All That Is the Case: The Collection, Exhibition, and Practice of *Weltliteratur*

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
BY

Andrew Nance Patten

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Professor Rembert Hueser, Advisor

January 2015

Acknowledgments

This dissertation would not have been possible without the generous support of a number of institutions, fellowship donors, and the lasting encouragement of dedicated family, friends, colleagues, and advisors. To properly express my gratitude for the support I have received would be to exceed the space allotted for acknowledgments. I would like to convey my most sincere appreciation to the following individuals and institutions for their assistance throughout my studies: The Department of German, Scandinavian and Dutch for numerous fellowships and the continued expression of confidence in my research projects and academic development; Hella Mears for the generous Mears Fellowship and the continued commitment to German Studies at the University of Minnesota; Gerhard Weiss for the Gerhard Weiss Summer Fellowship; *Die Freie Universität Berlin* for the supportive exchange opportunity; and finally the University of Minnesota for the Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship and the absolutely integral progress it afforded me during this year-long award. In the course of my studies, these institutions and private contributors have been essential to my progress. I am very pleased to express my gratitude for their generosity with this dissertation.

The personal contributions of my advisors and mentors have been and remain to be central to my research and development as a scholar. Thank you to Rembert Hueser for the many hours of critical input, advice, feedback, and good company throughout the years. Thank you to Leslie Morris, Shaden Tageldin, and Matthias Rothe for excellent academic advising, practical assistance, insightful comments on my work, and the continued support of my career. I would also like to express my gratitude to Ruth-Ellen Joeres for playing such an influential and supportive role in my studies. In their respective times as chair of GSD, both Charlotte Melin and Rick McCormick have provided me with departmental support for which I remain appreciative. Finally, thanks to Cathy Parlin, Melody Pauling, Amanda Haugen, and Jonathon Rusch for countless matters of assistance and for helping me out on a number of Friday afternoons just before closing time.

From my days at UNR, I would like to thank John Carson Pettey, Susanne Kelley, and especially Valerie Weinstein. I would also like to express my appreciation to Ethel Matala de Mazza and Karin Krauthausen at the Humboldt Universität zu Berlin both for the feedback and for the chance to present my dissertation research to the PhD-Net colloquium. Thanks also to the Doktoranden of that group (Wintersemester 2012/2013) for their comments, specifically Yael Almog, Tanvi Solanki, and Nicholas Baer.

For good conversation, proofreading, critical feedback, and discussions that turn into chapters, I am grateful for a number of friends and colleagues. Thanks to Val Pakis, to Nichole Neuman, and to Ryan O'Neill. Special thanks to Kalani Michell, who remains my best academic comrade and critical sparring partner.

Finally, I am most grateful to my loving family, my parents specifically for their unending support of all kinds, and to my wife Wera, of course.

For Wera, natürlich.

Abstract

All That Is the Case: The Collection, Exhibition, and Practice of *Weltliteratur*

From its origins in the early nineteenth century to its resurgence in the last decade (Casanova, Damrosch, Moretti, et al.), the concept of World Literature/*Weltliteratur* has challenged scholars to conceive of global literary space as the entirety of literature, the best of all literary works, or a world market of cultural exchange. While each new theory attempts to advance the perennial concept to fit its respective global era, it has gone overlooked that the concept itself is largely the result of a complex discursive history beginning with scholarship on Goethe and early globalization. This dissertation breaks from previous narratives of *Weltliteratur* as the idea of a sole visionary (Goethe) in order to ask not what *Weltliteratur* is in theory, but how it is realized through an array of approaches toward the organization of literature in a persistently changing discourse of globalization. In three case studies of such practices, this dissertation examine the first anthology of *Weltliteratur*, Johannes Scherr's 1848 *Bildersaal der Weltliteratur*; the National Socialist vision of *Weltliteratur* in the journal *Weltliteratur: Romane, Erzählungen und Gedichte aller Zeiten und Völker* (1935-1939) / *Die Weltliteratur: Berichte, Leseproben und Wertung* (1940-1944); and finally the digital perspective of an alternative *Weltliteratur* archive in the algorithm-driven organization of literature in online book commerce at Amazon.com. This dissertation demonstrates how the practices of literary mediation in these collections create, rather than reflect the notion of the world literary. In doing so, it presents a new approach to *Weltliteratur*, not simply as another manifestation of a nineteenth-century idea, but as practices of literary mediation with real and measurable effects on the way in which texts are translated, circulated, and read.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

Introduction

It is customary for studies of the concept of *Weltliteratur* to begin with Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. The setting of this commencement is most commonly the dinner table at his Weimar home on a January evening in 1827. This is the moment of the famed conversation in which Goethe and Eckermann discussed a Chinese novel and Goethe foretold the coming epoch of world literature.[1] But years of scholarship have also shown that such an origin story is questionable. To regard this moment as the starting point for something called "world literature" is to assign a performative quality to Goethe's comments and to hold that his pronouncements turned literature into "world literature" at the table that night. To dismiss his remarks, on the other hand, is to ignore the articulation of a larger discursive shift in which he was also very much involved. Let us therefore begin with Goethe as custom dictates, but let us depart from the dinner table scene and its resulting binary of outcomes. *Weltliteratur*, in this case, begins not with that January evening, but with the appendix.

Fritz Strich concluded his seminal study *Goethe und die Weltliteratur* (1946) with an appendix of the twenty passages from Goethe's oeuvre in which the term *Weltliteratur* appeared.[2] In its chronological span from January 15, 1827 to April 24, 1831, Strich's collection exhibits Goethe's idea not as a single performative utterance at the dinner

---

[1] Goethe's most widely known (but not first) comments on the matter were recorded by Johann Peter Eckermann on January 31, 1827: "National-Literatur will jetzt nicht viel sagen, die Epoche der Welt-Literatur ist an der Zeit und jeder muß jetzt dazu wirken, diese Epoche zu beschleunigen" (Goethe 19: 207).

[2] In the English translation, *Goethe and World Literature*, Strich's appendix consists of twenty one passages with the addition of the usage "Conversation with Willibald Alexis, 12th August 1829" (Strich 1949: 351).

table, but as a conceptual bricolage assembled over the course of four years from private correspondence, conversations, public speeches, journal entries, reviews, and other writings. Rather than refuting the popular narrative of *Weltliteratur* and its origins, Strich's appendix appears as a metaphor for the function of this contested concept beyond conjecture and theory, demonstrating not what *Weltliteratur* is in itself, but how this vague idea is experienced in practice. As a collection of fragments and excerpts from public and private sources, the appendix suggests a single idea, a conceptual unity. Goethe's *Weltliteratur*, these often contradictory remarks written, uttered, and transcribed over the course of years, appears as one, a collected display of the single parts of a whole idea. If Strich's appendix presents through gathered fragments the unified semblance of a contested idea, it is the same mechanics of representation – a process of collecting, connecting, and exhibiting various textual parts to create a world whole – that drives the many conflicting appearances of world literature as collections of literary texts in the service of an always subjective world idea. In dealing with the theory of *Weltliteratur*, Strich demonstrated its practice. *Weltliteratur* is continually experienced as collections, anthologies, archives, and other assemblages of textual parts stitched together metonymically as a single notion, as an object, and as a world.

World literature has undergone in the last two decades perhaps the single greatest of its many renaissances over the last two centuries. In recent publications, Franco Moretti, David Damrosch, Pascale Casanova, and many others have presented new perspectives on the literature of and in a changing global context and new takes on a concept, or a bundle of concepts, whose origin may be loosely located in central,

primarily German-speaking Europe around 1800. This recent wave of scholarship, it might be summarized, sets out not necessarily to settle once and for all the matter of world literature (although such arguments too can be found in the pages of these volumes), which is in itself a series of assumptions, theories, accusations, and claims to authority about the question concerning what in the world literature is and what, accordingly, should be done with it. Instead, the focus of these investigations is largely about reevaluating the core questions of literary disciplines in order to reconsider both the object and location of inquiry these disciplines address, particularly now that literature, as it is seen by the champions of the disciplinary meeting point that is the digital humanities, exists in "a universe in which print is no longer the primary medium in which knowledge is produced and disseminated" (Burdick et al. 122). To study world literature today means to consider the production and dissemination of literary texts in a world as a decidedly global place. Yet the tautological claims that the world is now global fall short of novelty and content when taken on the surface; despite a number of remarkable turning points that have indeed accelerated advancements in the technologies that facilitate globalization in communications and transportation, the world has arguably long since been global. At the very least, if we are to measure globalization by its discourse, then it can be concluded that we are in the latest phase of a globalization process that has been in motion since at least the eighteenth century (if evaluated by a sense of awareness thereof), or at least since the early modern-period (if expansion and exploration are the mark), or perhaps simply always (if the movement and migration of the peoples of the earth should be the way in which the global era is determined).

But while the definition of globalization as an entity is debatable and while a timeline of globalization must depend on conjecture, such details alone are not reason enough to conclude that ours is not a global age. It is. Yet the return to the old concept of world literature is not simply a matter of reevaluating the discipline, or reconsidering the role of literature in it, even if most were to agree that there is something comparatively more global in today's world than in years before. Instead, these recent inquiries occur as both causes and effects of a series of cultural, social, and technological conditions that are also at work in changing the way in which the notion of both a general understanding of "world" and of "literature" appears today. When the conceptions of these categories change, it is common practice to reconsider the most basic assumptions of our literary world in terms of the new perspectives of the world literary entirety.

It is an overlooked detail in the rich history of this perennial literary idea that the very consideration of world literature, the imaginative properties that self-reflexively create and validate the existence of the notion, are responses not to changes in the world literary system as an object, but to the methods and technologies that facilitate new perspectives thereof. In each of the waves of return to this idea, there exists something of an invariant quality in the pervasive sense that something is particularly new about the world of literature in its respective time period; it is a perception that holds that the measure of world literature is now more than ever at a point of quantitative crisis; that the cosmopolitan comingling of cultures and languages has now warranted the once stable literary homogeneities of the nation passé; or that the single texts we read now belong to an epoch of a uniquely global shape.

While there is no shortage of excellent scholarship that seeks to both confirm and refute such claims, these inquiries have concentrated mainly on the object of world literature itself, while the presentist fixation of these inquiries has been largely neglected. As such, a critical but underexplored detail of world literature discourse is the very act of inquiry itself. The return to the old concept, it seems, is spurred not necessarily by new theoretical musings, but by changes to the ways in which literature and world are seen and therefore understood. World literature, it can be said, occurs as a shift in the technologies and media that stimulate new perspectives of this old idea.

When Franco Moretti called for scholars to turn their attention to world literature once again, it was not because the shift into the twenty-first century had once and for all broken the camel's back with a last straw of quantitative excess in literature. In his 1828 essay *Die Masse der Literatur*, Wolfgang Menzel lamented the bloated state of German literature, an industry of what he regarded as unnecessary publishing activity in which the prolific output of German writing had exceeded matters to write about: "Das Meiste wird aber in Deutschland nur geschrieben, und gar nicht gethan" (Menzel 6). Menzel feared a monster of literary excess.[3] Reflecting a real-existing explosion of reading material and radically shifting reading practices in Germany around 1800, Menzel's trepidation stems from what Andrew Piper has called the "imminent sense of too-muchness that surrounded the printed book" around 1800 (Piper 5).

---

[3] Menzel locates his anxieties in the monstrous book market, referring to the "unermeßliche Büchermasse, die mit jedem Tage wächst," concluding that "wir erstaunen über das Ungeheure dieser Erscheinung, über das neue Wunder der Welt, die cyklopischen Mauern, die der Geist sich gründet" (Menzel 3-4).

Thus, Moretti's *Conjectures on World Literature* was very much a return to a problem that has seemed modern for nearly two centuries now. In his reassessment of an old problem in a new era, he also critiqued the failures of the utopian musings on the world literary epoch that appears always about to arrive but in actuality never does. But his radical solution to the shortcomings of world literary fruition and literary satiation is less about genuine changes in the object of inquiry as it is about the inquiry itself; the innovation of Moretti's intervention is one of method. Quoting Weber's remarks that new science results when old problems are approached with new methods, Moretti declares: "That's the point: world literature is not an object, it's a problem, and a problem that asks for a new critical method; and no-one has ever found a method by just reading more texts (Moretti 149). The controversial call for the practice of distant reading seeks a new science for an old literary world by so radically altering the view of its object, its problem, that the method of perception itself becomes the central matter of importance. It is precisely in the act of viewing and with the new tools that create such perspectives that world literature is continuously reborn as a monster, problem, and utopia alike.

A proper critique of Moretti's methods would require both the space and methodology of an entirely separate endeavor. Yet Moretti's method of distance remains highly relevant for this dissertation in that it demonstrates a drastic technique to fit that which is probably an impossible end, an analysis of world literature. Distant reading is a reminder that the object of inquiry is often more perspective than object and that this perspective is shaped and limited by the media that facilitate its distance or immediacy to the observer. As a shift in the *Kulturtechnik* of reading, this new practice of reading

utilizes abstractions of literature into information, a transition of the belletristic into data, a translation from poetic substance, to the graphs, maps, and trees with which world literature becomes visible. If Moretti has succeeded in making seen that which was once invisible, or perhaps that which never was at all, we are left to ask the question: where was world literature before this process? And the inquiry need not stop there. Where, for example, was world literature before dinner at Goethe's on that chilly night of January 31, 1827? Where was world literature between these points?

The answers to these questions cannot rest in something of an ontology of the world literary object without subscribing to a fixed notion of the idea and working backwards from it. To define world literature as an entity is to privilege the theory of its existence over the practices of textual order that make this existence possible. It is therefore necessary to modify the question in asking not where or what world literature is or was exactly, but how it is and has been realized. It is necessary to look at the process of becoming world literature as a series of practices of collecting and connecting disparate literary texts in order to create a semblance of a world whole. This dissertation endeavors to shift the focus from the theory of *Weltliteratur* to its practice in common collections of literary texts that stand in for the whole of literature; it is itself an assemblage of parts in the service of a whole, less a meditation on a single subject as it is a collection of perspectives and elements in a discursive history that is complex enough to exceed the possibility of a uniform method of investigation and an approach that is free of appearing to be at times scattered in its wide reach.

In the course of this dissertation it will become evident that the practices of *Weltliteratur*, those acts of making visible – of creating itself – a world of literature that can otherwise not be seen, are at once fictions of their own totalities and also real-functioning entities in the effects they produce. The collected, excerpted, and exhibited literary texts of world literature collections always fail in creating a comprehensive view of a qualitative or quantitative world of letters; however, they exist nonetheless as coherent semblances of a world literary entirety determined and upheld by the fiction of their own creation. Writing about the geography of literary capital in the Republic of Letters, Pascale Casanova maintains that literary value is intertwined with the places of perceived literary consecration, consolidated particularly in the capitals of literary value, namely Paris. For Casanova, such places occupy a dual position as both fiction and reality: "The existence of a literary center is therefore twofold: it exists both in the imaginations of those who inhabit it and in the reality of the measurable effects it produces" (Casanova 23). Such a dual function of the literary center – one that is both imagination yet also reality in what it achieves as a fiction – provides a model for those attempts to perform, materialize, and realize world literature as a collection of literary texts and fragments. These collections vary wildly in the underlying beliefs and the fictional accounts of the world they purport to represent; yet, the organization of texts on the basis of each imagined world unit also produces real and measurable effects on the way in which its texts are translated, circulated, and read.

In viewing these collections as such dualities, it becomes evident that *Weltliteratur* functions as a number of texts acting as *a* whole but with full and

8

simultaneous awareness that *the* whole is an always already failed concept. As the single but connected parts of their world configurations, literary texts in world-collections are always situated within a whole and are in constant extratextual dialog with this ideal entirety. Therefore, what is often called *Weltliteratur* is in fact a practice of organizing and reading texts in a specific and formative context presented by the world frame in which it appears. The constantly shifting landscape of new media reshapes how we know literature and the world, and this permanent reconfiguration supports the continued presence of *Weltliteratur* from its origins in early globalization to today. These shifting conditions also account for the renewed sense of urgency with which each revitalized turn to the old problem of our literary universe is acknowledged by critics. In addition to providing an investigation of the concept as an academic narrative and an examination of the parallel discourses that have informed, and been informed by, this literary version of a great conversation of global connectivity, this dissertation examines three widely different collections of texts as practices of *Weltliteratur*, emphasizing the common effects of a specific mode of mediating literature despite and because of the constant reconfiguration of multiple world entireties.

The selected examples for the organization of literary texts into numerous and conflicting world totalities vary across multiple periods and across strikingly different ideologies of order. With examples from the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries, the focus of this dissertation may appear to be scattered, waging precision against a wide-reach and potentially losing expertise to scope. In anticipation of such a critique, it should be noted that expertise, that is, a comprehensive representation of any

9

of the world-literatures of this inquiry, is not the goal. On the contrary, one of the defining lessons to come of the research on the theory and realization of the global literary vision is that the problem of *Weltliteratur* should be a constant reminder of the limits of our own abilities. To focus an inquiry on a single, small fraction of any one epoch is to ignore the wealth around it; to approach the bigger picture is to lose the fine detail of that myopic gaze. As such, the object of this investigation would hardly come closer to something of a comprehensive *Weltliteratur* if it were to include examples from the years before, between, and after the practices emphasized in the following pages. "Reading 'more,'" Moretti reminds us, "is always a good thing, but not the solution" (Moretti 149).

In order to adopt a method fit for the necessarily impossible problem of *Weltliteratur*, to find a solution to circumvent impossible acts of reading, it is necessary to opt for an inquiry not of *Weltliteratur* as an object, but of selected moments in its conceptual formation, of the discursive factors that produce the notion of such an object, and finally of the practice of *Weltliteratur* in the collection and exhibition of literary texts in and across multiple media. Accordingly, the presentation of materials in this dissertation is in many ways in keeping with precisely the mechanics of representation, which, as it will become evident in the course of this account, occurs as a constant and necessary feature of all collections of textual parts that point toward a whole. The chosen practices of *Weltliteratur* are not only by no stretch of the imagination comprehensive, they are also selected precisely for their discordant portrayal of possible outcomes. In each of the varying practices, a select and emblematic subset of literary texts is presented

to speak for a larger entity, a metonymic displacement of the whole through a series of parts. These literary collections have been selected as practices of *Weltliteratur*, which, although far from comprehensive, demonstrate in their organization of texts, common features of the mediation of world literary totality, speaking thus for the whole of practices in which they too are mere and minuscule fractions.

Chapter 1

In his 1919 essay "A Child is Being Beaten: A Contribution to the Origin of Sexual Perversions," Sigmund Freud writes of a common tendency among many of his patients seeking treatment for hysteria or obsessive neurosis. The invariant attribute of these patients is described by Freud as a reoccurring, underlying narrative condensed into a single sentence: "a child is being beaten" (Freud 97). For Freud, the common narrative of these patients has its reasons and effects, a worthy discussion of which would also require the space of an altogether different investigation and should not be confused with the literary-historical matters at hand. Nonetheless, Freud's identification of the single-sentence narrative, the latent utterance of the invariant preoccupation provides a model for the principal fantasy at work in a number of contexts beyond the limits of practiced psychoanalysis. Gayatri Spivak famously takes up this Freudian discourse in her identification of an invariant thread of "imperialist-subject production" running through narratives of the subaltern (Spivak 284).[4] In the nearly two centuries of debate, conjecture, acceptance, and rejection surrounding this something of a *Weltliteratur*

---

[4] In specific contrast to Freud and what she identifies as the pitfalls of his criticism which insists on scapegoating women in masochistic behaviors, Spivak uses Freudian discourse to circumvent the ends of his essay and apply them to the subject-formation of subaltern figures in the imperialist-male narrative. The sentence thus becomes: "White men are saving brown women from brown men" (Spivak 284).

concept, a narrative of Freudian brevity haunts the scholarly subconscious as a fantasy of comparable measure. It is the nearly biblical narrative of *Weltliteratur* and its genesis: "And Goethe said: Let there be *Weltliteratur*. And there was *Weltliteratur*." Following the lead provided by Spivak, it is necessary to avoid an "isomorphic analogy between subject-formation and the behavior of social collectives" in the identification of the latent creation story in the scholarship on the world literary (Spivak 284). Instead, the recognition of the narrative inception in *Weltliteratur* discourse is a starting point for a new approach not to Freudian hysteria, but to the perennial obsession of literary disciplines. It is a reminder that any investigation of the practices of *Weltliteratur* must first be viewed within the light of the theory they purport to affirm or repudiate.

The first chapter, "Genesis," analyzes the conceptual origin of *Weltliteratur* not as a reiteration of the story as it has been told, but as the function of the search for a conceptual origin within the scholarly history of the concept. It is within this history that the repetition of the moment of Goethe's utterance becomes visible. As an investigation of the defining moments of the *Weltliteratur* concept, this chapter examines a number of the many often contradictory interpretations of the idea in order to show that what is often at stake in *Weltliteratur* is less a stable concept, and more a narrative that has developed throughout the course of research and repetition of selected elements and keywords. It is clear that Goethe was unquestionably interested in the changing world of the early nineteenth century and its impact on the relations of literary exchange and a sort of peaceful internationalism in letters. But over the years, the legacy of Goethe's interest has also developed into something of a literary imaginary. As the arguably most

influential study of the topic, for instance, Strich's *Goethe und die Weltliteratur* presented a detailed study of Goethe's fragmentary comments on *Weltliteratur*, and the formative presentation of the idea in this publication is traceable as a specifically powerful force in the crystallization of the narrative in the twentieth century.

This chapter is an investigation of the concept within, and partially as a result of, its academic history; it is an examination of how the fragments of Goethe's work and life have come to present the *Weltliteratur* concept as a *cadavre exquis* of sorts. While there are indeed conflicting claims to the authority on the notion (Goethe, Wieland, Schlözer, et al.), attempts to tell an alternative origin story have been largely unsuccessful and their failed coups have perhaps strengthened the lasting narrative as the undefeated victor, challenged but not defeated, made stronger through consistent triumph. This chapter identifies the stability of a narrative of *Weltliteratur* as a single concept with a single author, a narrative that complicates the research on *Weltliteratur* as a matter of changing ideas of world and literature in a period of early globalization, born again in later years by the constantly shifting means with which the world and its literary systems are imagined. Chapter one thus attempts to establish the conceptual history from which to depart toward a novel examination of *Weltliteratur* beyond the narrative. This section endeavors to present the groundwork for an investigation of *Weltliteratur* that looks beyond the single author and single idea, in order to examine the changing mediation of literature in the service of a world idea without the burden of an established origin story and the projected fictions of creation and development it includes.

Chapter 2

Although the inaugural chapter seeks to establish that *Weltliteratur* is not a stable concept

or thing, devised strictly by Goethe on a January evening in 1827, the larger intention

should not be confused with the effort to discredit any of the single elements of Goethe's

writings and speech, or any of the single elements of scholarly focus that have

meticulously identified the world-literary undercurrent in Goethe and his contemporaries.

On the contrary, there exists around 1800 an emergent reconfiguration of literary

organization based on shifting understandings of world/global space and these new

understandings are arguably most directly articulated in the scattered murmurs of what is

now so concretely referred to as *Weltliteratur*. It is therefore necessary to embrace the

value of Goethe's market metaphors in the literary system, to retain his symbolic

language of textual exchange, to preserve his utopian dream of peace through trans-

national poetics, and to fully explore his parallel fascination with a new world through

technologies of communication and transportation; but these ends are best achieved by

shifting the gaze away from Goethe and beyond the narrative as we know it. Chapter two

thus begins by questioning the peripheral discourses that may have informed this world-

literary context. Why did the configuration of world and literature begin to shift so

radically at this time? In an attempt to utilize Goethe's global foresight and advance

beyond a sole adherence to it, this chapter asks about the significance of Goethe's

descriptive language and the models of communication, economics, and transportation

with which he imagined both the world and its literature. This chapter examines the

significance of the models and metaphors used in the early conception of *Weltliteratur*,

inquiring into the rise of metaphors and models that helped produce novel understandings

of the global around 1800 and regarding these as discursive forces with which the

concept of *Weltliteratur* is inextricably connected. From its earliest incarnations, the

discussion of *Weltliteratur* has borrowed symbolism, metaphors, and models from the

natural sciences, from technology, and from economics; this chapter asks how these

intellectual influences affected the epistemological conditions that altered literary space.

One of the earliest publications on Goethe's *Weltliteratur* is a previously

overlooked chapter of writer and publisher Moritz Veit's 1833 doctoral dissertation *Saint

Simon und der Saint-Simonismus: Allgemeiner Völkerbund und ewiger Friede*, which

includes a chapter on *Weltliteratur* with epigraphs of Goethe's now most widely cited

comments on the matter. In his chapter on *Weltliteratur*, Veit discusses the media of

peaceful connectivity in letters, likening literary journals to the system of Dutch canals, a

network connecting various places and people together in a particularly literary

manifestation of the *Völkerverständigung* that was on the mind of many European

intellectuals of the time.[5] Veit understands *Weltliteratur* through a model of network

infrastructure, actively connecting his reading of Goethe's idea with that peripheral

interest in the emerging networks facilitating with new speeds an international traffic of

ideas and things. Goethe's captivation with *Weltliteratur* also paralleled his fascination

with networks of canals, trains, ships, and postal systems, all described with similar

metaphors, descriptive language, and enthusiasm as those scattered utterances amounting

to *Weltliteratur*. Parallel to the celebrated inception of Goethe's *Weltliteratur*, the

---

[5] Related notions of international peace, such as Immanuel Kant's *Zum ewigen Frieden* and others, are
discussed in this context by Manfred Koch (Koch 263-264).

network as an epistemological figure emerges in multiple discursive contexts as a way of representing affinities between scattered elements in a vast universe, a method for conceiving of the whole through a collection of parts. Following this metaphoric parallel to *Weltliteratur* reveals a conceptual common denominator in the arts and sciences around 1800. This chapter identifies the figure of the network as a common metaphor of connectivity and a crucial discursive element on the periphery of the literary idea. It is a metaphor expressed in the concept of circulation, infrastructural technologies, taxonomic imagery, and *Weltliteratur* alike. The common metaphor suggests the emergence of a formative model that helped influence the reconfiguration of a world-literary whole by providing the conceptual frame for an understanding of totality.

Chapter two is an investigation of the way in which early ideas of *Weltliteratur* are derived from a sort of network epistemology in literature comparable to that which was being discussed in the natural sciences (in the circulation of blood and nerves or the order of plants and animals), technologies of communication and transportation (particularly telegraphs, train networks, and electricity), and the reorganization of social structures (Saint-Simonism, utopian infrastructure, and urban planning). These natural, technological, and social networks provided new ways of conceiving of the world as an interconnected unit by contributing conceptual models for a thinking of the world whole. By situating *Weltliteratur* within this context, it becomes evident that the world of *Weltliteratur* is largely a matter of how, and through which models, its parts (single texts, authors, or literatures) are collected and connected to create the whole. *Weltliteratur* appears thus as a means of collecting, connecting, networking, and mediating texts. This

section provides conceptual background for the practices of *Weltliteratur* to be explored in the following chapters.

Chapter 3

If the closest thing to a concept of *Weltliteratur* emerges from the shifting epistemology of the arts and sciences around 1800, it is necessary to ask how the common thread of connectivity and intermedial imagination occurred specifically in the realm of literature around this time. The third chapter endeavors to move, by way of the network episteme of chapter two, to the practices of literary conveyance, of connection, and exhibition of the once scattered parts now whole; it is the first of three different examinations of the formal practices of *Weltliteratur*. Johannes Scherr's 1848 anthology of literature *Bildersaal der Weltliteratur* is among the earliest official practices of *Weltliteratur* and the first to attempt it by name (Herder's collection of *Volkslieder* may be viewed in this light as the most noteworthy predecessor).[6] Scherr's massive collection presents fragments from literatures ranging from Chinese, Indian, and Japanese to much lengthier European and German sections. Much criticism of world literature anthologies is justifiably based on what is left out. In terms of post-colonialism, feminism, or other perspectives of alterity, it is immediately evident that there is much to criticize in this prescient realization of early nineteenth-century utopianism in letters; however, this is not the focus of the chapter. Instead, this section undertakes an intentional deviation from the canon-criticism based on the politics of inclusion or exclusion in order to avoid the tacit

---

[6] Birgit Bödeker maintains that Johann Gottfried Herder's 1778/79 anthology of *Volkslieder* is the definitive model of the German multilateral anthology that preceded and influenced later anthologies proclaiming to address the notion of *Weltliteratur* directly, naming particularly Scherr's 1848 *Bildersaal* (Bödeker 187).

argument that there is indeed a correct way to do *Weltliteratur*. Chapter three is instead concerned with the way in which the collected texts of the anthology work together to make a world-whole that cannot be *the* world-whole.

Scherr's volume begins with a forward declaring his interest in putting Goethe's idea to practice, noting that the Germans are the only group able to truly possess the world literary tradition. But beyond the chauvinism of such a claim (which also has a specific history), there is another meaningful element to Scherr's project. He declares his attempt to present "ein Gesamtbild des dichterischen Schaffens," an attempt that actively moves from theory to practice. How do the texts function together as a *Gesamtbild*? What sort of framing does this imply? What is the text-image relationship in such an endeavor? Given the limited space of the anthology, Scherr declares that he must omit prose, a decision that it at once contradictory to the concept of an inclusive literary collection and also logical in its pragmatic reaction to the limited space of a single print medium. As such, a series of interpretive refractions of literary wholeness is performed and an act of genre displacement and metonymic compression is undertaken. Massive novels are represented by single poems that appear within their lager narrative forms (*Wilhelm Meister* as *Mignons Lied*, for example). Plays become single scenes (act 5 from Schiller's *Die Räuber*, or act 4, scene 2 of Kleist's *Das Käthchen von Heilbronn*). And entire national literatures are summarized by short fragments, which are also rendered intelligible to the intended German-speaking audience through translation.

Chapter three examines Scherr's collection as a legitimate and telling attempt at the practice of a necessarily imperfect idea. It is through the limits and shortcomings of

Weltliteratur in practice that the significance of the idea begins to fully take shape for the early nineteenth century as well as its ubiquitous applications in the present era. With its limitations of world-literary representation, the world literature anthology as a form provides a fitting analogy for the true mediation of *Weltliteratur*: this world is limited to foreign texts in German translation; it is limited to size and shifts in abbreviation (also in medium and narrative); and it also illustrates the way in which texts are strung together in constant paratextual company with one another in order to communicate a sense of entirety through a collection of parts. Each text, fragment or whole, is introduced within a certain tradition or epoch and within the presence of a neighboring title. No text appears alone, rather always as a piece of a greater world-whole in constant paratextual company. As the title of the collection indicates, *Bildersaal der Weltliteratur* demonstrates uncanny metaphoric accuracy for the way in which this world of literature appears. In their abridged forms, the texts function more as images than as literature; they become *Bilder* in a gallery. The shifted emphasis on the location of the world collection is not specific to Scherr's anthology, but it is succinctly articulated in this early practice of the idea. *Bildersaal der Weltliteratur* thus provides a fitting metaphor, in the media of its time, for how we know the whole of the world through texts and how this same understanding underscores the practices that have followed Scheer's mid-nineteenth century collection.

To illustrate an exemplary relationship between text-fragment and frame in the creation of a whole, chapter three takes the example of two poems from Novalis as they appear within the *Bildersaal*. These poems, excerpts from the novel fragment *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, defer to an extended textuality that develops outward from the limited

section on display. The poems represent the novel; the novel represents the author (Novalis); the author is listed as the first of the German Romantics (following the epoch of the *Goethe-Schiller-Zeit*); German Romanticism appears as a crucial epoch in German literature, which is a part of the section on the Germanic tradition, the largest section of the West; and finally the whole configuration emerges as *Weltliteratur*. This is a reading of the fragment and its paratextual markers which extend the text well beyond its borders, illustrating the function of single texts in their fundamental association and paratextual intertwinement with the extended frame of the medium, the collection of world-literary texts.

The analysis of these textual fragments within their applied taxonomies of *Weltliteratur* is emblematic of the project itself; it is namely a close reading of the content of a text, but one that also necessarily branches out into the paratexts and the frame that make its presence possible. It is an attempt, much like that expressed by Pascale Casanova, "to overcome the supposedly insuperable antinomy between internal criticism, which looks no further than texts themselves in searching for their meaning, and external criticism, which describes the historical conditions under which texts are produced, without, however, accounting for their literary quality and singularity" (Casanova 4-5). *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, as it appears in the layout of the anthology, offers a unique case for a process of textual refraction that transfers a precariously whole, or fragmented novel to fragments of poetry as a representation of the whole prose novel as *Weltliteratur*.

Chapter 4

The fourth chapter turns to another attempt at *Weltliteratur* in the collecting (networking) of texts. In the most radical manifestation of the literary concept, the journal *Weltliteratur: Romane, Erzählungen und Gedichte aller Zeiten und Völker* (later named *Die Weltliteratur: Berichte, Leseproben und Wertung* under the control of the *SS-Ahnenerbestiftung*) appeared from 1935 to 1944 as a serial literary collection of the National Socialists. The world, and corresponding literature of this particular example, is clearly the most subjective of the selected cases and thus also the most transparent in its intentions. The editors make no attempt to hide their motives in their selection of texts. The 1940 edition begins with a statement from the editors in which they declare that the location of world literature is, of course, National Socialist Germany and that literature itself is but a product of the greater National Socialist Weltanschauung that is the political world of Hitler (Kaiser, 2-3 Feb. 1940). Although shockingly blunt in its paradoxically provincial/ideological proclamation of a sort of world consciousness in literature, such a statement also demonstrates the inherent capabilities (or perhaps inability) of the *Weltliteratur* idea. It is an extreme example of how far such a fantasy can go in what, by name alone, appears to be the same underlying interest in the world of letters.

Weltliteratur features contributions from over 100 writers, and yet only a mere third of these are from outside Germany; in this cosmopolitan subsection, moreover, the majority of the international fraction is overwhelmingly represented by Austrians. The nationalities of the contributors to the earlier edition create a remarkable cartographic parallel to the boundaries and intended boundaries of the Third Reich, focusing almost

exclusively on central Europe and the countries of interest for the NS-regime (and a few allies elsewhere). Yet in the hyperbole of this world fantasy in propaganda, this journal presents a unique case of literary mediation for the idea of *Weltliteratur*: it demonstrates the way in which "world" comes to reflect and be reflected by a collection of texts despite the drastically subjective swing in what such a world entails. In their biases, the editors of this journal articulate clearly the operative method of textual organization by distinguishing between *Weltliteratur* and *Allerweltsliteratur* (which is considered to be a nauseatingly diverse blend of letters). In some respects, this distinction, the active decision to retain the semblance of a world despite the surrounding realities, is the most accurate concession of subjective methodology. In an extreme ideological form, it shows how the world of literature, as we encounter it, is mediated as a way in which to distinguish it from the totality of world-literary output, or *Allerweltsliteratur*. In the NS-example, there is little need to prove that this attempt fails to represent the world as it is. Its blatant propaganda and resulting misery are apparent enough. The focus of this chapter begins with this clearly faulty world-idea, examining again *how* the literature is used to create this world and *how* its literature is affected by such a frame.

