die Hauptsachen losgehen, mit welcher unbefangenen Frische sie sich zurechtzufinden wissen. Der Amerikaner sucht alles zu umfassen und auf dem kürzesten Wege sich anzueignen. Emersons Lehre ist die von der Souveränität der Persönlichkeit. Zu erkennen, wofür ein junger Mensch gut sei, und ihn rücksichtslos für den Weg, den er einschlagen will, auszurüsten, ist die große Pflicht, auf die er hinweist.[287]

These two excerpts taken from Grimm's obituary of Emerson and the essay on him in the *Fünfzehn Essays* collection draw an interesting analogy: Grimm views Emerson's candid approach to things, his way of not letting the past inhibit and stifle him in his enthusiasm and love for expressing his experience of the present, as paradigmatic of nineteenth-century American scholarship. In a way Grimm's assessment of the different methods in which "Wissenschaft" has been practiced in Germany and America mirror the two sides of the late nineteenth-century "Methodenstreit," the discourse concerning the method and meaning of classical studies between the philologist Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Möllendorff and Friedrich Nietzsche. "Viewed through a wider lens," the clash between the two "was a struggle between historicists and humanists, *Wissenschaft* and *Bildung*, scholarship and life."[288] While Nietzsche insisted on the necessity of a humanist motivation for doing philological and historical research, Wilamowitz argued that the scholar's sole task is to investigate the classical past by assembling as much historical information as possible about the object under scrutiny, regardless of present-day viewpoints.[289]

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[286] Grimm, *Fünfzehn Essays*, 442-443.
[287] Grimm, "Ralph Waldo Emerson – Ein Nachruf", 67-68.

Following Grimm's description of the directions American and German intellectual life was headed, Emerson and nineteenth-century American scholars clearly emerge as exponents of the humanist viewpoint while German scholars emerge as practitioners of Wilamowitz' understanding of scholarship. Although the passage above suggests that practicing "Wissenschaft" for the sake of "Wissenschaft" takes priority over putting research into the service of humanist goals, Grimm is by no means consistent in his appraisal. He also writes that an approach centered on examining how scholarly activities may cast new perspectives on everyday life and thinking would be of great benefit for the revival Germany's cultural and research landscape:

> Emerson geht von einem Gedanken aus, der Amerika früher bewegt hat als uns. Auch uns steigt heute die Frage auf, wie es den folgenden Generationen möglich sein werde, die ungeheuren geistigen Vorräte…zu bewältigen, ohne der eigenen Arbeit Eintrag zu tun.[290]

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[288] Sheldon Pollock, "Future Philology: The Fate of a Soft Science in a Hard World," *Critical Inquiry* 35 (2009), 932.

[289] On the dispute between Nietzsche and Wilamowitz, see Pollock, "Future Philology," 931-932.

[290] Grimm, "Ralph Waldo Emerson – Ein Nachruf", 66.

> Ich begegne bei [Emerson] vielen bekannten Thatsachen, noch benützt er sie nicht, um die alten abgenutzten Rechenexempel noch einmal mit ihnen zu konstruieren, sondern jede steht an einer neuen Stelle und dient zu neuen Kombinationen. Von jedem Dinge sieht er die direkte Linie ausgehen, die es mit dem Zentrum des Lebens in Verbindung setzt. Was ich kaum zu denken gewagt, weil es mir allzu kühn erschien, brachte er so ruhig vor, als wären es alltägliche Gedanken, die sich von selbst verstehen. Er ist ein perfekter Schwimmer im Elemente des modernen Lebens.
>
> Unsere Geschichtsbücher enthalten sehr genau den Inhalt einzelner Fächer der Geschichte, aber ein Gefühl des großen allgemeinen Stromes entbehren sie....Wir haben die Kenntnisse im Kopfe...und [sind] jeden Augenblick bereit die geforderte Summe an Wissen bar auszuzahlen...aber die Ehe dieser Gedanken mit dem Geiste, der sie beherbergt, ist eine kühle Konvenienzheirath ohne Gemeinschaft und ohne Kinder. Wie scheut man Gespräche, in denen die Kenntnisse als Eigenschaften des Charakters verwerthet werden sollen! Man will nirgends Konsequenzen ziehen. Was über den Bereich des Positiven, durch Bücher zu belegenden hinaus geht, sind bedenkliche Konjekturen.[291]

According to Grimm, one reason for the lack of interest Germans show in Emerson lies in how people teach and have been taught to treat knowledge. Emerson's bold way of combining elements with one another and of thereby bringing into view relations between things that seem to bear no affinities to one another cannot fall on fruitful ground in a society that rates forms of personalized knowledge as unscientific and speculative. Stepping beyond the confines of compartmentalized thinking within disciplines is not part of the intellectual life of German institutions of education and research as Grimm experiences them.

The parallels Grimm detects between Emerson and the critical trends in his country open up a line of investigation that needs to be pursued further; his observations regarding Emerson's important voice in promoting a humanistically oriented direction of scholarship and the methodological divide he makes out call for a more nuanced investigation. Ironically, it was precisely the reception of elements of German scholarship that advanced the humanist direction which critical engagements with the past took in America. Emerson's ways of taking great liberties in drawing out connections between the works of others, commonplace thoughts, and present-day life does not portend but is being formed by the humanist impulse dominating nineteenth-century New England scholarly culture. The aspects critics like Ripley, Marsh, or Felton find most interesting in the German works they review and translate from fall into the same category with those Grimm highlights as typical for American scholarship: the emphasis on the individual, on placing a premium on creative and personal facets of interpretation while paying less attention to the factual and scientific side of doing research.

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[291] Grimm, *Fünfzehn Essays*, 443-444, 433.

But what exactly is the relationship between this rise of a humanistically oriented scholarship and Emerson's propagation of a fragmented and eclectic style of writing and lecturing? I will demonstrate that he advances a historical and anthropological understanding of ancient texts that helps us better understand why he would develop his writing and speaking the way he does. Like nearly every figure I have turned to in this dissertation, Emerson recapitulates the arguments of the Ancient-Modern debate. In his early lecture on "The Present Age" (1837), given as part of "The Philosophy of History" lecture series at the Masonic Temple in Boston, Emerson recalls Schiller when he compares the "reflective character" of our current age with the "golden age" of the self-united ancients (*EL*, vol. II, 168).[292] And like every German intellectual involved in the debate, he turns to Shakespeare as the modern poet best able to bridge the separation. Shakespeare, he writes in "Thoughts on Modern Literature," "is an apology for the analytic spirit of the period, because, of his analysis, always wholes were the results" (*W*, vol. XII, 323). More specifically, he suggests that it was the "influence of the genius of Shakespeare" that "almost alone has called out the genius of the German nation into an activity which, spreading from the poetic into the scientific, religious and philosophical domains, has made theirs now at last the paramount intellectual influence on the world, reacting with great energy on England and America" (*W*, vol. XII, 312).[293]

What is it in Shakespeare's ways of relating to the past, though, that could energize the flourishing of culture in Germany? "Shakespeare; or, the Poet," Emerson's portrait of him in the *Representative Men* series, provides an answer: his power lies in the way he enters into labors of his predecessors and reorganizes their materials: "Every master has found his materials collected, and his power lay in his sympathy with his people and in his love of the materials he wrought in" (*CW*, vol. IV, 110). Shakespeare reworks what he finds with love and sympathy and makes sure his compositions bear an immediate relation to his readers' present-day experiences. (I will return to the role affect plays for Emerson's notion of reading and composing texts in the chapter's third part.) Emerson notes how Shakespeare's simultaneous work as a librarian, historiographer, and poet (see *CW*, vol. IV, 113) helps him to convey the impression that "the rude warm blood of the living England circulate[s] in [his] play[s]" (*CW*, vol. IV, 111).

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[292] See also the essay on "Quotation and Originality" for Emerson's recapitulation of key arguments of the Ancient-Modern debate: "Now shall we say that only the first men were alive, and the existing generation is invalided and degenerate? Is all literature eavesdropping, and all art Chinese imitation?" (*CW*, vol. VIII, 187-188).

[293] In the portrait "Shakespeare; or, the Poet" which Emerson published as part of the *Representative Men* series, he refers to him as "the father of German literature," and writes that "it was the introduction of Shakespeare into German, by Lessing, and the translation of his works by Wieland and Schlegel, that the rapid burst of German literature was most intimately connected" (*CW*, vol. IV, 117).

It becomes evident how Emerson's appraisal of Shakespeare's function in German culture corresponds to those aspects on which other Transcendentalist critics focus; they all highlight the reworking and appropriation of historical fragments as the most innovative aspect of German criticism. In his early lecture on "Human Culture" (1837), Emerson writes that it was the rise of the concept of culture that empowered scholars to cultivate such subject-centered and innovative approaches in ancient studies: "The new view which now tends to remould metaphysics, theology, science…and professions, and which, in its earnest creation, must modify or destroy the old, has as yet attained no clearer name than Culture. His own Culture, the unfolding of his nature, is the chief end of man" (*EL*, vol. II, 215). Emerson draws a direct link here between the rise of a cultural understanding of all aspects of human knowledge and activity and man's calling to make self-culture the main objective of his striving.

Emerson invests a great deal in drawing attention to figures whose works express what he regards as pioneering treatments of traditions. Practices of revival that help to isolate individual fragments from a wide range of historical materials and connect them to current themes are valuable for the individual and modern culture at large. What we do not yet know, however, is what kind of a historical understanding it is that has empowered people to deal with the achievements of their predecessors in such highly individual and undogmatic ways. What are the characteristics of this new cultural view that Emerson espouses in his lecture on "Human Culture?" What concept of history endorses present- and subject-centered procedures of engaging the past?

In answering this question, we can see how closely Emerson's promotion of a creative modern fashioning of works of others is bound up with contemporary criticism at home and abroad. In the second lecture on "Literature" (1839) of "The Present Age" series, he discusses the "new epoch in criticism" dating from the ways "ancient history has been dealt with by Niebuhr, Wolf, Müller, and Heeren," and in particular from "Wolf's attack upon the authenticity of Homeric poems" (*EL*, vol. III, 225). He demonstrates that their research reveals in different ways the openness of ancient history; issues we thought we had settled appear inconclusive in light of the outcome of their findings. The new insights about the lack of unity and fragmentary nature of the Homeric poems lead Emerson to draw a number of interesting conclusions relevant for the practice and functions of historical research in his own time:

> Out of histories written in so narrow a mind as most of our histories are, laborious indeed but without a pious and loving eye to the universal contributions of nature to a people, nothing can come but incongruous, broken impressions, unsatisfactory to the mind. But the views obtained by patient wisdom studious of facts and open to the permanent as well as partial causes would give an analogues impression to the landscape. As it studies history, so it looks at the sciences in a higher connection than before….Our own country, I may remark, shares largely in whatsoever is new and aspiring in thought. Our young men travel in foreign countries and read at home with hungry eyes foreign books. Wishful eyes are cast to Germany…but here is Germany or nowhere.
> (*EL*, vol. III, 228)

The biggest shortcoming of the method of history writing customary in his own country is that it leaves the mind with "broken impressions"; it provides a potpourri of collected data but no coherent interpretation. We can see in this early lecture what would become the hallmark of Emerson's view on how the modern individual ought to approach history: for it to be of any value, the interpreter needs to take on an active role as a shaper of facts. There are obvious resonances between this lecture and the essay on Shakespeare in which Emerson calls Shakespeare the "father of German literature" because of his ability to bring the past back to life in a loving manner (*CW*, vol. IV, 117). In the lecture on "Literature," he also gestures at the important role a "loving eye" plays for viewing the significance of historical materials in broader contexts. And more than that, he suggests that a subject who has learned to exercise his "loving eye" will also begin to see the landscape differently. What he learns through studies of cultural history, in other words, has a formative impact on his visual capacities to draw fragments together in a new field of vision. His way of turning the transnational rise of a different historical consciousness into an occasion for a pervasive recasting of aesthetic categories marks one of the most interesting aspects of his historical thinking to which I will return below.

For now it is important to note how exactly Emerson supports his claim that historical work is useful only in so far as it serves the present. Like many of the German scholars he mentions, he approaches the issue both from a historico-critical and anthropological angle. In his course of lectures on "The Philosophy of History," he employs the metaphor of the shell and the kernel – one Herder uses in his essay on

"Shakespear" when he sets up his historical understanding[294] – to distinguish adequate and inadequate history writing from one another. Writings that document events in a chronological style are useless because they fail to cast into relief individual distinctions between different periods. Such writings appear like a "shell from which the kernel [has] fallen" because data ("shells") have been abstracted and severed from original events and forms of life ("kernel") (*EL*, vol. II, 9). According to Emerson, such recordings can neither do justice to the individual flavor of historical events nor to the nature of human reception and generation of meaning.

Similar to Herder, he suggests in "History" that we have to approach the myths and sagas of other cultures as a series of continuous human attempts to express their experiences of the world: "The shoes of swiftness, the sword of sharpness, the power of subduing the elements,…of understanding the voices of birds…are alike the endeavor of the human spirit to bend the shows of things to the desires of the mind" (*CW*, vol. II, 19). He considers such representations not as signs for a naïve mind but as evidence of fundamental principles of human interaction with the world, as indicative of how we form our perceptions of things. The most sacred documents, those "ejaculations of a few imaginative men," as Emerson expresses it in "The Poet" (*CW*, vol. III, 20), are no exception to this process:

> The gods of fable are the shining moments of great men. We run all our vessels into one mould. Our colossal theologies of Judaism, Christism, Buddhism, Mahometism, are the necessary and structural action of the human mind….Our theism is the purification of the human mind. Man can paint, or make, or think, nothing but man. (*CW*, vol. IV, "Uses of Great Men," 4)

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[294] Herder, *FA* 2:499.

Religions are the works of some exceptionally perceptive and imaginative minds, "a few oracles spoken by perceiving men" (*W*, vol. VIII, "Poetry and Imagination," 38). It is striking to see how closely Emerson's modes of introducing the human origin of documents that were for so long considered worldly manifestations of higher authorities resemble those of Herder's. An exclamation such as "man can paint, or make, or think, nothing but man," could be read as an American response to Herder's observation "Der Mensch siehet nur, wie der Mensch siehet" (*FA* 4:449). By gesturing at resemblances such as those between Herder and Emerson, I have no intention of restricting Emerson's interest in German scholarly criticism to a specific figure; rather, I draw attention to such intellectual overlap to demonstrate the transnational embeddedness of his historical understanding.

According to Emerson, literature of any provenience, be it sacred or secular, should be treated as "the public depository of the thoughts of the human race," as "a true history of man" in which "religion is his best hour. War is his worst" (*EL*, vol. II, "The Philosophy of History," 63). We need to bear such assertions in mind when we want to understand why he redefines how we ought to relate to other literatures and cultural histories: attempts to focus only on the "shell" of materials without putting any efforts into reimagining the "kernel" (that is, the circumstances and motivations that gave rise to documentations of poetic experience) can only lead to new formulaic and insignificant records, lacking individual color and character:

> Is it not the lesson of our experience that every man, were life long enough, would write history for himself? What else do these volumes of extracts and manuscript commentaries, that every scholar writes, indicate? Greek history is

> one thing to me; another to you. Since the birth of Niebuhr and Wolf, Roman and Greek history have been written anew. (*CW*, vol. I, “Literary Ethics,” 107)

Just as the ancient events documented bear witness to how humans “bend the shows of things to the desires of the mind” (*CW*, vol. II, “History,” 19), so is the personal component involved when we reengage with such documents. The biographical and personal facet of historical scholarship is of most interest to Emerson. The individual characteristics of the author shining through his way of telling the history of Greece and Rome determine the value of the account: “the whole value of history, of biography, is to increase my self-trust, by demonstrating what man can be and do” (*CW*, vol. I, “Literary Ethics,” 102). The task of history is to exhibit to man the wide range of his possibilities and contribute thereby to his self-culture.

Emerson, I suggest, uses this perspective on history as a springboard to corroborate and authorize what he would work into a fully-fledged cultural practice. Man needs to break with traditions and conventions as much as he needs to experiment with and cultivate new forms of life and expressions. Emerson’s concern with the historical debates of his time shows clearly that leaving old forms behind is as important to him as the creation of new ones. For him it is the right balance between letting go and appropriating new habits of thinking and living that indicates the health and happiness of individuals and societies alike. This is the background against which we need to interpret provocative statements such as “every healthy mind is a true Alexander or Sesostris, building a universal monarchy” (*W*, vol. VIII, “Poetry and Imagination,” 23) or “the human spirit…bend[s] the shows of things to the desires of the mind” (*CW*, vol.

II, "History," 19). Taken out of context, these exclamations can be read as evidence for a radical notion of individualism that seeks to dominate and take absolute control over things; when we read them as part of his engagement with historical criticism, however, they appear in a different light. What Emerson finds in both ancient and modern poetry is that

> The world is thoroughly anthropomorphized, as if it had passed through the body and mind of man, and taken his mould and form. Indeed, good poetry is always personification, and heightens every species of force in nature by giving it a human volition….Every healthy mind is a true Alexander or Sesostris, building a universal monarchy. (*W*, vol. VIII, 23)

Like many passages in Emerson's texts on literature and history, this one from "Poetry and Imagination" suggests that the anthropomorphizing of the world we find in literatures of all ages should be understood as a demonstration of man's ability to carve out a place in it for himself. Man's creation of a "universal monarchy" in which all things have a fixed place and interact in meaningful ways indicate a healthy mind, convinced that its way of seeing things is right and true, and this is no flaw in Emerson's eyes. The progression of cultures throughout history is a process that "recedes as fast on one side as it gains on the other," and in light of these changes bound to a continual rhythm of powerful gains and equally powerful losses and degenerations it is vitally important to find meaning and reliable points of orientation, if only momentarily.[295] Literature is thereby of great help because it

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[295] Emerson writes comprehensively about the nature of historical progress in "Self-Reliance": "Society never advances. It recedes as fast on one side as it gains on the other. It undergoes continual changes; it is barbarous, it is civilized, it is christianized, it is rich, it is scientific; but this change is not amelioration. For every thing that is given, something is taken. Society acquires new arts, and loses old instincts….The

> afford[s] us a platform whence we may command a view of our present life, a purchase by which we may move it. We fill ourselves with ancient learning; install ourselves the best we can in Greek, in Punic, in Roman houses, only that we may wiselier see French, English, and American houses and modes of living. (*CW*, vol. II, "Circles," 185)

Literature provides us with models that help us reinvent our own life. Examples of how this has been done by leading figures like Shakespeare or Goethe and by Emerson himself can be found in every text he composed. Nearly every essay and lecture is concerned with how to quote works of others productively and integrate findings in one's own work; "the greatest genius," he proclaims famously in *Representative Men*, "is the most indebted man" (*CW*, vol. IV, 109.).[296]

When we take into consideration Emerson's concern with the philosophy of history and his working through the latest scholarship, his undogmatic treatment of forms of cultural expression and habits of living appear natural. He regards ancient literary texts as models, suggesting that the best way to engage with them is by contributing to the continuous process of generating new modes of expression: "They say much of the study of the Ancients, but what else does that signify than, direct your attention to the real world and seek to express it, since that did the ancients whilst they lived" (Emerson quoting Goethe in *JMN*, vol. V, 290). What I argued in chapter three

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civilized man has built a coach, but has lost the use of his feet. He is supported on crutches, but lacks so much support of muscle. He has a fine Geneva watch, but he fails of the skill to tell the hour by the sun….. His note-books impair his memory; his libraries overload his wit" (*CW*, vol. II, 48).