Chapter 5

Finally, chapter 5 takes perhaps the most radical turn in its look at the implicit mode of textual networking in the digital era. Chapters 3 and 4 concentrate on collections that are by definition attempts at the practices of mediating the world-entirety of literature; however, as anthology and periodical, these collections rely on the materiality of the print medium. This chapter follows the same textual interaction of the anthology and journal as

it alters and becomes altered by the radically changing media landscape of the digital. Coinciding with the digital turn, *Weltliteratur* has also become a topic of specific interest in literary studies over the last decade. The radical change in perspective introduced by digital technology has allowed novel views of the literary world as a whole and, in doing so, also stressed the importance of the technologies and media that make such perspectives possible. Asking how *Weltliteratur* appears in times of pervasive communication, interconnection of the internet, and the computational tools of digital technology, this chapter investigates the seemingly unlikely appearance of a sort of *Weltliteratur* in the digital book market as it is made visible by precisely such new technologies.

Amazon.com, the world's largest bookseller, uses an algorithm-based program called *collaborative filtering* to recommend books to consumers. This now nearly iconic program is best known by its name "Customers Who Bought This Item Also Bought." Although it may appear to be a simple matter of marketing software at work, Amazon's algorithm-program provides an inadvertent visualization tool for an alternative mode of collecting and archiving literature. Clicking on a specific book at Amazon produces a series of recommendations, each suggested title bound to the core text by mathematically-driven associations. As an alternative archive, these recommendations reveal a previously unseen mode of knowledge organization as a network of textual relationships. Unlike other collections of literature, Amazon's recommendations are not collected through the will of a central authority (a top-down movement), but purely through data on previous consumer choices. Because Amazon displays textual

associations between books that are purchased presumably *before* they are read, these networks of recommendations become the expressions of a sort of collaborative archive of reader expectations. Based on associations about each work before it is read, the resulting mode of textual organization is based on the text's structural position within the network, or its *extratextual* relationships. What becomes evident is that, also in this alternative archive of algorithmic organization, each text appears in the constant paratextual company of others, each text acting as pieces of a larger interconnected whole. This is a relationship highly comparable to that of Scherr's collection, the NS-journal, and other collections that attempt an entirety through fragments. It is an expression of the same extratextual relationship of parts as a whole throughout significantly differing media. Using the example of Heinrich von Kleist and the extratextual echoes of media afterlives in the data-driven clusters of works, chapter 5 undertakes similar close readings of text and frame (or textual network) within the transmedia transfer of this digital, bottom-up archive. The unique mode of textual collecting appears without the central authority (editors, publishers, or literary institutions) while remaining nonetheless defined by the active constraints of the world-literary stage – translation, publication, circulation, etc.

If world literature is both the underlying principle for gathering and exhibiting myriad literary texts and equally the result of such an assemblage, then it is this order of texts in which the semblance of a fictional world with real and measurable effects can be located. This dissertation is an attempt to move from previous academic narratives of world literature and the conjecture of conflicting utopian visions to a series of

emblematic practices in the organization of literary texts in multiple media. To view world literature as a practice is to view it in that strange and contradictory position of fiction and reality, failure and success, and as both medium and message of its world fantasy.

Genesis
Chapter One

In 1832 in his Weimar home Goethe lay on his deathbed. No longer able to speak, so the story goes, he raised his hands and gestured to scribble some words in the air in an attempt to communicate with those around him. Although those present in his final hours were unable to make out his last writings, they were able to recognize a clearly scribbled "W" in the air. A last "W" could refer to nothing or to so much in those final moments. *Wasser bitte*. *Wie ist das Wetter heute*? *Warum*? Sometimes a "W" is just a "W." Yet, with the obvious ambiguity aside, Goethe's "W" has now also entered the gravitational pull of the *Weltliteratur* mythos: "Er malt zuletzt einen großen Buchstaben, ein W. Wir können ihn als den Anfangsbuchstaben seines eignen Namens Wolfgang deuten oder im Sinne seiner letzten großen Gedanken über die Weltliteratur und das gegenseitige Verstehen der Menschheit als Welt" (Friedenthal 629). Reading *Weltliteratur* in Goethe's dying gestures requires great liberties of interpretation. We have nothing more than pure speculation to go on in reading the significance of a dying man's last gestures. What is at stake in this matter that would lead to such brazen interpretations of one's most intimate last moments? How did the concept of *Weltliteratur* become so firmly established that it appears in such parables?

The story points out the fictional quality in the concept of *Weltliteratur* and the desire for narrative so strong that it seeks its validity in the life of its creator. But it is not simply in Goethe's final scene that the narrative is visible; the entire story of Goethe's *Weltliteratur* itself has an overwhelmingly fictional quality. That *Weltliteratur* appears on

Goethe's deathbed is less a specific misstep in the otherwise stable concept and more a reminder of the propensity for the creation of accounts of this type. It is a reminder that the concept of *Weltliteratur* itself begins with a nearly biblical narrative, a moment from which the sacred concept emerges. The underlying story appears as such: "And Goethe said: 'Let there be *Weltliteratur*.' And there was *Weltliteratur*." While a declaration of the genesis of *Weltliteratur* is never explicitly declared as such, this fictional, nearly subconscious utterance lingers in the perennial scholarship on the world literary idea and its discursive weight is visible in the way we view not just Goethe and his corresponding reflections on a new world and its literature, but also the vague convergence of world and literature.

There is a fascination with final words, particularly those of great and famous characters in history. The narrative value of one's final words is perpetuated by the popular belief that they represent an essential quality of their author, or that they punctuate a life's work and identity with finality, becoming a quotable submission in the world that survives them.[7] The example of Goethe's last gestures and words is particularly wrought with attention and scholarly interest. Karl Guthke traces a long academic discussion concerning the accuracy and interpretation of Goethe's widely known last spoken words: "Mehr Licht!" Perhaps the most popular reading of this famed utterance is that Goethe, ceaselessly in the service of the *Enlightenment*, articulated on his death bed his life search for truth and *illumination* of the world's mystery and beauty.

---

[7] See Karl Guthke, "'Gipsabgüsse von Leichenmasken:' Goethe und der Kult des letzen Worts" (Guthke 73-95). Guthke argues that last words and gestures are particularly vulnerable to unfettered interpretation. Citing specifically Friedenthal's *Weltliteratur* interpretation in Goethe's gestures, he notes that the reading is driven by the gravitas of dying Goethe's alleged intention as an act of writing (Guthke 88-89).

Erring perhaps on the side of Occam, the counter argument maintains that Goethe simply

wished to have the shutters open to allow the daylight into the room.[8] Despite the true

intention and factuality of the final words, Guthke sees the function of such words not as

truths per se, but as functioning mythologies in popular and academic discourse.

> Eher häufig als selten sind letzte Worte, wie nicht nur
> unsere Kultur sie schätzt und überliefert, nicht historische
> Fakten von dokumentarischen Status (wie Sterbeurkunden),
> sondern Artefakte. Und selbst wenn sie durch unantastbare
> Verifikation gegen den üblichen Verdacht gefeit sind,
> überleben und leben sie als Artefakte: als die Artefakte, die
> sie geworden sind durch die kollektive Imagination derer,
> die sie *als letzte Worte*, als Denkwürdigkeit, überliefert und
> so die mögliche empirische Legitimation mit einer Aura
> umgeben haben, die unvergleichlich reizvoller ist als die
> der Authentizität. (Guthke 87)

The mythological understanding of last words goes beyond questions of authenticity as it

is created and perpetuated by its own discourse. A narrative fiction has now formed

around Goethe's call for a sort of Enlightenment in his own dark room. Its emblematic

significance to the life of Goethe outweighs the narrative as a true biographical detail.

"Mehr Licht!" has become, in effect, an interpretable fiction comparable to Werther's

letters and Faust's conversations with Mephistopheles.

But are such mythologies constructed exclusively around last words? After all, we

now have Goethe writing about *Weltliteratur* as he lay dying and after his speech had

failed him. Guthke notes that this final scene in Goethe's life has been interpreted, most

famously by Thomas Mann, as an act of writing till the very end; however, even in these

---

[8] Guthke cites a number of biographies divided between the emotive and figurative readings of "Mehr Licht!" and the literal readings, particularly by the English germanist J.G. Robertson who noted in his 1927 biography of Goethe the possibility that the plea for illumination may have likely resulted from Goethe's dissatisfaction with the darkness of the room (Guthke 90).

terms, the argument that Goethe's "W" should be thought of as *Weltliteratur* seems to draw its weight not from the desire to identify that essential last thought of the great writer, but to solidify a mythology around the concept of *Weltliteratur* and its fundamental connection to Goethe as the first and most significant user of the term (Guthke 267).

The relevance of *Weltliteratur* in what is now perhaps best classified as the deathbed "scene" is also not a matter of the accuracy in Goethe's actual intentions. It is more important to consider the interpretation of the gesture in terms of the search for a cultural artifact as Guthke has discussed in the mythologizing of Goethe's final appeal for more light. The reading of the deathbed scene in terms of *Weltliteratur* represents a singular and rather specific episode in the scholarship; however, it also articulates an idea that is indeed common throughout the research on *Weltliteratur*, namely that there exists a specific concept of world literature and it is the intellectual creation and property of Goethe. There may be debate concerning the question of true origin and whether or not to attribute it solely to Goethe, but this too only reinstates the believed stability of the term. The idea of Goethe's *Weltliteratur* has become endowed with precisely the aura of mythology that outweighs reality. To borrow from Guthke, the story of *Weltliteratur* has become an artifact.

Two centuries have now passed since Goethe's lifetime. In this time the story of *Weltliteratur* has been told so often that it has become an origin story of sorts, the genesis of which may be credited in part to the repetition of selected elements and keywords amidst Goethe's grand aura. Both the grandeur and validity of such tales grow with each

repetition until the connection is so strong that the concept of *Weltliteratur*, or Goethe's whole life and work itself, gains a quality of literary fiction, and Goethe's last moments become the deathbed scene, a stage for the final thought, scribbled in air, in the birth of an idea. In order to demonstrate the way in which this sort of narrative has come into existence and the way in which it continues to shape the discussion of world literature and the general approach to conceiving of a global literary space, it is necessary to examine the trajectory that is often thought to begin with the uttering of the word by Goethe in the dark cosmos of his Weimar home.

Conflicting Claims to the Authority of *Weltliteratur*

Goethe coined the term *Weltliteratur*. Or perhaps to be more accurate: Goethe's comments on *Weltliteratur* sparked a discursive practice that has ebbed and flowed for the last two centuries in various branches of literary and cultural studies. The difference in these statements relies on our understanding of the word itself and more importantly, the importance we place on the authority of the first or most central figure in the history of its use as a term.

In 1987 Hans-J. Weitz published a short article in the miscellaneous section of the journal *Arcadia* entitled "'Weltliteratur' zuerst bei Wieland," suggesting that, contrary to popular belief, *Weltliteratur* should not be attributed to Goethe but to his contemporary Christoph Martin Wieland. As evidence for his claim, Weitz presents a usage of the term *Weltliteratur* by Christoph Martin Wieland from the 1790s (the exact date cannot be determined). The term appears as a handwritten correction to notes on his translation of

Horace's Satire. Wieland's marginal scribbling of *Weltliteratur* appears alongside the already printed text which reads:

> […]selbst dasjenige was man in den schönsten Zeiten von Rom unter dem Wort Urbanität begriff, diesen Geschmack der Hauptstadt und diese feine Tinktur von Gelehrsamkeit, Weltkenntniß und Politesse, die man aus dem Lesen der besten Schriftsteller, und aus dem Umgang der cultiviertesten und vorzüglichsten Personen in einem sehr verfeinerten Zeitalter, unvermerkt annimmt,[…]. (Weitz 206)

Appearing as handwritten comments against the printed *Fraktur* script, Wieland crossed-out the words *Gelehrsamkeit* and *Politesse*, replacing *Gelehrsamkeit* with *Weltlitteratur*, the sentence thus becoming: "[…]und diese feine Tinktur von Weltkenntniß u. Weltlitteratur so wie von reifer Charakterbildung u. Wohlbetragen, die man aus dem Lesen der besten Schriftsteller[…]" (Weitz 207). Weitz presents an extremely narrow reading of Wieland. The entirety of the Wieland fragment contains less than sixty words. Yet within this short glimpse, Wieland seems to associate a knowledge of literature with high-culture and, perhaps more importantly, its fundamental connection to the sophisticated cultural status of its creator. At its very least, Wieland's *Weltlitteratur* occurs alongside a vague notion of worldliness and cultivation, but its context is indistinct and the fragment too short to be considered more than corrective marginalia that was left unpublished and undiscovered for nearly two hundred years. What is indeed left is the formation of the word, but little else.

The bulk of Weitz's short article deals with the discovery of Wieland's notes and the process of textual editing they represent. Beyond highlighting the appeal of these findings as a philological curiosity, Weitz does conclude by differentiating between

Goethe and Wieland, stating that Goethe's *Weltliteratur* addresses the developing unity of a common poetic property throughout the world, while Wieland's usage connotes the educated readers of literature at the time of Horace. Finally, Weitz reverts back to the popular notion of Goethean *Weltliteratur* by noting that Wieland himself embodies aspects of Goethean *Weltliteratur* as the translator of Shakespeare and a number of Roman and Greek classics, a conclusion that functions to resituate Goethe as the articulator of the term and thus strengthen his specific authority over the contested but upheld concept.

Although Weitz presents these findings as a contradiction to the widely held notion that Goethe coined the term, he also concedes the fact that Wieland can really only be accountable for the formation of the word, not of something of a coherent concept. By now it is widely known that Wieland formulated the compound noun of *Welt-* and *Literatur* well before Goethe's 1827 remarks, but it is generally agreed upon that this is of little significance in adding to a theory of the concept.[9]

In response to Weitz, Wolfgang Schamoni adds another layer to the conversation about the origin of the term in his 2008 article "'Weltliteratur' – zuerst 1773 bei August Ludwig Schlözer." Schamoni's article also appeared in *Arcadia*; however, while Schamoni's title and initial remarks are clearly directed at Weitz's article from 1987, he also clearly asserts that Wieland's usage of the term has little relevance in the debate

---

[9] A number of contributions to the scholarship on *Weltliteratur* acknowledge Weitz's article as evidence for Wieland's earlier use of the word, yet they almost exclusively cite this detail as a footnote to the history without awarding the usage any larger significance, or they dismiss its relevance altogether (Birus 5; 1995; Bollacher 174; Koch 2005:53; Sebastian 13; Pizer 2006: 1-2). Koch also draws a distinction between the word and the concept on the Wieland-Goethe axis: "Das Wort 'Weltlitteratur' kommt früher bei Wieland vor, ein Konzept Weltliteratur gibt es erst seit Goethe" (Koch 2007:124).

concerning *Weltliteratur* as a concept today. Wieland's *Weltliteratur* functions only as a

starting point of refutation for a sort of conceptual etymology which seeks the origin of a

concept in the first appearance of the word on paper. Schamoni identifies an origin

preceding Wieland in the work of historian August Ludwig Schlözer in 1773.[10]

Schlözer's usage appears in his work *Isländische Litteratur und Geschichte* in which he

attempts to situate the Icelandic literary tradition among the major contenders of

Weltliteratur:

> Es giebt eine eigene Isländische Litteratur aus dem
> Mittelalter, die für die gesammte Weltlitteratur eben so
> wichtig und großenteils außer dem Norden noch ebenso
> unbekannt, als Angelsächsische, Irrländische, Rußische,
> Byzantinische, Hebräische, Arabische, und Sinesische, aus
> eben diesen duster Zeiten, ist. (Schamoni 289)

Schlözer refers to *die gesammte Weltliteratur* as a group of powerful literary traditions.

According to Schlözer the Icelandic literary tradition had been unfairly excluded from the

recognition it deserved. Schlözer's remarks on the literatures of other national/linguistic

traditions suggest a more descriptive concept of *Weltliteratur* than that of Wieland, but

the conceptual certainty remains vague. On the one hand, he does indeed describe

Icelandic literature as a hybrid entity, which, although rich and influential, did not spring

from some pure source, thus referring to an essential aspect of textual circulation in the

creation of a literary tradition among an arguably "world" body of literatures: "Aus der

---

[10] Árpád Berczik was the first to cite Schlözer's 1772/3 use of the term in 1967. He too draws a distinction between Goethe's use (as a more developed idea) and that of Schlözer, but he is indeed clear in his acknowledgment: "Das Wort 'Weltliteratur' stammt von August Ludwig Schlözer, der es zuerst in seiner 'Vorstellung der Universaltheorie' (Göttingen, 1772) verwendet hatte" (Berczik 7). Although not widely known, this rather obscure passage has been cited on a small number of occasions, including by Schamoni, in 2008 (Schamoni 289; Pizer 11; Schmitt 1). Despite the references in both German and English language publications, the Schlözer context, as well as its 1967 citation by Berczik, remains rather inconsequential for the continued study of the concept in the context of Goethe and beyond.

Vermischung der damaligen Deutschen, Französischen, und Englischen Litteratur mit der alten Norwegischen, entstand eine neue Geburt, die Isländische Litteratur" (Schamoni 290). Schamoni credits Schlözer for viewing Icelandic literature not "als uralt und ursprunglich dargestellt, sondern als Produkt vielfältiger Kontake mit dem mittelalterlichen. (Schamoni 290). Unlike Wieland's *Weltliteratur*, this particular notion, albeit nationally grounded in its conception, does identify the multiple layers of contact that suggest a national literature as a hybrid form, a somewhat conceptual interpretation of aesthetic exchange on an international level.

This seemingly progressive take on the co-mingling of literatures resonates with current interest in the global circulation of texts as *Weltliteratur*; but Schamoni also points out that Schlözer "tendiert jedoch schon zur Anerkennung von für einzelne Völker eigentümlichen Literaturtraditionen, so wie er in dem oben gegebenen Zitat die einzelnen nationalen Traditionen als Konstituenten einer 'Weltliteratur' sieht" (Schamoni 291).[11] Schamoni continues: "Er sagt nicht: 'Es giebt in Island Litteratur,' sondern: 'Es giebt eine eigene isländische Litteratur" (Schamoni 291). This is a decisive break from what might otherwise be regarded as parallels to the contemporary legacy of the Goethean notion as it is commonly understood. Schlözer's understanding of other literary traditions and their effects on each other may include an idea of plurality, but it ultimately represents a notion of national singularity in literature. While Goethe's conversation with Eckermann appears to offer a departure from the mode of thinking that conceives of national literatures as distinct entities indebted to the other (mainly European) traditions, Goethe

---

[11] The "oben gegebenen Zitat" refers to Schlözer's previous listing of the other literary traditions surrounding the Icelandic (Schamoni 289).

also mentions that cultural achievement experienced a peak of sorts in ancient Greece.

This ambivalent detour is overshadowed by later remarks and disappears completely in

specific comparison to Schlözer's chauvinism. Schlözer goes as far as to acknowledge

the general productive impetus in other cultures, but denies them the potential to compete

with his understanding of aesthetic significance. He writes: "Alle Menschen dichten, von

Kamaczatka an bis zu den Grönländern und Iroken hin: aber nur wenige Völker haben

eine eigentliche, d.h. cultivierte, Dichtkunst. Sineser und Türken haben Musik: aber wer

wird sich bei diesen Musik-Barbaren dasjenige denken, was wir Concerte nennen?"

(Schamoni 293).

　　　Schlözer's blatant Eurocentric contortion of values denies the significance of

cultural artifacts beyond the boundaries of Europe, a notion that effectively prevents his

Weltliteratur from being read as anything but European literature. The mere comparison

between European and Chinese or Turkish music is not in itself an outward expression of

cultural chauvinism, but the language of "Barbaren" and "eigentliche, cultivierte

Dichtkunst" is inseparable from an unapologetically teleological concept of culture and

its products. Schamoni points out that Schlözer "sieht also eine Pluralität von Literaturen,

gibt aber gleichzeitig nicht die mit Wörtern wie 'artig' und 'cultiviert' ausgedrückte

Erwartung auf und fällt unbekümmert Werturteile über Kulturen, die er kaum kennen

konnte" (Schamoni 293). The extent of such a *Weltliteratur* is therefore the

acknowledgment of some form of alterity in letters, but an acknowledgment that is

otherwise mired in a sense of superiority and determinism. This use of *Weltliteratur*

certainly demonstrates more depth than Wieland's scribbling of the word; its primary

concern is literary history and, to some extent, the multitude of literatures in the world. But a closer reading of Schlözer reveals *Weltliteratur* to mean the hierarchical reflection of European achievement against the rest of the world, an argument that has also been levied against Goethe (as a criticism of the widely-held authority of the concept).

Schamoni argues that Wieland's use is of no significance and refers only to a context of no relevance for today's concern – *in einem heute vergessenen Sinne* (Schamoni 288). However, the perhaps unintended effect of both Weitz and Schamoni's articles is their mutual support of the origin story and Goethe's single authority in it. Although both articles seek to highlight the prior appearance of the term and concept, they both exist only in the shadow of Goethe and contribute little to the altering of this narrative. On the contrary, the two attempts to locate earlier manifestations both appear within the specific context of the Goethean *Weltliteratur* narrative, that is, against the dominant claim to authority via the predetermined origin story. Wieland's notes are easy to dismiss on the grounds that they are simply evidence of the formation of the word, not of a concept. By creating a sort of contrast, such criticism inadvertently suggests that Goethean *Weltliteratur* is a fixed idea and that the mere appearance of the word contributes nothing to the conceptual history. As a result, these challenges to Goethe's central authority paradoxically also imply a particular bond between signifier and signified in Goethe's *Weltliteratur* through the mere comparative dissonance between the former and the latter expressions of empty connotation. Schlözer's usage of the term certainly comes closer to the popular notion of *Weltliteratur*. He is, after all, concerned with the development of numerous literary traditions and the hybrid nature of national

literatures. But his Eurocentric teleology effectively cancels out any serious interest in approaching a world totality, or even legitimately theorizing the circulation of works and styles throughout world culture. The effect of both contestations of the Goethean origin narrative is to situate the two usages on opposing sides: one representing mere word formation (reflecting eighteenth-century Eurocentrism) and the other representing a coherent theory or at least a homogeneous utopian ideal. There is indeed textual evidence for the formation of the word *Weltliteratur* well before Goethe's 1827 use, but these examples fail to alter the firmly established discourse. Instead, such challenges inadvertently strengthen the previous narrative by acting as failed coups to unseat the reigning and preferred origin story.

Why did it take 160 years of rather steady scholarship to pass before earlier usages of *Weltliteratur* were found? One possible answer may be located in the simple lack of demand for alternatives. The very notion of an alternative origin depends first on a firmly established belief against which the secondary accounts may offer their contrast. As such, the alternative genealogies of *Weltliteratur* suggest the discursive crystallization of the homogenous narrative centered on Goethe. The findings of philological archeologists have made little in the way of lasting changes to the popular conception of *Weltliteratur*, but the sheer fact that the Goethean notion would go unchallenged for so long is also representative of deep-seated inclinations in the academic discourse to settle on a desirable origin story and narrative. With time, even earlier appearances may be discovered, but their effects will likely be the same. In this sense, Goethe's *Weltliteratur* concept shares a similar contextual space with the story of Goethe's request for "Mehr

Licht!" Both aspects demonstrate the strength of the narrative and the preference of a community to uphold it despite conjecture concerning the authenticity of the claim. In either case, it is now less important to contribute to investigations which seek to add to the claims that either (*Weltliteratur* or *Mehr Licht!*) are true or not, rather, the goal is to identify the way in which such accounts emerge as meaningful narratives, at least partially generated and upheld by their own scholarship. Regardless of their accuracy, the resulting significance of these narratives can be found in their conceptual market value, in the collective desire to locate and defend origin stories of this type.

In this regard, Goethe has been established as the author of a unified theory of world literature, a position that is as problematic for its origin as it is for the representation of *Weltliteratur* as a concept. By and large, scholars have contributed to this condition actively in their attempt to isolate Goethe and *Weltliteratur* together and inadvertently in the failed challenges to the origin which, in their defeat by the popular notion, serve only to reinforce the stability of the discursive practice and its search for single theories and creators. But this should not lead to a mere dismissal of Goethe or his role in the establishment of a concept, nor should it lead to a dismissal of the wealth of scholarship which has indirectly and unintentionally served this underlying narrative. Instead, it is necessary to seek and identify the elements that make the narrative as powerful as it so clearly is, and not simply in an attempt to debunk them, but to pursue a broader consideration of the factors involved, such as the creator of the concept as the constructed author of a specific discourse. Commenting on precisely the function of such an author (of singles artworks, texts, and discourses), Michel Foucault suggests

examining the space around an author rather than attempting to remove the author from the text: "we must locate the space left empty by the author's disappearance, follow the distribution of gaps and breaches, and watch for the openings that this disappearance uncovers" (Foucault 105).

Following this suggestion to remove Goethe as the central figure in the narrative of world literature, a resulting examination of the negative space via the "distribution of gaps and breaches" reveals a number of stable elements that accompany Goethe and his *Weltliteratur* without leading to the function of an author figure alone. It is within this space that meaningful elements of a world literary space are to be recovered beyond the now stable narrative that may have obscured them.

Fritz Strich: Secular Prophet, Critic, and Co-creator of Goethe's *Weltliteratur*

It is widely acknowledged, even by the most dedicated adherents to Goethean *Weltliteratur*, that Goethe was both vague and ambivalent in the details of what the coming literary epoch would entail. Fritz Strich, arguably the most central figure in the study of the concept, concedes that an immediate challenge to Goethe's idea is presented by the lack of defined terminology and consistency in use: "[…] nie und nirgends hat Goethe selbst etwa systematisch, eindeutig und mit klaren Worten gesagt, was er unter Weltliteratur, die er verkündigte, forderte, erhoffte und schon 'anmarschieren' sah, verstanden wissen wollte" (Strich 15). Strich even goes as far as to say that Goethe

deliberately avoided a concrete definition of the term.[12] The variability in Goethe's use of

the term has done little to impede the advancement of scholarship creating an at times

seemingly uniform understanding of the concept in Goethe's name. Instead, the

admission of the ambiguity and ambivalence in his remarks usually serves as a starting

point for a larger act of conceptual construction based on largely unrelated sources,

spanning temporal and contextual boundaries. The most striking detail of this conceptual

construction is not in its attempt to make sense out the ambiguous; rather, it is the

consistency with which these sometimes conflicting and arguably unrelated fragments

have come to give the appearance of *Weltliteratur* as a literary theory despite the

decidedly non-literary nature of many of the conceptual fragments that are woven

together in its construction.

It is less important that there are contradictions in Goethe's understanding of

Weltliteratur (assuming he had a specific understanding) and more important to consider

the process that has rendered *a* vague idea of *Weltliteratur* to become *the* idea of

Weltliteratur. Dieter Lamping challenges the notion of Goethe's single authority

concerning the concept: "Was er über Weltliteratur verlauten ließ, scheint nicht mehr als

eine Idee im vagen Sinn gewesen zu sein: eine Erkenntnis, ein Einfall. Es scheint, als

hätte Goethe diese Idee in die Welt entlassen und beobachtet, wie sie aufgenommen

wurde" (Lamping 11). By suggesting that Goethe set his idea forth only to observe its

path, Lamping puts forward a view of the poet, not as the sole creator of the concept, but

---

[12] "Ja, er ging offenbar geflissentlich einer prägnanten Formulierung und Verdeutlichung aus dem Wege" (Strich 15). Manfred Koch expresses a similar view of Goethe's intentional neglect to clarify: "Goethe hat bewußt auf eine systematische Darstellung seiner Überlegungen zu diesem Phänomen verzichtet[…]." (Koch 2005: 52; Koch 2000: 117).

as a catalyst, a single specific agent in a more complex process of secondary development. The relevance of this subtle suggestion is in its implications for the continued trajectory of the academic narrative of *Weltliteratur*. It is a challenge to the origin story that seeks to identify the moment of creation with the moment Goethe spoke the now celebrated words. To maintain that Goethe could have simply suggested or hinted at an idea only to have it developed beyond his own lifetime is to acknowledge the need for an investigation into the forces that helped to solidify the idea itself. To suggest that he merely let the idea free is to contend that the bulk of the work, the development of the idea, and the highly contested arena of authority must be attributed to the history of scholarly intervention along with Goethe himself. It is an argument for new scholarly inquiries which elect to look beyond strict adherence to the ambivalent aspects of Goethe's thoughts on the world as the sole elements of *Weltliteratur*.

Lamping's statement invites consideration of the processes of development beyond Goethe in the creation of what is now thought of as *the* idea. It is an invitation to examine the factors that have led to the unification of seemingly contradictory elements and a fragmented array of partially related thoughts. As perhaps the most essential single study devoted to the concept, Strich's monograph has played an immensely influential role in the creation of a specific academic narrative of Goethe's world literary view. It was Strich who painstakingly combed through Goethe's works, collected, and organized the various instantiations of the term *Weltliteratur* in order to present them as a single

coherent concept (Strich 397-400).[13] Strich's concluding appendix demonstrates a

collection of the twenty appearances of the word *Weltliteratur* across Goethe's works.

These fragments have now become the building blocks of the commonly known concept,

but their conceptual cohesion remains dubious in its afterlife. Strich's organization in his

post-work appendix is also based purely on the appearance of the word itself; whereas the

elements of the conceptual framework, or Goethe's related reflections on *Weltliteratur*

without the direct use of the word, are addressed throughout the course of his

investigation. The collection of Goethean instantiations is effectively a performance of

Lamping's idea, or of Goethe setting the idea free to be collected, reconstructed, and

presented through meticulous scholarly attention.

  The logocentric organization of the idea presents an immediate challenge in its

priority of the term over content, or of signifier over signified. As a mode of organization,

Strich's appendix connects wildly different modes of expression in the service of the

idea. In response to the lack of an explicitly coherent concept from Goethe himself, Strich

declares the need to gather and reproduce (or perhaps produce) Goethe's concept

throughout a number of appearances in fragments:

> Man ist daher genötigt, die vielen Andeutungen, wie sie in
> Goetheschen Artikeln, Rezensionen, Einleitungen,
> Gesprächen, Tagebüchern und Briefen niedergelegt sind, zu
> sammeln, sie in Beziehung zu Goethes gesamter
> Gedankenwelt zu setzen und aus ihr zu ergänzen, sie mit
> seiner literarischen Tätigkeit im letzten Jahrzehnt seines
> Lebens, das dem Dienste der Weltliteratur geweiht war, zu

---

[13] Strich's index announces its collection as an assemblage of fragments taken from various sources in Goethe's oeuvre. In chronological order of appearance, Strich introduces his collection as "Die zwanzig Stellen aus Goethes Werken, Tagebüchern, Briefen und Gesprächen, in denen er sich des Wortes 'Weltliteratur' bedient" (Strich 397).

vergleichen, und so ein klares Bild zu gewinnen. (Strich 15-16)[14]

Perhaps inadvertently, Strich thus describes poignantly an absolutely critical aspect to the greater function of *Weltliteratur* (one that will only gain in significance in the course of this study); he explains that its very creation and function is dependent on the collectors and assemblers of scattered fragments to communicate a whole through a series of dispersed parts, to put these disparate elements and materials in concert with the oeuvre of a celebrated genius, and thus serve an idea which, although real in its applications in scholarship, may precede a real-existing *Weltliteratur* and indeed be the very driving force in this act of conceptual assemblage as it creates a clear picture (*klares Bild*) to be observed.

Strich was not the first to consult largely varying locations of Goethe's *Weltliteratur* in the service of a unified concept; however his study remains without question the most comprehensive in its scope and resulting influence.[15] Strich is very

---

[14] A very similar thought is expressed in an earlier context by A.R. Hohlfeld: "The many admirable remarks we have from Goethe on the subject of a 'world literature' are unfortunately not easily accessible in some one definite place. Like so many of his best and most stimulating observations on various important topics, they are scattered through his letters, among reported conversations with friends and visitors, and in a number of reviews and brief critical essays dealing with new publications in the field of foreign, especially English and French literature, and they belong, practically all of them, to the last five or six years of the poet's life" (Hohlfeld 342). Hohlfeld's remarks were delivered in his talk *Goethe's Conception of World Literature* in Chicago in 1928, the same year Strich published his first essay on the same subject (*Goethes Idee einer Weltliteratur* 1928).

[15] There are indeed earlier investigations that use a broad reading of Goethe's works to identify the concept, but none has been as thorough or reached such a wide audience as Strich's book. In the years surrounding World War I, a small resurgence of interest in the concept is noticeable in the German language book market with a number of anthologies devoted to various manifestations of *Weltliteratur*. See also, Georg Brandes, "Weltlitteratur," 1899 (1-5). In her 1915 doctoral dissertation *Zur Entwicklung des Begriffs der Weltliteratur*, Else Beil employs a reading of the intellectual atmosphere from the early Romantics to Goethe in service of the concept of *Weltliteratur*. Whereas Beil considers Goethe's contemporaries and cultural context in the development of the idea, her commitment remains with Goethe as the central figure, also basing her reading of the concept on a sweeping selection of sources throughout Goethe's work such

forthcoming about his methodology in constructing the concept from a broad number of locations. Yet the most striking detail of this constellation of texts is not the range of ambivalent views on the new literary history to come and on technology and communication in the changing world of nineteenth-century Europe, or the sheer fact that it treats personal conversations and letters, written introductions to Carlyle's work, speeches, journal entries and theoretical writings in *Kunst und Alterthum* on equal terms; rather, it is the consistency with which these sometimes conflicting and arguably unrelated remarks are used in the service of *Weltliteratur* as a literary theory in this and resulting academic explorations. A great deal of current work on the matter presents these comments as if they appeared as a single theoretical treatise.[16] It is often taken for granted that Goethe's "view" has been constructed from a multitude of thoughts and has now been substantiated by layers of scholarly attention that have blurred the fragmented origin story of this contested concept. Furthermore, the methodology that binds these various fragments also treats multiple aspects of Goethe's entire life as a progressively developing project of *Weltliteratur*.

Caution must also be practiced in interpreting the role of Strich in creating Goethe's *Weltliteratur*, as his pivotal study of the idea also approaches the matter with a great degree of critical reflection and is careful not to mythologize. Just as Strich's work

---

as journals, private correspondence, literary reviews, and biographical details including the significance of Goethe's journey to Italy.