[296] On Emerson's concern with creative reading and writing, see, for instance, "The American Scholar": "One must be an inventor to read well….There is then creative reading as well as creative writing. When the mind is braced by labor and invention, the page of whatever book we read becomes luminous with manifold allusion. Every sentence is doubly significant, and the sense of our author is as broad as the world" (*CW*, vol. I, 58.); see also "Quotation and Originality" (*W*, vol. VIII, 177-204) and Robert D. Richardson, *First We Read, Then We Write: Emerson on the Creative Process* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2009).

with regard to other influential Transcendentalists holds equally true for Emerson: the use of history and books lies in what they can do for the living generation. Regardless of whether Emerson turns to Wolf, Niebuhr, or Herder, the question of interest to him is how they manage to put their findings into the service of the individual's development and present-day cultural renewal.

This latter aspect is particularly significant; it is no news, of course, that Emerson challenges established aesthetic values by turning to "the low, the common…the philosophy of the street" rather than what is traditionally considered "sublime and beautiful" (*CW*, vol. I, "The American Scholar," 67). What is interesting and has not been commented on, however, is that he draws a direct line of connection between the rise of a historical consciousness and the transformation of aesthetic categories. The refashioning of the relationship between ancient and modern cultures contributes in important ways to his propagation of an aesthetics of the low and common. He articulates this link between history and aesthetics most elaborately in "The American Scholar" and the essay on "Goethe, or the Writer" in the *Representative Men* series.

Following his famous proclamations on the beauty of the everyday in "The American Scholar," he associates such an aesthetic practice with Goethe, "the most modern of the moderns" (*CW*, vol. I, 68). It has often been noted that among all the portraits in the *Representative Men* series, Goethe's is the one that comes closest to a self-portrait.[297] This observation seems particularly apt with regard to Emerson's descriptions of what he takes to be Goethe's aesthetics; the German poet emerges here as a powerful sounding board for Emerson's fascination with the aesthetic value of the most common experiences. No one, he writes, has worked out "the distinction between the antique and the modern spirit of art" as well as Goethe because of how he and others of his period make sure that their historical discoveries have some "application to Berlin and Munich." This focus on the present distinguishes the German preoccupation with the past from that practiced "in England and America" where "one may be an adept in the writings of a Greek or Latin poet, without any poetic taste or fire" (*CW*, vol. IV, 158, 162). Goethe, by contrast, makes out "a thread of mythology and fable" in the most prosaic "actions of routine"; he finds the "genius of life" in "public squares and main streets, in boulevards and hotels" (*CW*, vol. IV, 157-158). Such passages indicate how far Emerson goes beyond the American classical scholars discussed earlier: he does not only establish in a general fashion that new perspectives on past cultures impart the subject with a hitherto unknown sense of responsibility and power but suggests that these perspectives teach us to "embrace the common" (*CW*, vol. I, 67) and render seemingly insignificant actions and perceptions as sites of aesthetic experience. Before following up in more detail on questions regarding the nature of Emerson's style, however, I will turn to the other and most important domain of scholarship that has fundamentally changed his life and thinking.

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[297] See for instance Joseph C. Schöpp: "'The Powers and Duties of the Scholar or Writer:' Emersons Selbstentwurf im Lichte Goethes," in *Dialoge zwischen Amerika und Europa: transatlantische Perspektiven in Philosophie, Literatur, Kunst und Musik*, ed. Astrid Böger (Tübingen: Francke, 2007), 91-106.

“*Ejaculations of a few imaginative men*”: Emerson on Religion

Unlike Emerson’s exposure to historical scholarship in fields other than religion, the connections between his resignation from the ministry and his engagement with German higher criticism is well documented.[298] The aim here is to first map out the broader critical conversations to which Emerson contributes and in the context of which he develops his undogmatic religious understanding. I will show that we miss out on the significance of his engagement with the scholarly discourses of his time if we do not go beyond the well known observation that they helped to sever religious authority from historical texts and relocate it in the individual’s higher consciousness.[299]

It is common knowledge that the latest contemporary research fed into Emerson’s doubts about institutionalized religion; as I noted earlier, he refers to Bibles not as divinely inspired documents but as “ejaculations of a few imaginative men” (“The Poet”) who were no more or less entitled to document and diffuse their spiritual experiences than anyone else. In light of such insights into the individual and cultural distinctiveness of religious expressions, Emerson becomes the most fervent proponent of abandoning historically obsolete rituals and of putting all efforts into finding new forms for reviving the spiritual life of his time. As with Homer or any other renowned figure, Emerson advocates for changing our ways of relating to spiritual leaders like Jesus or Paul by treating them not as authoritative models but as humans whose legacies we can learn from.

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[298] See the sources cited in the introduction to this chapter. See also Elisabeth Hurth, “William and Ralph Waldo Emerson and the Problem of the Lord’s Supper,” 203: “This rejection of a Christianity of forms forced Emerson all the more to affirm a new basis of religion….the proof of the validity of revelation had to be sought somewhere else – not in historical and external evidences but rather within the heart.”

[299] For further references, see also the chapter’s introduction.

The aim is to isolate emotional, intellectual, and communicative skills Emerson highlights as worthy of imitation in the writings and accounts of Jesus and Paul and to place them in the context of aspects fellow Transcendentalists would emphasize in their translations and discussions of German criticism. This will bring into view a number of features and themes relevant for a better grasp on the ways in which well known characteristics of Emerson's reading, writing, and lecturing are guided by his current engagement with biblical research.

William Emerson kept his younger brother up to date with the latest scholarship while studying at Göttingen. As I noted in "Transcendentalism's Critical Instruments," what he found out about the histories of the Scriptures from scholars such as Eichhorn and Michaelis shook the foundations of what he had learned at Harvard's theological seminary so fundamentally that he decided to leave the profession. Hurth works out the conflict between the evidentialist apologetics familiar to William and the theological scholarship he encountered in Göttingen. To recapitulate briefly, critics like Andrews Norton or Henry Ware took the view that "any criticism which steered away from historical factuality…amounted…to a denial of the supernatural authority of biblical revelation and the historical personage of Jesus himself" while the studies by Michaelis or Eichhorn undermined the principles of Harvard's evidentialists. According to Hurth, the dissemination of these studies in New England by students returning from Göttingen like William "fed right into Ralph Waldo's long-standing uncertainty about his profession and calling."[300]

One of the earliest manifestations testifying to Emerson's familiarity with German criticism is a series of lectures on the Gospels which he began in 1831 and which led up to his well known "The Lord's Supper" sermon (1832) and, most famously, to the "Divinity School Address" he gave on July 15, 1838 to the senior divinity class at Harvard. Throughout the six Gospel lectures, Emerson uses German higher criticism as the source that provides powerful evidence that the Bible cannot be regarded as a divinely inspired document.[301] He speculates on questions such as the authorship of the Gospels and discusses Eichhorn's theory which suggests that the evangelists copied from a common source. He also engages with Eichhorn's questioning of Moses' authorship of the Pentateuch and of Paul's composition of the Timothy epistles.[302] Moreover, he uses studies like Herbert Marsh's "Dissertation on the Origin and Composition of the First Three Gospels" (1802) that offer summaries of Eichhorn's and Herder's position on questions about the gospel's origin, and he refers to Connop Thirlwall's 150-page introduction to his translation of Schleiermacher's *A Critical Essay on the Gospel of St. Luke* (1825).[303]

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[300] Elisabeth Hurth, "William and Ralph Waldo Emerson and the Problem of the Lord's Supper," 191-192.

[301] "The term 'Higher Criticism' was first applied to Eichhorn with regard to his *Introduction of the Old Testament*. Higher Criticism builds on the foundation of lower or textual criticism, which seeks the recovery of extant manuscripts as they left their authors' hands. Higher Criticism seeks to determine authorship, date, meaning, and intention" (Karen Kalinevitch, "Turning from the Orthodox: Emerson's Gospel Lectures," *Studies in the American Renaissance* [1986], 70). On Emerson's gospel lecture series, see also Richardson, *Emerson. The Mind on Fire*: "These [the lectures on the gospels] are detailed, scholarly, critical performances, summarizing the most recent biblical research. They are utterly unlike the personal statements of the sermons. In these lectures Emerson undertook to show what is known of each of the Evangelists, to provide a history of the transmission of the Bible, and to review the various theories about the origin of the three synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) and their relation to one another" (111).

[302] Kalinevitch, "Emerson's Gospel Lectures," 70-71.

These multiple references make evident that Emerson was well informed about the latest scholarship from a variety of sources. His brother was a main resource, but he also attended lectures by Harvard faculty who had returned from their studies at German universities;[304] moreover, English translations of key German works provided portals to what had become the object of theological debates on the other side of the Atlantic. Besides Thirlwall's introduction, Frederic Henry Hedge's edition of *Prose Writers of Germany*, containing Ripley's translation of the fourth speech of *Über die Religion*, was crucial for Emerson's encounter with Schleiermacher. Hedge urged him to study Schleiermacher, and there are resonances in the "Divinity School Address" of Schleiermacher's contention that religious feelings need to be communicated.[305] Emerson also became familiar with him directly through Ripley; as I noted in chapter 3, Ripley composed three book-length letters in response to Andrews Norton's public attacks on his students' subversive position regarding the status of Jesus' performance of deeds and wonders. In fact, Ripley also wrote them in defense of Emerson who was viciously attacked by Norton in a Boston newspaper after he had given his address at the Divinity School.[306] In short, Ripley's debate with Norton "defined for the public the division between the Harvard-Unitarian establishment and the young Transcendentalists" who were almost all Harvard graduates.[307]

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[303] For a more detailed overview of the biblical research that Emerson uses in each gospel lecture, see Richardson, *Emerson. The Mind on Fire*, 111-113; and Schleiermacher, *A Critical Essay on the Gospel of St. Luke*, with an introduction by the translator Connop Thirlwall (London: John Taylor, 1825). Herbert Marsh's "Dissertation on the Origin and Composition of the First Three Gospels" (1802) is part of his English edition of J.D. Michaelis's *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*.

[304] "Emerson listened firsthand to the reports of Harvard's first Göttingen students who had seen how the 'religion of their Fathers' was dissolving in the crucible of historico-critical scrutiny. In 1821 Emerson attended several of George Ticknor's lectures at Harvard; he also fell under the spell of Edward Everett's and George Bancroft's reports, all of which gave him a growing sense of the exegetical and theological context in which the higher criticism was practiced," Hurth, "William and Ralph Waldo Emerson and the Problem of the Lord's Supper," 196.

[305] Richardson, *Emerson. The Mind on Fire*, 197. Richardson draws attention to the relationship between Emerson's "Divinity School Address" and Schleiermacher's *Über die Religion*. Like Schleiermacher, he argues that "religion is not served by…conventional preaching but only by living discourse.…For Schleiermacher, as for Emerson now, the religious impulse in human nature demands not only expression but communication with others. Great truths demand great utterance" (290).

This brief overview suffices to convey an impression of the number and complexity of the threads of German criticism running through Emerson's religious writings. His sermons show "a gradual advancement toward historico-critical methods," and he would call his decision to resign from the ministry a "German" one.[308] He recognizes the power of scholarly insights as instruments to undercut contentions regarding the authority of divine revelation and evidence for the genuineness of the books of the Bible. The question now is how these insights manifest themselves in his writing.

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[306] "On August 27, about five weeks after the [Divinity School address], Andrews Norton published a violent attack on Emerson in a Boston newspaper. Norton accused 'the new school in Literature and Religion' of a 'restless craving for notoriety and excitement' and sneered that its origins could be attributed 'to ill-understood notions obtained by blundering through the crabbed and disgusting obscurity of some of the worst German speculatists.' He attacked Cousin, 'that hyper-Germanized Englishman, Carlyle,' and 'the German pantheist Schleiermacher.'" Ripley begun to publish the series of pamphlets (see chapter three) in 1839 not only to defend himself against those attacks Norton had directed at him and his enthusiastic reception of Spinoza and Schleiermacher, but he also composed his pamphlets in support of the hostilities Emerson received from Norton in response to the Divinity address: "Never gathered together or properly published as a unit, [Ripley's letters] remain the unacknowledged high point of the influence of Schleiermacher in American thought in the nineteenth century and a declaration, for those who could see it, that Emersonian transcendentalism was not an aberration, as Norton claimed, but proceeded in one of the main currents of modern thought(" Richardson, *Emerson. The Mind on Fire*, 298, 325).

[307] Kenneth S. Sacks, *Understanding Emerson: "The American Scholar" and his Struggle for Self-Reliance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 80-81.

[308] Hurth, "William and Ralph Waldo Emerson and the Problem of the Lord's Supper," 196. Emerson wrote in a letter to Mary Moody Emerson on August 19, 1832 that he was determined to leave the ministry: "…I can only do my work well by abjuring the opinions [and] customs of all others [and] adhering strictly to the divine plan a few dim inches of whose outline I faintly discern in my breast. Is that not German en[ough]?" Cited in Hurth, *Between Faith and Unbelief*, 29.

"The Lord's Supper" sermon is a good starting point because it clearly exhibits how his familiarity with theological research permeates his way of relating to and employing rituals of the past. Comparing the accounts Matthew and John provide of the last supper, Emerson concludes that "neither of them drops the slightest intimation of any intention on the part of Jesus to set up anything permanent" that would have to be followed by subsequent generations (*W*, vol. XI, 5). He examines the mode of communication Jesus employed and finds that he spoke to his disciples like "a friend to his friends" (*W*, vol. XI, 7). Emerson concludes from the personal and informal tone of their communication that Jesus sought to install the shared feast as a symbolic act of commemoration for *this* particular group of friends and not for all following ages: "I can readily imagine that he was willing and desirous, when his disciples met, his memory should hallow their intercourse; but I cannot bring myself to believe that in the use of such an expression he looked beyond the living generation…and meant to impose a memorial feast upon the whole world" (*W*, vol. XI, 7). It therefore seems untimely and inappropriate, in Emerson's eyes, to stick to forms and symbols dogmatically that were intended for a clearly defined occasion and audience.

It is important to note, however, that for Emerson such a historical perspective on Jesus' activities does not imply a rejection of using forms for the purpose of commemoration per se: "I am not so foolish as to declaim against forms. Forms are as essential as bodies; but to exalt particular forms, to adhere to one form after it is outgrown, is unreasonable, and it is alien to the spirit of Christ" (*W*, vol. XI, 20). But he did urge that we change our relationship to them.[309] Instead of stiffly imitating his models, we ought to actively imitate his mode of interaction. Jesus, Emerson writes, "is the mediator in that only sense in which possibly any being can mediate between God and man, that is, an instructor of man…. [B]ut the thanks he offers…are not compliments, commemorations, but the use of that instruction" (*W*, vol. XI, 18). What we can learn from Jesus, in other words, is to relate to him in the same way he would to his disciples, that is "after the free way of friendship." But what does such a personal, friendly encounter with the accounts we have of him really look like? What does a mode of communication founded on a reciprocal model of friendship imply for the practice of commemoration? Emerson specifies:

> I will love him as a glorified friend…and not pay him a stiff sign of respect, as men do whom they fear. A passage read from his discourse, a moving provocation to works like his, any act or meeting which tends to awaken a pure thought, a flow of love, an original design of virtue, I call a worthy, a true commemoration. (*W*, vol. XI, 20)

Meeting Jesus as a friend means engaging with a selected passage from the documents we have recording his life and deeds. The outcome of our engagement with a feely chosen aspect of "his discourse" that caught our attention is as unpredictable as the outcome of a conversation we would have with a friend. And that is good, because in order to qualify as a true act of commemoration, the process of "meeting" Jesus in the act of reading or conversing about him has to entail an element of surprise. Thoughts that have the potential to form into "an original design" can only thrive if we free ourselves from dogmatism and read with an open mind.

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[309] Richard A. Grusin argues in *Transcendentalist Hermeneutics: Institutional Authority and the Higher Criticism of the Bible* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991) that the reformulation of symbolic acts of commemoration and the transformation of the institutional settings within which they are practiced lies at the heart of Emerson's religious reform ideal. The key to renewal for Emerson, Grusin claims, lies not in escaping institutions but in reinventing them effectively.

Similar principles apply to preaching: Emerson announces in the "Divinity School Address" that it needs to be kept in a "style of friendship" as well. According to him, an "appropriated and formal" mode of address is doomed to fail because "truly speaking, it is not instruction, but provocation, that I can receive from another soul. What he announces, I must find true in me, or wholly reject" (*CW*, vol. VII, 80-82). Any form of top-down instruction, in other words, cannot work; the preacher has to find a way to address his congregation at eye level and, instead of telling them what to think, to animate and provoke them to find out what is true for themselves. In "The Preacher," he warns his colleagues that if "there is any difference felt between the foot-board of the pulpit and the floor of the parlor, you have not yet said that which you should say" (*W*, vol. X, 233).

Given that truth is not ready-made, not tied to a single creed or a specific person but evolves out of non-hierarchically structured communicative processes, it is important to create environments where such exchanges can flourish: "If utterance is denied, the thought lies like a burden on the man. Always the seer is a sayer" (*CW*, vol. I, 84.); humans need outlets such as canvasses, stones, music, or words to express their perceptions.[310] Richardson has noted the parallels here between Emerson's emphasis on the communicative element for the revival of a vital spiritual life, Schleiermacher's fourth speech in *Über die Religion*, and Riply's way of modeling his representation of an ideal religious community thereon in the first letter to Norton.[311]

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[310] See the following passage from the "Divinity School Address": "It is very certain that it is the effect of conversation with the beauty of the soul, to beget a desire and need to impart to others the same knowledge and love. If utterance is denied, the thought lies like a burden on the man. Always the seer is a sayer. Somehow his dream is told: somehow he publishes it with solemn joy: sometimes with pencil on

It is easy to make out a number of parallels between the presence of Schleiermacher or Herder in Transcendentalist discourses in general and in Emerson in particular. His way of premising active modes of commemoration on non-hierarchical communication and undogmatic practices of reading and spiritual expression resonate with what Ripley, Marsh and Bancroft highlight in their translations and reviews. Emerson's fellow Transcendentalists' translations and discussions of Herder's *Der Redner Gottes*, of the *Briefe, das Studium der Theologie betreffend* or of the introduction to *Vom Geist der Ebräischen Poesie* all suggest that the reading and reworking of ancient documents and conversations about them will turn out to be most productive when the discussion is kept within a discursive structure of friendship. In translating freely from Herder, Ripley examines how such a dehierarchized model of communication restructures the relations between preacher and congregation.[312]

Like his colleagues, Emerson is deeply concerned with filling the vacuum scholarship tore into religious life. And in similar ways, he explores unconventional modes of communication, reading and expressing religious feelings to compensate for

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canvas; sometimes with chisel on stone; sometimes in towers and aisles of granite…sometimes in anthems of indefinite music; but clearest and most permanent in words" (*CW*, vol. I, 84).