[16] Strich defines his methodology in gathering and organizing fragments in order to illustrate what he sees as Goethe's *Weltliteratur*, but beyond Strich (and especially *after* Strich) there are countless examples that employ the same mode of organization based exclusively on a predetermined understanding of the concept in gathering and reading the fragments, a mode that contributes largely to a form of patchwork scholarship that gives the illusion of conceptual unity without overtly displaying the act of construction involved in its production (Hohlfeld 339-350); Schrimpf, *Goethes Begriff der Weltliteratur*; Wild 3-11; Birus 5-28).

has added to Goethe's *Weltliteratur*, Strich's Goethe has also evolved at the hands of later scholars. It would be careless and reductive to conclude that Strich alone managed to consolidate a set of ideas and package them as one; yet, it remains important to ask how these fragments, letters, and comments have come to constitute a functional legacy as a single theory through such work, and perhaps more importantly, to ask what the broader implications of this methodology might be if practiced beyond the single Goethean concept. Aside from any abrupt conclusions, it remains an indisputable detail in the conceptual history that Strich's study propelled a popular understanding of the concept by forging a bond between a specific notion of a Goethe-specific *Weltliteratur*, as well as the precise articulation of the previously unknown peripheral elements of the concept.[17] Goethe was undoubtedly concerned at various times with thoughts on a number of cultural, literary, and technological elements he sometimes referred to in discussion of *Weltliteratur*. Strich has given the most detailed account of what this was to Goethe. However, it is also evident that the years of scholarship and debate served as a process of discursive transformation in which this vague idea of *Weltliteratur* became well established in popular academic discourse. The importance of Strich's conceptual contribution is his meticulous reading of the concept throughout a broad spectrum of Goethe's writings and interactions. In its scholarly afterlife, this reading often privileges the concept over the medium of its appearance, entertaining any utterance, conversation, journal entry, letter, or literary work on similar grounds. This is a methodology that relies

---

[17] Ernst Martin argues in his 1899 essay *Goethe über Weltliteratur und Dialektpoesie* that Goethe's albeit first use of the term was nonetheless in the tradition of Herder: "Hier und sonst spricht Goethe das Wort aus, daß er für den gesammten Schatz der Dichtung aller Völker und für ihre gegenseitige literarische Beeinflussung und Benutzung ausgeprägt hat. Er nannte dies die Weltliteratur. Er knüpfte damit an Herder an, der ungefähr in dem gleichen Sinne das Wort Humanität gebraucht hatte (Martin 13).

heavily on the single-author/creator understanding of the concept. Once the idea has been

established, or at least once it is agreed upon that the word itself can be treated as such, it

is then possible to examine the entire corpus of writing in order to reconstruct the

fragmented concept in the name of the author. The resulting examples also raise the

question concerning the limits of a concept. Strich's study employs a sweeping reading of

late Goethe almost as a work in itself. But should the investigation stop simply with

Goethe? How far can one go in search of *Weltliteratur* beyond Goethe? What details of

Goethe's life are not relevant to the construction of the concept?

Strich does indeed look beyond Goethe to consider the Zeitgeist and intellectual

climate of the concept's creation, but he concludes these conceptual detours by clearly

identifying Goethe as the personification of the late eighteenth-century elements that

underscore the developing idea of a world and its literature.

> Es waren die rollende Zeit, das Tempo und die Leichtigkeit
> des modernen Verkehrs zwischen den Völkern, ihr
> Verständigungs- und Friedensbedürfnis nach den
> Napoleonischen Kriegen, der übersteigerte Nationalismus
> der Romantik, das europäische Chaos und nicht zuletzt das
> Christentum als die Relgion der Humanität, wie das 18.
> Jahrhundert es verstanden hatte. Aber alle Quellen, wie sie
> in Zeit und Volk und Überlieferung fließen, führen doch
> schließlich in die innerste der Quellen zurück, ohne die all
> jene anderen doch vergeblich geflossen wären: in den
> inneren Raum der Goetheschen Natur. Die Idee der
> Weltliteratur ist als die reife Frucht des Goetheschen
> Wesens überhaupt entstanden. (Strich 54-55)

"Das Goethesche Wesen," as Strich puts it, becomes the focus extraordinaire of this

moment in intellectual history through a methodology that is largely dependent on the

reading of the man before or always together with the world-literary idea, or one that

makes it difficult to tell the two apart. It is not to dismiss the work of Strich in such a scholarly endeavor as the contribution of his work remains immense. On the contrary, it should be noted that it is because the work's influence has been so great that it now requires closer attention to detail in order to separate it from recent trends that may have been unintentionally formed in the shape of conceptual attributes stemming from, but not owing solely to, Strich's work. What remains important is Strich's focus first and foremost on *Weltliteratur* as a concept inextricably connected to Goethe and the way in which this has been internalized and reproduced in the decades to follow.

Strich's collection of Goethe's varying uses of the term *Weltliteratur* specifically reifies Goethe as the focal point of the investigation in its concentration on the specific term *Weltliteratur*. Yet his focus remains on Goethe's central position in creating and personifying the concept beyond the pure connection to the word itself. There is a strong underlying sense of true admiration for Goethe running throughout Strich's work, a subtextual reiteration that the great poet was simply the right genius at the right time, the perfect communicator of the historical process that was at hand in central Europe, and the proper medium to notice and articulate the coming changes in world and literature: "Die Idee war im Grunde nur die Deutung und Formulierung eines sehr realen, historischen Prozesses, dem Goethe beiwohnte, den er mit höchster Aufmerksamkeit verfolgte, und der ihm sagte, daß ein neues Zeitalter der Literatur im Anbruch sei" (Strich 69). Thus, beyond the index of applied terminology, Goethe's interest in the historical process of world literature may also be seen beyond the exact use of the term itself. In his summary

47

of Goethe's idea, Strich presents *Weltliteratur* as a utopian forum for cultural exchange between nations.

> Weltliteratur also ist nach Goethe die zwischen den
> Nationalliteraturen und damit zwischen den Nationen
> überhaupt vermittelnde und ihre ideellen Güter
> austauschende Literatur. Sie umfaßt alles, wodurch sich die
> Völker auf literarischem Wege gegenseitig kennen,
> verstehen, beurteilen, schätzen und dulden lernen, alles,
> was sie auf literarischem Wege einander näherrückt und
> verbindet. Sie ist ein literarischer Brückenbau über
> trennende Ströme, ein geistiger Straßenbau über trennende
> Gebirge. Sie ist ein geistiger Güteraustausch, ein ideeller
> Handelsverkehr zwischen den Völkern, ein literarischer
> Weltmarkt, auf den die Nationen die Nationen ihre
> geistiger Schätze zum Austausch bringen. (Strich 16)[18]

The language of Strich's synopsis exemplifies the core characteristic of a literary system of interconnected parts throughout the world, but it also utilizes the metaphors and symbolism of transportation and physical communication between the no-longer separate parts of the world ("Brückenbau über trennende Ströme," "Straßenbau über trennende Gebirge"), of industry and market exchange ("literarischer Weltmarkt," "ideeller Handelsverkehr," and "Austausch geistiger Schätze"). With these metaphoric understandings of the world of letters, Strich effectively reads Goethe's musings within a growing undercurrent of an emerging global consciousness through models and figurative language in economics, industry, and technology around 1800, models that will gain in importance in the course of this investigation.

---

[18] Strich follows this summary be noting that Goethe himself employed the imagery of the world exchange in his writings (Strich 16). Although he is not specific in naming his reference, it can be assumed with near certainty that Strich is referring to Goethe's allusions to market forces both in the sense of *freier geistiger Handelsverkehr* and in the sense of the German language as the auxiliary literary language for an international cultural trade, as in his comments in his letter to Carlyle (July, 20 1827) : "Wer die deutsche Sprache versteht und studirt befindet sich auf dem Markte wo alle Nationen ihre Waren anbieten […]." (Goethe 18.2: 237).

With this pronouncement of the Goethean idea, Strich summarizes elements of the concept without necessarily depending on the direct applications of the term in Goethe's oeuvre. The sheer emphasis on the process of the global marketplace of ideas and literatures, while indeed addressed by Goethe, is not directly referenced in Strich's appendix as it does not contain the term itself, yet its centrality to the concept is explicitly articulated and palpable throughout Strich's study and among its many conceptual successors. This market, communication, and transportation symbolism in Goethe (and reiterated by Strich) underscores a larger current in the contemporary intellectual history of an early global awareness and its specifically literary manifestations.

Freier geistiger Handelsverkehr

The notion of global intellectual exchange that is so central to Goethe's *Weltliteratur* can be traced in part to one of the passages collected in Strich's twenty citations. In his 1830 introduction to Thomas Carlyle's *Life of Schiller*, Goethe explicitly addresses an *allgemeine Weltliteratur* as the result of a process of intellectual exchange throughout the world.

> Es ist schon einige Zeit von einer allgemeinen Weltliteratur
> die Rede, und zwar nicht mit Unrecht: denn die
> sämmtlichen Nationen, in den fürchterlichsten Kriegen
> durch einander geschüttelt, sodann wieder auf sich selbst
> einzeln zurückgeführt, hatten zu bemerken, daß sie
> manches Fremdes gewahr worden, in sich aufgenommen,
> bisher unbekannte geistige Bedürfnisse hie und da
> empfunden. Daraus entstand das Gefühl nachbarlicher
> Verhältnisse, und anstatt daß man sich bisher
> zugeschlossen hatte, kam der Geist nach und nach zu dem
> Verlangen, auch in den mehr oder weniger freyen geistigen

Handelsverkehr mit aufgenommen zu werden. (Goethe
18.2: 180-181)

In terms of the discursive history of the concept, the term *freier geistiger Handelsverkehr*

is nearly as significant as the term *Weltliteratur* itself. In it we see a descriptive notion of

the intellectual global market and the beginnings of the European discipline of

comparative literature.[19] The importance of the phrase in the construction of the concept

has been largely documented and is now established as a concrete pillar supporting

understandings of world literary space in the eighteenth/nineteenth century European

contexts as well as today.[20]

In addition to appearing alongside the term *Weltliteratur* in the introduction to

Carlyle's biography of Schiller, *freier geistiger Handelsverkehr* describes with more

clarity what *Weltliteratur* is thought to be. The depiction of a free world-market exchange

---

[19] Market metaphors of this sort are elaborated upon by Strich throughout his monograph. In addition to direct references to the world market of cultural exchange, he also likens the circulation of cultural goods throughout the world to the circulation of different world currencies, an economic model for a global utopian ideal (Strich 23). Koch argues that the market metaphor of intellectual exchange in Goethe's letter to Carlyle has assisted in establishing conceptual stability to the notion of *Weltliteratur* beyond the descriptive shortcomings of a coherent literary model: "Eine Goethesche Theorie der Weltliteratur gibt es nicht. Goethe hat bekanntlich sehr bewußt auf eine systematische Darstellung seiner Überlegung zu diesem Phänomen verzichtet und es bei Sprüchen und mehr oder minder detaillierten Hinweisen in Unterhaltungen, Briefen, Notizen, Aphorismen, Zeitschriftenartikeln und Rezensionen belassen. Wer Goethes Konzept der Weltliteratur rekonstruieren will, hat deshalb um so genauer auf Kohärensfaktoren anderer Art zu achten, beispielsweise auf Metaphernfelder. Früh schon wurde bemerkt, daß die Äußerungen zur Weltliteratur durch eine deutlich Rekurrenz ökonomischer Metaphern gekennzeichnet sind" (Koch 2007: 117)

[20] An exhaustive list of *freier geistiger Handelsverkehr* in direct service to late conceptions of Goethe's *Weltliteratur* is not possible within the limited scope of this investigation; however, a number of notable examples demonstrate without absolute coverage the central position this concept occupies within the scholarship: (Hohlfeld 345-346; Schrimpf 45-48; Guthke 2001:155; Madsen 73-74; Prendergast 7; Casanova 14). Manfred Koch identifies *geistiger Handelsverkehr* not only as a vital element in the construction of Goethe's concept, but also as a paradigmatic aspect of exchange and communication within the intellectual community of Enlightenment Europe. In this view, the metaphor of the emerging intellectual commerce is emblematic of both Goethe's *Weltliteratur* and a considerable shift in intellectual history through a restructuring of modes of knowledge and communication. The stability of *freier geistiger Handelsverkehr* as a mainstay of Goethean *Weltliteratur* is additionally evident in: (Bohnenkamp/Martinez 10-11).

of cultural goods represents not just the final world-product of the utopian exchange, but also hints at the process with which it is thought to occur, a model of global cultural-capital flow with the visionary results of intercultural communication, influence, and mutual appreciation. It is therefore not surprising that, as a focal point in the study of the concept, *freier geistiger Handelsverkehr* is sought throughout Goethe's works with a frequency comparable to his use of the term *Weltliteratur*.

Freier geistiger Handelsverkehr marks a movement in the scholarly narrative of world literature. It is the conceptual companion of the word *Weltliteratur*, a break from the logocentric dependence in Goethe's works, and something of a description of the subject at hand (albeit still vague). Strich's appendix of uses clearly exhibits an important step in the foundation of the specific concept by collecting the fragments of Goethe's *Weltliteratur* with a methodology that first identifies the various appearances of the word. The collection of these sources is dependent on two aspects: the direct use of the term and Goethe as its single author. Yet Strich's presentation of the idea also includes elements in Goethean *Weltliteratur* since the nineteenth century which have not been solely dependent on the word (and in a few cases also not on Goethe). He examines, for example, the active intellectual exchange between Goethe and his contemporaries, the development of world and comparative literatures in a disciplinary sense, and literary history amidst changing conditions of nationalism and identity. Strich also elaborates on the history of the notion with a conceptual branching out brought on by the emergence of, among others, *freier geistiger Handelsverkehr* as a peripheral concept to the term *Weltliteratur*. This late (1830) appearance gives the impression of a much more mature

concept. It provides a more evocative illustration than the simple compound noun and suggests more descriptively what is meant by this otherwise vague term.

Together, Goethe's direct comments on *Weltliteratur* and his descriptive elements of *freier geistiger Handelsverkehr* enact a sort of conceptual branding, a process of legitimatization through proximity in which the metaphor of cultural exchange, market, and traffic becomes the ordained, deputized, or otherwise confirmed companion to the term *Weltliteratur* itself. The implication of this is that it advances the concept beyond the mere word and invites an exploration of what appears to be Goethe's idea, not simply in the twenty exact moments of the applied terminology, but also in the conceptual patterns of intercultural commerce through literature. In consideration of the peripheral aspects of the concept via the statement concerning *freier geistiger Handelsverkehr*, a similar trend in the methodology of this sort of reading is thus also visible; it is a broad reading of *freier geistiger Handelsverkehr* throughout an equally diverse spectrum of sources in Goethe's oeuvre.[21] As a mode of reading the concept, the focus on these elements throughout Goethe's works represents the formation of the dominant understanding of the concept and its seemingly intrinsic connection to Goethe. The concept becomes as visible through *freier geistiger Handelsverkehr* as through the direct application of the term. But just as with the term *Weltliteratur*, as in the scholarship

---

[21] In pursuing the conceptual genealogy of the idea, it is evident that the identification of *freier geistiger Handelsverkehr* broadened the concept by opening up an additional connecting point with which related notions could be joined in the service of the single thought: "Die Rede vom 'mehr oder weniger freien geistigen Handelsverkehr,' an dem die gebildeten Köpfe neuerdings nach dem Vorbild des vermehrten 'Warenhandels' teilzunehmen wünschen – sie stammt aus der Carlyle-Rezension von 1830 -, ist dabei nur das berühmteste Beispiel. Andernorts spricht Goethe vom 'Weltumlauf' der Ideen oder vom modernen 'Freihandel der Begriffe und Gefühle.' Die Beispiele ließen sich mehren, an Einzelwerken wie dem West-östlichen Divan, wie Goethe eine ganze Poetik der Moderne im Zeichen des Warenhandels und der Geldzirkulation entwirft" (Koch 2007: 117).

devoted to it, what remains is the focus on Goethe as a point of departure. Meanwhile, the potential of the untouched parallels to *freier geistiger Handelsverkehr* in Goethe's intellectual climate remain largely underexplored.

To extend the notion of *Weltliteratur* beyond the simple use of the word via market metaphors is also to complicate the single origin notion of the same idea. The progressive movement of the academic narrative is visible in Thomas Bleicher's *Novalis und die Idee der Weltliteratur* (1979). Bleicher argues that pre-ideas of such *Weltliteratur* are to be found in the work of Novalis, an argument that is exemplified by the specific pairing of Goethe's Carlyle introduction with a similar fragment concerning the market of cultural wares by Novalis: "Der Handelsgeist ist der Geist der Welt. Er ist der großartige Geist schlechthin. Er setzt alles in Bewegung und verbindet alles. Er weckt Länder und Städte – Nationen und Kunstwercke. Er ist der Geist der Kultur – der Vervollkommnung des Menschengeschlechts" (Bleicher 254).[22] The connection to Novalis is based on the established stability of the market metaphor as an element of the Goethe-specific idea. Novalis too viewed culture (and with it literature) in terms of an expanded sense of globality through the advancement of an awareness of global capitalism. Here we can observe the strength of academic narrative in its movement, which in this case, moves backward in time and beyond Goethe's own works without challenging Goethe's specific authority in the concept.

As in the transition from the term to a broader concept of intellectual commerce in global space, the identification of themes of *freier geistiger Handelsverkehr* also brings

---

[22] Upholding Goethe's position of authority, Bleicher states clearly that his findings on Novalis are indicative only of precursors to concept, not of the concept itself (Bleicher 255).

about a broader reading of all sorts of *Handelsverkehr* as metaphoric representations of the world-literary idea. Nowhere is this more evident than in the correlation between *Weltliteratur* and the metaphor of canals and other waterways of global exchange. Less than a month after his most celebrated remarks on *Weltliteratur*, Goethe had another moment of prophecy. Eckermann reports another dining table conversation in which Goethe, remarking with interest on the travels of Alexander von Humboldt around Cuba and the Caribbean, explains the importance of creating a canal at the Gulf of Mexico to connect the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans:

> So viel ist aber gewiß, gelänge ein Durchstich der Art, daß
> man mit Schiffen von jeder Ladung und jeder Größe durch
> solchen Kanal aus dem Mexikanischen Meersbusen in den
> Stillen Ozean fahren könnte, so würden daraus für die
> ganze zivilisierte und nicht zivilisierte Menschheit ganz
> unberechenbare Resultate hervorgehen. (Goethe 19: 538)

Humboldt, according to Goethe, had made him aware of the significance of such a pathway and its real possibility in Panama. What is remarkable about this ides is not simply Goethe's recognition of the benefits of a canal at Panama for the expansion of trade and travel, it is his prophetic musings on the likelihood that what he saw as the ambitious young nation of the United States should include such an endeavor in their westward intentions: "Es ist für die Vereinigten Staaten durchaus unerläßich, daß sie sich eine Durchfahrt aus dem Mexikanischen Meerbusen in den Stillen Ozean bewerkstelligen, und ich bin gewiß daß sie es erreichen" (Goethe 19: 538-539).[23] Such a

---

[23] Koch casts some doubt on the accuracy of Eckermann's account due to Goethe's earlier mentioning of the canal project in his journal: "[…]es ist schwer zu entscheiden, was authentische Goethe-Äußerung gewesen sein mag, und was Eckermann ihm retrospektiv in den Mund legt. Daß Goethe von dem *amerikanischen* Kanalprojekt fasziniert war, bezeugen jedenfalls die Tagebücher der 20er Jahre" (Koch 2005: 55). Whether or not Koch's suspicion is valid or not is insignificant in changing the stability with

venture, according to Goethe, would secure a great trade route between China, the East

Indies, and the United States, and lead to a great interconnectivity of world commerce.

Continuing this contemporary global speculation, Goethe then outlines his other wishes

for the future he will likely not live to see.

> Dieses möchte ich erleben, aber ich werde es nicht.
> Zweitens möchte ich erleben, eine Verbindung der Donau
> mit dem Rhein hergestellt zu sehen. Aber dieses
> Unternehmen ist gleichfalls so riesenhaft, daß ich an der
> Ausführung zweifle, zumal in Erwägung unserer deutschen
> Mittel. Und endlich drittens möchte ich die Engländer im
> Besitz eines Kanals von Suez sehen. Diese drei großen
> Dinge möchte ich erleben, und so es wäre wohl der Mühe
> wert ihnen zuliebe es noch einige fünfzig Jahre
> auszuhalten. (Goethe 19: 539)

Goethe's prophecy has now come to pass and more or less in the order he envisioned it.[24]

Such predictions of the technological advancements of trade and travel are

impressive by sheer articulation and accuracy, but are they indeed inadvertent reflections

of the concept of *Weltliteratur*? It is necessary to question the institutional factors that

contribute to the seamless transition between Goethe's thoughts on waterways in Latin

America and the impending literary world, and yet, taking as a point of departure the

established narrative of Goethe's *Weltliteratur* to explore the peripheral elements of the

same idea results in a self-reflexive reading in which the object of inquiry is always

already determined by the inquiry itself. The value of Goethe's insights on an emerging

---

which Goethe's remarks of Feb. 1827 (on the canals and river projects) are referred to in the academic discourse concerning the concept of *Weltliteratur*.

[24] The construction of the Panama Canal began within the fifty years that Goethe predicted and was completed as suggested by decree of the American government following a number of treaties, precarious diplomatic relations, and corporate interventions. The Suez Canal was opened in 1869 and, although certainly not without major political repercussions, was indeed in the hands of the British for some time. Finally, and perhaps as Goethe's pessimism indicates, the Rhine-Main-Danube-Canal was completed well beyond Goethe's years in 1992.

global-literary consciousness can be preserved by challenging the previously established

delineation between a narrative that opts only for the prophecies of the single thinker or

its complete dismissal in the reduction of the poet to merely one voice in an intellectual

community that was collectively concerned with related aspects. In order to avoid

polarization of this sort, it is necessary to look at the descriptive quality of Goethe's

remarks on the matter and examine them as both founding moments of discursive

influence and also poignant expressions delivered through the figurative language and

models (of real-existing media) that were in place in his lifetime.

Peter Madsen reads Goethe's interest in the expansion of waterways as a part of

metaphor of trade as a model of cultural exchange, made possible by what was viewed as

the opening of the world (Madsen 71). In this model, the ever-expanding reach of global

capitalism brings with it a process of interaction between the various nations, the

exchange of *geistiger Handelsverkehr*. This idea, so acknowledges Madsen, was

originally expressed by Hans Joachim Schrimpf, another key figure in the establishment

of Goethean *Weltliteratur* as a stabile academic narrative:

> Die Beziehung zu Goethes Interesse am Bau des
> Panamakanals wird deutlich: wie die künstlichen
> Wasserwege Grenzen sprengen und Meere, Kontinente und
> Völker miteinander verbinden, so sollen Weltfrömmigkeit
> und Weltbildung die Abgeschlossenheit und
> Selbstgenügsamkeit der Konfessionen und Nationen
> gegeneinander aufheben. Der Gedanke der
> Weltkommunikation, von Goethe in diesen Jahren auch
> 'Weltumlauf' und 'Weltverkehr' genannt, ist es, der auf
> solche Weise völkerverbindende Kanäle, Konfessionen
> überbrückende Frömmigkeit und weltweite Gesitesbildung
> zusammenbringt. (Schrimpf 12)

Schrimpf's reading articulates the critical connection between Goethe's interest in the new means of interconnectivity in the world and its implications for a new literary system. Goethe's language of market exchange and his borrowing from transportation and communication technologies cannot be overlooked. Considered alone, however, Goethe's attention to expanding trade routes also runs the risk of becoming a common reading akin to the *Mehr Licht!* interpretation of the deathbed scene. Through repetition of the *Weltliteratur* origin story, the models and metaphors of canals, international communication, and peaceful coexistence through exchange become easily relegated to symptoms of Goethe's *Weltliteratur* as a stable concept and not, fitting as such classification would be, as leading models for understanding the developing global contours of world space and with it the changing consideration of literature within this new space.

Thus, it is clearly tempting to read *Weltliteratur* into Goethe's thoughts on Panama and Egypt – this is arguably among the most significant details of the concept – but it is also necessary to challenge the gravitational pull of the academic discourse of *Weltliteratur* in order to resist one-sided interpretations that then regard Goethe's fascination with canals and connectivity purely and only within the context of the narrative that has been constructed around the vague literary epoch suggested by Goethe around the same time. Taken by itself, Schrimpf's reading of the canals as a means of intellectual commerce is a valuable contribution to understanding Goethe's relationship to space and communication, but in terms of the conceptual history, it is also apparent that these articulations contribute to a progressive stabilization of the idea as a reality, a

process in which the canal aspect of the theory appears to become a fact by sheer repetition. In the development of the academic narrative, the introduction of clearly articulated connections to such ideas functions as a turning point of sorts, a movement beginning with the term itself, branching out through related concepts such as *geistiger Handelsverkehr*, and then onto further metaphoric readings of *Handel*, *Verkehr*, *Kanäle*, etc. As in the other cases, the focus remains bound to Goethe while expanding outward to develop as the stable concept by one man. The outward impetus of this movement rightly approaches the discursive elements of metaphors and models for a new world imagination with which Goethe hinted at the new era, and the growing awareness of a new world consciousness, but the potential of this approach can be first revealed by pursuing both Goethe and his intellectual surroundings without adherence to one side or the other.

The growing ubiquity of the metaphoric language of connectivity assists in emphasizing other peripheral concepts hovering around the established center. These examples demonstrate the way in which the entire concept is made up of multiple threads that reach further into the entire life works of the writer. As a concept, Goethe's *Weltliteratur* appears to have a degree of coherence, but this is the at times misleading result of the now firmly recognized scholarly discourse that has been created by consolidating the multitude of fragments and connecting the otherwise unrelated threads. It is largely a narrative that is stitched together from other fragments. Although it is rather indisputable that Goethe was interested in the changing face of the world, the ultimate connection to a theory of *Weltliteratur* is in part an act of academic construction. This is

an impasse in the previous scholarship. On the one hand, a great deal of the excellent

work on the notion of Goethe's *Weltliteratur* has rightfully and thoroughly identified

Goethe's fascination with a newfound sense of the world as an interconnected whole, but

these poignant observations and archival finds have been gathered first around the notion

of Goethe's *Weltliteratur* as a stable idea; the concept thus precedes the findings. As

such, previous investigations, despite their contributions, have overlooked the greater

epistemological shifts which influenced the poet and in which he was so clearly a crucial

agent.

The canal metaphor presents a coherent model of the conceptual genealogy as it

has been developed by the academic narrative: through the collection and continued

reproduction of fragments, Goethe's speculation on the importance of the Panama and

Suez Canals becomes linked with the concept of *Weltliteratur* as it demonstrated his

interest in world commerce and the changing landscape of world geography. The effect

of this process is the gradual adding of links with which to read other, always Goethe-

centric aspects as elements of the final goal supporting the world-literary ideal. John

Noyes explores Goethe's life-long interest in cartography as a representation of his

thoughts on global commerce (intellectual and actual), national territoriality, and

geographical expansion, arguing that these thoughts are articulated in the idea of

Weltliteratur.[25] Guthke presents similar research on Goethe's fascination with travel

reports, English cosmopolitan visitors to Weimar, and a library of maps representing the

---

[25] Noyes reads the concept of *Weltliteratur* in terms of the changing face of world and specifically European cartography within Goethe's lifetime. This particular approach to the Goethe-specific notion of *Weltliteratur* is also dependent on the broad reading of Goethe's life in its exploration of his relationship to world cartography even decades before his thoughts on the world context of literature. See: (Noyes 128-145).

expanding knowledge of world space, or in short Goethe's cultivated *Weltbürgertum*.[26] Such readings are based on well documented evidence of Goethe's interest in the expanding world as both a figurative and literal space. These aspects serve to exemplify the concept as the final stage in a long-standing development of a world-consciousness in Goethe. However, they also exhibit the continued process of reading the life of Goethe as a fragment of the *Weltliteratur* concept, a progressive reaching into further metaphors, actions, and circumstance of the poet's life in the search for a predetermined idea. In simultaneous inspection of the scholarly trajectory of the fabled concept and Goethe's life and works, the task at hand presents itself as a challenge to untie the crossed wires and reveal the way in which *Weltliteratur* appears to be something of a conceptual anachronism grafted on to the many interests of the celebrated polymath alone.

The function of waterways in the establishment of Goethe's concept is crucial in depicting an increasingly interconnected world space that is physically bound by technological advancements, but whose outcome is more significantly the cultural/intellectual interconnectivity between once hostel nations. The metaphoric figure of the canal also functions as another example of the way in which the concept is formed and what the term *Weltliteratur* has also come to signify through a progressive

---

[26] Guthke's *Goethes Weimar und »Die Grosse Öffnung in die weite Welt* addresses the working examples of Goethe's world-literary thoughts and applied intellectual commerce through a thorough investigation of Weimar as a central node in the growing world-network of cultural trade. While his study situates the *Weltliteratur* idea within a larger community of intellectuals and with a plurality of contributing factors, it is nonetheless also indicative of the methodology that extends to multiple facets of Goethe's life in search of the concept. This is most evident in the detailed reading of Goethe's specific involvement in creating and maintaining the library at Weimar (including lists of travel books ordered for the library, correspondence with Johann Christian Hüttner in England, and close readings of journal entries referring to sections on specific works of travel literature, maps, etc.). The focus rests on Goethe's interest in the social and physical geography of the world, but in terms of the academic narrative of *Weltliteratur*, these pre-concept biographical details appear to be inseparable from the other elements of the concept.

branching-out in the scholarship. If the notion has grown from a mere compound noun of *Welt* and *Literatur* to include a process of global intellectual exchange, then the conceptual development of *freier geistiger Handelsverkehr* is of comparable significance in the further development of literary models conceived through or as canals and travel ways.[27] Yet there remain still further examples of such progressive developments in the creation of the concept. By once again consulting fragments of speeches, letters, and writings that include the term *Weltliteratur*, the Goethe-specific idea expands throughout the further exploration of the context in which it appears, a process evident in reviewing the construction of Goethean *Weltliteratur* within the framework of world communication and world travel.

In a speech to a community of scientists and doctors in 1828 (*Zu den Versammlungen Deutscher Naturforscher und Ärzte*), Goethe proclaimed:

> Wenn wir eine europäische, ja allgemeine Weltliteratur zu verkündigen gewagt haben, so heißt dieses nicht, daß die verschiedenen Nationen von einander und ihren Erzeugnissen Kenntnis nehmen, denn in diesem Sinne existiert sie schon lange, setzt sich fort und erneuert sich mehr oder weniger; Nein! hier ist vielmehr davon die Rede, daß die lebendigen und strebenden Literatoren einander kennen lernen und durch Neigung und Gemeinsinn sich veranlaßt finden gesellschaftlich zu wirken. Dieses wird aber mehr durch Reisende als Korrespondenz bewirkt, indem ja persönlicher Gegenwart ganz allein gelingt das wahre Verhältnis unter Menschen zu bestimmen und zu befestigen. (Goethe, 18.2: 357)

---

[27] An increase in compound nouns beginning with "Welt" occurred in the German language at the turn of nineteenth century as symptoms of the growing global consciousness and changing relationship with time and space. See: (Koch 2005: 53).

In this speech Goethe draws a direct connection between *Weltliteratur* and the exchange of the international literary community. Here he emphasizes the function of personal communication, through traveling and face-to-face interaction, over correspondence and exchange through journals. The effect of the fragment occurs in the coupling of the term with the mechanics of a developing international community through the changing modes of communication and travel, an element that has been widely explored by scholars devoted to the world literary context. This now inseparable element and crucial media feature of any global context gains its legitimacy for the context of *Weltliteratur* by its sheer proximity to the term. In the progression of the scholarship, the addition of travel and communication technologies contributes to the widening framework while maintaining the starting point and critical center of Goethe.

The mechanics and effects of world communication gain authority in the framework of Goethe's *Weltliteratur* as coded, embedded thoughts on the coming epoch of world literary space. In a letter to Thomas Carlyle (8.8.1828), Goethe writes of the increasing process of exchange through developments in transportation technology and communication, with contradictory praise of the improvement in the circulation of precisely the impersonal cultural artifacts of literary journals.

> Wie durch Schnellposten und Dampfschiffe rücken auch durch Tages-, Wochen- und Monatsschriften die Nationen mehr aneinander, und ich werde, so lang es mir vergönnt ist, meine Aufmerksamkeit besonders auch auf diesen wechselseitigen Austausch zu wenden haben… lassen Sie uns der eröffneten Communication immer freyer gebrauchen! (Goethe 44: 201)

Here the reference to *Dampfschiffe* and *Schnellposten* appears as a sort of qualification of conflicting comments he wrote to Zelter on June 6, 1825:

> Reichthum und Schnelligkeit ist was die Welt bewundert
> und wornach jeder strebt; Eisenbahnen, Schnellposten,
> Dampfschiffe und alle mögliche Fazilitäten der
> Kommunikation sind es worauf die gebildete Welt ausgeht,
> sich zu überbieten, zu überbilden und dadurch in der
> Mittelmäßigkeit zu verharren. Und das ist auch der Resultat
> der Allgemeinheit, daß eine mittlere Kultur gemein werde.
> (Goethe 20.1: 851)

In this example, we see a different take on the means of travel and communication. The increasing speed of impending modernity has the effect of cultural homogenization and mediocrity. The invariant thread connecting these otherwise scattered fragments (other than that they emanate from the same source) is their mutual stake in the gradual emergence of a world network of sorts. Postal communication and transportation technology clearly occupy a pivotal position in the emerging world network and global consciousness.

The ambivalence of Goethe's scattered remarks on communication and technology is widely acknowledged.[28] Yet the most striking detail of this constellation of texts is not the range of ambivalent views on technology and communication in the changing world of nineteenth-century Europe (part of this very ambivalence is the product of being read in the specific context of the world literary era at hand); rather, it is the consistency with which these elements emerge as one and the way in which their final

---

[28] In his study of Goethe and the ambivalence of *Weltliteratur*, Koch offers perhaps the most concise illustration of the precarious construction of the stable idea and its discursive peripheries (Koch 2005: 52-67).

appearance contributes to a literary theory based on the focal point of Goethe's entire life as a text.

In reviewing the way in which the concept of Goethean *Weltliteratur* is established as the object of scholarly interest, there are several points that require reiteration. Strich's organization of Goethe's twenty uses of the term shows a method of reading based on an agreement of the term and its author, leaving the entire scope of Goethe's career and all sorts of materials eligible in the search for *Weltliteratur*. *Freier geistiger Handelsverkehr* and further elements of world commerce and circulation expand the search beyond the word by opening up and validating conceptual characteristic through metaphors of market, exchange, and global circulation. Yet the adherence to the authority of authorship and the broad reading that treats the entirety of Goethe's life and works with equal interest remains the same. It is a methodology that depends on the stability of the center, the authority of the author, the consistency of intention, all of which, in this case, are attributed to Goethe. This mode of reading fails to do its subject justice by eliminating the relevant characters, trends, and ideas that constitute the environment in which this unified author exists.

Toward the Peripheries of Goethe's *Weltliteratur*

If the search for the concept is applicable to matters beyond Goethe's specific use of the term in order to identify a larger life-long development of *Weltliteratur*, it is only logical to look beyond Goethe and examine where the latent interest in world commerce and circulation of literary/cultural matters occurs in his intellectual environment. How does

the opening of the world manifest in other areas of the intellectual atmosphere of the time? What about the world cartography beyond the library at Weimar? What were the competing opinions of world travel and exchange and how do they coincide with the world of literature in nineteenth-century Europe? These questions not only serve to interrogate the conceptual peripheries of Goethe's *Weltliteratur* by examining the idea within a greater pattern of conceptual trends fostered by the availability of materials and novel imaginations of world space; these questions also enact the first steps toward an investigation that reverses the past order of inquiry in which metaphors and models of knowing based on interconnectivity, increased attention to travel, new-world cartographies, and shifting epistemologies spurred by technological advancements are read solely as symptomatic of Goethe's *Weltliteratur*. Instead, it is possible to retain Goethe's clear engagement with the critical undercurrent of something like a new consciousness of the world without opting for a narrative whose sole departure point is *Weltliteratur* alone.

Goethe's musings on canals and communication are commonly associated with the concept of *Weltliteratur* because they demonstrate an understanding of the increasingly interconnected physical world as a reflection of the intellectual/literary world. The changing face of the physical map corresponds with that of the developing republic of letters and a changing commensurability of national literatures. The world map unfolded with a pronounced period of European exploration during Goethe's lifetime, presenting a nearly complete cartography of world space around the time of his now famous proclamation of the coming literary epoch in January 1827.

65

However, Goethe was far from the only one interested in the expansion of the world and literature in and of such a changing world. In fact, at this time there was an explosion of popular interest in all things far and exotic in terms of travel and expanding awareness of world geography. In her influential study on the latent colonial desire in pre-colonial German literature, Susanne Zantop identifies travel reports and literature as a predominant interest of eighteenth-century German readership. Zantop describes a "travel mania" evident in the massive increase in travelogue-book consumption in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, noting also that such travel literature "had become so popular that even geographic compendia tended to appear under the rubric of 'travelogue' in order to attract a wider public[…]" (Zantop 32). The breadth of the travel literature permeated the book market of the time and created an awareness and interest in the foreign world without the reality of traveling.

> Histories, geographies, and philosophical 'investigations'
> mapped, classified, and ordered this [travel and geographic]
> information; political articles actualized and complemented
> travel accounts; journals excerpted them; and book reviews
> commented on them. In their totality, these writings
> engaged all armchair travelers in a constant dialogue on
> and textualization of an ever more known and ever more
> accessible world[…] (Zantop 34)

Goethe's fascination with the world coincides precisely with the travel mania in increased book production in the German intellectual scene, a trend reflected in the work of Noyes and Guthke as applied to the specific context of Goethean *Weltliteratur*. Through correspondence with Humboldt and conversations with Georg Forster, Goethe was indeed enthralled with travel reports, geography, and the changing world. But these interests were not exclusively his.

Whereas Goethe's interest in geography seems to reflect the world elements of

Weltliteratur, it should be noted that the changing discipline of geography also performed

a specific role in the intellectual life of the turn of the century, particularly around the

time of his growing interest in maps and travelogues. Among dramatic changes in the

study of geography largely brought about by Carl Ritter and Alexander von Humboldt,

modern geography in the German context found its beginnings in the exact period of

Goethe's interest in geographic change and something of a new literary epoch. Chenxi

Tang regards this period in terms of the formative changes in the organization of

geographic knowledge. As a period defined, not only by an "exponential increase in the

quantity of geographic knowledge generated by intensifying travel activities and the

commercially driven book market," but also by the new mode of knowing it produced,

the reorganization of geographic knowledge can be read alongside Goethe's similar

interest in the world expansion through water ways (Tang 33). As a corollary of such

reorganization, Tang contends:

> Indeed the flowering of natural history, statistics, and
> ethnography—and by the same token, the rapid growth of
> natural and political geography—was all a piece of the
> spate of travel activities that earned the late eighteenth
> century the reputation of the second age of discovery.
> During this period, well developed road networks and
> regular, speedy postal services facilitated traveling and
> long-distance communication within Europe; revolutionary
> improvements in navigation technologies—including
> shipbuilding, charting, and onboard logistics—made
> intercontinental travel both safe and fast. (Tang 34)

Tang describes a critical shift based on a rapidly changing relationship between time and

space, the organization of knowledge, and a growing awareness of the interconnectivity

of once strictly foreign places – a shift whose parallels to the established idea of a new global literariness are not to be overlooked.

The realm of travel literature had been widely expanded at the end of the eighteenth century, holding specific importance for the intellectual commerce and status of the upper and educated classes. In his study of travel reports in Enlightenment Germany, Hans Erich Bödeker describes an intellectual community shaped by a fascination with the world and the developing interconnectivity facilitated by travel and its resulting interpersonal communication and intercultural contact. One of the most remarkable aspects of Bödecker's research is the uncanny parallel to what is commonly considered Goethe's theory of *Weltliteratur*. In discussion of the travels of explorer Georg Forster, he describes, in effect, the development of an intellectual economy through travel and communication, a sort of *freier geistiger Handelsverkehr*.

> Forster beobachtete auf der Fahrt von Aachen nach Lüttich im Jahr 1790, wieviele "neue Ideen im Umlauf" seien, die noch zehn Jahre zuvor als ausgefallen und fremd abgelehnt worden wären. Die Reisenden hielten die Diskussionen, das Gespräch der Gebildeten fest; und indem sie diese Diskussion publizierten, initiierten sie weitere. Gerade das Wechselspiel zwischen Zeitschriften und Reisebeschreibungen als Kennzeichen für ein dichter werdendes Netz überregionaler solzialer Kommunikation ist für diesen Prozeß aufschlußreich. (Bödeker 107-108)

For Bödeker, the exchange between travel literature/reports and increasing scholarly periodicals is "ein dichter werdendes Netz überregionaler solzialer Kommunikation," which is also a perhaps inadvertent summary of what *Weltliteratur* is about. Such a communication network, in Forster's explanation, describes a developing unity of

cultural consciousness through the increasing exchange of information via new media

and modes of transmission. Without a brand name or a central figure, we can nonetheless

identify the network, and the gradual awareness thereof, not as a side note to the concept

of *Weltliteratur*, but as an essential and inseparable issue that requires more exploration

beyond the established narrative as it has come to be.

      Bödecker conveys the way in which travel and expanding geographical awareness

function to form a network of communication and channels of intellectual interaction.

Through Forster's observations, he illustrates an almost exact parallel between the

perceived expansion of the world and the creation of a global economy of literatures

produced by a seemingly free intellectual commerce. In this relatively new context of the

eighteenth century, travelers were not merely moving through physical space, but were

also carriers of information within a larger network of information exchange, or

participants in continuous conversation that fostered an awareness of the growing

interconnection (Bödeker 104-105). The journals, travelogues, and personal contact of

these messengers created and perpetuated a public fascination of all aspects of this

exchange. As early as 1785 the economy of material and intellectual exchange was being

discussed in terms of the postal system, again reflecting one of the central aspects of

Goethe's interest in the increasing communication processes in the later years of his life.

> Das Postwesen gehört unstreitig zu der kleinen Zahl von
> Erfindungen, auf denen die ganze Kultur unserer heutigen,
> so sehr verfeinerten Staaten wie auf Grundsäule ruht. Ohne
> Postwesen wäre unsere Weltkunde voll Gebrechen, alles
> kaufmännische und literarische Kommerz beinahe
> unmöglich, und die Kreise der Freundschaft, dieses beste

Glück der Menschheit, auf den engen Bezirk unserer
körperlichen Gegenwart eingeschränkt.[29] (Bödeker 105)

Returning to Goethe's letters to Carlyle and Zelter decades later, we can observe a similar function of the postal system in the development of an intellectual network of sorts. Posselt goes so far as to name "literarische Kommerz" among the positive new attributes of an emergent world community as a result of postal communication channels, noting the fundamental connection between the cultural exchange of travel and postal communication with the exchange of knowledge fostered by the material trade of literary texts in a growing world-literary economy.

The growing attention to notions of movement, exchange, circulation, and changing world geography points toward the gradual shifting of intellectual conditions concerning the flow of knowledge in the changing world space. The increases in the physical means of communication and movement confirm Forster's "dichter werdendes Netz," the developing world-network to rupture previously dominant modes of thought with its modern intervention in the exchange of information.[30] Koch identifies the significance of precisely this sort of network in the language of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, noting the shift toward a network consciousness which coincides with the development of the modern era. The capitalist focus on global trade remains fixated on

---

[29] Bödeker quotes Posselt's 1785 publication "Über das Postwesen in Teutschland, dessen Geschichte, Rechte und Mänge" in *Wissenschaftliches Magazin zur Aufklärung*.

[30] In describing a second phase of globalization brought on by European exploration in the eighteenth century, Ottmar Ette explains a similar notion of idea circulation and its effects on the scientific community: "Vornehmlich die Berichte von den Entdeckungs- und Forschungsreisen des 18. Jahrhunderts mit ihren an spezifischen Interessen europäischer Herrschaft und Wissenschaft ausgerichteten neuen Aufbereitungs- und Anordnungsformen des Wissens dokumentieren auf bis heute beeindruckende Weise ein Anschwellen von Wissensströmen, das nicht nur die europazentrischen Wege des Wissens global vervielfachte, sondern auch zu tiefgreifenden epistemologischen Veränderungen in den universalistisch denkenden okzidentalen Wissenschaften führte" (Ette 262).

the channels of material circulation, yet the parallels to the cultural/intellectual trade are also highly evident and the evocation of the circulatory models, which are comparable to other dominant trends in interconnectivity and information flow.

> Smiths Hauptwerk beschreibt mit nachhaltiger Wirkung die neuzeitliche Weltverdichtung als Ergebnis einer globalen Zirkulation. Die Nationen werden verbunden durch die Intensivierung und Verstetigung von "Strömen," die zwischen den einzelnen Weltteile hin- und hergehen. Solche Ströme sind zunächst – ganz wörtlich – die natürlichen Wasserwege und ihr künstliches Pendant, die von Menschenhand geschafenen Kanäle. Die Blüte schon der frühen Hochkulturen Vorderasiens, Ägyptens und Chinas verdankt sich, so Smith im Einklang mit der Kulturanthropologie seiner Zeit, einem "Netz" von Schiffstraßen, das die Teile dieser Reiche miteinander und die Reiche ihrerseits mit den näheren und ferneren Nachbarn zu einer Austauschregion verband. (Koch 2005: 53)

The categorical change represented in the imagination of a world network emerges from the gradual recognition of the channels of movement and material exchange with a sense of cultural development. In this context, the humanist parallel to the growing world market profits on nearly equal terms.

The descriptive language of such networks reflects the commerce of both goods and ideas. Koch's reading of Smith emphasizes the active imagery of a living being, a biological organism in which the "Warenströmen, die auf den Kapillaren der Fluß-, Meeres- und Landwege sich über die Welt verbreiten" amount to "das Nervensystem des ökonomischen Weltorganismus" (Koch 2005: 53). The metaphor of the single body, supported by a vast network of capillaries in which the movement of international exchange occurs, will become increasingly crucial in understanding the portrayal of the

71

single world entity that helped to shape the thinking of Goethe and his contemporaries. This was, for example, the utopian vision of Fritz Strich in his understanding of Goethe's *Weltliteratur*; it was the literary coming together of the once separate world factions. Not only does Strich also borrow the economic model for his literary context – "Güter austauschende Literatur" – he also employs the metaphoric language of a utopian sort of civil engineering to counterpart Koch's biological model, referring to "ein literarischer Brückenbau über trennende Ströme, ein geistiger Straßenbau über trennende Gebirge" (Strich 16). Despite the deference for this descriptive method, what remains is the focus on the developing single entity through the connection of nodes in a network or the communication between multiple parts of a whole organism, a building network consciousness in literal and literary world traffic.

The scholarship on Goethe's *Weltliteratur* has clearly addressed the role of Goethe in recognizing and articulating that the web of world interconnectivity was being spun more tightly in the age of Goethe and that the effects in the production and transfer of materials, knowledge, and culture would be felt with increasing frequency in the years beyond his life. To examine the entire cultural context is, however, to recognize two crucial facts: first, that Goethe was indeed concerned with the world network as a mode of intellectual exchange, as well as the effects of such a network in liberating the literary potential of cultures previously in the shadows of central European hegemony. Goethe spoke of *Weltliteratur* by name. He elaborated on the idealism of *freier geistiger Handelsverkehr* as a truly intercultural event of modernity. He was fascinated and agitated by the contemporary consequences of the growing network and the medial shifts

they brought forth. Yet as a second and equally important facet of Goethe's involvement, it must be noted that, although Goethe was somewhat articulate in dealing with varying aspects of the world network, he was most certainly not the only visionary of his time to take notice. This is perhaps the most misleading aspect of the now firmly grounded "concept" of *Weltliteratur*. In many ways it does an injustice to Goethe and his contemporaries alike to establish a world literary brand from the conceptual *cadavre exquis* of Goethe's life work, as the result is an almost literary narrative (Mehr Licht!) itself, a narrative whose fictionality becomes more and more difficult to identify with every telling until it finally becomes true. The consequences of the process occur as an obscuring of what was at stake the entire time, namely the recognition of the changes to the literary object in a developing world network, the media event, and an always new epoch, which has been, and which will remain to be, in motion for some time.

The challenge is thus to untie the crossed circuits of this discursive knot by stepping back from the race to claim the authority and ownership of the concept. It is necessary to preserve Goethe's role in creating a novel perception of the world and its literary system. But it is equally necessary to rid ourselves of the burden of an inquiry that departs solely from the narrative of *Weltliteratur*, from Goethe's *Weltliteratur*. Let us do both. Moving beyond a specific Goethe-centrism in the pursuit of a world-literary consciousness must not come at the dismissal of Goethe's clearly essential involvement. To move beyond the firmly established narrative is rather to extend the inquiry of *Weltliteratur* both from and through Goethe. Beyond the narrow contours of the established narrative alone, a wealth of common metaphors in the language of exchange,

circulation, interconnection and unification surround what now seems to be the stable idea of *Weltliteratur*. In order to embrace this literary fantasy and its attachment to Goethe, it must first be stripped of its aura and examined amidst a series of shifts in the experience of the world around 1800. Let us examine the market conditions, the network epistemology, and the dream of a cultural internationalism in which Goethe seems to have uttered "let there be *Weltliteratur*."

Circulation, Network, *Welt* – 1800
Chapter Two

On August 15, 1794 the National Convention in Paris received word that French soldiers

had recaptured the city of Le Quesnoy from Austrian forces. Coming from the city of

Lille, nearly 200 km from Paris, the message arrived with unprecedented speed, less than

an hour after the battle's conclusion. The rapid delivery of the news was made possible

by a novel communication technology: it was the first official message to be transmitted

by the newly built optical telegraph, the invention of Claude Chappe and his brother

Ignace (Huurdeman 24). The semaphore system conveyed the message over a series of 23

signal stations between Lille and Paris, each occupied with operators who would

maneuver the movable wooden arms with regulators and indicators situated atop the

elevated locations in order to represent the coded signal with each changing position.

Once this message was taken in by the operators of the next station, the arms of the

receiving post would then reproduce and transmit the message to the intermediaries at the

next station down the line, a relay process that continued until the message was conveyed

to the transmission destination. This pre-electronic technology, the first telegraph system,

would develop by the 1830s into an expansive web of communication lines attached to

Paris.

In the same late eighteenth-century years, engineers were advancing in the

development of Watt's steam engine. In 1804 Richard Trevithick's high-pressure steam

locomotive successfully completed the first railway journey in Wales, leading to a series

of developments in steam-engine design and infrastructure that culminated in the 1825

opening of the Stockton and Darlington Railway line in England, the first stretch of what would become a vast system of railway lines throughout England and the rest of the world. A few years before these technological innovations occurred, Luigi Galvani made severed frog legs dance by connecting muscle tissue to an electric current, sparking a heated debate over the concept of animal electricity and the notion of organic bodies animated by the movement of electric signals (or fluid) pulsing through an organic system of channels (Otis 16). Shortly thereafter, a series of breakthroughs followed Alessandro Volta's 1800 invention of the Voltaic Pile, which further enabled experiments with electronic communication between distant objects, such as Samuel Thomas von Sömmerling's 1808 transmission of messages via electronic telegraph and Hans Christian Ørsted's 1820 innovation in electromagnetism which could move an electric needle at a distance through a coil of wire (Otis 22).

A mere year after Goethe's death, author/publisher and later politician Moritz Veit (1808-1864) published his 1833 doctoral dissertation on Saint-Simonism in which he included a section on Goethe's concept of *Weltliteratur*. Veit's reflections on the function of literary globalism are not only important because of their remarkably early attention to the idea, but also because they describe *Weltliteratur* with the same techno-organic imagination of contemporary science and technology. For Veit, Goethe's vision of a new literary epoch was coming to fruition through a world exchange of ideas ("Ideenverkehr" and "gegenseitiger Austausch") made possible by media of literary circulation imagined as an organic sanguineous circulatory system – "Blutumlauf" – or a material network of waterways – "das holländische Canalisationssystem" – connecting

once separate parts into a new entirety. Circulatory systems and material networks of transportation and communication provided the blueprints for a modern network imagination and a conceptual grammar for *Weltliteratur* as well. While Veit credits the role of the circulatory medium of the literary journal in ushering in global-belletristic connections, he also notes that this one medium is also but a single part of a larger movement: "Es ist ein sehr gewöhnlicher Irrthum, daß die Journale die einzige Ursache dieser Aufregung in unserer Zeit sind. Jede geschichtliche Erscheinung ist Ursache und Wirkung zugleich" (Veit 299). This discursive simultaneity pertains to the notion of *Weltliteratur* itself as a conceptual apparition that is at once cause and effect of its epistemological circumstances. Veit's astute reflections on *Weltliteratur* as a network or system are a stark reminder of the formative force of the imagery, models, and metaphoric language through which the notion of *Weltliteratur* is pictured and to which the literary idea contributes with each moment of increased conceptual stability. We are reminded of the need to consider the models and metaphors of *Weltliteratur* as integral elements of a discursive grammar, causes and effects of changing perceptions in the early part of a new century.

Many of the technologies of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries represent single instruments of a preoccupation with connectivity, of circulation, of remote communication, rapid transportation, and of inter-subjectivity. Not only did each of these developments serve to assist in the collapsing of former spatial-temporalities and establish the means of connectedness, they also provided models for connectedness itself, awakening a consciousness of plurality and interaction in perceived world space. These

technologies became what we now unhesitatingly refer to as networks. Perhaps more importantly, they provided models for new ways of thinking, shaping the contours of a novel epistemology at the heels of a new century. These largely material networks (railway tracks, canals, telegraph cables, etc.) emerge from *and* contribute to a sort of network-thinking, a pervasive trend throughout multiple corners of thought around 1800 which gradually appeared as a leading metaphor for the reconsideration of the natural world, the body, technology, and literature as a world of sorts.

The construction of Goethe's *Weltliteratur* in its historical trajectory consists largely of elements dealing not with literature, but with a changing conception of the world as a space and changing modes of consideration facilitated by new technologies and media perspectives. A central feature of the concept is founded on Goethe's discursive overlap with the theory of global expansion via interconnectivity, infrastructure, and communication technologies. Goethe's remarks on the changing perception of literature in and of the world appear to be fundamentally informed by the same network epistemology critically altering the thoughts of his contemporaries. His belief that literatures and texts are renewed through their interaction and exchange with others posits a reciprocal system based on interaction and interdependence. The specter of the same metaphor (*Wechselwirkung*) haunts the margins of multiple disciplines around the same time, drawing connections between a thriving *Gelehrtenrepublik* and joining a literary legacy to a conceptual common ground with technology, economics, science, and politics. For Goethe's metaphor of vital literary renewal, the model of blood circulation dominates the natural scientific context, influencing the study of the body as

well as technologies of media and communication, urban planning, and infrastructure. For his *geistiger Handelsverkehr*, the channels of the increasingly global trade of cultural wares emerge primarily as conduits of goods and service, enmeshing systems of industrial intercourse through a new model of the economic whole. The peaceful intentions fantasized in a world literary unit are also expressed in early nineteenth-century projects aimed at *Völkerverständigung* through systems of railroad connections, financial institutions, and communications. The remarkably similar efforts of the Saint-Simonians and the resulting concept of *association universalle* appear as the twin dream of *Weltliteratur*, a poetics not of letters but of infrastructure. As a concept, *Weltliteratur* seems to begin at the point of its estrangement from the conceptual conditions of its origin in a widely shifting episteme.

Goethe's musing on canals, postal networks, and steam ships becomes the pillars of world-literary discourse in representing the rapidly changing methods of world communication. Yet these elements of early globalism appear misleadingly to be supplements of *Weltliteratur*, the marginal elements serving the greater poetic ideal. What are the possible benefits of reversing the investigation? What can we gain by looking not at *Weltliteratur* as a means for understanding waterways, railroads, and postal systems, but instead by looking at these networks as a means for understanding the model we now take to be strictly literary?

The following chapter is an exploration of the epistemological peripheries of the common *Weltliteratur* concept. It is an examination of the technologies and ideas that produced both models for, and examples of, the network-thinking central to the crucial

reconsideration of the world literary system. If Goethe's musings on new literary horizons become a specific part of a larger intellectual discourse, it is also possible to locate *Weltliteratur* within the history of ideas on a broader scope and to flesh out its common conceptual denominators. Such a change in inquiry shifts the exploration from *Weltliteratur* as it *is*, to the multi-discursive developments as they occur *through* Goethe and others in the organization of literature, extending the concept beyond the previous account. To look around this narrative is to observe a thriving obsession across disciplines with connectedness, simultaneity, exchange, and the drawing together of once seemingly disparate parts to create the semblance of a whole. It is an obsession with circulation, networks, and world systems, models that laid the epistemological foundation of *Weltliteratur*. The following chapter is an inquiry into the network-thinking that underlies this emergence of *Weltliteratur*.

The technological advancements which commence this chapter represent integral parts of what would become tightly woven networks of infrastructure and communication in Europe and beyond. In the late years of the eighteenth century and the early years of the nineteenth, scientists and engineers developed a number of technologies that greatly collapsed former spatial-temporal constraints. But while advancements in transportation and communication technologies are aptly expressed by the development of material networks, the idea of connectedness that precedes and informs them is ubiquitous across the arts and sciences of this age. It is a dominant metaphor of connectivity through circulation, simultaneity, and the flow of goods, capital, ideas, and literature. Hartmut Böhme writes that the creation of technological networks shifted the metaphor of the net

into the center of the episteme around 1800, which in turn, affected the contours of perception and inquiry, thus becoming an integral epistemological model of modernity (Böhme 31). And yet, the same network technologies that are credited with shaping the changing form of a modern Weltanschauung were largely understood through physiological imagery and models of organic bodies, networks of capillaries and veins, circulatory systems which connected body parts through channels of blood flows, streams of fluids, and pulsing currents of nerves. As an integral epistemological element around 1800, the figure of the network is thus part of what Laura Otis describes as a sort of reciprocal process of influence beyond the body and technology:

> We speak of networks of computers, of professional contacts, even of nerves within our bodies. Networks of highway facilitate our movement, and telecommunications nets inform us about the world when we cannot explore it ourselves. The image of the worldwide web, however, did not begin with the computer. Emerging from studies of nervous and electromagnetic transmissions, the web has been upheld for two centuries as nature's own apparatus for transmitting information. Images of bodily communications nets have inspired us to build technological ones, and images of technological ones have inspired us to see them in the body. (Otis 2)

The techno-organic reciprocity in these models of knowing prevents us from creating a clear conceptual hierarchy in determining their origins; instead, they remain fundamentally intertwined. Regardless of whether organic network imagery *first* influenced the creation of technological networks, or if the former is better understood through the latter, what underlies their mutual importance is the pervasive use of circulation and communication as the gathering of scattered parts to form a unit. Thus, the figure of the network in technology and social organization, or the model of

circulation in natural science and its cultural manifestations, is not simply a ubiquitous

trope of the late eighteenth/early nineteenth century, but also a visual representation of a

new mode of consideration based on the communication and interdependency between

the parts of a whole, or a synthesis of a multitude of elements, a fitting description for the

model of texts as a world whole.[31] The figure of the network, like its world-literary

relative, is both a representation of perceived connections and a formative force in

producing a perception of the world as an entirety.

By no stretch of the imagination, it must be noted, did networks (as a thing) begin

around 1800. By the Third Century CE, a network of Roman roads spanned from the

North of England to North Africa and Jerusalem, a transportation net covering over

50,000 miles (Beyrer 77).[32] Medieval monks communicated through a network of

messenger channels throughout Europe (Beyrer 80). Before the establishment of national

postal services in Europe (mainly in the nineteenth century), or the precursor network

initiated by the Thurn und Taxis family in the sixteenth century, messages from Egyptian

Pharaohs were communicated through channels of pedestrian curriers (Glaser 80). And

long before any of these human enterprises, networks quietly existed in nature as spider

webs, fungi patterns, and countless other organic compounds; the net has always been a

basic form of natural order (Andritzky/Hauer 13).

The existence of networks in nature, as well as the precursor nets of

Enlightenment-Romantic era technologies, indicates an ambiguity which demands

---

[31] Böhme, "Netze synthesieren sowohl die Einheit des Mannigfaltigen wie sie auch eine Vielfalt ohne Einheit ausdifferenzieren (Böhme 19).
[32] Beyrer refers to the work of historian Hermann Schreiber for these details (Beyrer 77).

immediate clarification. It is necessary to distinguish between networks as ontological

entities and networks as representations, maps, or constructions. Even the abridged

definition of a network in its most basic contemporary understanding, as Manuel Castells

describes it, says little about networks as real-existing objects and fails to illuminate the

complex set of relationships with which we understand them and which they maintain in

their actual existence: "A network is a set of interconnected nodes. A node is the point

where the curve intersects itself. A network has no center, just nodes. Nodes may be of

varying relevance for the network" (Castells 3).[33] Hartmut Böhme argues that a number

of subterranean pipes alone do not amount to a network; rather that such a classification

comes first through consideration of their organization (*Anordnung*) and their distribution

of flows and connections between determined points (nodes) (Böhme 25). The emergence

of the network in the eighteenth century, as well as its profusion in following decades, is

not that of an ontological entity that previously did not exist; instead, it is the emergence

of a way of thinking about and through the multiplicity of connections and

interdependencies that networks depict. The focus of this investigation lies in the image

of the network as an indication of novel epistemological conditions and the reciprocity

between thought models and knowing itself. Finally, it is the same mode of thinking in

and through the network which underlies the novel character of *Weltliteratur* discourse

and which provides a model for reading and reconsidering the greater configuration of

literature in its "world" space.

---

[33]Of course, Castells does indeed elaborate on the intricacies of the network, but the simplicity of his definition also illustrates the degree to which the significance of the network is ascribed by the function that each specific network serves.

Circulation

The scattered murmurs of *Weltliteratur* around 1800 point toward a reconfiguration of once seemingly stable categories of world and literature alike.[34] However, the reconfiguration of large-scale comprehension was also the order of the day for a number of fundamental concepts, such as the body, world geography, or simply (and utterly not simply) knowledge itself. In the midst of the shifting paradigm of the late Enlightenment, it is difficult to overestimate the importance of circulation as a guiding concept for the fundamental restructuring of knowledge (Schmidt/Sandl 11). The metaphor of circulation in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries is ubiquitous in the natural sciences as well as economics, technology, and culture. The beginnings of this metaphor can be largely attributed to the anatomical paradigm of blood circulation that was prompted by William Harvey's 1628 publication *Exercitatio anatomica de motu cordis et sanguinis in animalibus*, in which Harvey first posited the theory of blood circulation instead of a centrifugal movement in the body (Borgards 25). Anatomical knowledge after Harvey becomes extensively involved with the processes of circulation and pressure-determined flows.[35] By the eighteenth century, the European scientific community had widely

---

[34]Koch makes arguably the most central connection between Goethe's *Weltliteratur* and the changing metaphors of exchange and connection, noting the correlation between the literary ideal and the topos of circulation organic, economic, and otherwise: "Die Metaphorik des 'geistigen Handelsverkehrs', durch den Weltliteratur nach Goethe zustande kommt (oder in dem sie geradezu besteht), verfestigt sich in einer Zeit, die den 'Umlauf' zum staats- und wirtschaftstheoretischen Schlüsselbegriff erhebt. Historiker reden vom 'Zirkulationstopos,' der die systematische Mitte der kameralistischen Theorien bildete. In vielen Schriften ist es selbstverständlich, an die Analyse des Waren- und Geldumlaufs Betrachtungen über den Gedankenumlauf anzuknüpfen" (Koch 2012: 57).

[35] See Bernard Siegert, *Currents and Currency*. Drawing from the work Karl E. Rothschuh, Siegert identifies the contribution of Harvey's theory as instrumental in the early theories of economic, electric, and intellectual circulation: "William Harveys Theorie des Blutkreislaufs (1628) hatte (vor allem nach der Entdeckung der Kapillarwege durch Marcello Malpighi 1661) bereits im 17. Jahrhundert dem Experiment in der Anatomie eine fundamentale Bedeutung verschafft und das anatomische Wissen auf ein Wissen von

accepted the theory of blood circulation and had begun conceiving of other forms of

organic circulatory systems, such as in the circulation of nerves and nervous fluids based

on Harvey's model of blood movement in the body.[36]
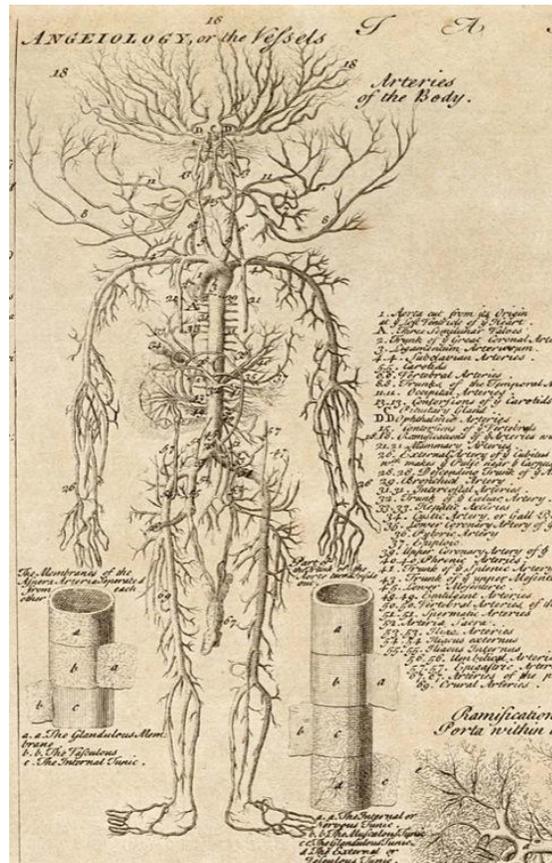
Figure 1. This illustration from Ephraim Chambers' 1728 *Cyclopædia* is an early depiction of the physiology of the human circulatory system in the literature of medical science. In this image the unit of the human body as whole is depicted through the circulatory system, demonstrating the increasingly ubiquitous notion of the body as a system of channels and circulatory connections.

Zirkulationsprozessen, Druckverhältnissen und des Ausgleichs verwiesen, auf deren Störungen oder Modifikationen die nach außen sichtbaren Zeichen verweisen" (Siegert 53).

[36] See Roland Borgards, *Blutkreislauf und Nervenbahnen* . Borgards describes the development of a theory of nerves and the circulation of nervous fluids based on models of blood flow in the early eighteenth century (Borgards 26). Borgards also demonstrates that the understanding of the two systems (blood and nerves) began around 1750 to be considered separate systems following research breakthroughs by Albrecht von Haller (Borgards 32). By 1800, however, the two systems, largely held to be independent of each other, were nonetheless stable models of organic circulation systems that guided anatomical understanding and drove medical research in shaping the contours of inquiry into the body as well as its metaphoric applications elsewhere in the arts, sciences, and technology.

In a broader application of the physiological idea, circulation achieved a largely metaphoric status, providing imagery for a wealth of social, economic, and cultural phenomena. In 1651 Thomas Hobbes drew on Harvey's model in order to describe the arrangement of state taxes as a system of capital circulation (Schmidt/Sandl 14). The metaphor of circulation based on Harvey's findings, according to Roman Marek, also advanced the metaphor of central governance in circulation, an understanding of a natural central authority commanding the flow of capital circulation like the heart in the body (Marek 210). By roughly 1700 economic models were commonly described in the language of circulation but without reference to the central authority commanding the circulation, or in direct reference to the flow of blood stemming from Harvey's heart-centered model (Schmidt/Sandl 14).[37] The image of a physiological circulatory system provided a formative model for considering a broad spectrum of phenomena. Circulation thus moved from an anatomical model, to economic metaphor, to the dominant conception of economic systems as the flow of capital.

If Hobbes' *Leviathan* was responsible for introducing to economic theory what Harvey had introduced to the natural sciences, it was François Quesnay (1694-1774) and later the school of physiocrats that expanded the circulation metaphor in economics by advancing the metaphor to an image or visible model.[38] A physician himself, Quesnay was inspired directly by Harvey's circulation system when he created his 1758 *tableau économique* as a graphic representation of economic circulation, which illustrated with

---

[37] Schmidt and Sandl credit Harry Schmidtgall in tracing the discourse of blood circulation in the organic body to the discourse of capital circulation in the state economic body (Schmidtgall 424-430)

[38] Harry Schmidtgall states that Hobbes, a personal friend of Harvey, was the first to apply the model of circulation in an economic context, or at least the first to do so in a widely published and accepted context. However, Schmidtgall also notes that the popular connection is usually attributed to Quesnay.

zigzag-connections between agents an economic system based on flows and reciprocity (Mattelart 2004: 6).[39] The *tableau économique* depicts, as Bernard Siegert summarizes, the commerce (*Verkehr*) between three classes in demonstration of the physiocratic understanding of the circulation of wealth within an economic system of sorts (Siegert 60). Quesnay's contribution to the economics of circulation is not only significant as a theory of the interconnected multiplicity of actors or classes, rather than the single operator of the blood/capital metaphor (the heart and the state), it also provided a visualization of the figurative comparison. As an illustration of the conduits of macroeconomic relations, the *tableau économique* is considered an early representation of a network of complex relationships (Estrada 5; Mattelart 2004: 6-7).