[311] On the relation between Schleiermacher's *Reden* and Emerson's emphasis on the communicative element of religious expression, see Richardson, *Emerson*, 290.

[312] According to Ripley's Herder interpretation, the new model preacher may both inscribe his signature on the sermons while making their unfolding contingent upon the audience's contributions. He does not instruct in the sense that he would impose but his teaching aims at what is perhaps best described as giving the audience inspiration and animating them to seek for truth in themselves. See Chapter three.

the spiritual gap which had motivated many already to turn their backs on the ministry. Jesus emerges thereby as a model for Emerson's reconstructive efforts. In the concluding part of "The Lord's Supper," he turns to Paul and introduces him like Jesus as a prototype we can learn from:

> Although I have gone back to weigh the expressions of Paul, I feel that here is the true point of view. In the midst of considerations as to what Paul thought, and why he so thought, I cannot help feeling that it is time misspent to argue to or from his convictions…. I seem to lose the substance in seeking the shadow. That for which Paul lived and died so gloriously; that for which Jesus gave himself to be crucified…was to redeem us from a formal religion, and teach us to seek our well-being in the formation of the soul. (*W*, vol. XI, 22)

Given his familiarity with key works by German scholars and their circulation and discussion in New England, it is safe to assume that Emerson was familiar with the contested scholarly debates regarding the authenticity of Paul's letters. An answer to these authorship questions, however, is of no interest to him; what makes these writings powerful regardless of their authorship is how the writer relates to religious forms and conventions and puts them into the service of the soul's formation. Emerson shares this interest in what Paul's religious understanding can do for the individual with Schleiermacher. As I demonstrated in "Transcendentalism's Critical Instruments," in his discussion of Lücke's account of Schleiermacher's Paul interpretation Ripley emphasizes that the authenticity of the epistles to Timothy are not a primary concern. Rather, Ripley's translation focuses on how Paul's breaking away from formal religion becomes an occasion for Schleiermacher to disregard all critical conventions and turn the letter to Timothy into a creative site for narrating his own scholarly biography and development.[313]

Emerson's interest in Paul, however, goes beyond introducing him as a model for the human freedom of making traditions; crucially, he also comes to stand in as a representative for Emerson's core concern: as Branka Arsić shows, Paul figures as an example for the necessity of breaking with ingrained habits. His ways of treating traditions occupies a crucial representative function for this key Emersonian interest that runs like a red thread through all his writings: "Paul's idea of leaving ritual in order to reach something more religious is translated by Emerson into the necessity of leaving our habits in order to set ourselves on the path of self-perfecting. The Pauline gesture of leaving thus becomes crucial for Emerson's ethics, as it conditions what in the sermon he calls the process of 'self-improvement.'"[314] The text Arsić refers to here is Sermon 144, which Emerson gave for the first time in 1832, the same year as "The Lord's Supper." He provides in it a commentary on Hebrews 6:1, "which sees perfection as an effect of leaving."[315]

In her reading of Emerson's commentary on Paul, Arsić makes an important observation regarding the characteristics the act of departing has in Emerson: what matters to him is not so much what specifically one's breaking with particular forms of life develops into, but rather the very act of liberating oneself from a particular habit. This is what ignites a moment of freedom. The newly found independence might develop into something better, or worse, or show no improvement at all. The value lies in the effort made and not in the outcome. To those familiar with Emerson's concept of self-reliance, this observation has a recognizable ring; Arsić's point is to show that this kind of thinking existed already in rudimentary form early on.[316]

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[313] See chapter three.

[314] Branka Arsić, *On Leaving. A Reading in Emerson* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 27.

[315] Arsić, *On Leaving*, 27. Arsić cites the text of Hebrews 6:1-2 from the KJV: "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, 2 Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment." See *The Complete Sermons of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, vol. 4, ed. Wesley T. Mott (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1992), 71-76.

The examples of Paul and Jesus show clearly that it is necessary to go beyond general observations regarding the relationship between theological scholarship and Emerson's religious understanding. In conversation with other contemporary texts and discussions, he introduces the path toward a recovery of religious institutions and experiences as one that is tied to reforms in reading, conversing, and expressing oneself: ministers, or any person in a position of authority, need to make sure they address their audience in a way that provokes and inspires rather than simply instructs. In the realm of reading and expression in writing and other artistic media he also propagates the practice of a selective, non-conclusive, and undogmatic relationship to religious sources and traditions. Such openness keeps spiritual life fresh and moving; old forms and traditions transform into new ones, and the individual develops thereby his higher consciousness by both leaving behind what he experiences as outgrown symbols and customs and by embracing new ones. Retrospectively, Emerson's enormous influence seems obvious, and we tend to see every aspect of the Transcendentalist movement through his eyes. A deeper probing into the circumstances in which Emerson became Emerson, however, show how closely some of the most radical aspects of his thinking are embedded within a large network of cross-cultural intellectual history.

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[316] "The self possesses the counterpower to refresh life by breaking with habit, thus putting itself in tension with itself in a different way. Similar to Paul's injunction to perfect Christianity by annulling the very essence of Christian doctrine, Emerson proposed that we set ourselves on the path of bettering the self by annulling its very identity. For if stepping over the threshold of the self is performed by our own thinking, it is through thinking that the self will hollow itself out, as if cancelling out its 'I' in order for a new self to be formed. 'Self-Reliance' is an elaborate version of this idea, and so represents a crucial formulation of Emerson's theory of self-culture. The gesture from departing from oneself is there famously called aversion….The paradox of self-reliance, then, and the radicalism of its demand, is that it calls the self to rely on what within it is not it. Because the self doesn't know what it relies on, the call may turn out to be no better than whim, and the new self perhaps worse than the one left behind. That is the self's existential wager….However, the possibility of a negative outcome cannot form a basis for discrediting aversive self-crafting. Even if it happens that the new doesn't substantially improve the old, the sheer power necessary to enact the exit from the habitual, the breeze of the unknown, the beauty of the risk that fills us with life makes it worth the effort" (Arsić, *On Leaving*, 31, 34).

Loving, Forming, Abandoning: The Duties of American Scholars and Emerson as a Lecturer

The foregoing examinations have shown a specific facet of Emerson's versatile thinking that comes into view when we examine it through the lens of his philosophy of history and his engagement with contemporary scholarship: regardless of whether he concentrates on poets or researchers, what he is most interested in is how individuals have tapped cultural and literary resources of different origin productively and put them into the service of humanist practices. The historical perspective is conducive to regarding texts and artworks as manifestations of how humans have taken possession of the world and cultivated particular habits and traditions – be they religious or secular – in certain moments at different times and places. And Emerson is interested in works and life stories of people whose way of living, thinking, and writing respond to the changing nature of norms and traditions by treating them accordingly, that is by cultivating a dynamic relationship to artistic standards or religious beliefs. In his eyes, representative figures are those who relate to traditions in a non-authoritative fashion and who make active use of, alter and appropriate confidently what they find without seeking to exercise full control.

I have demonstrated that he shares this liberal perspective on scripture and myths and their scholarly and poetic reworkings with other Transcendentalists, but like no one else of his generation Emerson is the one who works these new insights into a fully-fledged modern cultural practice and a new profession, that of freelance lecturer. How he does this is the theme of the following pages. The features of this cultural practice become explicit in Emerson’s introduction of the duties of American scholars, and my argument is that the ways a true scholar ought to think and act is modeled on the characteristics I highlighted in previous discussions of researchers and writers Emerson and his cohort treat as models to learn from.

One central text for this further investigation of Emerson’s techniques is, of course, the Harvard commencement address that now in retrospect figures as Emerson’s most famous: “The American Scholar” (1837). It is important to note up front that he often uses “poet” as an interchangeable term for “scholar” in his texts, and that this is not because he assumes that in every human lies dormant the potential to become a Shakespeare or Goethe; rather, he associates with both denominations a certain attitude to life and a set of capacities. This is not to say that he doesn’t also employ “poet” in its more conventional meaning but that the distinctions between the poet who writes fiction, publishes, and gets publicly recognized for what he does and the poet who qualifies as one because of how he thinks, lives, and reshapes literary materials in his texts is often blurred.

The same, however, cannot be said about the scholar; when Emerson refers to someone as a true scholar, he never just means a person committed to doing research in an academic sense. In fact, Emerson's scholar does not even require any formal training or tutoring, and even if he has received a formal education and is an active researcher Emerson does not judge him by what he has found out but by how he uses his findings. Like his Transcendentalist colleagues, he evaluates the use of any scholarship by how it may further the individual in his striving for self-crafting and how it may serve the advancement of America's cultural blossoming.