Thomas Hobbes borrowed from Harvey in his likening of gold and silver to the life blood of society, the "sanguification of the commonwealth" that compares the flow of commodities in the public to the flow of blood in the human body, connecting the parts of the body to the heart. More than a century later, Adam Smith spoke of circulation in *The Wealth of Nations*, also likening the economic system to that of the body with

---

[39] Mattelart also argues that Quesnay's interest in circulation preceded his creation of the *tableau économique*: "Before publishing the table, Quesnay had laid the basis of his philosophy of the economy in the *Encyclopédie* – not in the article devoted to the term 'circulation,' which remained centered on the circulation of blood, but rather in two others titles 'Farmers' and 'Grains,' published respectively in 1756 and the following year. At that time, the question of free trade in grains occupied an important place in the debate over the liberalization of the regime. These two articles constitute the first work on economic matters by Quesnay, a physician, already sixty years old and known until then for his treatises on the effects of bleeding (1730), animal economy (1736), suppuration and gangrene (1749), and chronic fever (1753) (Mattelart 2004: 27). Joseph Schumpeter argues that Harvey's circulation paradigm still held a matter of great contemporary significance for Quesnay although nearly a century divided the two publications, and was a direct influence on Quesnay in his conception of the tableau (Schumpeter 240).

corresponding metaphors of healthy circulation and diseased bodies/economies whose

health is impeded by poor circulation:[40]

> In her present condition, Great Britain resembles one of
> those unwholesome bodies in which some of the vital parts
> are overgrown, and which, upon that account, are liable to
> many dangerous disorders, scarce incident to those in
> which all the parts are more properly proportioned. A small
> stop in that great blood-vessel, which has been artificially
> swelled beyond its natural dimensions, and through which
> an unnatural proportion of the industry and commerce of
> the country has been forced to circulate, is very likely to
> bring on the most dangerous disorders upon the whole body
> politic. (Smith 353)

Unlike Smith's significant use of circulatory metaphors, however, the circulation

illustrated in Quesnay's *tableau* adds to these largely figurative uses in economics by

providing the specific shape of an illustrated set of relations, or a visualization of the

unseen connections previously described through the metaphor of organic bodies. As a

graphic rendering of relationships, Quesnay's tableau establishes a visual order for

network and circulatory connectedness.

---

[40] Albrecht Korschorke also argues that the physiological metaphor in economics, particularly stemming from the physiocrats, refers to the image of the circulation of blood and the distinction between healthy and diseased circulatory systems: "Es ist kein Zufall, wenn sich hier wieder physiologische Metaphern einstellen. Überall, wo bei den Ökonomen von den heilsamen Wirkungen des Tauschverkehrs die Rede ist, drängt sich ihnen das Bild des Blutkreislaufs auf. Das gilt insbesondere für die Physiokraten. In gleicher Weise wie die Ärzte betonen sie die Heilsamkeit des Umlaufs und die Gefahren der Stockung" (Korschorke 70).
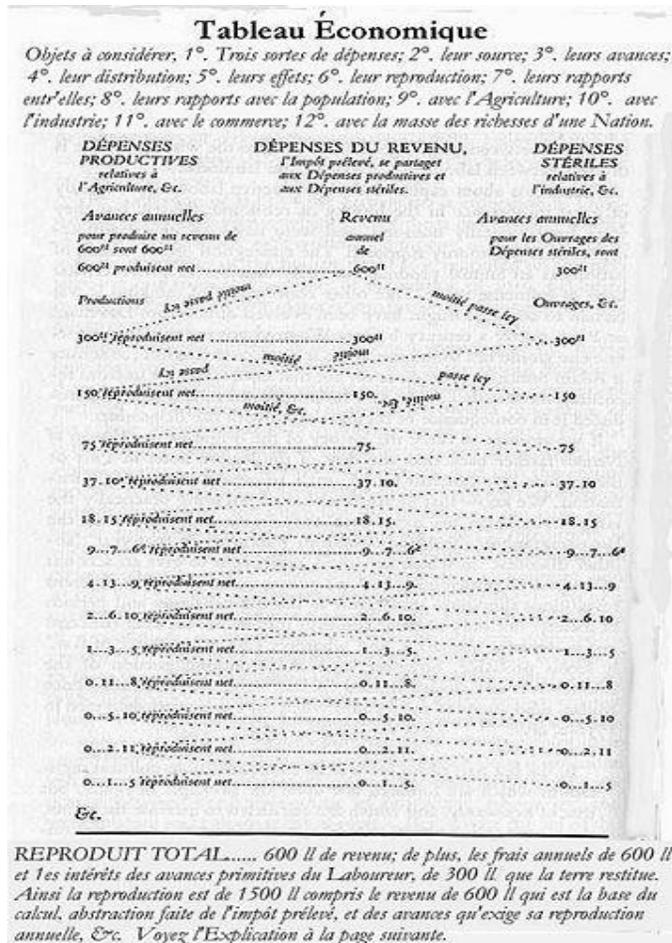
Figure 2. Quesnay's *Tableau Économique* depicts the agents of economic exchange in a series of visible, network-like connections. As a figure, Quesnay's table provided a novel image for the figurative model of economic exchange and reciprocity.

Tracing the ever-widening trajectory of the metaphor around 1800, it is evident that circulation provides a means for a new epistemological architecture. The ubiquity of the metaphor extends to urban planning, hydrodynamic systems, and electricity – concepts of systems, objects, and people linked in communication.[41] Acceptance of

[41] The metaphor of circulation appears in terms of the exchange of ideas as well. See Georg Stanitzek and Hartmut Winkler, *Eine Medientheorie der Aufklärung* (forward to *Josias Ludwig Gosch: Fragmente über den Ideenumlauf*). Stanitzek and Winkler identify the economic writings of Josias Ludwig Gosch as fundamental theories of Enlightenment-era media theory concerning the circulation of ideas. The media of Gosch's circulation appear as ideas themselves. While Stanitzek and Winkler maintain that Harvey's

Harvey's theory led to a sort of internalization of the new figure of the body. Its

metaphoric significance, as Richard Sennet writes, influenced civil engineering and the

equating of cities to living beings, whose health was determined by a robust circulatory

system. Enlightenment architects inspired by the shift in perception "sought to make the

city a place in which people could move and breath freely, a city of flowing arteries and

veins through which people streamed like healthy blood corpuscles" (Sennett 256).[42] The

"sanguine mechanics" of urban planning belongs not only to the specific model based

solely on the circulation of blood, but to a greater epistemological transformation in the

concept of bodies, economies, and cities as units of interconnected parts, joined by the

binding currents of various vital fluids (Sennett 264). Circulation models supported

practical applications of "socio-natural assemblages" and "socio-ecological

assemblages," or aggregates linked in their varying conduits and bound together by flows

and distributions (Swyngedouw 31-32). Ivan Illich locates this shift within the notion of

liquid circulation around 1800:

> At the beginning of the eighteenth century—with the
> exception of France where ideas had already begun to

circulation model and its economic adaptations do indeed provide a definite theoretical frame for Gosch's idea circulation, they also contend that the metaphor of purely reciprocal circulation falls short in the context of a media theory of idea circulation: "Kommunizieren wir mit Homer oder Aristoteles, erhalten diese ja keineswegs im Wortsinn zurück, was sie uns überantwortet haben. Wohl aber existieren ihre Leistungen nur in ihrer Rezeption, der Anwendung, anreichernden Weiterverwendung fort" (Stanitzek/Winkler, 15). A detailed discussion of this rich example exceeds the scope of this chapter; however, it serves, nonetheless, to illustrate the development of and departures from the circulation metaphor in multiple applications around 1800.

[42] Sennett cites German and French urban maps modeled on the circulation of blood in bodies, where the analogy of a city's health was compared to the health of a living being, e.g. that blockages in the necessary flows of a city were compared to the hazardous blockages in blood circulation systems that could lead to a stroke. Harvey's model thus directly influenced the infrastructural design in city planning to include to circulation of people as well as fresh air, water, and waste products (Sennett 264-265). Illich also identifies the use of the metaphor by British architects in the nineteenth century, in which the cleansing circulation of water becomes a vital part of a healthy city, an idea that led to the implementation of sewer and canalization networks.

> "circulate"—the term as used in medicine meant the same
> as that used by botanists to speak of the flow of sap. But
> then, quite suddenly, around 1750 wealth and money begin
> to "circulate" and are spoken of as though they were
> liquids. Society comes to be imagined as a system of
> conduits. "Liquidity" is a dominant metaphor after the
> French revolution; ideas, newspapers, information, gossip,
> and—after 1880—traffic, air, and power "circulate." (Illich
> 43-44)

The "liquidity" metaphor summarizes the significance of the circulation imagery by demonstrating the way in which it produces an understanding through an imagined "system of conduits." Such a metaphor expresses precisely the epistemological shift toward a mode of thinking *through* connectivity, systems, and the interdependent parts which create the whole.

Both Sennet and Illich describe varying applications of innovative scientific practices corresponding to the expanded metaphor of fluidity and circulation. In both cases, these new intellectual foci may be considered a part of what Bernard Siegert describes as the eighteenth-century move from physics, with its focus on bodies, to the mechanics of fluids and currents (Siegert 53). In this new approach to knowledge, the move toward currents is less about the object of circulation, such as capital in the economic sense or blood in the anatomical, and more about circulation itself as an act of communication between separate entities, a matter of media and mediation; it is also the same mediation of circulating texts in a grand literary body.[43]

---

[43] Early concepts of electricity were also largely concerned with theorizing the flow of electric "fluidum," which, indicative in its similarity to the economic circulation, is expressed by both "currents" and "currency" (Siegert 57). In the writings of Benjamin Franklin, who was interested in the mechanics of both sorts of circulation, Siegert identifies the bourgeoning consciousness of multiple modes of circulation in terms of abstract media, or as conduits of communication.

As a metaphor, circulation is largely the communication between disparate components that amount to a system of circuits as a semblance of a whole. In examining economic circulation, there is a fundamental interconnectivity and enmeshment between the actors of exchange. In identifying linkages between the appendages of an organic body, a similar mode of vital correspondence occurs between the organs joined together and sustained by the current of the vital fluid in the body as a whole closed-circuit system. Circulation, therefore, is concerned with the channels of mediation and the means of "communicating" between seemingly disconnected entities. Thinking through the figure of circulation enacts a perception of inter-subjective relations. It is a model that presents both individual and system as simultaneous and interdependent. The epistemological effect of a consciousness of circulatory systems and network connectivity is a mode of perception in which parts are related to a whole in terms of their communication; their ontology becomes intertwined with *how* and *whom* they communicate. "Throughout the nineteenth century," Laura Otis writes, "scientists' electrophysiological understanding of the nervous system closely paralleled technological knowledge that allowed for the construction of telegraph networks" (Otis 12). Thus, if the abstract but ubiquitous image of circulatory systems and organic webs around 1800 provided a model of the communication between units of circuitry, then such imagery also influenced the way in which large-scale systems, wholes, or worlds were imagined through network-communications.

The underlying principles of such communication are visible as they were put to practice in the scientific inquiry of the late eighteenth century. Electricity, or electric

fluid, as a medium of communication is epitomized in the theories and experiments of

Franz Anton Mesmer (1734-1815), the champion of early hypnotism and the theory of

animal magnetism. In the popular discourse of eighteenth-century circulation, Mesmer

theorized that illness in the body was the result of restrictions in the flow of the electric

fluids coursing not just within the body as a closed-system, but also between all living

things (Barkhoff xi; Peters 90). Mesmer hypothesized a fundamental bond of electric

association between living things, connecting all within a collective magnetic system.

Mesmer's theory of animal magnetism connects the crucial aspects of the circulation

metaphor as a formative epistemic force by theorizing the mechanics of circulation as a

science of communication between all bodies and souls of the universe, and a medical

practice which sought its treatment in the consolidation or the rejoining of stray elements

in the electric collective.

> Animal magnetism created an arresting image of the total
> fusion of two or more souls that would, in conjunction with
> romantic and occult currents, reverberate through European
> and American literature in the nineteenth century. The
> mesmeric condition of being *en rapport* or, as it is often
> translated, "in communication" was another term borrowed
> from electricity. (Peters 91)

Mesmerist communication through animal magnetism depended on a specific concept of

interaction or reciprocity (*Wechselwirkung*). Mesmer attempted to "communicate"

directly with individual patients by channeling the flow of electric fluids in their bodies

through touch and "magnetic passes." However, he also "connected" multiple subjects at

once in his arguably most notorious of treatments with his invention of the baquet. The

baquet, a tub of water with protruding metal rods linked together with ropes, offered an

apparatus to channel and transfer the energy between subjects, a principle governed by the larger conception of the network-connectedness model. Mesmer attempted to restore the currents of energy by joining his ailing subjects to metal rods of the baquet, wiring them directly to the controlled circulation of vital magnetic currents. Although Mesmer's practice was discredited by a committee delegated by Louis XVI (consisting of a *who's who* of eighteenth-century science – Lavoisier, Guillotine, and Franklin, among others), his conceptualization of a field of connection through invisible currents offers a telling metaphor (in practice) for the discourse of circulation, networks, and the reorganization of knowledge based on the interconnectivity of individual entities within a greater system.

Hans-Jörg Rheinberger remarks that the object of study for historians of science is often the "museum of abandoned systems" (Rheinberger 411).[44] Mesmer's theories have been resigned at worst to quackery or charlatanism, and at best to a position in the museum of abandoned systems (in this case a foundational precursor to somnambulism, hypnosis, and psychoanalysis). Specifically as a now defunct theory, however, Mesmer's magnetism is void of practical scientific application, leaving behind the purely conjectural frame as a crucial metaphor for the discursive context of late eighteenth-century epistemology. Mesmer's magnetism appears now solely as a metaphor of connectivity within a system, communication and exchange with separate agents, and a fundamental linkage within a network. The scientific reality of animal magnetism, in its performance by Mesmer's baquet, is not as important in its attempt at a genuine science

---

[44] "Der Wissenschaftshistoriker hat es in der Regel mit einem 'Museum aufgegebener Systeme' zu tun" (Rheinberger 411).

as it is as a conceptualization of an applied connectivity with the medium of fluid/electricity joining its disparate parts. Jürgen Barkhoff writes that the controversy of Mesmer's theory is indicative of its significance for scientific structures around 1800 (Barkhoff xii).[45] Through imagination of a network of magnetic associations between beings, Mesmerism effectively extends the metaphor of circulation to its greater significance and ultimate relevance as a greater network-thinking (Barkhoff 5). It proposes magnetism as a media event, a conveyance of a message, a signal, a current between numerous, distant sources. This medial imaginary supports the epistemological mode which thinks through the model of a network, circulatory systems, and world-connectionism in literature.

Mesmer's theory of magnetic circulation parallels a shifting perception of the book as a medium of connectivity. The contemporary imagination of a world literary exchange conceives of literature and literary systems as conduits of currents, nodes in a network, or connected parts of a larger world body (*Weltliteratur*!). Although those early theorists of world-literary exchange did not use electric metaphors specifically when speaking of literary renewal through contact with other literatures, it is essentially the same dynamic undercurrent in a literary system that electrifies and revitalizes. In the late-eighteenth and early nineteenth century, the literary world too, it seems, was becoming a current to plug into.

---

[45] Barkhoff names specifically the significance of scientific practices and differentiation within what Reinhart Koselleck called the *Sattelzeit* period, 1750-1800 (Barkhoff xii).

Network

The metaphor that developed largely from the increasing propensity of a common familiarity with organic circulation is also widely expressed in the graphic representation of the network in science and technology around 1800. Although the dominance of our contemporary conception of networks involves the risk of anachronistic interpretations of eighteenth-century images, it is possible to pursue the network figure, not as a defined concept classified as a network as it is commonly known today, but as imagery of knowledge organization and media which expressed the structural relationships of interconnected things with nodes and lines. To this end, it is necessary to identify the image of the network as a further expression of the changing epistemological approaches of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The figure of the network emerges in a wide array of intellectual contexts, again not as a material entity, but as an image illustrating a new way of organizing intricacies and structural relationships in a larger system. This network thinking, arguably the same scientific impetus that sought circulation as its central metaphor, is fundamentally concerned with connections and the multiple subjectivities of interwoven things, agents, and places. It is an emerging consciousness of plurality and systematic relationships in the study of the natural world, and its conceptual core also shares the epistemological conditions of economic and organic circulation, as well as the discussion of *Weltliteratur*.

The figure of the network, as a model of scientific order, emerges in the natural

sciences of the mid-eighteenth century.[46] As a spatial expression, the network and its lack

of linear order marks a departure from the previously dominant model of the "great chain

of being," which served as an organizational foundation in the intellectual and religious

thought of the Middle East and Europe since antiquity.[47] The "chain of being," a

metaphoric order of the natural universe through the representation of steps, chains, or

other linear hierarchies, began to weaken as a guiding model during the Enlightenment

and scientific revolution and was seen by the late eighteenth century as insufficient in

representing the diversity of the natural world (Ragan 43).[48] Breaking from the linear

model, scholars began focusing on the concept of affinity as "regularities of resemblance

or arrangement among characteristic or functionally important body parts (e.g. those

constituting skeletal or organ systems) that indicated an attraction or closeness between

organisms or taxa in which they were found" (Ragan 4:43). This shift in the perception of

the natural world was expressed in the increasingly common depiction of affinities as a

---

[46] Researchers point to Vitalino Donati's 1750 *Della storia natural marina dell'Adriatico* (Gießmann 34; Ragan 43).
[47] See Arthur Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being*. Situating the chain of being within the history of ideas, Lovejoy describes: "[…] the conception of the plan and structure of the world which, through the Middle Ages and down to the late eighteenth century, many philosophers, most men of science, and, indeed, most educated men, were to accept without question – by the strict but seldom rigorously applied logic of the principle of continuity – of an infinite, number of links ranging in hierarchical order from the meagerest kind if existents, which barely escape non-existence, through 'every possible' grade up to the *ens perfectissimum* – or, in a somewhat more orthodox version, to the highest possible kind of creature, between which and the Absolute Being the disparity was assumed to be infinite – every one of the differing from that immediately above and immediately below it by the 'least possible' degree of difference" (Lovejoy 59).
[48] In *Trees and networks before and after Darwin*, Mark Ragan presents four developments in science that shifted the understanding of the world away from the chain-of-being-model: 1) Richard Bradley's 1721 assertion of non-uniform progressions in animal species; 2) expansion of knowledge in the diversity of plants, animals, and microbes; 3) discoveries that complicated the linear order of former classifications of animal, vegetable, mineral or otherwise; 4) the taxonomic problem of classification based on the perceived shared linear development of perfect and imperfect plants and animals (Ragan 43).

decentralized set of interconnected nodes, or what we would now unhesitatingly refer to as a network. Ragan identifies the emergence of the nature-as-network model with the dawn of modern biology. In the sciences, this change is not only significant in that it, like its corollary in economics and physiology, provided a new image to think with, it is also indicative of the spreading pervasiveness of the reconsideration of the entire configuration of the natural world, and thus the very concept of entirety or wholeness. Telling of the shift around 1800, Georges Cuvier writes that:

> […] our systematic methods consider only the nearest affinities; they seek to place a being only between two others, and they are unceasingly at fault; the true method sees each being in the midst of all others; it shows all the radiations by which it is connected more or less closely within this immense network which constitutes organised nature. (Ragan 43)

Cuvier's conception of connections and affinities within an immense network –"in the midst of all others" – of natural relationships may be regarded in terms of what Igor Polianski considers the new systematic meta-narrative of collective nature that began in mid-eighteenth-century science with the decline of the "chain of being" model and the rise of a decentralized, differential classification of network imagery (Polianski 15-16). The familiar image of the contemporary network begins to emerge from precisely such shifts in the perception of the world. Shortly after Donati suggested a net form in the place of a chain, Georges Buffon developed a taxonomic model depicting the network of relationships between species of dogs in the form of a spatial set of structural affinities (Gießmann 39). Buffon's 1755 *Table de l'ordre des chiens* offered an image of what Donati referred to in writing, providing a mode of visual representation of the natural

world that is so familiar to today's observer and so novel to inquiring eighteenth century

eyes. From its emergence in the mid-eighteenth century, the figure of the network in

scientific representations of order became an increasingly common illustration of the

connections and interplays underscoring the natural world, highlighting yet another

expression of network-thinking in multiple fields of inquiry around 1800.[49]
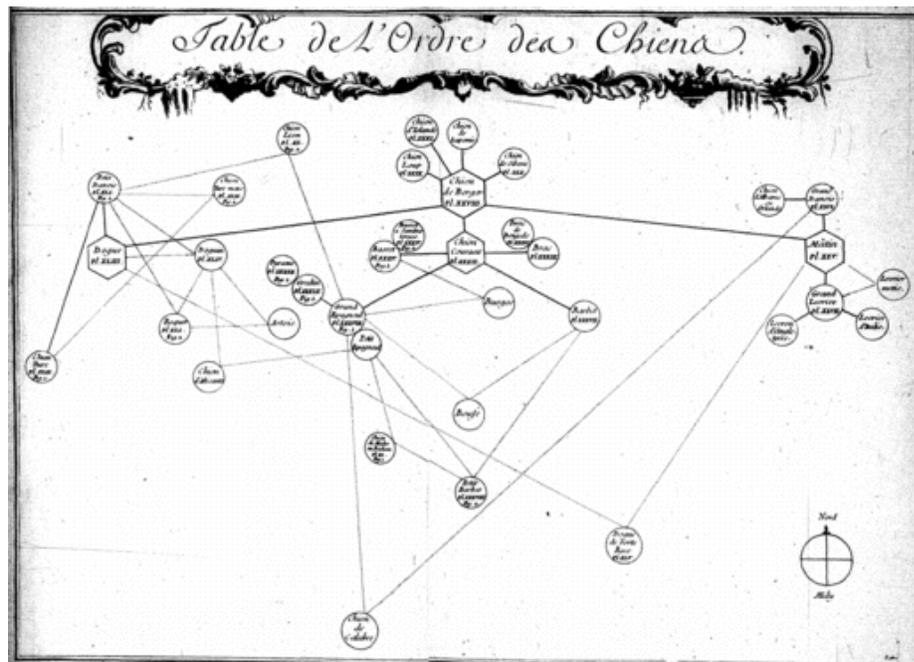
Figure 3. The 1755 *table de l'ordre des chiens* illustrates canine taxonomy with the nodes and connections of what in today's terms would be unhesitatingly described as a network. This novel visualization of natural order demonstrates the shifting perceptions of relationships and affinities in the natural world and the influence of what might be called the network epistemology of the eighteenth century.

The characteristic networking (*Vernetzung*) of this period belongs to the broader

field of discourse in science and humanities (Polianski 13-15). Using another seemingly

contemporary image of a network from 1802 to illustrate the move toward network

thinking, Polianski presents a connection between network affiliations in botany and

---

[49] Two thorough studies of this emergence can be found in Gießmann (2006) and Ragan (2009).

natural science and its parallel in the work and thought of Goethe. August Johann Georg

Karl Batsch's 1802 *Tabula affinitatum regni vegetabilis*, a depiction of taxonomic

affinities among vegetables, displays a network figure that is all too familiar to a viewer

from the internet age. But the 1802 table of nodes and criss-crossing links appeared with

but a few precursors to offer structure to this network imaginary. It is nonetheless a

concrete expression of the epistemological break from the previous models on which the

world had been thought to be governed (great chain of being) and the solidification of a

new understanding founded on dynamic systems and connectivity.
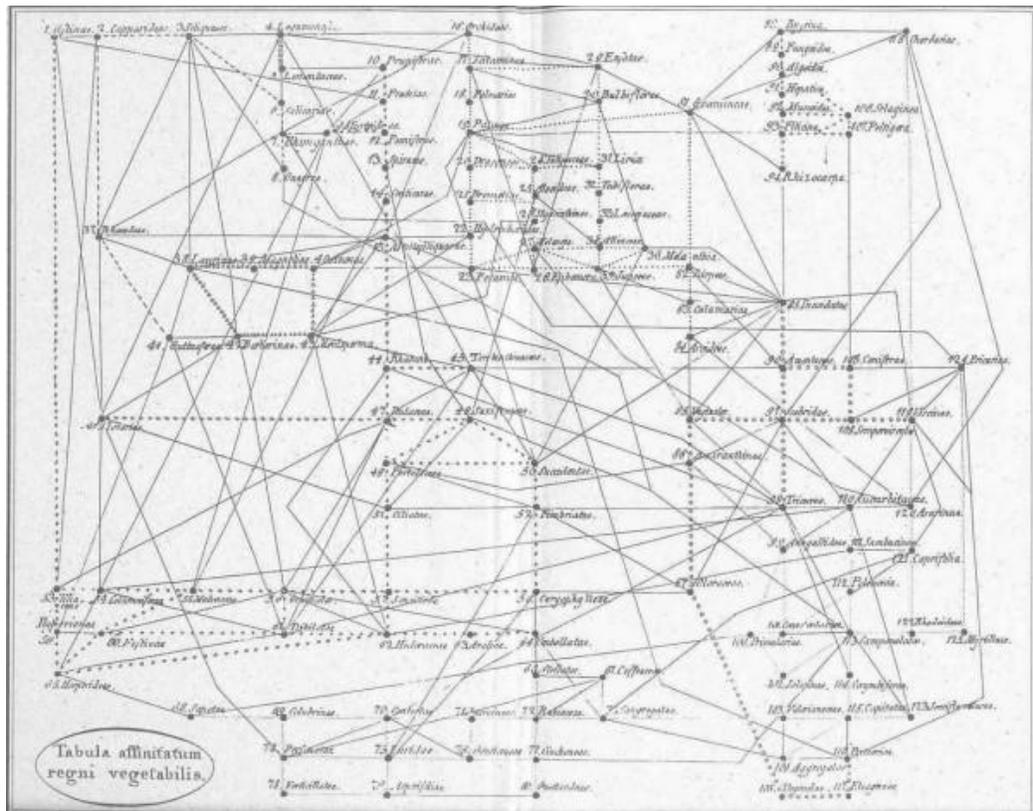
Figure 4. The natural network of August Johann Georg Karl Batsch's 1802 *Tabula affinitatum regni vegetabilis*.

In a telling coincidence, Igor Polianski observes in the poetry and thought of young Goethe an underlying interest in the same connectivity informed by the new episteme driving Batsch's illustration.[50] In celebration of Mayday 1803, Goethe composed the poem *Magisches Netz*, which depicts a mystic dance as the metaphoric process of nature's interweaving of parts to create its botanic whole. Nearly parallel to the creation of Batch's table, Goethe depicts the natural network and the process of weaving the very consciousness thereof. The poem begins by questioning whether the scene of the net is violence or order, a cautious approach to the observation of the network phenomenon in nature:

Sind es Kämpfe, die ich sehe?
Sind es Spiele? Sind es Wunderbar?
Fünf allerliebsten Knaben
Hegen fünf Geschwister streitend
Regelmäßig, taktbeständig
Einer Zauberin zu Gebote

The actors of this encounter are armed with spears, but the thrusts and jabs of their forceful contest emerge as a process of creation, the driving of the lances stringing the threads of a progressively forming fabric.

Blanke Spieße führen jene,
Diese flechten schnelle Fäden,
Daß man glaubt, in ihren Schlingen
Werde sich das Eisen fangen.
Bald gefangen sind die Spieße;
Doch im leichten Kriegestanze
Stiehlt sich einer nach dem andern
Aus der zarten Schleifenreihe,
Die sogleich den Freien haschet,

---

[50] The association between Goethe and Batsch in terms of network epistemology/natural affinities and its correlation with concept of *Weltliteratur* must be credited to Polianski.

Wenn sie den Gebundnen löset.

In this rather romantic likening of nature to simultaneous creativity and destruction, a

figure of a net as natural totality begins to emerge.

So mit Ringen, Streiten, Siegen,
Wechselflucht und Wiederkehren
Wird ein künstlich Netz geflochten,
Himmelsflocken gleich an Weiße,
Die, vom Lichten in das Dichte,
Musterhafte Streifen ziehen,
Wie es Farben kaum vermöchten.

Wer empfängt nun der Gewänder
Allerwünschtes? Wen begünstigt
Unsre vielgeliebte Herrin
Als den anerkannten Diener?
Mich beglückt des holden Loses
Treu und still ersehntes Zeichen!
Und ich fühle mich umschlungen,
Ihrer Dienerschaft gewidmet.

The figurative form of a net is woven in the course of reading, yet it is the process of

weaving itself that is of interest here. The net is created through the "Wechselflucht und

Wiederkehren" of numerous agents. The threads, ever densely woven, join the nodes of

the ensnaring fabric.

Doch indem ich so behaglich,
Aufgeschmückt stolzierend wandle,
Sieh! da knüpfen jene Losen,
Ohne Streit, geheim geschäftig,
Andre Netze, fein und feiner,
Dämmrungsfäden, Mondenblicke,
Nachtviolenduft verwebend.

Eh wir nun das Netz bemerken,
Ist ein Glücklicher gefangen,
Den wir andern, den wir alle,
Segnend und beneidend, grüßen. (Goethe 6:1 83-83)

This process of natural networking, of mystical weaving, presents a similar interplay underlying the changing scientific view of affinities in the natural universe. Observing the process of the magical system reveals the natural net of nets, a seemingly endless process of networks (fein und feiner), encompassing the natural totality. It is tempting to read Goethe's poem simply as a Mayday tribute to nature's mystical network-creation, a *Walpürgisnachtstraum*; but the final verse reminds us of what we have witnessed – *Eh wir nun das Netz bemerken* – that is, the witnessing itself. It thematizes the act of observing the process of networking, the process of becoming conscious of the net as *Wechselflucht und Wiederkehren*. The poem's opening with questions – *Sind es Kämpfe, die ich sehe? Sind es Spiele? Sind es Wunderbar?* – appears to be a rhetorical staging for the observations; but it may also account for a genuine plea for information, asking if this process of creation is mystical or scientific. *Magisches Netz* thus performs an awakening awareness to network structures as they develop, presenting a poetic depiction of a developing breakthrough in the consciousness of a dominant model.

While the threads of Goethe's *Magisches Netz* share a similar conception of the dynamic system depicted in Batsch's table, this conceptual affinity between Goethe and Batsch is expressed further by a direct and unusual linkage of the two network aficionados a few years prior to their nearly simultaneous publications devoted to networks in their respective crafts (Polianski 26). Polianski shows that the collective network interests of Goethe and Batsch had already overlapped in a coincidental case in 1794. In that year Goethe oversaw the creation of a botanical garden in Jena which, according to Polianski, was conceived to implement the ideological and aesthetic botanic

model founded on the theory of network spatiality of nature as it was then being theorized, and whose very conception was arguably indebted directly to Batsch (Polianski 26). Polianski explains that Goethe not only hired Batsch as director of the garden, but that the very position was created for him with the hope of achieving a botanical garden devoted to precisely such a natural network system (Polianski 27-28).

The case of Goethe and Batsch as a discursive meeting point between botany and poetry embodies the epistemological climate at the heart of the network metaphor; that this emerging network metaphor, despite its varying applications in science and the arts, presents itself not as thing in itself, but as an increasingly ubiquitous and formative model for a new method for considering the world and its structures. Perhaps the most fascinating aspect of the strange coincidence of Goethe and Batsch is Polianski's articulation of Goethe's role in the project of network consciousness:

> […] Goethe, der sich für dieses große Vernetzungsprojekt
> der Aufklärung auf allen seinen Teilgebieten eingesetzt hat
> – sowohl als dichtender und philosophierender
> Naturkundler durch begrifflich-diskursive und poetische
> Sprache als auch handelnder und gestaltender Akteur der
> Bildungs-, Wissenschafts- und Gartengeschichte. Auch
> Goethe hat dazu beigetragen, dass unsere Zeit als das
> Zeitalter des Netzes nicht nur beschrieben, sondern auch
> gefeiert werden kann. (Polianski 32)

In an attempt to circumvent the asserted narrative of the single authority of Goethe in the discursive formation of the world-literary ideal, it has been necessary to examine the figures of circulation and network connectivity in the epistemological peripheries of the eighteenth-century humanities and *Weltliteratur* discourse. However, Polianski's remarks appear to arrive at nearly the same conclusion as the *Weltliteratur* that scholars both

criticized and commended in previous sections. In this investigation of the network

figure, Goethe is also celebrated as a crucial forefather of the concept, a concept that is

neither synonymous nor separable from the celebrated notion of *Weltliteratur*. Yet such a

conclusion, unearthed from Jena's botanical garden, appears less as further evidence for

the extensive authority of Goethe's discursive reach as it does for the complex

enmeshment and ambivalence of the interrelated aspects of network-thinking across

multiple disciplinary boundaries around 1800.

Infrastructure, Saint-Simonism, and *association universelle*

If we may indeed consider that which is known as *Weltliteratur* to be inseparable from

the figures of circulatory systems and networks, or at least that their common origins may

be attributed to a conceptual core within shifting paradigms around 1800, then the

examination of *Weltliteratur* should not simply be conducted by means of philological

excavation in search of keywords and direct references to the compound noun of interest.

Instead, the boundaries of inquiry should be widened to include those parallel events in

the history of ideas, which share, by means of common metaphor, not only the same

objects of interest (like literature), but also the same modes and tools of perception with

which these new objects are made visible and considered. Such an approach enables a

perception of the world from other angles through the epistemological conditions

affecting these perceptions; it facilitates consideration of technologies that

instrumentalize thinking; and it supports reflection on historical events which, while

arguably separable from the direct influence of the core investigation (*Weltliteratur*), may

105

lend discursive similarity to the present subject without the same burdens of the discursive tradition from which it emerges. To this end, *Weltliteratur*, in an abstract sense, is parallel to the theories and practices of another early-nineteenth-century mode of thinking, namely Saint-Simonism. The emergence of a network consciousness, as well as the will to implement it in the pending epoch, is indebted largely to the legacy of French philosopher, early socialist, and utopian idealist Claude Henri de Rouvroy, Comte de Saint Simon (1760-1825). Saint-Simon's ideas for the reorganization of society were fostered on an implicit notion of network interconnectivity and structure, which, particularly through the disciples who continued his ideas after his death, was a critical figure in the move toward a network logic of the early nineteenth century. Saint-Simonism, as it will be shown, also shares a direct link to *Weltliteratur*, both with and without Goethe, in the work of Moritz Veit in the early 1830s.

The ideas of Saint-Simon, as well as their conceptual trajectory in the nineteenth century, emerge from an active and unusual life at a pivotal turn in European intellectual history. As a self-proclaimed descendent of Charlemagne and belonging to an aristocratic family, Saint-Simon was born into a life of financial means and intellectual distinction, including brief acquaintances with Rousseau and D'Alembert, who tutored Saint-Simon for a period in his youth (Taylor 13). Yet despite the comforts of the privileged class, Saint-Simon's life and ingenuity are also defined by his independence and rebellion from established social structures, a reoccurring opposition evident in the oscillating sense of megalomania and progressive idealism in his works. The life of Saint-Simon seems nearly embellished in its adventure and grandiosity: he was imprisoned on his father's

orders at the age of thirteen after refusing his first communion, subsequently escaping the

resulting custody; during the American Revolution he joined French forces in the service

of the American rebellion against the British, fighting in numerous campaigns under the

command of George Washington; after returning to France to participate in the French

Revolution he quickly made a large sum of money through investments, nearly escaped

the guillotine after being arrested during the *reign of terror*, and then completed

university studies (Taylor 13-19). Saint-Simon's involvement in these key late

eighteenth-century events produces a near caricature of the man in his time. Saint-Simon

perceived the potential of his age as a historical opportunity for drastic change. For Saint-

Simon, this period was also his occasion to orchestrate a move toward the utopian

prospects of a new era, a task he may have been driving toward for some time: "at the age

of seventeen he instructed his servant to stir him from sleep with the words, 'Levez-vous,

Monsieur le Comte, vous avez de grandes choses a faire'" (Murphy 95). This self-

assigned role in world history is best seen in his plans to reorganize society and the

ultimate legacy of an applied network consciousness in the implementation of such a

grandiloquent plan.

Although he never used the word "network" in his writings, Saint Simon is

chiefly credited with the novel conception of society and culture functioning as a single

interconnected body, or an organism as an anatomical network.[51] For Saint Simon,

---

[51] Mattelart reads the Saint-Simonian metaphoric understanding of social conditions as an organic body as among the founding notions of a larger network-thinking. Theoretical in its imagination of social physiology and administrative in its infrastructural realization, Saint-Simonism conceived of communication and information flow based on organic models but with far-reaching implications for the notion of communities as interconnected unities bound by the intercommunication of their once disparate parts (Mattelart: 2004 7-8).

society was directly comparable to the body as he had studied it within the disciplinary boundaries of physiology. In 1802/1803 he published a series of letters presenting a number of ideas in the hope of attracting followers to his school of thought. In his *Lettres d'un habitant Genève à ses contemporains*, he declared: "My friends, we ourselves are organic bodies. It is considering our social relations as physiological phenomena that I have conceived the present plan; and by using ideas borrowed from the system of linking physiological facts I shall prove that the plan is a good one" (Saint Simon in Taylor 75). The "present plan" in question was a comprehensive restructuring of European and perhaps eventually world society based on the notion that social phenomena are also bound by the observable laws of nature and that the understanding of society as an organism would provide the necessary template for a new, progressive administrative model with which the coming century could transition into an epoch of utopian unity.[52]

That Saint-Simon so freely "borrows" from "physiological facts" is crucial to the conceptual conditions of this early network epistemology. Pierre Musso reads Saint-Simonian interest in harnessing the potential of organic flows within the context of the thought conditions brought forth in the science and economics of the previous century. Citing the relevance of both Harvey's circulation model and Quesnay's *tableau*

---

[52] Studying circulation and metabolism systems in nineteenth-century urban planning, Swyngedouw shows that, by the late nineteenth century, understanding cities and spaces as bodies was a pervasive metaphor that drew directly from network and circulation-thinking: "This representation of urban space as constructed in and through perpetually circulating flows of water is conspicuously similar to imagining the city as a vast reservoir of perpetually circulating money. Viollet-le-Duc introduced circulation as a bodily metaphor for the organization of the urban villa. In fact, Chadwick's papers were published under the title 'The Health of Nations' during the centenary commemoration for Adam Smith (Chadwick 1887). Like the individual body and bourgeois society, the city was now also described as a network of pipes and conduits. The brisker the flow, the greater the wealth, the health and hygiene of the city would be (Gandy 2004)" (Swyngedouw 23). Although Saint-Simon is not cited as a direct influence in the later equation of the city with the body, his contribution, through both his writings and the immense contributions of his followers, is arguably inseparable due to its shared conceptual history.

économique, Musso situates Saint-Simonian thought within an interdependent discourse

of medical science and technology.[53] In Musso's formulation, the Saint-Simonian

metaphor of society and circulation is in accord with Georges Canguilhem's reading of

Harvey's model as a matter of media and data transfer; a view that likens blood flow in

an organism to the closed-circuit current of data, surging between its conduits.[54] Such

comparisons not only locate Saint-Simonian network epistemology within the larger

discursive field that shares the multiple perspectives of connectivity and movement, they

also demonstrate the way in which these earlier notions of circulation acted as conceptual

catalysts for a metaphoric extension into other areas, merging physiology with

technology, urban planning and cultural systems.

In an example that predates Saint-Simon's writings but also draws a connection to

an early world-literary application of physiological metaphors, Johann Gottfried Herder's

imagination of the world-literary whole also borrowed from a figurative corporeality

similar to that of Saint-Simon's later writings. In a description of a world-literary

intermingling and simultaneous influence that all but spells out the later notion of

Weltliteratur, Herder conceived of the literatures of the world as the parts of a single

colossal body in his 1766/67 *Fragmente über die neuere deutsche Literatur*:[55]

---

[53] Pierre Musso, in *Aux origines du concept moderne : corps et réseau dans la philosophie de Saint Simon*, cites particularly Saint-Simon's *La Science de l'Homme* in terms of its foundational establishment of physiological-network comparison.
[54] Musso cites Canguilhem's entries on physiology in the *Encyclopedia Universalis*.
[55] Herder describes the "Weltbegebenheit" of literary development and sometimes decay as a process of intermingling, influence, and corruption. The result is a world-literary synthesis, not free of hierarchy, but an amalgam of transnational traditions, languages, and thought: "So gären Griechisch-Römisch-Nordisch-Orientalisch-Hellenistische Dämpfe ganze Jahrhunderte: sie brausen gewaltig auf: die Hesen sinken endliche langsam, und nun! Was ist ausgegäret? ein neuer Moderner Geschmack in Sprachen, Wissenschaften und Künsten" (Herder 363).

> Ist das wundersame Bild ein Traum, das ich in meiner
> Einbildung vor mir sehe, und das auf seiner Stirn den
> Namen trägt: Neuere Litteratur der Völker? Es ist ein
> großer Colossus: sein Haupt von Orientalischem Golde, das
> meinen Blick tödtet, weil es die Stralen der Sonne
> zurückwirft: seine hochgewölbte Brust glänzt von
> Griechischem Silber: sein Bauch und Schenkel vestes
> Römisches Erz: seine Füße aber sind von Nordischem
> Eisen mit Gallischem Thon vermengt – ein ungeheures
> Wunderwerk der Welt. (Herder 364)

Herder's colossus is far from without hierarchies in its imaginary arrangement of world-literatures as body parts; yet, it nonetheless conceptualizes a similar literary unity through the imagination of a physiological or organic amalgamation.[56] The corporal organization of literature suggests an early affinity to other large-scale reorganization projects, or a common metaphor for a new consideration of entirety.

The world as a physiological phenomenon rests at the center of Saint-Simonian ideology; it is the grounds for the positivism on which his theories were based and which he passed on to his followers (most notably Auguste Comte). Saint Simon perceived a sort of threshold between the passing eighteenth century and the new epoch ahead, a sort of epistemological shift upon whose forefront he himself stood. Using metaphors of physical structures that demonstrated his mode of positivism, Saint Simon described the architecture of dominant knowledge and its need to be "demolished" and "rebuilt" to fit the present age:

---

[56]Tobias Döring affirms the meaningful significance of Herder's likening of world letters to an intercultural body in the form of a colossus. Noting that understandings of *Weltliteratur* as an entity rely heavily on metaphors of this sort, Döring not only identifies Herder as an influential figure in the expanded discourse of *Weltliteratur*, his reflections also identify the relevance of the metaphor itself as a formative figure in the understanding of the idea – that the literature of the world appears as a body is not, therefore, without its hierarchical distinctions. As Döring reminds us, this was the critique of Edward Said in the epistemological organization of world literature through such models (Döring 110).

The structure built by Descartes must be demolished, but the materials used in its construction must be carefully preserved. New materials must be added to them: it is necessary to work for the discovery of new facts, and to postpone the building of the structure until all the materials are available. In short, it is necessary to stop looking at things *a priori* and to examine them *a posteriori*. It is necessary to abandon the synthetic approach for the moment, and to adopt the analytic approach[…] (Taylor 90)

The ubiquitous eighteenth-century (and prior) focus on *a priori* metaphysics led, according to Saint Simon, to a myopic scientific stalemate in which new relations between the scientific disciplines and the natural world were no longer visible to the tired eyes of the viewer (Taylor 89). The privileging of the *a posteriori* reflects the positivist view of the world in which knowledge and progress derive strictly from the empirical exploration of the world. But for Saint Simon and his followers, the stakes were not simply philosophical; his intention was to completely reorganize the structures of knowledge, government, and religion based on the notion of an *a posteriori* world.

Perhaps the main pillar of the Saint-Simonian ideology structure is the notion of organization. Augustin Thierry, a devout early follower of Saint Simon, summarized the organizational turn toward the new period of Saint Simonian knowledge: "The philosophy of the last century was revolutionary; that of the nineteenth century must be organizational" (Taylor 34). Thierry's comments reflected exactly the sentiment of Saint Simon's 1804 *Extrait d'un ouvrage sur l'organisation sociale* in which the same prediction of the organizational dominance of the coming century is delivered: "What will happen in the nineteenth century? The science of social organisation will become a positive science" (Saint Simon in Taylor 84). Keith Taylor describes the Saint-Simonian

111

doctrine as a theory of organization based on physiology, or society as an "organic entity whose development, like that of any other organic body, was governed by natural laws which it was the purpose of scientific inquiry to reveal. From the notion of *organism* it was a short step to that of *organisation*" (Taylor 34). Based on the perceived organic form of a living organism, this mode of organization is precisely the point from which the implicit network consciousness emanates in Saint Simon's works.

Saint Simon delivered a great deal of his thoughts on the reorganization of institutional structures in a number of periodicals founded and published by him and his followers in the early years of the nineteenth century. With the fittingly titled publications *L'Industrie* (1816-1818), *L'Organisateur* (1819-1820), and *Le Producteur* (1825), he spelled out an ideology of the reorganization of the political system, clergy and religion, class differences and property ownership, and perhaps most central, the very means of information and knowledge dissemination.

> In the new political order, the sole and permanent object of
> social organisation should be to apply as well as possible
> the knowledge acquired in the sciences, fine arts, and arts
> and crafts to the satisfaction of man's needs; to disseminate
> that knowledge, improve it and increase it as much as
> possible; in short, to combine in as useful a way as possible
> all the particular works of the sciences, fine arts, and arts
> and crafts. (Talyor 208)

The operative notion in Saint Simon's utopian vision is a network of redistributed nodes of artistic and scientific authority; this fantasy is governed by the positivist view of society as an organism. By first approaching the social organism empirically, the system can be reorganized to accentuate the "natural" elements of its organic structure, that is,

112

through harnessing and developing its centers of power and its flows of information in the service of the organizational plan.

The implicit network figure functions as the dominant metaphor in Saint Simon's understanding of the social organism and its potential. Mattelart explains this model as "society conceived as an organic system, a bundle or fabric of networks, but also as an 'industrial system' managed by and as an industry" (Mattelart 7). Yet despite the notion of society as a network or organism, as a set of relations between *a posteriori* parts to make the whole, Saint Simon's approach also employed a network-logic in considering the very process of knowledge production as a practice of linking established points of knowledge production. His desire to depart from a perceived eighteenth-century thought was also governed by a mode of simultaneous departure from and maintenance of valuable institutional knowledge through a process of linking the old with the new, a historical epistemological network of sorts: "the old system will not completely die out until our ideas concerning the means of replacing the institutions (derived from that system) which still exist have been sufficiently clarified, linked, and coordinated, and have been sanctioned by public opinion" (Taylor 192). In the network language of today, links and coordinates are taken as a given and understood with the ubiquitous network imagery of the digital age. For Saint Simon, the image of a new society as interconnected nodes, or a system of circuits between distributed points of knowledge and energy, may have hardly resembled the specific figure of the computer network as it is commonly visualized today; and yet, this idea of connectivity precedes the image itself even if it is

not directly influenced by the reciprocal network-thought models in physiology and technology.

Saint-Simon's plan for a technocratic socialist utopia was heavily based on the development and control of the modes of information flow. Like the circulating blood through the arteries of the living organism, a central tenet of the Saint-Simonian doctrine was to expand the network of communication, transportation, and interaction between the scattered points of the desired structure of knowledge and capital. After having accompanied French forces in the West Indies in 1782/1783, Saint Simon travelled to Mexico where he attempted to convince the viceroy to build a canal to connect the Pacific and Atlantic, a plan indicative of his early network aspirations (Dondo 34; Gießmann 89; Mattelart 1996: 91-92).[57] Saint Simon's idea for the transoceanic waterway was not taken up by the Mexican government, however, after returning from North America his ambitions toward waterway networks were given a second chance when he submitted a proposal to the Spanish government to build a canal that would connect Madrid with the sea. This plan too was interrupted as Saint Simon returned to France during the revolution. In 1797 Saint Simon was accused of operating an illegal private postal network whose efficiency exceeded that of the government controlled service. Although he denied the allegations, the accusations align with his underlying interest in opening paths of movement and communication via canals, postal routes, and other networks of information flow (Dondo 77-78).

---

[57] Although Saint Simon's proposal to the Mexican viceroy is widely cited and his later canal-project participation verified, Dondo notes that the account of his journey to Mexico is not without some ambiguity regarding the verifiable details of his meeting with Mexican officials (Dondo 34).

In his fascination with the power of communication channels, Saint-Simon appears to be in direct step with the peripheral elements of *Weltliteratur* accounted for in the previous chapter. Goethe also saw the potential in joining the Pacific and Atlantic (if only in Panama), in joining European rivers, and the creation of Suez Canal. He too spoke of *Dampschiffe, Eisenbahnen und Schnellposten*. Such interests in the conduits of cultural exchange (*freier geistiger Handelsverkehr*) appear as simple fragments of his greater *Weltliteratur* ideal. But what role do these matters play in the context of Saint-Simon? Can we speak of the fate of a new literary epoch in the schemes of another nineteenth-century idealist? In Saint-Simon's case to the Mexican government? In his illegal operation of a postal communication system? Rather than submitting Saint-Simon as a contender for another authority claim to *Weltliteratur* discourse, it is possible instead to locate in Saint-Simonian thought an invariant core of interest in the channels of communication and exchange that these intellectual figures shared in their overlapping lifetimes. Such an approach departs from the observation of the common metaphors of perception in varying discursive contexts as the underlying elements of both the perceived reorganization of the world-literary system and the perceived reorganization of society through infrastructure and political reform. Within the commensurable contexts of these varying concepts is a metaphoric common denominator less burdened by the conceptual developments and changes throughout the trajectory of *Weltliteratur* and Saint-Simonism alike.

The Saint-Simonian network ideology, or the "cult of the network" as Armand Mattelart describes it, found its most articulate and developed form in the works of his

followers after his death in 1825. Michel Chevalier, one of Saint Simon's closest

devotees, drafted what Sebastian Gießmann refers to as the central document of French

network-thinking in his series of articles under the title *Système de la Méditerranée*

which appeared in *Le Globe* 1832 (Gießmann 81).[58] *Le Globe* was purchased and taken

over by the Saint-Simonians in 1830, providing a forum for writings of this sort.[59] As a

continuation of the Saint-Simonian reorganization of society, Chevalier proposed a

detailed transformation of infrastructure in the service of world peace. Through an

advanced network of transportation and economic connections throughout Europe and the

Mediterranean surroundings, the *Système de la Méditerranée* was intended to achieve the

utopian goal of *association universelle* through the unifying effects of organizing and

linking the scattered centers of culture, economy and thought in an infrastructural

network of the continent, a sort of "redemption through networks" (Mattelart: 2000 17).

    Writing in the wake of the 1830 July Revolution in France, Chevalier proposed to

stir European and world events into a progressive, peaceful epoch that would come from

a sort of network unification despite recognition of national difference and confrontation

with varying political mentalities (not simply liberalism and its opponents). Chevalier's

vision for the new period of peace was to turn the Mediterranean and its neighboring

nations into a physical network of transportation and exchange, and into a figurative

---

[58] An avid reader of *Le Globe* from 1826 onward, Goethe was, according Heinz Hamm , influenced in his conception of *Weltliteratur* by the "Globisten" of the journal. However, Hamm also describes Goethe's waning interest in the journal due to its increasingly political tone following the July Revolution of 1830 and the subsequent takeover by Saint Siminonians (Hamm 9-11).

[59] See Peter Goßens for an extended discussion of the effects of the Saint-Simonian takeover of the journal on readers in Germany. "Nachdem die Saint-Simonisten den *Globe* im Oktober 1830 gekauft hatten, veränderte sich die Zeitschrift vom Medium des kulturellen Austauschs zu einem durchweg politischen Periodikum, das ab dem 12. Januar 1831 mit dem offizellen Untertitel *Journal de la religion Saint-Simonienne* erschien" (Goßens 151).

network of economic (and also cultural) trade. Industry, for Chevalier, "consists of centers of production united by a relatively material link, that is to say by transportation routes, as well as a spiritual link, that is to say by banks" (Chevalier 36).[60] By harnessing the potential of these links, and with the symbol of the railroads as the means with which humanity may "march toward association universelle," Chevalier's plan was an attempt to translate the network-thinking of the Saint-Simonians into practice, an attempt to move the metaphor to reality. In its intended utopian effects of a peaceful global unity through interconnection and exchange, Chevalier's plan resembles a great deal of what the early nineteenth-century discussion of *Weltliteratur* also includes.

Unlike Saint Simon, Chevalier does indeed employ the word *network* (*réseau*) in describing the unit of interconnected parts and the constant dialog between the centers and peripheries of Europe's industrial and social mainstays. Much of the network in *Système de la Méditerranée* appears as a thorough proposal for its implementation. Chevalier describes at great lengths the cost estimates, figures concerning the required amounts of manpower and timelines, as well as both the logistical and cultural barriers that each involved country might present as a challenge to the execution of the plan.[61] His suggestion for financing the production of the transportation network also reflects his peaceful utopian interests; each country involved should apply their defense/military budget, as well as the manpower involved, for over a decade in order to simultaneously inhibit any international conflict and generate the immense sums necessary for such a

---

[60] The translation from French is mine.
[61] Chevalier discusses the geo-cultural specifics for the realization of his infrastructural unification plan with detailed the subsections: Espagne, France – Angleterre, Italie, Allemagne – Turquie D'Europe, Russie, Asie et Afrique (Chevalier 40-50).

world-altering infrastructural endeavor. The vision of the material network production

was itself a step toward the utopian bond of *association universelle* in the coming era and

an example of the emerging techno-organic imagination of connected nodes in a new

world.

Chevalier's vision represents the Saint-Simonian ideal par excellence; the *Système*

de la Méditerranée sought to classify and reorganize the structure of the world and its

national divisions by employing a network logic stemming largely from the physiological

model of organic circuitry and with corresponding emphasis on the flow of materials, and

perhaps more importantly, ideas. Chevalier's plan in particular is the most eloquent

articulation of the network logic in the service of a global utopian unit of sorts; it is also

the most detailed description of the Saint-Simonian vision, which "marks a genuine and

self conscious attempt to come to grips with the new spatiotemporalities that had

emerged during the previous half century" (Wittman 36). In Chevalier's writings, the

figure of infrastructural networks provide the model for a figurative and literal

progression toward a common unity. Chevalier:

> In the eyes of those who have faith that humanity marches
> towards *universal association*, and who devote themselves
> to leading it there, the railroads appear under a completely
> different light. The railroads, which along with men and
> products can move with a speed which twenty years ago we
> would have judged as a tall tale, will singularly multiply
> the relations of people and cities. In the material order the
> railroad is the most perfect symbol of universal symbol of
> *universal association*. The railroads will change the
> conditions of human existence. (Tresch 207)

Of the many critical changes brought forth by the shifting spatial-temporalities, it is

difficult to assess too highly the metaphoric value that railroads and other novel

technologies of rapid conveyance and communication provided. Chevalier's plan

required the material networks of transportation; yet, for Chevalier, the value of these

networks as *symbols* was that which would truly revolutionize the conditions of human

existence. Chevalier, in effect, described the conditions which produce the necessary

models for altering the thinking that *universalle association* and *Weltliteratur* both

require.

There is a purely pragmatic element to Chevalier's proposed network of

transportation. Despite deeper significance and the operative network logic, there remains

the simple benefit of conveyance between disparate points in quantities and at speeds

previously unheard of. Part of Chevalier's fantasy included the collapsing of spatial and

temporal boundaries in the movement of materials and people; he offers the somewhat

romantic, and for the early nineteenth century surely thrilling possibility of departing

early in Le Havre, breakfasting in Paris, and by evening boarding a steamship en route to

Algeria (Chevalier 37).[62] What is at stake in such a fantasy is the wakening to an

awareness of a notion of graspable world-unity on a purely physical scale. Within the

span of one day, one moves throughout the entirety of European space with each stopped

marked by the meals on which a day's time is measured. Thus, Chevalier depicted the

European body growing tighter and its thresholds less stable (Algeria is now connected to

Le Havre with croissants in Paris in a single day). In this movement is an implicit

communication between Europe and Africa, an awareness and feeling of cultural

---

[62]See also Gießmann's discussion of the union of once distant localities in Chevalier's treatise as a system of universal junctions (Gießmann 2007: 126). That the sequence of meals throughout the day would be possible while conveying passengers between Europe and Africa (the Occident and Orient) is in keeping with the metaphoric view of the body. It is indicative of an understanding of travel throughout world space on the time of the body and thus understood on the schedule of daily meals.

simultaneity and connection. By proceeding through time and space as nodes in a network, a consciousness of geographic and cultural interconnectivity emerges and the thought of connecting Le Havre and North Africa becomes possible. The imagined transportation network became a model through which a new "world" consciousness could be formed.

In Wolfgang Schivelbusch's terms, transportation technology, specifically the the railroad in the nineteenth century, is the "material substratum of potentiality, i.e., it is in equal measure the material substratum of the traveler's space-time perception" (Schivelbusch 33). The equation of perception with material technologies embodies the epistemological change provided by network-thinking through material models. For Schievelbusch, the articulation of such changes is most evident in the words of Heinrich Heine as one of the unusually astute observers of the culture of his time:

> Durch die Eisenbahnen wird der Raum getötet, und es
> bleibt uns nur noch die Zeit übrig. Hätten wir nur Geld
> genug, um auch letztere anständig zu töten! In viereinhalb
> Stunden reist man jetzt nach Orléans, in ebenso viel
> Stunden nach Rouen. Was wird das erst geben, wenn die
> Linien nach Belgien und Deutschland ausgeführt und mit
> den dortigen Bahnen verbunden sein werden! Mir ist als
> kämen die Berge und Wälder aller Länder auf Paris
> angerückt. Ich rieche schon den Duft der deutschen Linden;
> vor meiner Türe brandet die Nordsee.[63] (Schivelbusch 34)

The wit of Heine's take on spatial-temporal compression reduces but does not eliminate his palpable concern with the effects of the railroad. For Heine, the product of rail

---

[63] Todd Presner notes that Heine's comments were the result of an encounter between Heine and Friedrich List, a key figure in the establishment (and ideology) of the German railway system: "[…] as early as 1831, after meeting the German railway pioneer, Friedrich List, in Paris, Ludwig Börne reports that Heine found it a 'terrible idea' that he might, one day, be able to take a train from Paris to Germany in a mere twelve hours" (Presner 61).

technology is not the sheer potential of quick travel, but the inescapable consciousness of the now compulsory bind to distant, perhaps hostile places. Chevalier and Heine express two poles in the ambivalence of railroad-technology effects, those "two contradictory moments of the same motion" (Schivelbusch 34). However, both the utopian and pessimistic perceptions support the same conclusion that transportation technology of this sort creates a drastic shift in the perception of localities as single spaces; both visions entail a mode of knowing space that is inevitably plural in its inescapable awareness of its attachment to other world-spaces that are always "en rapport" with another.

Chevalier also knew that the significance of the networks was more than the expansion of spatial-temporalities and the increasingly compressing parameters of time of space; he freely referred to the railways as a "symbol" and it is as symbols that these technological advancements would achieve their greatest significance for a new era. Rather than embodying a specific meaning in themselves, the railways deferred to their greater purpose of enabling *association universelle* in which the idea of local space is always already preceded by an idea of the global, an understanding of space as fundamentally interconnected. The burgeoning consciousness of global unity is an aspect of the Saint-Simonian network-thinking derived largely from the metaphoric reading of space and society as an organic entity or a body. The practical implementation of infrastructure and administration was a direct response to precisely this shift in the conception of society as a single organism:

> This ultimately derived from the Saint-Simonians' sense
> that society was something qualitatively other than an
> accumulation of individuals. Rather, society was an entity
> in its own right that could not be understood as

121

Enlightenment thought had usually done; that is, through extrapolation or, conversely, through representing the collective in individual terms. Saint-Simonian organicism instead viewed society as based on difference. Saint-Simon himself envisaged society as a body composed of different organs that were not all equal in importance: the toes may be important, but the body dies without its heart. Nonetheless, every part had its dignity and all were necessary to the healthy functioning of the body. (Wittman 34)

The symbolism of the railway networks stems thus from an applied knowledge of world society as a body of different, but necessarily related and interdependent (but not equally necessary) parts, the coveted *association universelle*.

Chevalier's metaphoric understanding of the world body also goes beyond the purely figurative. Writing of the "veins" and "arteries" of industry – what other metaphor could have possibly provided such a model? – or of "linking the disjointed members," Chevalier attempted to access the whole organic body by moving from metaphor to action with his plan of the *Système de la Méditerranée*.[64] The network of transportation, communication, economics, and culture is summarized as an infrastructural project, yet its underlying significance is also its fundamental expression of an applied mode of network-logic in the very conception of space and culture. "Infrastructure," argues Wittman, "became the physical bridge between the embodied space of the individual body and the exploded space of the national and international arena of production and publicity" (Wittman 35). This physical bridge was both a product of, and undoubtedly

---

[64] The sanguineous life force pulsing through the organic channels of the figurative body appears, in Chevalier's depiction, as a circulating form of civilization between the nations: "civilisation circulant" (Chevalier 41).

also a key contribution to, an ever-growing awareness of spatial and cultural simultaneity and interconnectedness.

The descriptive similarities between *association universelle* and *Weltliteratur* discourse are enormous in their common approach to world unity through the awareness and reorganization of the channels of exchange. Strich spoke of Goethe's *Weltliteratur* precisly as communication channels –"wodurch sich die Völker auf literarischem Wege gegenseitig kennen, verstehen, beurteilen, schätzen und dulden lernen, alles, was sie auf literarischem Wege einander näherrückt und verbindet" – and also as transportation networks – "[s]ie ist ein literarischer Brückenbau über trennende Ströme, ein geistiger Straßenbau über trennende Gebirge" (Strich 16). For Strich, literature was also an infrastructural force in the language of the literary as a bridge (Brückenbau), or both the circulating commodity and the market itself. It was a perceived view of literature as a specific kind of medium between different cultural entities. Both the means and ends of *association universelle* and *Weltliteratur* seem to communicate the same dream.

Not unlike Goethe's call to hasten the approach of the literary epoch, the Saint-Simonians sought, through network-thinking, to hasten the approach of a progressive epoch of peace and cooperation between the previously bellicose nations of the world. Chevalier's proposal for a world network in the Mediterranean begins with an epigraph addressing the present urgency for the peace of the world and the emancipation of the people: "Le paix est aujourd'hui la condition de l'emancipation des peoples" (Chevalier 1). Yet his most telling expression of the attempt to mend the rifts in the organic world unity is found in his desire to unite East and West and thus rid the future of the conflicts

that stem from this historically devastating divide. Accordingly, Chevalier envisioned infrastructural reorganization that would lead to a peaceful shift in which the former arena of world conflict would be erotically bound by the progress of a new era: "The Mediterranean will become the marriage bed of the Occident and Orient" (Tresch 207). Such a cultural union would first become possible through the network-organization of physical space, a crucial facet of the Saint-Simonian drive toward a world unity. With an intended degree of triumph over the physical barriers of world exchange, the perception of canals as nearly holy paths demonstrates the conceptual weight of space, and more importantly, of the channels of exchange and distribution in what the Saint-Simonians thought to be the "communication of two seas" (Mattelart 1996: 96). For the final *association universelle*, the outcome of binding Orient and Occident would signify a larger step toward a utopian world unity with the physical channels made accessible through intricate network linkages.

Like the early nineteenth-century predictions of the coming epoch of world literature, historical hindsight shows that the expansion of networks not only failed to wed the East and the West, it also helped to usher in the pronounced period of colonial violence over the contested points of geopolitical interest. However, while the utopian vision of *association universelle* certainly fell short in coming to fruition, the legacy of Chevalier's work and the general network-consciousness of the Saint-Simonians did indeed leave a lasting mark on the development of infrastructural networks and consequently the course of world history. The network impetus of the Saint-Simonians was evident throughout the nineteenth century with lasting effects today. Aside from

124

Saint Simon's attempt to convince the Mexican government to construct a passageway between the Atlantic and Pacific in Nicaragua, a group of Saint-Simonians also sought to implement infrastructural changes that would later develop into the Suez Canal.[65] Barthélemy Prosper Enfantin, another Saint-Simon devotee, had a career as postmaster and also presided over another network of communication as director of the Paris-Lyon railway (Mattelart 1996: 98). Michel Chevalier continued his pursuits of infrastructure development and the construction of railway and canal projects throughout the nineteenth century. Chevalier also continued his drive toward an altered version of *association universelle* with his circulation-based economic liberalism, helping to broker a free-trade agreement between France and England. The contribution of the Saint-Simonians was the translation of concepts into objects, conveying ideology into material networks throughout Europe.

The infrastructural influence of Saint-Simonian thought informed one of the earliest published images of a railroad network, a decentralized but interconnected chart of nodes (cities), bound by the stretches of desired railway lines. The liberal economist and infrastructural visionary Friedrich List was among the first committed supporters of the plan to develop a railway system in Germany. His 1835 proposal *Über Eisenbahnen und das deutsche Eisenbahnsystem* appeared in the periodical *Das Pfennigmagazin* with a front-cover sketch of a national railway network that would connect scattered cities as nodes.

---

[65] The creation of the Suez canal was according to Gießmann a matter of great importance with nearly religious connotations for Saint-Simonians in the early 1830s, particularly for Chevalier and Prosper Enfantin (Gießmann 2006: 127).

Figure 5. List's 1835 vision of the network unity that would be the result of the binding railway system.

List also played an indispensable role in the establishment of a central German *Zollverein* as a means of uniting the country's scattered economic forces. List described the "Siamese twin" of the *Zollverein* and the railway network, the two forces working to move Germany from its provincial isolation toward its future as a united world power of material and cultural production. List's motives were clearly nationalistic in their

conception, but his sketch of the German railway network and other infrastructural visions reflected the growing consciousness of an intersection between material and culture whose profits would come through the unity of networked space. Specifically significant is List's emphasis on the cultural aspects of such network unification: "Das deutsche Eisenbahnsystem wirkt indessen nicht bloß durch Förderung der materiellen Nationalinteressen, es wirkt auch durch Stärkung aller geistigen und politischen Kräfte auf die Vervollkommnung der deutschen Nationalzustände" (List 3). In this sense, the infrastructural unity of a networked Germany would resemble the concluding stage to a nearly Hegelian process of development in which the nation would become politically, economically, and culturally complete. The network of rails would accomplish this national maturity by performing a number of necessary and previously lacking functions as: 1) *Nationalverteidigungsmittel*; 2) *Kulturbeförderungsmittel*; 3) *Gesundheitsanstalt*, *Stärkungsmittel des Nationalgeistes*; 4) *ein fester Gürtel*; 5) *das Nerven System des Gemeingeistes* (List 3-4).

The fifth function of List's railroad fantasy, the creation of the "nerve system" of the common cultural spirit, was envisioned to connect the three elements of significance in the investigation of new models of world literary systems and network thinking. In this new global imagination, technology, physiology, and culture occupy the same common metaphoric space, becoming inseparable from one another. The railroads become again an organic communication system with the imagination of the material network reflecting the previous models of connection and providing a material network model for further contexts. Like the bodily transmission of nerves as telegraphic messages, these

communications become the vital transmissions of culture. This three-way reciprocity summarizes the interdependence of each of the models (technological, organic, cultural), each inescapably informed by the other.

The perceived cultural benefits of the imagined railroad era mirrored precisely the rhetoric associated with the nineteenth-century discussion of *Weltliteratur*. Whereas Goethe offered little description of the means with which world traffic and exchange would occur in the coming epoch, List, in very near temporal proximity, described the railroad network as *Kulturbeförderungsmittel*:

> [...]denn es beschleunigt und erleichtert die Verteilung aller Erzeugnisse der Künste und Wissenschaften; es bringt Talente, Kenntnisse und Geschicklichkeit jeder Art in Wechselwirkung; es vermehrt die Bildungs- und Belehrungsmittel aller Individuen, von jedem Stand und Alter. (List 3-4)

An obvious and immediate difference between Goethe's *Weltliteratur* and List's German railway system is their competing geo-cultural reaches: Goethe speaks of a world unit, List of a German unit. Yet this detail is easily overlooked when considering that the underlying principle of this fantasized unity is the same in both utopian visions. In both cases, the rapid compression of time and space through transportation technology, the circulation of cultural wares, and the opening currents of thought, are considered to bring forth a period of cultural affluence by embracing the interconnectedness, the process of exchange and communication, and the reorganization of arts and knowledge to maximize the potential of the once isolated parts of the whole. These common metaphors provided images and structures with and through which to think. "To follow the exchange of images among nineteenth-century scientists describing communication," writes Laura

128

Otis, "is to enter a complex circuit of thought—a system of coils, cross-links, and loopings in which a fluctuation at any point instantly becomes a property of the entire system" (Otis 13). Like the other nineteenth-century proponents of the common metaphor, Goethe and List conceived of the mechanics of network-thinking in their respective fields with diverging but related outcomes.

What is crucial to both the fanaticized unity of world letters and the transportation network of German cities is the basic vision of a larger unit consisting of scattered, largely unrelated, but ultimately interconnected parts that create the whole through the reciprocal metaphors of body and machine that had recently begun circulating in the sciences. This is evident in the idea of literature as a world system as much as in the unifying effects of a national railway network. The Saint-Simonian reading of society as an organic body is visible in List's work. The railway network was thought to function "als fester Gürtel um die Lende der deutschen Nation, der ihre Glieder zu einem streitbaren und kraftvollen Köper verbindet" (List 4). List's motivation for connecting the limbs and members of the organic German nation also shows a change toward a specific kind of network organization, namely a mode of connectivity with a single and proper center of power. In List's view, Germany was without a center of science, culture, literature and *Bildung* and he maintained that no country would benefit more from having its parts collected and connected as Germany (List 4). This need for cultural infrastructure is largely a reflection of the period before the 1871 unification of Germany in which the country consisted of numerous principalities and differently governed bodies: "Durch frühere Zerissenheit fast aller Attribute der Nationalität entkleidet, bedarf

keine Nation so sehr inniger Verbindung ihrer Glieder" (List 4). In a vivid expression of Romantic science, Germany appeared thus as an alienated body waiting to be connected and acquainted with its multiple parts. Like Frankenstein's assemblage awaiting its vital charge, this political body was thought to come to life when a current would surge through its sanguineous and nervous channels, providing the vital circulation to the body and networking the machine.

The Saint-Simonian legacy produced both the word and the figure of the network as a techno-epistemological expression of the advancements of modern interconnectivity. Chevalier's Mediterranean network was the vision of a united Orient and Occident bound by a principle drive toward *association universelle*, the same operative principle, albeit on a more national scale, that would bind the nodes in List's railway network. And yet, the range of Saint-Simonian effects is too large and diverse to suggest a single school of thought. The figure of the network too, while implicit and ubiquitous in Saint-Simonism and the works of his followers, is hardly restricted to this group alone. The clear articulation of the network consciousness, together with the applied techno-political significance of the Saint-Simonian followers, positioned the group as central and influential in the larger shifting episteme around 1800. It is in precisely this intellectual shift that we can position the concept of *Weltliteratur*, both with and beyond Goethe.