For scholars and poets to be true, they have to be "Man Thinking" (*CW*, vol. I, 53) just like "the scholar of the first age" (*CW*, vol. I, 55). The reason he qualifies as a model is because his ways of processing perceptions and thoughts exhibit strategies that help to countermand the biggest danger awaiting the most distinguished works of literature:

> The sacredness which attaches to the act of creation, the act of thought, is transferred to the record. The poet chanting, was felt to be a divine man: henceforth the chant is divine also. The writer was a just and wise spirit: henceforward it is settled, the book is perfect; as love of the hero corrupts into worship of his statue. Instantly, the book becomes noxious: the guide is a tyrant….Colleges are built on [books]. Books are written on it by thinkers, not by Man Thinking; by men of talent, that is, who start wrong, who set out from accepted dogmas, not from their own sight of principles. (*CW*, vol. I, 56)

Regardless of how much creative energy once went into the composition of a book, the most vibrant texts turn into dogmatic “tyrant[s]” if their readers consume them as “thinkers” instead of “Man Thinking.” “The scholar of the first age,” by contrast, demonstrates how to counteract this process of fossilization by imparting to his sources a “new arrangement of his own mind,” and he can thereby transform any “dead fact” into “quick thought” (*CW*, vol. I, 55).[317] We can see here how Emerson turns insights dominating New England scholarly discourse into guiding principles for cultural activities: instead of just suggesting that the philological and historical strategies of a Wolf or a Herder are noteworthy, he severs them from their specific contexts and proclaims that such non-fossilized approaches need to become paradigmatic for American scholars and poets.

The parallels between Emerson’s “Man Thinking” and the characteristics of what he and his colleagues introduce as innovative scholarship become even more obvious when we ask how exactly one ought to acquire the qualities necessary to read and rework texts in ways that make it possible for them to become vehicles of inspiration. How can the occupation with texts become an occasion for setting in motion a flowing stream of thinking? In previous discussions, I worked out the central function that a personal language of love and friendship has for a redefinition of the contemporary use of ancient texts as well as for the restructuring of the communication between spiritual leaders and their congregation. Emerson also suggests that affect plays a major role in reading, composing, and speaking:

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[317] “The scholar of the first age received into him the world around; brooded thereon; gave it the new arrangement of his own mind, and uttered it again. It came into him, life; it went out from him, truth. It came to him, short-lived actions; it went out from him, immortal thoughts. It came to him, business; it went from him, poetry. It was dead fact; now, it is quick thought. It can stand, and it can go. It now endures, it now flies, it now inspires. Precisely in proportion to the depth of mind from which it issued, so high does it soar, so long does it sing” (*CW*, vol. I, 55).

> In poetry, and in common speech, the emotions of benevolence and complacency which are felt towards others, are likened to the material effects of fire; so swift, or much more swift, more active, more cheering are these fine inward irradiations. From the highest degree of passionate love, to the lowest degree of good will, they make the sweetness of life. Our intellectual and active powers increase with our affection. The scholar sits down to write, and all his years of meditation do not furnish him with one good thought or happy expression; but it is necessary to write a letter to a friend, and, forthwith, troops of gentle thoughts invest themselves, on every hand, with chosen words. (*CW*, "Friendship", vol. II, 113)

In this passage from the essay "Friendship," he takes on different perspectives on the issue. First, he speaks from the position of the reader and listener, arguing that we need to be attentive to the emotions certain elements of speech or poetry stir in us. He compares the impact such "inward irradiations" have on the body to the "material effects of fire" and suggests that it is important to nourish such physical sensations because they increase our "intellectual and active powers" and make life sweet and enjoyable. Second, he turns to the scholar, proposing that he is the one to focus that burning spark by forging an individualized perspective on the topic under investigation, a perspective resembling that which one would adopt when writing a letter to a friend. So the bodily sensation we feel when we read or listen helps to set our thinking in motion; emotions are able to detach words from their fossilized state and become active ingredients of our thinking and writing.

In a third step, Emerson approaches this phenomenon from a first person viewpoint: "High thanks, I owe you, excellent lovers, who carry out the world for me to new and noble depths, and enlarge the meaning of all my thoughts. These are new poetry of the first Bard, poetry without stop, hymn, ode, and epic, poetry still flowing, Apollo and the Muses chanting still" (*CW*, vol. II, 115.). He considers his own activity of thinking an outcome of processes structured around emotions of friendship and love that have such a strong and mind-broadening effect on him that they can weaken time and distances. By virtue of the renewal of his own thinking, the distance to the classical past seems to shrink, and his thoughts appear fresh and original like "new poetry of the first Bard." Regardless of the angle Emerson chooses, what is important is that emotions play a major role in preventing stagnation in the ways we approach a text and speak or write about it.

Emerson turns the poetic-philological elements other Transcendentalists highlight in German scholarship (as discussed in chapter 3) into a cultural practice. To be of any use to himself and others, his scholar's or poet's occupation with texts of different kinds needs to bear his signature just like a personal letter would. Driven by the desire to get the most out of any subject that has caught his attention, he draws on his imagination which sets words "in a dance" just like a flute. His thinking enlarges like a magnifying glass and "thus begins that deification which all nations have made of their heroes in every kind, saints, poets, lawgivers, and warriors" (*W*, "Poetry and Imagination", vol. VIII, 19). The affective approach, in other words, is necessary to turn any subject or object into an exclusive and deified one:

> If your subject do not appear to you the flower of the world at this moment, you have not rightly chosen it. No matter what it is, grand or gray, national or private, if it has a national prominence to you, work away until you come to the

> heart of it: then it will, though it were a sparrow or a spider-web, as fully represent the central law…as if it were the book of Genesis or the book of Doom. (*W*, “Poetry and Imagination”, vol. VIII, 33)

The key lies in selecting the subject of one’s attention and scrutiny in such a way that it appears to be the only true one at that moment. I gestured at this component of Emerson’s thinking earlier when I examined his understanding of the nature and use of history. He makes a similar point in “History” when he argues that our chance to create modern equivalents to ancient poetry lies in “bend[ing] the shows of things to the desires of the mind” (*CW*, vol. II, 19). It is quite easy to misunderstand such exclamations as an attempt to win absolute control over things, but this is not Emerson’s objective.[318] On the contrary, he is quite precise in how exactly he imagines appropriation operations and makes clear that the exclusive status the subject of one’s choosing inhabits should never suggest closure and complete mastery:

> Barthold Niebuhr said well, “There is little merit in inventing a happy idea, or attractive situation, so long as it is only the author's voice which we hear. As a being whom we have called into life by magic arts, as soon as it has received existence acts independently of the master's impulse, so the poet creates his persons, and then watches and relates what they do and say. (*W*, “Poetry and Imagination”, vol. VIII, 43)

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[318] Albeit in a different context, Sean Ross Meehan makes a similar point in “Emerson’s Photographic Thinking,” *Arizona Quarterly* 62, no. 2 (2006), 27-58: Emerson suggests that the production of art is a process that is never fixed but always flowing, but according to Meehan’s interpretation this does rule out the possibility of truthful representation. Emerson engages “an understanding of all art as contingently and partially representative” (35); such a vision “seems at odds with the conventional, metaphorical view that we have tended to associate with Emerson’s notion of the representative. But Emerson’s vision runs against the grain of a metaphorical vision of wholeness and closure, of the ‘representative’ as a fixed and singular exemplar, to the extent that it is itself about, and informed by, the recognition of ‘vision’ as thoroughly suggestive, partial, fundsamentally metonymic” (40-41). Meehan’s argument is of interest for my own research regarding the nature and function of appropriation for Emerson’s cultural practice. His findings corroborate the argument that Emerson views the subject’s partial way of singling out representative aspects of a certain text as true and authentic without suggesting closure.

Drawing on the historian Niebuhr, Emerson argues that whatever it is we embrace and express in writing, speech, or any other form, we have to grant our productions a life of their own. In a way the "author's voice" has to disappear behind his own creations and become a witness to their independent actions. As in a dream, our inventions have to "speak after their own characters, not ours" so that we find ourselves "listen[ing] with surprise to what they say" (*W*, "Poetry and Imagination", vol. VIII, 45). Ancient myths where "clouds clapped their hands, the hills skipped, the sky spoke" (*W*, "Poetry and Imagination", vol. VIII, 53) inhabit a model function in this regard, because their personifications demonstrate straightforwardly and vividly what it means to read literature that has a life of its own. Today, by contrast, we have to achieve such effects by means of composition and style.

Emerson's portrayal of the tasks of the modern American scholar and poet as "Man Thinking" whose writing and speaking he imagines as equally inspiring and thought-provoking received its impulse from the current historical discourse. The scholar ought to produce works that leave himself and his audience under the impression that they are discovering "the flower of the world" (*W*, "Poetry and Imagination", vol. VIII, 33) through his words. At the same time, however, these same words cannot leave those paying attention to them under the impression that their meaning is confined to the topic under discussion, but rather that they have significance and meaning in regions that lie beyond what is uttered momentarily and beyond the author's reach. This aspect, I argue, does not only comprise a core component of what

Emerson defines as crucial for "Man Thinking" but also lies at the heart of his own lecturing activities.

Although we know Emerson best today for his essays and epigrammatic sentences, it is worthwhile to remember that nearly all his texts were first composed to be given as public lectures. This is not to say that the "style of his performance" and the "style of his writing" need to be strictly differentiated from one another, but, as critics have noted, it certainly helps our understanding of Emerson's prose to bear in mind that he read for and composed almost all pieces with an eye toward their public performance.[319] My objective here is to show that the lecture platform provided him with an ideal setting to explore what it means to communicate aloud the insights he works out in his writings. The institution of the lyceum gave him the opportunity to test with a broad audience how to employ one's emotions and imagination so as to cast a new light on the most common subjects and turn them into sanctified ones only to abandon them in the next moment.

Emerson was first offered the opportunity to speak at the lyceum – "a loose federation of hundreds of local organizations that sponsored regular series of public lectures by traveling speakers" – after his resignation from the ministry and upon his return from Europe.[320] The lyceum movement was first initiated by the Boston Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge in the late 1820s and spread fast throughout New England and across America. The idea was that members of the different local organizations would share their specialized knowledge in engineering, farming, education or any other field with fellow members and contribute thereby to the public's general intellectual and moral advancement. Toward the middle of the century, the lyceum's focus on mutual civic education began to shift more and more toward commercialized entertainment, and the individual branches sustained themselves primarily by inviting prominent speakers to give lectures.[321]

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[319] Jackson R. Wilson, "Emerson as Lecturer: Man Thinking, Man Saying," in *The Cambridge Companion to Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. Joel Porte and Saundra Morris (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 89.

[320] Wilson, "Emerson as Lecturer," 77.

The speakers were expected to broaden the public's horizon by addressing topics of general interest from a non-specialized vantage point, and they were asked to refrain from using the platform for discussions of controversial topics such as slavery or religious conflicts. As Jackson R. Wilson and Johannes Voelz point out, however, lecturers like Emerson would employ rhetorical tricks that challenged the decorum of the lecture hall and its regulation to not involve the audience in potentially disputatious issues. Wilson assesses Emerson's skill in finding just the right balance between "surprising originalities and the conventions of uplift…between the decorous and the 'savage'"; he demonstrates how his lectures would move "deftly from safe and predictable ground to language that was meant to jolt and even threaten."[322] Similarly Voelz examines how Emerson worked with the tension between instruction and entertainment typical for the public lecture at that time and distanced himself thereby from commonly held norms.[323] Voelz explores the rhetorical means he employed to "redefine[…] essential moral concepts…transforming them from precepts to be followed in conduct into experiences to be had by the individual listener in the act of giving oneself over to the lecturer."[324]

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[321] See Voelz, *Emerson's Challenge*, 62-75; Gregory Clark and S. Michael Halloran (eds.), "Introduction: Transformations of Public Discourse in Nineteenth-Century America," in *Oratorical Culture in Nineteenth-Century America* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1993), 8-9.

[322] Wilson, "Emerson as Lecturer," 91-92. See also Halloran, "Introduction: Transformations of Public Discourse in Nineteenth-Century America"; he argues that among the lyceum speakers, Emerson was the one who broke with conventions most radically and "authorized his fellow citizens…to redefine themselves and their world in autonomous terms" (11-12).

This turn away from commonly accepted norms toward individual experience by lecturers like Emerson has to be understood against the backdrop of the transformation America's oratorical culture was undergoing in the mid nineteenth-century. At the beginning of the century, public discourse was strongly neoclassical, in the sense "that moral authority in a community is located in the public consensus of its members rather than their individual private convictions." For complex reasons such as the transformation of professions, the increasing specialization of knowledge, and the popularization of Locke's and Descartes philosophies, the collective ethos eroded and gave way to individualism.[325]

The lyceum was a forum in which the changes America's oratorical culture was undergoing became manifest in the ways lecturers like Emerson would speak. The institution provided suitable conditions for him to reinvent himself professionally and find a new platform to address the public he had lost with his resignation from the ministry. As Wilson notes, to make a living by traveling across the country and giving up to seventy lectures a year did not only mean a radical career change but also implied his leaving behind "a conception of what it meant to be a man of letters" and reinventing his prose style.[326]

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[323] For further references to "detailed accounts of the lyceum and the public lecture in the nineteenth-century United States," and on the "tension between the goals of instruction and entertainment that accompanied the lyceum throughout its entire history," see Voelz, *Emerson's Challenge*, 69-70.
[324] Voelz, *Emerson's Challenge*, 72.
[325] Compare Halloran, "Introduction: Transformations of Public Discourse in Nineteenth-Century America," 1-26.

As already mentioned, both Voelz and Wilson suggest that Emerson faced the challenge by employing a rhetorical style that both met the audience on familiar ground, reassuring them of the truth of common assumptions on virtually any topic, while also questioning and unsettling these same assumptions in the next moment. Reviewing newspaper reports that discuss the effect an Emerson lecture had on its listeners, Voelz concludes that it was this kind of style that assured his success in the lecture hall. The experiences many journalists report are reminiscent of Grimm's description of his experience upon first reading Emerson: inspired and uplifted yet unable to summarize what he just read. The journalists also write about the exhilarating effect of uplift an Emerson lecture would have on its listeners, and like Grimm they express their inability to associate the effects with concrete subjects discussed in the lecture.[327]

According to Voelz, the explanation for this feeling of being left with "an aesthetic excess," "a surplus of oratory" that cannot be resolved, lies in a "rhetorical trick" Emerson employed: he would suggest "connections between things entirely disparate, without spelling them out," and thereby activate, inspire and broaden his listeners' minds.[328] He worked with a technique Voelz terms "fractured idealism"; this means that "in one moment he suggested to his audience that they were on the brink of actualizing their universal potential, in the next moment this potential was declared unreachable, and in the moment following the actual turned out to have been identical with the ideal all along."[329]

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[326] Wilson, "Emerson as Lecturer," 80.

[327] For an overview of contemporary journalistic reports on Emerson's lectures, see Voelz, *Emerson's Challenge*, 67-69.

[328] Voelz*, Emerson's Challenge*, 67-69, 74.

The characteristics of Emerson's rhetoric that critics like Voelz and Wilson bring into view help to substantiate the claim that the lyceum provided Emerson with a fitting venue to translate insights he works out through his occupation with contemporary criticism into a lecturing style. Speech that oscillates between reassuring and eroding its listeners' expectations performs what Emerson discusses throughout as a fundamental prerequisite to the mind's revitalization and renewal. I pointed out earlier his stress on the human making of every aspect of human cultural history, including scripture, and that his emphasis on appropriating the past through modes of creative reading and writing follows naturally from this standpoint. In the essay "Circles," he develops a similar claim by drawing an interesting analogy between history and speech.

History, he writes, progresses in alternate rhythms of de- and re-composition where "new races fed out of the decomposition of the foregoing":

> There is not a piece of science, but its flank may be turned tomorrow; there is not any literary reputation, not the so-called eternal names of fame, that may not be revised and condemned….The things which are dear to men at this hour, are so on account of the ideas which have emerged on their mental horizon….A new degree of culture would instantly revolutionize the entire system of human pursuits. (*CW*, "Circles", vol. II, 183)

As in the representations of history I discussed previously, "Circles" pronounces the dependence of certain literary standards and value judgments on the opinions humans hold at certain times, and Emerson turns this insight into a springboard for the promotion of a liberally-minded and innovative engagement with even “so-called eternal names of fame.” What is interesting now is that he employs this notion of history, proving that even the most powerful precepts can be overturned as a model for how to lead a conversation that helps us “to recover our rights, to become men”:

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[329] Voelz*, Emerson's Challenge*, 74.

> Conversation is a game of circles….When each new speaker strikes a new light, emancipates us from the oppression of the last speaker, to oppress us with the greatness and exclusiveness of his own thought, then yields us to another redeemer, we seem to recover our rights, to become men. (*CW*, “Circles”, vol. II, 184)

Conversations that have a truly expansive effect on the mind are those whose members inspire each other by taking turns in articulating compelling perspectives on a topic that seem to cancel each other out. So what they do in an alternate fashion is articulate statements that appear like “flower[s] of the world” (*W*, “Poetry and Imagination”, vol. VIII, 33) at the moment of their pronouncement to the speaker and his audience, while also then challenging the subsequent speaker to free everyone from the grip of the foregoing vision by weakening it with his own equally powerful one. When Emerson addressed his lyceum audience, he would fashion his speech in exactly this way; he would translate key insights regarding the human making of meaning over the course of history into a rhetorical practice by constructing his speech as a series of oppressing and redeeming statements.

According to Emerson, such a way of addressing and interacting with the audience authorizes the true orator. Not rank or degree but the ability to express the truth that others may feel but cannot verbalize legitimizes his superior status:

> This is the dominion of the orator over his countrymen, that he speaks that which they recognize as part of them but which they were not ready to say….Whoever separates for us a truth from our unconscious reason, and makes it an object of consciousness, draws that is to say a fact out of our life and makes it an opinion, must of course be to us a great man. (*EL*, vol. II, "Philosophy of History," 57)

Very similar to what his Transcendentalist colleagues would highlight in their translations in which Schleiermacher and Herder develop the characteristics of their practices of preaching and lecturing (compare chapter three, part two), Emerson also warns against the danger of the speaker's over-identification with his position and his turning it thereby into a tyrannical and oppressive one: "When a mind of powerful method has instructed men, we find the examples of oppression…. It is the delight of vulgar talent to dazzle and to blind the beholder. But true genius seeks to defend us from itself" (*CW*, *Representative Men*, vol. IV, 11). Emerson protected his audience from his own speech by consciously drawing attention to his lack of control over language, thereby leaving no one in doubt that "no man…is reason or illumination or the essence of what we are looking for; but is an exhibition, in some quarter, of new possibilities" (*CW*, *Representative Men*, vol. IV, 19). Speech needs to remain open and a true orator knows that he has to give up control and "consciously…make[…] himself the mere tongue of the occasion and the hour….Hence the French phrase *l'abandon*, to describe the self-surrender of the orator" (*EL*, vol. II, "Philosophy of History," 49).

Conclusion

The chapter opened with an investigation of Emerson's intensive intellectual engagement with scholarly findings and arguments that reached him through translations, reviews, and firsthand accounts by colleagues who had returned from their studies in Europe. I proposed that his involvement with this contemporary discourse would help to better understand why and how he develops the idiosyncrasies of his style of thinking which has been the focus of Emerson criticism. And a closer examination of the relationship between his critical engagements and the activities and skills he associates with the figure of the scholar, the poet, and with his own lecturing showed the vital impact historical scholarship had on his work. It demonstrated how important it is to go beyond the level of source studies and general observations, suggesting that the reception of crucial aspects of German historical research helped authorize Emerson's trust in the independent power of the subject.