Weltliteratur as Network

Shortly after the deaths of both Saint-Simon (1825) and Goethe (1832), Saint-Simonian thought and Goethean *Weltliteratur* experienced a direct connection in the work of

Moritz Veit. It is in this connection that these two variations on a global theme become

apparent as interrelated models for reorganizing totalities envisioned through increasingly

prevalent metaphors around 1800. It has been largely overlooked in previous

Weltliteratur scholarship that one of the first major citations of Goethe's *Weltliteratur*

idea occurred as early as 1833 by Moritz Veit and that it was in the context of Saint-

Simonism, another forward-thinking fantasy of a new interconnected world unit.[66] What

was the connection between Goethe and Saint-Simon, or at least the idea of *Weltliteratur*

and Saint-Simonism? Goethe himself was skeptical of the cult in his lifetime; he even

advised his friend Thomas Carlyle to stay away from them and their teachings.[67] The

very title of Veit's book, *Saint Simon und der Saintsimonismus: Allgemeiner Völkerbund*

und ewiger Friede, illustrates a heavy lean toward the idea of peaceful unification of

people. Heavily influenced by Hegel, under whom he studied in Berlin, Veit wrote of

Saint-Simonism in terms of a gradually building historical process in which a single

entity begins to merge from a gathering of the individual nations.

> Wir behaupten daher, daß die Entwicklung der Geschichte
> darin bestehe, sich jenem Ideale eines Völkerbundes mehr
> und mehr zu nähern, und wir wollen versuchen, in
> flüchtigen Umrissen die Reihe der Erscheinungen
> hervorzuheben, die auf diese Entwicklung hinweist. (Veit
> 221)

---

[66] In his recent study of *Weltliteratur* in the nineteenth century, Peter Goßens discusses Veit's dissertation as an overlooked contribution to the idea of *Weltliteratur*, noting the necessary connection to the Saint-Simonian trend in European intellectual history. Goßens notes particularly Veit's Hegelian leanings in his idealized *Völkerbund* with its tendency toward a unified "Weltgeist" of sorts (Goßens 177-186). Veit's publication belongs perhaps in the category of the politicized post-Goethean (Young Germany) *Weltliteratur* that the literary critic Wolfgang Menzel criticized as a sort of corrupted internationalism, a combination of immoral cosmopolitanism and Saint-Simonism (D'haen 53).

[67] Goßens refers to correspondence between Goethe and Carlyle in October 1830 in which Goethe advises his friend to keep a distance from the suspicious French movement (Goßens 151).

For Veit the Saint-Simonian impetus toward collecting and administering the disparate parts of the ideal whole adopts the Hegelian language of historical inevitability while requiring a few devotees to usher in its completion. The fantasy of a world unity of connected and linked nations and peoples underlies Veit's presentation of the Saint-Simonian idea. But it is first in his discussion of the means of such a potential world-unity that the connection to *Weltliteratur* becomes evident.

Like Chevalier's *association universelle*, Veit's idea of a world *Völkerbund* implied an implicit network-thinking in the service of a utopian fantasy of world harmony and mutual recognition between peoples. It was a notion of a fundamental interconnectivity that drives what he referred to as "gegenseitige Annäherung der Völker" (Veit 282). But unlike Chevalier, Veit focused on intellectual and artistic elements in the process of mutual convergence between nations. Specifically, he included the role of literature alongside industry as a crucial medium of intercultural exchange.

> Außer den großen geschichtlichen Erscheinungen, die auf eine solche gegenseitige Annäherung der Völker hinweisen, giebt es aber auch noch andere Richtungen des geistigen Lebens, die geräuschloser, gewiß aber um desto thätiger mitgewirkt haben, die Völker einander zu nähern und dauernd zu befreunden. Es sei uns erlaubt, diesen friedlichen Richtungen des Völkerlebens, der Literatur und der Industrie, sofern sie als Vermittler des allgemeinen Weltverkehrs auftreten, einige Betrachtungen zu widmen, die sich ergänzend dem eben Gesagten anschließen. (Veit 282)

Literature in this context is seen a means of forging international recognition, friendship, and unity through exchange with and consideration of the other. It is with this idea that Veit presents Goethe and his remarks on *Weltliteratur* as an instrumental element in this

larger Saint-Simonian project. Perhaps more importantly, Veit advances the world-

literary image, offering a reading of literary movement in the world as blood circulating

through veins, connecting the vital organs of a world system; as the crucial coinage of

economic circulation; as the charges and flows of electric currents in a system; and as the

pulsing nerves and wired transmissions of organic and technological telegraphs alike

(Veit 299). For Veit, literature was a vital medium of the coming world peace.

Following the concluding fragment quoted above, Veit's second chapter

"Weltliteratur" begins with two epigrams by Goethe. Both fragments, now widely cited

evidence of Goethe's concept, are among the more direct comments on *Weltliteratur*.

> Ueberall hört und liest man von dem Fortschreiten des
> Menschengeschlechts, von den weiteren Aussichten der
> Welt- und Menschenverhältnisse. Wie es auch im Ganzen
> hiermit beschaffen sein mag, welches zu untersuchen und
> näher zu bestimmen nicht meines Amtes ist, will ich doch
> von meiner Seite meine Freunde aufmerksam machen, daß
> ich überzeugt sei, es bilde sich eine allgemeine
> Weltliteratur, worin uns Deutschen eine ehrenvolle Stelle
> vorbehalten ist. Alle Nationen schauen sich nach uns um,
> sie loben, sie tadeln, nehmen auf und verwerfen, ahmen
> nach und entstellen, verstehen oder misverstehen uns,
> eröffnen oder verschließen ihre Herzen: dies Alles müssen
> wir gleichmüthig aufnehmen, indem uns das Ganze von
> hohem Werth ist. (Veit 283)

and:

> Eine jede Literatur ennuyirt sich zuletzt in sich selbst, wenn
> sie nicht durch fremde Theilnahme wieder aufgefrischt
> wird. Welcher Naturforscher freut sich nicht der
> Wunderdinge, die er durch Spiegelung hervorgebracht
> sieht? Und was eine Spiegelung im Sittlichen heißen wolle,
> hat ein Jeder schon, wenn auch unbewußt, an sich selbst
> erfahren. (Veit 283)

Veit's remarkably early attention to Goethe's comments bridges the literary conceit with the Saint-Simonian ideal, perhaps even subsuming Goethe's *Weltliteratur* to Saint-Simonian utopianism. The chosen epitextual fragments from Goethe embody precisely two crucial elements of Veit's portrayal of Saint-Simonism and the developing *Völkerbund*, namely a simultaneous concentration on and concern for the single national entity (in this case German letters) along with the critical awareness that the very character of this single entity is fully dependent on its constant interaction and influence with the other parts of the greater system. It is the vision of the whole as a network, a system, or an organic body of interactive parts.

Veit's continued discussion of *Weltliteratur* positions the concept in exactly the terms expressed throughout the Saint-Simonian legacy; that is, that literatures are at once individual and universal. As necessary participants in "jener großartige Ideenaustausch" of world letters, literary units (national and otherwise) would become inseparable from the intellectual exchange of the republic of letters or *Gelehrtenrepublik* (Veit 293-294). Veit saw in Goethe's writings the literary expression of the Saint-Simonian ideal: "ein gegenseitiger Austausch des Eigenthümlichen, ein gegenseitiges freies und selbstbewußtes Aneignen und Anschmiegen des einen an den anderen, dies ist das Ideal der Weltliteratur, wie es die Zeit zu verwirklichen ist" (Veit 295). Veit's understanding of *Weltliteratur* as a process of exchange was clearly in step with the other tenets of a developing world interconnectivity evident in the Saint-Simonian legacy, but unlike the physical railway connections between cities in List's model, the network of capital flows between banks in Chevalier's model, and the organic systems of arteries and nerves in

living bodies, what were the elements fostering literary circulation and exchange that were driving the metaphor into literary territory?

Veit argued that the intellectual and literary exchange was advanced by two main forces: translation and journals (Veit 297). In the particularly rich context of German literature in terms of both translation and literary journals, Veit viewed these two forces as the same binding material that the iron tracks would be for the railroads. More importantly still, literary circulation through translation appeared as the sort of changing conception of simultaneity and connectedness that drove Heine's fear of the North Sea to come crashing down on his Parisian door and that also would lead to a utopian era for the Saint-Simonians. To comprehend the media of literary circulation in the early nineteenth century is to understand literature as a medium of cultural connection, for better or worse.

The wholesale reassignment of literary connections, via Goethe's *Weltliteratur*, takes its most pronounced shape in the common metaphor of circulatory systems and networks. In his discussion of the driving forces of literary exchange, Veit likened literary circulation and cultural exchange to physical infrastructure by comparing journals to the system of canals in Holland.

> Die Journale hat ein geistvoller Schriftsteller mit dem holländischen Canalisationsysteme verglichen, welches, das ganze Land in den verschiedensten Richtungen durchschneidend, auch die kleinsten Ortschaften und entlegensten Winkel desselben dem allgemeinen Verkehr zugänglich macht, und, wenn auch durch Ab- und Nebenwege, mit den Hauptstraßen in Verbindung setzt. (Veit 298)

Using the image of the Dutch water-way system, Veit described a network of texts bound and conveyed by translation and literary journals, a literary system reaching throughout

and beyond the land. This model imagined nodes joined by literary circulation, providing an artistic and intellectual model that mirrors the real existing networks of infrastructure. Echoing Chevalier's call to rescue the dying provinces of Europe by linking them to vibrant centers of production and culture, Veit suggested translation and periodicals as means for connecting even the smallest literatures (like the smallest places connected by canals) to the dominant cultural centers, or as parts of a greater circulatory system of the united body. But the most significant detail of Veit's equation between the two ideas was the accentuation of the models which form the epistemological conditions of these concepts. The organic body, the channels of communication, Romantic technologies – these interrelated developments are the conceptual common space through which the novel epoch is thought. *Weltliteratur*, as Veit's eloquent and timely dissertation demonstrates, is another way of reorganizing knowledge – in this case the knowledge of literary systems – by thinking through the new models of knowing as they were appearing in multiple network manifestations. In a complex interplay of influence between multiple disciplines and thought-directions, *Weltliteratur* emerges as another of the new modes of imagining the world and accordingly its literature.

But what is ultimately achieved by comparing the concept of *Weltliteratur* to the alternative or parallel discourse of networks and circulatory systems, that is, the metaphor of connectivity around 1800? If there is indeed a narrative to the idea of *Weltliteratur* that precedes and complicates its function as a concept, the notion of the network is most certainly burdened by the same lack of clarity and by similar conceptual developments. Networks, according to Erhard Schüttpelz, have become (particularly between the years

1990 and 2010), an "absolute concept" (*absoluter Begriff*) with which to describe everything; they are less phenomena as they are modes of scholarly phenomenologization (Schüttpelz 25-26). Yet this critical interjection is precisely what strengthens the bond between network-thinking and *Weltliteratur* as such a criticism lends itself equally to the literary ideal – that *Weltliteratur* too is less a phenomenon as it is a mode of scholarly phenomenologization. In both cases, the question is not about the ontology of *Weltliteratur* or networks, but about how these figures serve as the guiding metaphors for understanding entirety (world) as a collection of interconnected parts.

Hartmut Böhme's considers the character of nets to be defined precisely by the difference from the spaces they do not do not cover in entirety; that they set themselves apart from the in-between spaces between the net and the non-net (Böhme 21). To assume the same of *Weltliteratur* – that it does not cover all areas of literature, but that it is a sort of distinction between what is read, valued, and circulated, and that which is not – is to open the idea to a mode of reading that acknowledges the whole as an interplay between the individual (or text) and its unknowable plurality. For Böhme, it is against the in-between space of network connections that the nodes and lines, from which nets are formed, first become visible. Accordingly, these spaces, both real and figurative, take specific shape through their coexistence with and difference from the negative spaces of their specific contrasts, their difference between net and non-net. Such in-between space is constitutive of the net and *vice versa*. As such, while the net is indeed the *totum* of a space, it is not everything.[68] To follow Böhme, it may be said that the figure of the

---

[68] "Das Netz ist zwar das *totum* eines Raums, aber nicht das Alles (*pan*)" (Böhme 6).

network, to modify Wittgenstein's *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*, is not "'alles was der Fall ist,' sondern nur die Gesamtheit dessen, was in bestimmter Perspektive eine Information heissen kann" (Böhme 21). This comparison between net and world (via Wittgenstein) condenses the significance of the common conceptual history of these concepts as well as their contemporary implications. *Weltliteratur*, as Böhme describes of networks, also speaks to the *totum* of literature, but is not everything that *is* literature.

What is important, then, is the way in which (and through which models) we view such totalities. The network, like the world, gives the impression of the whole through the connection of key nodes, it is an interactive collection of a few in the service of a whole. Goethe's comments on *Weltliteratur* are concerned with a sense of "das Ganze" of the literary world. Equally, Saint-Simon and his followers sought to harness the potential of a new world utopia by binding the world, through various means, into a whole unit. And Veit, synthesizer of both sides, envisioned the media of connection in the sense of a world community and a world literature alike. In all cases, the focus is the whole, das Ganze, the unit of connected parts. Looking beyond previous narratives and theories of *Weltliteratur*, what are the practices of literary wholeness? How is the world as a whole mediated through literature? What does it mean for reading when the literary object becomes inalienable from its connections? What does it mean for a text to be a part of a synthesizing totality, a network, a world? And what kind of textual analysis involves a navigation of both the part and the whole it both creates and is created by? In keeping with the invariant conceptual origin of this network-thinking, this sort of *Weltliteratur*,

the following chapters attempt to answer these questions by examining the practices of

literary totalities that are at once "das Ganze" of the world, but not everything.

In the Gallery of World Literature
Chapter Three

"Der 'Bildersaal,'" wrote Johannes Scherr in the 1869 introduction to the second edition

of *Bildersaal der Weltliteratur*, "war der erste Versuch, einen Gedanken zu

verwirklichen, für welche Göthe zuerst das Wort geschaffen: – 'Weltliteratur'" (Scherr

1869 5).[69] With this declaration the great compiler and critic Scherr positioned his

anthology of *Weltliteratur*, and with it himself, within a conceptual trajectory of literary

history; he picked up the torch to continue the legacy Goethe began.[70] Despite his

somewhat less than modest claims to affiliation with Goethe, Scherr referred to his

project not as the concrete realization of the Goethean ideal, but as an attempt (Versuch)

to this end. As an attempt, Scherr's *Bildersaal* put to print an early interpretation of

Goethe's ambivalent "idea," which has come to mean a narrative in itself. However, it is

not simply that the anthology was conceived with previously unseen foresight as the

practice of what had been hitherto lofty idealism; instead, the great significance of the

Bildersaal is that as a practice the anthology was intended to mediate a world literary

entirety, to offer a picture, both figuratively and literally, of world letters, and in so doing

apply precisely the notion of wholeness, "das Ganze," and the assemblage of parts bound

as a novel, exceedingly modern world whole. Scherr's collection emerged as a timely

---

[69] The anthology *Bildersaal der Weltliteratur* was first published in 1848. Second and third editions (both expanded) were published in 1869 and 1885, the collection growing by over 300 pages from its original edition (Steffen 397). Marion Steffen provides an excellent overview of Scherr's work as an anthologist in *Johannes Scherr als Anthologist und Kulturhistoriker* (1996).

[70] In the third revised edition of the *Bildersaal* (1885), Scherr altered this statement by increasing his ownership of the collection, beginning with "Mein 'Bildersaal'" and thus connecting in retrospect his project to the Goethean tradition that preceded him.

print-media intervention in the history of ideas concerned with new global realities, the

contours of which had been established by models, metaphors, and technologies of

interconnectedness and world unity. It was the first declared practice of world literary

wholeness and one that prefigured collections to come in its imagination of the location

of the world literary gallery, the collection of global letters, and the exhibit of

Weltliteratur.

To call the collection an attempt is to reveal immediately the logic of the world

anthology. An attempt suggests the process of choosing, of selecting and editing texts, of

subjective interventions in the realization of an idea which, if left untouched, would

remain nearly sacred. But the elements of subjectivity are already obvious. It is hardly a

surprise that the realization of a conceptual superlative like *Weltliteratur* must involve the

imperfect biases of its practitioner. Scherr's candid remarks, however, do not merely

point toward a partial interpretive practice, but to the greater notion of the practice in

general. By voluntarily and self-consciously moving from theory to practice, Scherr

shifted the focus of *Weltliteratur* from the lofty idealism of utopian letters to a practical

application and its necessarily flawed realities. The result of such a shift was a departure

from the sole concentration on a single canon or unit of world literary masterpieces to an

emphasis on the medium with which such an idea is delivered. Well before the now

eminent academic narrative gained its full momentum, Scherr's project sought to deal

with the storage space of *Weltliteratur*, opting to practice the theory by conceiving of a

container for the world literary before the world literary itself. Scherr imagined the

depository, the archive, the container of the impossibly inclusive and arrived at the

portrait gallery of world literature, a metaphoric understanding of a visible storage space

that prefigured a way of reading the whole through a collection of parts. By conceiving of

the grand belletristic gallery, Scherr engaged in the contemporary logic of representation

that was being practiced in the increasingly popular museum as a viewable collection. By

implementing the collection in the form of an anthology as a museum, Scherr presented a

printed layout of trans-national literary samples, staging the medium of visible literary

commensurability at the same time comparative literature was emerging as a discipline.

And by presenting the monolingual (German) voice of a polyglot world of literature,

Scherr enacted the paradox of plurality mediated by the homogeneity of a single language

in a single space. In the discursive history of the concept, the significance of *Bildersaal*

der Weltliteratur has been greatly overlooked.

The instability of the *Weltliteratur* concept is by now abundantly familiar; yet, the

practices of *Weltliteratur* are not. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Scherr's endeavor to realize the

idea included a number of contradictions in its conception of the world-literary whole,

but these contradictions are emblematic of the reoccurring theme of subjectivity in the

practices of *Weltliteratur* that will follow. Following his statement on the realization of

Goethe's idea, Scherr wrote:

> Von dem olympischen Stand- und Schaupunkte seines
> Weltbürgerthums herab hatte Wolfgang der Große erkannt,
> daß "die Welt, wie ausgedehnt sie auch sei, doch immer nur
> ein erweitertes Vaterland," und sein ahnendes Ohr vernahm
> das "Weltconcert" der Poesie, in dessen
> Universalsymphonie die dichterischen Stimmen- und
> Instrumentenklänge der verschiedenen Zeiten und Völker
> dereinst zusammenfließen könnten und sollten. (Scherr
> 1869: 5)

Scherr's practice of *Weltliteratur* included the now common, nearly sacred intellectual

reverence less than two decades after Goethe's death. Goethe, more grandiose still

"Wolfgang der Große," appeared atop Olympian heights like a god of antiquity. In the

contemporary legacy Goethe reads like the Old-Testament creator of the *Welt*(literature),

uttering in act of ventriloquism "let there be Weltliteratur!" Scherr's introduction shows

that this divine declaration was preceded by Goethe's earlier dabbling in the polytheistic

divinity of ancient Greece. These sacrosanct depictions are thus not pure imagination

alone; they also validate the claims that are made in the name of founding moments of

secular literary worship. Scherr moved ceaselessly from Goethe's Olympian perch to the

perhaps most controversial of Goethe's utterances on *Weltliteratur*, noting the god-like

decree that the world, despite its rapid expansion, remains an extended fatherland. What

Goethe meant by this is up for (another) discussion; however, Scherr's reading and

subsequent realization thereof was clear: Goethe's vision of a "Weltconcert der Poeise"

was accurate, but the venue of the performance can only be Germany.[71]

As an attempt to realize Goethe's *Weltliteratur*, the project of the *Bildersaal* is

about the materialization of a theory. And yet the theory in question is anything but pure.

There is no original theory to materialize. Instead, the decisions put forth in the service of

the *Weltliteratur* idea reflected a specific reading, the personal tastes, and the biases of

subjectivity that were necessarily inherent in the practices and material applications that

follow. Scherr's indeed pioneer practice of word-literary production set a precedent for

the formal imagination of the idea. But despite the challenges in representing a unified

---

[71] Birgit Bödeker regards the duality of Scherr's vision as fundamentally contradictory to the notion of *Weltliteratur* (Bödeker 187).

theory of *Weltliteratur*, the methods Scherr employed in the construction of his

Bildersaal come to elucidate this vague notion of collective world literariness better than

years of speculation and academic analysis. In the declaration of his mission in the

introduction to the second edition, Scherr exhibited a prime example of the contradiction

of world-literary practice that, perhaps inevitably, affects any collection that ventures to

represent world totality in letters. Before the collection had even commenced, Scherr

explained that its task was the representation of the whole of literature through the parts

of his selection:

> Der "Bildersaal der Weltliteratur" soll in deutschen Lauten
> ein Gesamtbild des dichterischen Schaffens geben oder,
> genauer bestimmt, ein Gesammtbild des dichterischen
> Schaffens sämmtlicher Kulturvölker alter und neuer Zeit,
> welche wirklich eine Literatur besaßen oder besitzen.
> (Scherr 6)

Bildersaal der Weltliteratur was an attempt to present an image of literary entirety, a task

that was as admirable in its requisite openness as it was doomed to failure. The necessary

incongruity in this undertaking is evident in the arguments that follow his thoughts on

literary entirety. Scherr nearly immediately cancelled out his suggestion of creating a

"Gesamtbild des dichterischen Schaffens" with his instantaneous correction to the

grandiosity of this claim. He added in close proximity the clarification that in reality it is

"ein Gesamtbild *sämmtlicher Kulturvölker*," implying that those not present in the

Bildersaal were simply those without history, without culture, without a contribution to

the sacred harmonies of the *Weltconcert*. This gallery of world letters thus begins with

the obvious biases and subjectivity of its editor, with a particular cultural stance, and with

the intent to produce an image of a world literary whole through selected parts contrasted by others.

German Literary Translation and the Location of World Letters

If *Bildersaal der Weltliteratur* was the first attempt to realize Goethe's theory of *Weltliteratur*, it was also the first to truly realize the inevitable impossibility of the whole as a practice.[72] The challenge of the *Gesamtbild* of literary creation in the *Bildersaal* was not simply a matter of what becomes excluded, of the inevitable chauvinism of cultural omission from the whole, or of the negative space left of those that are barred entrance. Its conceptual premise was also burdened by an underlying nationalism and essentialism. Scherr positioned the practice of *Weltliteratur* within the realm of cultural characteristics in which the Germans emerge as the chosen people to take on the timely task of *Weltliteratur*.

> Die Unermüdlichkeit der deutschen Wissenschaft hat des
> Verständnisses der geistigen Hervorbringungen aller
> Nationen sich zu bemächtigen gewußt in einem Grade, wie
> kein anderes Volk es vermochte, und aus diesem
> universalenVerständniss ist jene poetische
> Uebersetzungskunst erwachsen, wie nur die Deutschen sie
> besitzen, – eine Uebersetzungskunst, welche die
> Literaturschätze der Fremde dem Vaterland anzueignen
> rastlos und erfolgreichst bemüht war und ist. So dürfen
> denn wir Deutsche uns in Wahrheit die Besitzer der
> "Weltliteratur" nennen, auf welcher Göthe hingewiesen hat,
> und mit Fug durfte an die deutsche Muse der Zuruf
> ergehen. (Scherr 6)

---

[72]For an overview of the earliest German-language histories and anthologies of world literatures in the nineteenth century, see Theo D'haen, *The Routledge Concise History of World Literature* (D'haen 16).

This first attempt to effectuate Goethe's *Weltliteratur* declared its own contradiction before the ink of the introduction was dry. It is not simply about the so-called *Weltconcert*, about the international exchange, or the open literary canon (is it ever?); its subject appears necessarily as an imagination of a literary tradition that is the earned property of subjective (here German) erudition ("die Besitzer der Weltliteratur"). Amidst the usual cosmopolitan tones and utopian propensities of the dreamed world-literary epoch, such a national basis to the fundamentally international concept is paradox.

Scherr's rather chauvinistic position concerning the German ownership of *Weltliteratur* was, however, not a unique thought. His citation of Goethe's *Weltliteratur* as an extended fatherland is evident of a reading that has challenged the notion throughout its development.[73] Moreover, the perhaps most essential argument to Scherr's claim, that of the German translation tradition (and with it its cultural communication), had already been a firmly established idea well before Scherr's introduction.[74] If Scherr sought to practice what Goethe theorized, his hyperbolic statement may appear to be less a unique sort of proto-nationalism in letters as it was simply in keeping with a set of commonly held beliefs at an early moment of developing nineteenth-century nationalism, or with the theories of early Romantic translation.

---

[73] Goethe's remarks on the world as an extended fatherland have been interpreted in multiple ways, indicating both praise for and warning against the effects of cultural homogeneity in globalization. (Strich 38; Pizer 216; Damrosch 8).

[74] An excellent overview of this translation tradition is provided by Andreas Huyssen's *Die frühromantische Konzeption von Übersetzung und Aneignung: Studien zur frühromantische Utopie einer deutschen Weltliteratur* (1969), André Lefevere's *Translating Literature: The German Tradition from Luther to Rosenzweig* (1977), and Antoine Berman's *The Experience of the Foreign: Culture and Translation in Romantic Germany* (1992).

Goethe expressed similar ideas in his discussion of German as the auxiliary node

of translation through which the literatures and nations of the world will become known.

This paradoxical duality has complicated the concept of *Weltliteratur* by incompatibly

promoting a world plurality though linguistic and cultural homogeneity. Antoine Berman

cites Goethe's view of German in the world literary exchange:

> It cannot be denied…that when someone understands
> German well, he may do without many other languages. I
> am not speaking here of French – that is the language of
> conversation, and particularly indispensible when traveling,
> because everyone understands it, and it can be used in
> every country in lieu of an interpreter. But as far as Greek,
> Latin, Italian, and Spanish are concerned, we can read the
> best works these nations in German translations of such
> outstanding quality that there is no further reason…to lose
> time over the painful learning of languages. (Berman 57)

Goethe described the idea in terms of a German cultural space that was thought to create

a sort of hub of interaction, forum of literary trade, or "'exchange market' par excellence

of Weltliteratur" (Berman 57). Antoine Berman argues that the role of the German

language as the medium of *Weltliteratur* complicates the notion of literary exchange if

considered a fundamental aspect of the national literary tradition (57-59). Yet Scherr's

espousal of *Weltliteratur* via German language and culture is arguably in keeping with at

least some of Goethe's remarks, a fact that reiterates the instability of Goethe's

Weltliteratur while validating Scherr in his efforts.

Goethe too was far from alone in his belief in German as the translation language

that would enable an international exchange of letters and exposure to the foreign works

of an increasingly open world. The translation tradition in Germany assumed a specific

significance with Martin Luther's rendering of the Bible into vernacular German

(Verdeutschung,), moving on, as André Lefevere argues, into a trajectory of translation practices through Justus Georg Schottel, Johann Christoph Gottsched, Johann Jakob Bodmer, and Johann Jacob Breitinger.[75] But while these sixteenth to early eighteenth-century theorists and practitioners of translation may have founded and sustained the activity and interest in a German translation culture, it was first in the late eighteenth century, primarily among the Romantics, that the perception of a specifically German relationship to literary translation began to emerge.[76]

In addition to Friedrich Schleiermacher's 1813 polemic and still resonate essay *Über die verschiedenen Methoden des Übersetzens*, translation was widely explored as a critical literary idea by Herder, Hölderlin, Goethe, Wilhelm von Humboldt and others. German translations of world (mainly European) works dominated the market and put a sort of literary canon into practice via translation. Luther's translation of the Bible marked the first major gesture of translation activity in German. Voss translated *The Odyssey* and *Iliad* of Homer; Hölderlin translated *Antigone* and *Oedipus Rex* by Sophocles; A.W. Schlegel translated Dante and, together with Ludwig Tieck, works of Shakespeare which are still used today; Tieck translated Cervantes' *Don Quixote*; and Wieland translated Horace and Shakespeare (just to name a few). Such canonical examples are indicative of the prolific translation activity in this cultural moment around

---

[75] Berman also demonstrates support for the same conceptual path "starting with Luther's translation of the Bible" from which "a whole set of questions is posed to German culture that question its very essence: What are we if we are a nation of translators? What is translation, and what is a good translation, for the people we are?" (Berman 33).
[76] Andreas Huyssen, in *Die Frühromantische Konzeption von Übersetzung und Aneignung: Studien zur Frühromantischenutopie einer deutschen Weltliteratur*, presents the argument that the notion of a sort of German mastery in translation had occurred through a detailed engagement and disagreement with the theories and practices of the pre-romantic practitioners of translation.

1800 and the growing sentiment, expressed most directly by A.W. Schlegel, that the Germans were the "true translators."[77]

In light of the active culture of literary translation, the perception of German as the language of literary mediation began to manifest abroad as well. There are countless examples of this belief in the writings of the German literary community around 1800. The Swiss-French intellectual and literary figure Germaine de Staël echoed the German sentiment that "the art of translation is carried further in the German language than in any other European dialect (Martin 1). Thomas Carlyle, a friend of the German literary scene and avid translator himself, also declared that the literatures of the world were delivered through the German language:

> Every literature of the world has been cultivated by the Germans: […] Shakespeare and Homer, no doubt occupy alone the loftiest station in the poetical Olympus; but there is space in it for all true Singers, out of every age and clime. […] The Germans study foreign nations in a spirit which deserves to be oftener imitated. It is their honest endeavor to understand each, with its own peculiarities, in its own special manner of existing; […] Of all literatures, accordingly, the German has the best as well as the most translations. (Martin 1-2)

In this widespread belief, the German language was held to be something of a pivot language, the auxiliary connection between the otherwise disparate and foreign works of the world.[78]

---

[77] See Koch on Schlegel: "'Die Deutschen [...], wie in allen Dingen treu und redlich,' seien deshalb vor allem auch 'treue Übersetzer.'" Koch adds that "die deutsche Sprache, lange verspottet als barbarisch-plumpe Mundart rückständiger Tölpel, ist für Schlegel die ideale Übersetzersprache" (Koch 2000: 30).
[78] As Greenblatt points out, despite criticism of the notion of German as the language of the world-literary pivot, "one should recall that circa 1800 there was indeed a singular plethora of German translations of foreign literature…" (Greenblatt 107).

However, the rise in translation practices in Germany around 1800, or in the age of German Romanticism and its predecessors, was also profoundly shaped by the decidedly insular political conditions and cultural relationship between Germany and the rest of Europe (particularly France and England). Intersecting with other widely held beliefs of early nationalism and hostility against Napoleonic France, translation was commonly intertwined with notions of a developing political consciousness. As a measure against the cultural dominance of the French, German translation became a means of self-definition through a rupture of the cultural dominance of French literary control as well as a defining act of self-realization through engagement with the other literatures of the world. This is largely evident in the parallel chorus from many German writers around 1800 who advocated for the unique position of German as the language of literary translation while also criticizing the dominance of the French literary tradition and its shortcomings.

Literary translation as the battle ground of national rivalries is a consistently problematic element of *Weltliteratur*. Translation serves simultaneously as a mediator of world-literariness and a reinforcement of cultural hegemony through literature. The countless moments of praise for the worldliness of German translation activity often came in conjunction with the self-defining impetus of an emerging national consciousness, and one whose form was shaped by its opposition to the culturally dominant neighbors. Herder declared that the French "who are overproud of their national taste, adapt all things to it, rather than to try to adapt themselves to the taste of another time" (Lefevere 32-33). Using the example of this French dominance, Herder

continued to reflect on the binary of domestication and foreignization methods in

translation:

> Homer must enter France a captive, and dress according to
> the fashion, so as not to offend their eye. He has to allow
> them to take his venerable beard and his old simple clothes
> away from him. He has to conform to French customs, and
> where his peasant coarseness still shows he is ridiculed as a
> barbarian. But we poor Germans, who are still almost an
> audience without a fatherland, who are still without tyrants
> in the field of national taste, we want to see him the way he
> is. (Lefevere 33)

Herder's take on translation is of particular significance for *Weltliteratur* and its

implementation as an anthology, as his posthumously published collection *Stimmen der*

Völker in Liedern is indeed a prototypical collection of world literary voices presented

through translation in German (Bödeker 187). For Herder, translation was a means of

resisting the hegemony of a universal language while supporting the notion of a universal

literary or poetic spirit among different cultures.[79] By maintaining a correspondence

between nation and language, Herder's resistance to a central cultural dominance in

letters led to what Pascale Casanova describes as the "Herder effect" in which the

previously minor languages/nations began to emerge as players in the world republic of

letters (Casanova 77-81). For Herder and later the Romantics, translation, particularly

German translation, was a means of relaying the national voice of other cultures through

the monolingual conveyance of German.

---

[79] Huyssen notes that Herder's motivation of hegemonic resistance in translation was largely directed at
French dominance and that this sentiment would be adopted by the early German Romantics in their
conception of German as the new universal language of translation and cultural mediation (Huyssen 33).

The complex relationship of literary translation and developing nationalism is crucial to the intellectual climate from which the idea of the *Weltliteratur* of the *Bildersaal* emerges. In its best intentions, such a *Weltliteratur* opens to the paradox of the world literary exchange that is predicated on mediation through a central language, or a fundamental practice of translation which is difficult to divorce from the other forces of dominant literary institutions and canon formation. One of the key features of Goethe's *Weltliteratur* was, it must be noted again, a specific indecision on the matter when taken as a single treatise. In addition to his most cosmopolitan remarks, Berman shows that Goethe also commented:

> Independently of our production, we have already achieved
> a high degree of culture (Bildung) thanks to the full
> appropriation of what is foreign to us. Soon other nations
> will learn German because they will realize that in this way
> they can to a large extent save themselves the
> apprenticeship of almost all other languages. Indeed, from
> what languages do we not possess the best works in the
> most eminent translations? (Berman 11-12)

This passage exemplifies the paradox of the world literary mediation through a single language (as a means for possessing literature), or what Berman points out to be Goethe's oscillation between the generalized inter-translation of world literature and the pervasive belief that the German language, and more importantly the literary-cultural practices of German culture, should be considered the "privileged medium of world literature" (Berman 56).