The broader transnational context of classical and biblical research forges a nuanced perspective on a key concern that runs like a red thread through Emerson's writings and public speaking: his objective to combine the abandonment of historically anachronistic rituals, dogmas, and aesthetic standards with the impetus of making regenerative forms of appropriation the main goal of any occupation with the past. The close lines of correspondence between his own purposes and those his colleagues work out in their addresses and translations help to isolate and contextualize the emotional, intellectual, and communicative capacities Emerson highlights as crucial for making the encounter with other cultures and their works a productive one. We saw more clearly in what ways he is both tied to and surpasses his contemporaries in working these capacities into widely applicable cultural practices in the fields of reading, writing, and public communication. My examinations thereby provided an idea of how these practices formed his recasting of aesthetic categories and work as a lecturer.

Conclusion

My study has focused on how three writers and their contemporaries from the late eighteenth- to the mid-nineteenth centuries contribute to and expand on reconstructive practices of rendering the ancient past contemporary for the revival of religious life, educational reforms, and cultural renewal. More specifically, I have worked out how Germaine de Staël, Johann Gottfried Herder, and American scholars, most notably Ralph Waldo Emerson, forge new relationships to the Bible and classical culture through their readings, reworkings, and translations of ancient texts as well through their reception of studies by other scholars and their preaching and lecturing. I have demonstrated that for Staël and the Transcendentalists Germany functions as a model in this regard because of the development that religious scholarship and the revival of Greek and Roman culture had taken there.

It is no news that the publication of the first English translation of Staël's *De l'Allemagne* in 1814 in New York sparked a large-scale preoccupation with German culture that resonated in multiple ways in nineteenth-century America. My own focus, however, was not on Staël's role as an intermediary of German idealist philosophical thinking, which has received most of the critical attention. Rather, I took her investigations of the relationship between historical scholarship, philology, and what she introduces as the renewal of Germany's educational institutions, religious life, and culture as an occasion to examine that relationship in the writings of individual authors in Germany and America. Exploring how historico-critical practices shaped the domains of education, religion, and cultural life casts new light on Staël, Herder, and Emerson as well as on the connections between German Romanticism and the early years of American Transcendentalism.

I showed how the erosion of the authority of classical texts by the historical research of scholars such as F.A. Wolf led to a fundamental rethinking of the modern educational functions of classical culture in the works of writers and scholars on both sides of the Atlantic. Drawing on a wealth of rarely examined writings by American classical scholars, on Emerson's engagement with German scholarship, its discussions by Staël and her assessment of how it transformed methods of learning at educational institutions, on Herder's ways of collecting and reworking ancient genres, and on his engagement with Winckelmann, I focused on different characteristics of the transformation of antiquity in light of new historical insights and research techniques. I showed that both European and American writers regard the encounter with the foreign culture and language as most productive if it is not just focused on gaining new historical insights but on supporting individuals in their striving for what American scholars refers to as self-culture and what Herder terms "Selbstschöpfung" or self-creation. I worked out different ways in which they put practices of reading, writing, lecturing, and communicative interaction in the service of facilitating man's self-forming capacities.

The texts I examined each show that while Herder's, George Ripley's, Emerson's or James Marsh's focus on self-culture bestows a new significance on the field of classical learning, their concentration on questions of pedagogy and self-formation decentralizes the field at the same time. For them the value of classical learning lies no longer in didactic and rhetorical purposes but in the cognitive, imaginative, and emotional capacities that the individual exercises through philological, linguistic, and historical activities. It becomes obvious that other languages and literatures can potentially fulfill that same function. At the level of institutional reforms, this insight manifests itself in the opening of schools and universities toward the teaching and research of modern languages and literatures. In America we witness the rise of the liberal arts college model of education. To explore these developments in a transnational context is a larger research project I could only gesture at in this study.

The same holds true for the impact new historical and imaginative strategies of reviving the past had on people's broader understanding regarding questions of cultural and aesthetic value. Besides bringing into view how the authors under discussion concentrate their preoccupation with classical culture on matters of education and self-formation, I also called attention to their interest in fashioning the relationship to antiquity in ways they consider beneficial for the thriving of modern cultural life and scholarship's contribution to it. I noted, for instance, that Staël regards what she perceives as Goethe's natural, unstylized poetry of common people as formed by his imaginative abilities to transport himself back into the most distant ages. Emerson makes similar remarks with regard to Goethe and articulates links between historical scholarship and the rise of an aesthetics of the low and common in "The American Scholar." Staël's and Herder's discussion of Winckelmann is also focused on highlighting the impact his textual strategies of reviving fragmentary objects had on

German cultural life at large. Herder lays emphasis on how Winckelmann's ways of using a language of love and friendship draws attention to scholarly activities as cultural practices that garnered broader public interest. In short, what these writers stress in one or the other way are lines of connection between the popularization of historical criticism, philology, and a pluralization of aesthetic categories. I have found that the question of how the refashioning of the relationship between ancient and modern cultures contributes to aesthetic transformations opens up a research area that needs more attention than I could give to it in this study.

Each chapter has shown that the techniques scholars and writers employ to revive antiquity for educational and cultural purposes are closely related to those used in theological research to rekindle people's religious lives and institutions. I highlighted Herder's announcement at the end of "Denkmal Johann Winkelmanns" that Winckelmann's writings serve as a model for his own works on sacred and secular texts. We saw that his primary concern in *Vom Geist der Ebräischen Poesie* and in the *Briefe, das Studium der Theologie betreffend* is to make sure the Bible remains an attractive resource for people during times in which its superior position was coming under attack. With his commentary and style of writing, he seeks to ease his readers' way into the world of humanity's oldest poetry. I also pointed out, however, that although Herder emphasizes the human origin and poetic qualities of the Bible's writings, he does not simply suggest reimagining them aesthetically within a secular framework of thinking. Rather, *Vom Geist* introduces the Bible's origin as a contemporaneously human *and* divine affair. As I demonstrated, his discussions about the Bible's origin are a vexed issue that does not resolve itself in easy explanations.

Herder's own qualms about regarding the Bible as an extraordinary book among many other equally extraordinary poetic compositions, however, are of no concern for *Vom Geist*'s international readership. Staël and the Transcendentalists are in the first place interested in detailing the nature of his reconstructive techniques, in how exactly he structures spiritual revival around a number of exercises. They emphasize how his way of combining empathy and imagination with scholarly erudition enables him to fashion himself as a "God-Man." Ripley and Marsh focus on his poetic-philological activities, his modes of arranging, commenting, and personalizing the materials assembled in *Vom Geist*. Together with Schleiermacher, Herder emerges in American reviews, addresses, and translations as a modern theologian able to turn the most ancient religious records into powerful instruments for a timely and subject-centered mode of practicing religion.

I have worked out how American scholars investigate the relationship between modern revelation and critical exercises not only through practices of reading and writing but also in the social domain of public oratory. Drawing on multiple American sources that engage primarily Herder and Schleiermacher, I focused on how Transcendentalists develop an understanding of religious revival based on people's reciprocal formation, on interactions in the sphere of social life. I showed how this perspective sparks discussions about a fundamental unsettling and reorganization of church hierarchies. Finally, I turned to Emerson and concentrated on parallels between the themes occupying his colleagues' writings and Emerson's own ways of premising active modes of commemoration on non-hierarchical structures of communication as well as undogmatic practices of engaging with Scriptures and writing about them. I demonstrated that while his explications resonate strongly with his contemporaries' liberal perspective on the Bible and its poetic reworkings, he is the one who like no one else of his generation works the new insights into fully-fledged cultural practices and makes them the foundation of his new profession as a freelance lecturer.

With its focus on how cross-cultural conversations over the modern role of ancient cultures shape practices of learning, preaching, and creative activities, this project has shed new light on writings by leading figures of the Romantic age and their relationships to one another. I have thereby chosen an angle different from those usually employed in the critical literature; most critics have concentrated their investigations on the philosophical or political facet of transnational cultural exchange processes. As I pointed out, particularly Emerson's eclectic style has become a sounding board for examinations concentrated on how his engagement with literatures from around the globe may open up potential spaces of resistance to the ideological hold of the American nation state. By contrast, my own comparative approach to texts from the Transcendentalist period was motivated by questions and themes raised therein; in bringing together Emerson's works and more obscure writings and translations by his contemporaries with well-known texts by Staël, Herder, and Schleiermacher, I found that American scholars' search in them for specific practical advice. In engaging with foreign texts, they examine how exactly the reading or reworking of a religious text may help to rekindle faith, or how fragments from classical works can become springboards for an aesthetic experience. In translating and commenting on the works of others, they ask about the use of activities such as of preaching, lecturing, or writing for the individual's self-development. How can such activities assist the subject in working on itself?

I discovered that by approaching the cultural relationships between Germany and America in the first half of the nineteenth-century from this angle, we find interesting points of connection to some of the best known American cultural and educational developments of the period that call for more detailed examinations. A question my research raises, for instance, concerns the relationship between the adoption and popularization of scholarly techniques on the one hand, and the turn of writers like Emerson or Herman Melville to an aesthetics of common places and objects on the other. Further points of connection that need to be scrutinized are those between the reception of Herder's and Schleiermacher's liberal theology and other neighboring religious reform movements such as the Calvinist tradition of life-long sanctification or the Pietist tradition. In the field of education, it would be important to examine the impact of the pedagogical writings by classical scholars on the transformation that modern language teaching and the humanities underwent at American educational institutions in the second half of the nineteenth-century.

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FA	Herder, Johann Gottfried. *Werke* in zehn Bänden. Edited by Günter Arnold et al. 10 vols. Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1985-2000.
JMN	Emerson, Ralph Waldo. *The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson*. Edited by William H. Gilman et al. 16 vols. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960-1982.
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