In light of precisely this paradoxical split in Goethe and his contemporaries, Scherr's *Bildersaal* took its most definitive shape, adopting the language of possession and appropriation, and perhaps more importantly, becoming the hyperbolic mediator of

"all" languages and literatures. If *Bildersaal der Weltliteratur* is indeed the materialized

practice of the theory of *Weltliteratur* through translation, it is in keeping with the

complications and ambivalence of the idea of German Romanticism in that it equally

oscillates between a world-literary utopia and a fundamentally national medium for

international literary exchange. Both the complicated history of *Weltliteratur* and the

medium of literary translation are performed succinctly in Scherr's project. It

demonstrates the erudition and diversity of German literary translation. It is a range of

careful translations from literary traditions previously unheard of, and one that attempts

(at least in part) to treat these works with the respect of world-literary classics. Yet the

Bildersaal also expresses the shortcomings of *Weltliteratur*, those fundamentally

nationalist and particularly provincial characteristics, which, while arguably inevitable in

such an impossible task, invite critical questioning of the very validity of the intentions in

such an endeavor. Scherr's declared attempt to realize Goethe's vague concept appears

thus well informed of the moments that preceded it, and thus includes the brazen,

chauvinistic declaration: "So dürfen denn wir Deutsche uns in Wahrheit die Besitzer der

"Weltliteratur" nennen […]" (Scherr 6).

The Politics of Choice in the Anthology

It is tempting to dismiss Scherr and the entire project to the realm of nineteenth-century

chauvinism and literary imperialism.[80] The claim of a rightful German ownership of

---

[80]Helga Eßmann uses the term "literary imperialism" to describes translation practices, particularly in the context of the German-language anthologies of *Weltliteratur* in the nineteenth-century (with specific attention to Scherr and his *Bildersaal*), which she refers to as media of literary imperialism (Eßmann 150).

Weltliteratur is a bold and inflated statement even if detached from the specific context of

an emerging national consciousness, deeply engrained cultural inferiority complex, and

the miserable world-conflicts that would follow and now appear inseparable from such

early sentiments. But sheer dismissal of Scherr or the *Bildersaal* on such grounds would

be a fundamental mistake. In the context of *Weltliteratur*, it is an oversight to read this

collection simply and solely as another early symptom of the nationalist disease and its

particularly ugly consequences in Germany. A reading of this nature would throw the

logic of the world-literary anthology out with chauvinism like the proverbial baby with

the bathwater.

     The case can be made that such a criticism would be faulty not because it is not

valid. It is. One could make a case for nearly every aspect of critical otherness from post-

colonial to feminist approaches, that the biases of this anthology established or reinforced

the literary institutions of colonial Europe, the nation (particularly Germany), and the

well known monuments of the mainly patriarchal, canonical authorities of Western

civilization. Not only did Scherr open with the statement that the collection itself is

devoted to "sämtlicher Kulturvölker" of the world, but even in its generous inclusion, the

collection omitted contributions from massive parts of the world. Asia is present but is

summarized only by fragments from China, Japan, and India. There is no mention of the

indigenous peoples of the Americas beyond references within other Western works, like

the German translation of Wordsworth's Native American treatment in "Song of

Hiawatha."[81] Africa is virtually ignored. Women writers appear almost exclusively

quarantined to their own space, removed from the other taxonomies of epoch, genre, etc.

And even in terms of Western Literatures (Central European and friends), there are

biases. German language literature is the overwhelming focus of the collection and within

that subsection the preference appears, perhaps unsurprisingly, to be on Goethe, Schiller,

and the Romantics. Scherr even included works by Friedrich Schlegel, whom he declared

in the introduction to be a mediocre if not simply bad writer.[82] Why even include him?

Scheer's subjectivity as editor clearly coincided with the gate-keeping function of the

literary canon in the *Bildersaal* as it would with any other anthology.

It may be seen as something of the elephant in the room. Anthologies, such as the

Bildersaal, include a notion of the literary (or *Welt*-literary) that is deeply intertwined

with the dominant currents of literary canons as they are imagined by their editors. But

this is also far from the only point of interest. It is indeed true that the *Bildersaal* commits

those acts of imperial exclusion, the crimes of othering, and the assaults against the

negative space of the anthology's layout. And yet it must also be noted that criticism of

this sort is of a specific kind and should be only sparingly mixed with a critique of the

anthology as a practice or applied form of *Weltliteratur*. Caution must be exercised in the

exclusive separation of *Weltliteratur* from the politics of inclusion in order to avoid a

---

[81] Published after the 1848 edition of the *Bildersaal*, Wordsworth's Hiawatha was added to the expanded editions from 1869 and later.

[82] Schlegel, according to Scherr, is at once the "Doktringeber der romantischen Schule," but also "als Poet nur eine zur Schwulstblase aufgetriebene Null (Scherr 1869: 14; vol. 2). The resulting paradox of Schlegel's inclusion in the *Bildersaal* may be, it can be speculated, a reflection of Scherr's admiration for Schlegel's clearly central role in German Romanticism despite his lack of contribution to its primary poetic works. In this sense, the two selected poems would be obligatory or tokenistic inclusions on behalf of Schlegel's work as an editor, critic, and theorist of the movement.

criticism that seeks to evaluate *Weltliteratur* on the basis of its perceived successes or

failures. Those critical views which look no further than the crimes of exclusion arrive,

perhaps unintentionally, at the conclusion that the *Weltliteratur* collection in question is

not a success because it fails to include any number of texts, genres, specific writers,

entire literatures or cultures, or in its nearly meaningless sweep, excluding literatures of

either the so-called East or the so-called West. The implication of such a conclusion is

that there could indeed be a proper way to represent *Weltliteratur* if only the collection

were to include x, y, or z. With such an argument *Weltliteratur* is deferred yet again, put

off for another day while it is simultaneously validated in its existence. By focusing only

on what is omitted, a narrative of real-existing world literature is upheld and *Weltliteratur*

grows further as a mythos. It is therefore necessary to avoid confusing the object of

criticism in *Weltliteratur* anthologies.

It is a common attribute of *Weltliteratur* criticism, particularly where anthologies

are concerned, to assess the validity of the collection based on a degree of proper

inclusion.[83] But what could possibly be a satisfying collection to fit *Weltliteratur*? It

should be noted that such collections invite denunciation by including the grandiosity of

totality in their world claims, but such critique is scarcely met with full awareness of

what the opposite would imply. Even if the *Weltliteratur* anthology were to include the

literatures whose absence is rightfully noted by critics, would the anthology be any bit

---

[83] This is nicely addressed by Leah Price who mentions the particular role of the anthology as a stage for the contentious points of the culture wars; however, Price also argues for a critical reading of anthologies beyond the tempting binaries of what they do or do not contain: "Although the canon wars have drawn attention to the power of anthologists to shape national identity, a criticism which reduces anthologists to shape national identity to their evaluative function can do little more than catalogue binary oppositions: including or excluding particular texts, over- or under-representing a given category of authors, acknowledging or ignoring new writing" (Price 3).

closer to something of a true world-totality? Franco Moretti's polarizing intervention in the concept has forced critics to concede to the fact that the addition of certain authors, texts, languages, cultures, epochs etc. is a matter of including them within a specific, already existing group, but not within a truly world-literary body.[84] *Weltliteratur*, it seems, is an idea that is always already failed, and is therefore an inadequate means for assessing the triumphs and defeats of literary wholeness in collections of the same name.

In his reflections on anthologies of world literature, David Damrosch questions the all-inclusive world literature that would encompass in its practice "Akkadian epics to Aztec incantations," asking therefore "what *isn't* world literature?" (Damrosch 110). He rightly states that, although the idea of *Weltliteratur* often reflects an ideal notion of literary order, "in practice it is experienced as what is available to read, in classrooms and on bookstore shelves, on course syllabi and in anthologies for students and general readers, and questions of scale and of coherence come to the fore in such practical contexts" (Damrosch 111). The pragmatic realism of this claim restates the centrality of literary institutions in creating and maintaining a living *Weltliteratur* as simply that which is available. However, like many others, Damrosch also cites the "opening of the canon" as a positive step in the direction of a realized world-literary idea in the form of the anthology (Damrosch 143).

In his critical analysis of literary anthologies, including *The Harvard Classics*, *The HarperCollins World Reader*, and *The Norton Anthology of World Literature*, Damrosch dwells on the shortcomings of world-literary collections and their historical

---

[84] Moretti refers to the work of Margaret Cohen and the "great unread" of literary potential (Moretti 149).

157

chauvinism in relation to the "other" (non-European/North-American) literatures, noting

for example that even "as recent as 1985, the Norton's "World" meant Western Europe

and the United States" (Damrosch 127). There is indeed a laudable expansion to the

collection in the 1995 version, which Damrosch describes as having included non-

European literatures as well, albeit "tokenistic and incoherent" in their appearance. This

version, as in the others, is weighted on the merits of inclusion and evaluated on a type of

success that comes from properly joining the seemingly incongruous traditions as in his

example of Inuit Songs and Kafka. But again, such a means of evaluation necessarily

suggests a right and a wrong way to *do* world literature, succumbing again to the pitfalls

of inclusion-based criticism.

Of course, Damrosch also argues for reading strategies that go beyond the call to

expand literary anthologies. He does, after all, suggest an approach that is far from based

solely on the fantasy of an inclusive collection that may one day redeem us all:

> But why should we have to choose between a self-centered
> construction of the world and a radically decentered one?
> Instead, we need more of an elliptical approach, to use the
> image of the geometrical figure that is generated from two
> foci at once. We never truly cease to be ourselves as we
> read, and our present concerns and modes of reading will
> always provide one focus of our understanding, but the
> literature of other times and eras presents us another focus
> as well, and we read in the field of a force generated
> between these two foci. (Damrosch 133)

Thus, Damrosch presents two takes on world literature anthologies. One the one hand he

freely evaluates anthology collections on the common axis of success or failure based on

what they include, how far they reach, and what sort of world they seem to depict through

the successes and failures of the texts they include. This sort of argument, again, presents

158

an implicit and ultimately false notion of *Weltliteratur* as something attainable, a project that could indeed be achieved with the right collection, a recipe whose balance of proper ingredients may one day be found. On the other hand, Damrosch also argues for a complex shift in the reading strategy of texts in anthologies altogether. By suggesting an approach to literature based on the geometrical figure of the ellipses, Damrosch suggests an interaction between text and reader that takes into full consideration the cultural and temporal position of the reader and the text alike, thus creating a reading strategy that privileges method over object. The successes and failures of *Weltliteratur* anthologies become less relevant if they are read as one of two foci of differing subjectivities in the world-literary collection.

It is thus clear that the study of *Weltliteratur* anthologies, or any of the practices of the vague idea, incorporates criticism based on what is included and excluded. It would be difficult to ignore the importance of such arguments when examining a collection like Scheer's or any other that voluntarily claims through the grandeur of its own classification (world!) to in some way represent the breadth of a literary tradition across spatial and temporal borders. Yet it is now more important to look beyond this aspect which has kept the concept of *Weltliteratur* in a state of limbo and has obscured some of its most valuable assets. If the goal of criticism of this sort remains simply to point out the flaws of each collection, then such criticism will serve no other function than to strengthen a discourse of *Weltliteratur* that has gradually become the standard; it is a discourse that ultimately reproduces itself, aligning with those elements of its creation discussed in previous chapters. To consider the shortcomings of the *Weltliteratur*

practice without fully embracing its impossibility is to imply that there exists an unseen manifestation of this idea. We are led to believe that the past prophets of *Weltliteratur* have been charlatans but that salvation is on the way with the messianic arrival to end our literary history. Scherr's collection undoubtedly falls short, but all *Weltliteratur* anthologies do. Does it make sense to still dwell on the nationalism of the collection? Is it the task of the critic to read *Bildersaal der Weltliteratur* strictly in terms of its assaults and failures? Should we continue to speak of a failed realization of *Weltliteratur*?

The answer to these questions is simply "no." It is necessary to approach Scherr's *Bildersaal* with these matters in mind, but ultimately also with a novel view of the idea of *Weltliteratur* as a practice. If we regard the very idea of such collections as always already failed (to be truly *Weltliteratur*, that is), than we are left with a new-found freedom of criticism. We are free to ask not whether or not the collection *is*, but what it *does*. How does this convergence of texts create *its* world, one that is always to be distinguished from *the* world? What are the textual elements that make this possible? What sort of a reading strategy does this involve? How does the structure of the anthology as a collection create a narrative of the whole? And finally, what can this early collection of *Weltliteratur* tell us about other collections to come?

Reading the *Bildersaal* with this line of inquiry allows an investigation of the anthology as a collection of texts as a semblance of a specific whole (world). Regardless of whether or not the whole is a reality or a success of sorts, this collection does indeed operate as a coherent unit of *Weltliteratur*. *Bildersaal der Weltliteratur* succeeds in presenting a concept although it is always already failed and it is this incongruous

dichotomy of terms that makes it a fitting metaphor for the greater *Weltliteratur* in its various instantiations. It is a textual whole made of fragments that have been excerpted, translated, and refracted through multiple channels of literary delivery. It is a textual assemblage of literary pieces rearranged through genre and media shifts. And it is a convincing portrayal of a whole that can never truly be. In Scherr's collection it is possible to observe a shift from the question that asks *if* this *Weltliteratur* is communicated to *how* this *Weltliteratur* is communicated. In presenting the logic of storage and exhibition in the gallery of *Weltliteratur*, Scherr's collection makes visible the otherwise unconscious mediation of a totality that is always already impossible, but also always at work in the reading process.

Scherr's Gardening Shears: The Anthology and the Literary Botanical

By now it is evident that a permanent fixture of the theory *Weltliteratur* is its seemingly fundamental instability. Although examining the practices of the concept in terms of literary collections such as Scherr's allows a way of circumventing a concrete definition by opting for the effect of *Weltliteratur* rather than an essence or *telos*, it also leads to new challenges of classification and brings to practice the difficulties once reserved for theory. Scherr's collection performs its *Weltliteratur* as an anthology; but the anthology, it seems, occupies its own specific place of contention. Even this seemingly straightforward form requires an examination of a number of conflicting opinions regarding what can or cannot be. The question of the anthology is one of genre, period, and authorship. There also exists a question concerning the practical drawing of

161

boundaries, such as the question concerning how many different authors must be featured in order to qualify as an anthology (Eßmann 153-154).[85] As a form of print media, the anthology has been the primary medium associated with the practice of *Weltliteratur*. In its treatment of gathered textual signifiers, the anthology is a means of presenting the semblance of a literary whole, but each unit of entirety varies in the intended sweep of its inclusion and the means with which it uses the print medium to this end. It is therefore necessary to position the project of the realized *Bildersaal der Weltliteratur* within the generic typology of the anthology if the operative means of world mediation is indeed dictated by the form itself.

A starting typology of anthologies of translated literature may be established on the basis of a simple distinction concerning the inclusion of multiple or single-source languages. "Multilateral anthologies" refer to collections of translated literature (of all kinds) from a wide range (but no fewer than three) of different languages and cultural contexts, encompassing the vast majority of anthologies that assume the title or mission of *Weltliteratur* (Eßmann 155). Multilateral anthologies are thus in opposition to "bilateral anthologies" of translation, which included translated works from one specific language.[86] In their form, multilateral anthologies prefigure a notion of plurality in letters, but the implications of the perceived "world" collection are first visible through a deeper

---

[85] Helga Eßmann also discusses the question of translators in anthologies of multiple or world literatures, noting that "one might ask what to do about a translator's anthology in which one translator has collected his or her translations of several foreign authors: if such translations are published for the first time, can the collection be called an anthology? And is not the translator possibly even commented on the texts?" (Eßmann 154)

[86] ibid, 155-156. Eßmann also describes other typologies of anthologies, including "monolingual," "bilingual," and "multilingual," as well as further distinctions of anthology types as they are shaped by the factors genre, editor, selection, and arrangement.

interrogation of the specific practices of *Weltliteratur* collections and the anthology as a form in itself.

Of all the varying definitions and diverging typologies of the anthology as a form, the general agreement in its simplest form is that the anthology is a collection of texts. The etymology of the word offers a particularly enlightening view into the specifics of such a collection. Anthology, from Latin *anthologia* via Greek, means "flower gathering."[87] The commonplace use of the term anthology began in the eighteenth century, which is largely evident, according to Joachim Bark, in the aesthetic descriptive title of "Blütenlese" to describe mixed pieces of belles lettres.[88] This definition, apparent already in the early entry of the word in Johnson's dictionary, remains still the operative description of the word.

In its etymology, the anthology establishes a logic of aesthetic implications for the texts included. Both beautiful (flowers) and specifically chosen (gathered), the texts of the anthology assume a particular value and connection to each other as their constellation depicts an aesthetic whole, a bouquet. The literary collection as a floral arrangement is equally manifest in the term "garland" (also the verb *to garland*), which is a collection of literary texts in a wreath or the interwoven collection of flowers or other decorative plants (Fain 22). "Garland" is also the name of the first known anthology of

---

[87] An overview of the etymology of the term "anthology," as well as its ancillary terms can be found in *Translation in Anthologies and Collections* (Seruya, D'Hulst, Rosa, and Moniz 3).

[88] "Der Begriff der Anthologie für Sammelformen von schöner Literatur wurde erst im Verlauf des 18. Jahrhunderts allgemein und zwar im Sinne des bürgerlich-ästhetisierenden Verständnisses von 'Blütenlese' belehrender, schöner und erbaulicher Texte. Dem entspricht auch die Ausweitung der Textorten, nachdem in der Antike zunächst nur die Kränze' von griechischen oder lateinischen Epigrammen damit gemeint waren" (Bark 443).

literature. The Greek anthology, a collection of epigrams and poems gathered by

Meleager of Gadara in the first Century BCE, was likened to a collection of flowers and

plants interwoven as a single collection of works (Fain 22). From the Middle Ages into

the fourteenth century, texts of a mainly religious variety were also collected in

anthologies and miscellanies, often mixing with secular poems, as well as sources from

Latin and vernacular languages (Boffey and Thompson 279). The medieval and early

modern eras also employed the floral metaphors of poetic collections with terms like

"Florilegium" or "Chrestomathie" (Bark 443).[89] Despite the details and conflicting

specifics of each mode of classification in the anthology, the critical characteristic of the

anthology as a literary collection depends on the act of selection and interweaving of

texts. The very inclusion in the collection is a means of identifying the aesthetic quality

of the chosen text and it is a matter of combining the perceived value of each of its parts

into a collective assemblage of other beautiful choices. As a bouquet, the anthology is

always at work in distributing a sort of textual value which always depends on the larger

constellation of the fragments that that make the whole.

Another common method of collecting texts occurred in early publishing as

literary miscellanies. In seventeenth-century England, miscellanies were sold as

collections of various writings as lots of printed texts that were essentially gathered by

booksellers as a means of selling off multiple texts at once, pointing also toward the

practice of textual compilation and formatting that were deeply intertwined with the early

---

[89] Bark writes: "Der benachbarte Begriff 'Florilegium' (im Mittelalter meist 'flores') war in der Neuzeit geläufiger, er wird häufig synonym gebraucht und hat insbesondere den Aspekt der Mustersammlung angenommen; als 'Chrestomathie' schließlich wurde er vor allem eine für den schulischen Gebrauch hergestellte Anthologie bezeichnet" (Bark 443).

book market (Benedict 19). Benedict notes that while the publication of miscellanies was a profitable means of selling printed materials as a bundle, it also operated with a logic of classification that connected the texts on the basis of guiding principles of organization (Benedict 19). "By facilitating the categorization of literature into genres including what would be called ephemera," writes Benedict, "the catalogs of these auctions [miscellanies from booksellers] reveal the organizational principals behind booksellers' groupings and indicate the way readers were expected to purchase, read, and think about this literature" (Benedict 19). While miscellanies may appear in their categorization to lack the direct editorial intervention evident in the textual organization of anthologies, the logic of textual assemblage is nonetheless a formative force for establishing the literary context that guides each reader toward a specific sort of reading. Moreover, as Benedict also points out, the etymology of the word "miscellanies" also demonstrates a critical mode of reading the textual collective: "In his *Dictionary* of 1755, Samuel Johnson traces the term *miscellane* to the Latin for 'a dish of mixed corn,' a definition that echoes the derivation of satire from the Latin satura, 'a dish filled with various kinds of fruits' or a 'medley'" (Benedict 7). Addressing chiefly the culture of miscellanies from Restoration England into the eighteenth century, Benedict stresses the importance of the cultural logic of the metaphor of miscellanies as literary feasts. By likening texts to an abundant meal, readers were presented with texts as a sort of commoditized literary unit appearing as an inviting and essential part of the bookish feast (Benedict 10).

While the specific history of miscellanies and anthologies in Restoration England may differ from the cultural context of later periods in other countries, the logic and

effects of the textual collection may be viewed as something of an invariant attribute of literary anthologies into the nineteenth-century context of Scherr's collection. As an assemblage of texts, the anthology always presents a sort of crucial counsel on how to read, both in its mere selection of what is available to read and through the practical guidance provided by layout and editing. These factors contribute directly to the establishment and preservation of literary canons and subgroups by consolidating the riches of the literary, the prized floral arrangements of letters, and the bountiful spreads of opulent poetic feasts. The very form of the anthology is itself an essential expression of the institutions of literary and cultural value. As Natalie Houston remarks, again on the English tradition, anthologies are modes of creating and maintaining literary history and aesthetics in their material layouts which guide readers to a specific experience of cultural value: "Examining what information is given on the page with the poem, how it is presented and the anthology as a whole is organized, along with the editor's introductory remarks and other paratextual elements, reveals changing conceptions of the role of the reader, the editors, and the anthology itself" (Houston 250). Houston demonstrates that a fundamental element of the anthology is that its production of meaning is largely dependent not just on what it presents but also how it presents it.

In what ways does the anthology create its meaningful assemblage of texts or its canon? How are the individual texts presented as a whole? What are the methods of textual editing, of editor commentary, of paratextual accompaniment, and of the subtle material matters of font, size, binding, and the order of organization? How can these matters of design be approached with the same analysis that the literariness of the

featured texts also requires? While such questions may be applied to most printed texts, the specific challenge and opportunity of the anthology rests on the fact that the anthology, in multiple cultural contexts, attempts a sort of collective textuality in its presentation of a multitude of authors and text fragments that are necessarily interconnected within a predetermined framework of value.

With the beginning of the epigram collection in Greek antiquity, the anthology is scarcely an object of modern times. Despite these precursors, however, the anthology as a form and as a widely popular mode of literary mediation is best considered a product of the nineteenth century. Although the presence of anthologies had been growing since the eighteenth century, the anthology became something of a mass phenomenon in the nineteenth century, most notably in Germany (Bark 444). In Germany, the history of the anthology as a form parallels in many ways key aspects of German literary history. In the early seventeenth century, at the time of an emerging discourse of German literary history and the developing conditions of a cultural-national consciousness, the form of the anthology began to appear following the models of similar collections in England, the Netherlands, and particularly France (Wiedemann 2-3).[90]

By the eighteenth century, a number of textual collections began to appear on the German-language market. Robert Bareikis identifies a trend in publishing collected texts in multiple manifestations including and beyond the anthology: "Die Geschichte der deutschen Anthologie im letzten Drittel des. 18. Jahrhundert kann nicht absehen von den

---

[90] Conrad Wiedemann also discusses the sixteenth-century precursor of collections of sayings, folk wisdom, and aphorisms, or "Apophthegmata" (Wiedemann 20): "Das 16. Jahrhundert hatte sich, wie kaum ein anderes, dem Sammeln von Spruchweisheit gewidmet und dabei eine Vorliebe für die volkstümlichen Formen, Sprichwort und Redensart, entwickelt" (Wiedemann 19-20).

drei Arten verwandter Sammlungen: den Musenalmanachen, Taschenbüchern und

Kalendern, die in den 80er und 90er Jahren den Markt gleich einer Sintflut

überschwemmten" (Bareikis 100). That multiple forms of such collections became

common in the eighteenth century is evidence for the changing media conditions of

literary delivery.[91] Yet, the arguably most significant element to this trend in publication

is the shared aspect of textual collecting that these emerging forms of literary mediation

employ. In each case, texts are gathered and presented as an assemblage worthy of

attention, but these collections also appear as an answer to a question concerning the

mediation of increasingly expanding bodies of literature.[92] Aside from the obvious

elements of canon formation that are necessarily present in matters of textual selection,

the popular emergence of the anthology and its ancillary forms also demonstrates

precisely the quantitative aspects of literary form. In continuation of his discussion of the

anthology in the eighteenth century, Barakeis notes:

> Wie deutsche Anthologisten über die "Unmenge poetischer
> Werke" klagen, so weist er auf die "foule des Almanachs
> de toute espèce qui renaissent exactement chaque année"
> mit dem Resultat hin, daß "gens de goût" nicht in der Lage
> sind, mehr als einen kleinen Teil der dichterischen
> Jahresproduktion zusichzunehmen. Der neue Almanach
> aber biete eine Lösung […]. (Bareikis 100)

---

[91] Georg Jäger discusses technical advancements introduced by the use of steam technology in nineteenth-century publishing, by new mechanization of book binding practices, and by the increasingly sinking cost of materials (namely paper); these changes in technology drastically shaped the German book market and the way in which the book became commonly encountered by the reading public (Jäger 19).

[92] The anthology is in part a reaction to the early sense of literary excess that accompanies the concept of *Weltliteratur* throughout its development. In 1828, the critic Wolfgang Menzel expressed his anxiety about the monstrous quantities of German publications. His essay *Die Masse der Literatur* expressed thus with great prescience the problem of quantity that is now central to Moretti's current endeavors of the literary whole.

The rise of the anthology in Germany thus appeared simultaneously as the rise of a media compromise to an ever-increasing problem of quantity in literature, or perhaps more accurately, to the awareness of a quantitative excess that had already existed but was increasingly announcing itself through new technologies and the abundance they produced. Compiling the best selections from the "Unmengen poetischer Werke" appears as a way to sort through the otherwise unreadable masses of texts while preserving the feeling of a single textual entity.

In practice, the form of the anthology therefore clearly shares a conceptual history with the specific discourse of *Weltliteratur*. It emerges as a form whose purpose was to mediate the semblance of a world-literary whole by means of fragmenting, excerpting, and connecting texts. Of course, this is also one of the central issues of the current debates concerning *Weltliteratur*. Franco Moretti's polemic stance on distant reading positions the contemporary discussion of *Weltliteratur* as a problem of perspective. He famously notes that no amount of reading could possibly cover even a pitiful fraction of even a single genre of a single popular language, let alone the daunting realities of the true world of literature. For Moretti, the answer to the impossible "problem" of *Weltliteratur* is therefore a radical change in perspective, one that attempts to address the whole of world literature through the "distance" of data and digital technology.

Even before Moretti's plea for distant reading, *Weltliteratur* appeared in terms of the unknowable textual plurality. In another, equally canonical text, Erich Auerbach's 1952 Festschrift article for Fritz Strich, *Philologie der Weltliteratur*, declared the same crisis of literary excess and in specific terms of *Weltliteratur*:

Wir besitzen Material aus sechs Jahrtausenden, aus allen
Teilen der Erde, in vielleicht fünfzig Literatursprachen.
Viele der Kulturen, von denen wir jetzt Kenntnis haben,
waren vor hundert Jahren noch unentdeckt, von anderen
kannte man nur einen Bruchteil der heute vorliegenden
Zeugnisse. Selbst für die Epochen, mit denen man sich
schon seit Jahrhunderten beschäftigt, ist so viel Neues
gefunden worden, daß der Begriff von ihnen sich stark
verändert hat und ganz neue Probleme aufgetaucht sind.
Dazu kommt, daß man sich ja nicht mit der Literatur einer
Kulturepoche allein befassen kann; es sind die
Bedingungen zu studieren, unter denen sie sich entwickelt
hat; es sind die religiösen, philosophischen, politischen,
ökonomischen Verhältnisse, die bildende Kunst und etwa
auch die Musik in Betracht zu ziehen, und es sind auf all
diesen Gebieten die Ergebnisse der ständig tätigen
Einzelforschung zu verfolgen. (Auerbach 88)

The problem of literary quantity is thus the precise conceptual burden of *Weltliteratur*

that Moretti identifies today and that was also so prominent in the exploding book market

of German Romanticism (Piper 5). The discussion of *Weltliteratur* in all of these

observations of literary quantity appears largely as an attempt to approach or conceive of

literary objects within a vast and unknowable literary universe. As a medium, the

anthology provided exactly a model with which to sort through the literary excess and

with which to envision this vast world of literature. It provided an answer to the problem

of quantity.

If the anthology was indeed a means of mediating a sort of literary plurality that

was otherwise unknowable, then it was also as a critical mode of mediation for that which

is commonly and mistakenly regarded as the separate theoretical discourse of

Weltliteratur. It is therefore necessary to look again beyond the specific boundaries of the

discourse as it has come to be over the last nearly two-hundred years and to examine not

170

simply the idea of a conceptual *Weltliteratur*, but also the practices of mediating literature within the unknowable literary frame and as a means of expressing a wholeness through a collection of parts. Like the ostentatious origin story of the discourse, the practiced reality of the anthology as world-literary mediation also occupies a meaningful place in nineteenth-century German literary history. Already in 1848, Johannes Scherr turned to the form of the anthology with the intention of realizing Goethe's concept which was otherwise to be relegated to the realm of lofty theories or utopian musings. Scherr's collection presented a unique convergence of literary-historical significance in that it embraced both of the seemingly separate approaches to *Weltliteratur*. *Bildersaal der Weltliteratur* is the connection between the mediation of the world whole through the material form of the anthology and the theoretical conception of the idea.

Not long after Scherr declared his intention to take up the rightful responsibility of German exceptionalism in letters to create "ein Gesammtbild des dichterischen Schaffens," the growing popularity of the anthology, particularly in Germany, was gaining attention as a novel and necessary form. "Wir leben in der Zeit der Anthologien […]," declared the writer Christian Friedrich Hebbel in 1854 (Hebbel 76) . From his perspective in mid-nineteenth-century Germany, Hebbel observed the rapid growth of the anthology as a literary form as well as its proliferation in the book market. Writing in response to two recent anthologies, Hebbel used his discussion of the two collections to reflect on the anthology as a form specific to the age.[93] Hebbel's observation of the

---

[93] Hebbel responds to *Museum aus den Deutschen Dichtungen österreichischer Lyriker und Epiker von der frühesten bis zur neusten Zeit*, by S.H. Mosenthal, and *Album hundert ungarischer Dichter in eigenen und fremden Uebersetzungen*, by T. M. Kertheny.

anthology is remarkable not simply in its astute consideration of the form within its

particular historical moment, but because it identified the importance of the anthology

form as a function of textual abbreviation in an increasingly vast literary universe.

> Wie die Folianten längst zu Quartanten zusammen
> schrumpften und die Quartanten dem Groß- und Klein-
> Oktav wichen, wie das Schweinsleder und der Sassian dem
> gepreßten Papier Platz machten und die Messingenen oder
> ehrnen Krampen, die ehemals so sicher an jedem Thesaurus
> zu hängen pflegten, wie Schloß und Riegel an der Thür,
> ganz und gar verschwanden, so hat sich auch das Innere der
> Bücher vollständig metamorphosirt und manches bloße
> Register der verschwundenen Periode ist umfangreicher,
> als jetzt ganze Werke. (Hebbel 76)

Hebbel appears to lament somewhat melancholically the historical shift in the literary

form that developed (or devolved perhaps) from a once elegant type, a seldom but refined

structure of larger volumes decorated with the pomp and mystique of the long-term

literary form they respectfully contained. These noble predecessors were increasingly

replaced with the short-form, the compact, mass-produced fragments of literature that

point to the greater whole of literature elsewhere. Of course, such complaints were then,

as they are now, nothing new. Every generation looks back with nostalgia to a time of

perceived superiority and in opposition to the downfalls and corruption of the current age.

But Hebbel's apparent objection also addressed a qualitative shift which this new

popular form brought forth in the pages of anthology. It was the compression of the

literary through a process of editing, a by-product of the textual collection in the service

of a greater whole.

> Aber so winzig die Produkte unserer Presse auch schon an
> und für sich sind und so gewiß es ist, daß selbst ein
> anspruchloser alter Roman, wie z. B. der Amadis, bei

seinem Leibesumfang mit einiger Geringschätzung auf
unsere modernen Universal-Geschichten und Philosophien
herabsehen würde, wenn irgend ein boshafter Zufall ihn
damit zusammenführte: für uns sind sie noch viel zu groß,
uns wird das Glas unserer Vorfahren noch wieder zum Faß,
das nicht im raschen Zug geleert, nur langsam ausgezapft
werden kann, wir vertragen nur noch die Quintessenz der
Quintessenz und fragen nach dem Kern des Kerns. Sogar
der Mann der Wissenscahft muß darauf gefaßt sein, das
sein Kollege nicht sein Buch, sondern die Rezension
deselben liest und der Dichter, so weit er nicht von der
Bühne herab unmittelbar zum Volk redet, ist dem
Anthologisten mit Haut und Haar verfallen. (Hebbel 77)

Hebbel describes a growing restlessness, a collective waning in the literary attention

span. Demanding the "Quintessenz der Quintessenz," the "wir" of 1854 exhibited a

demand for brevity in letters, desiring the most significant literary information, expressed

quickly and succinctly, as opposed to the long-winded forms of past years. It is in this

context that the anthology takes its most pronounced significance as a medium. As a

collection or assortment of textual flowers, the act of selection and framing inherent to

the anthology presented the texts that represented first and foremost precisely the

quintessential character that Hebbel referred to. The overt effects of canon formation

aside, the anthology as a mode of literary concentration always brings with it a series of

qualitative textual decisions that announce the essentiality of the texts it contains.

Hebbel expressed first the palpable consequences of this mid-nineteenth-century

trend on the material medium of the book. With a seemingly ever-shrinking impetus, the

book contracted from the great folio to the diminutive quarto, the physical properties of

the book representing the shrinking interest in the bloated forms of the baroque past. This

change in the physical form of the medium was also very connected to "das innere der

Bücher," reflecting a logic in which the material properties of the volume mirrored the qualitative contents of the book. The demand for the "Quintessenz der Quintessenz" of the greater literary selection, was followed, according to Hebbel, with a demand for the "Kern des Kerns" of this "Quintessenz" in the texts that were selected and sorted from the masses. Hebbel explained the logic of the shorter form:

> […] wer wüßte nicht, daß jene von Gelehrsamkeit strotzenden Folianten und Quartanten, die so ehrwürdig erscheinen, ihr Fleisch zum größten Theil dem Ekzerptenkasten abgewonnen und ihr Fett der ungefunden, unfruchtbar mit sich selbst spielenden Scholastik des Mittelalters entsogen haben, oder wer wünschte sich im bellestristischen Gebiet Beschreibungen und Dialoge, wie sie z.B. die asiatische Banise aufschwemmen, zurück? Im Gegentheil, es ist nur heilsam, daß Schriftsteller und Dichter sich jetzt kurz fassen und in gesteigertster Konzentration ihr Eigenstes bieten müssen, wenn ihre Leistung nicht auf der Stelle zum bloßen Substrat für eine fremde Geistes-Operation herabsinken soll. Ja, es schadet nicht einmal, wenn sie trotzdem rascher wie sonst mit ihrer Gesammthätigkeit einem höheren Ganzen als untergeordnete Glieder einverliebt und in gewissem Sinne wieder zur Materie gemacht werden, den je schneller man zu den übersichtlichen Punkten und den Endresultaten gelangt, um so größer ist der Gewinn und wo es sich um's Fleisch und Blut handelt, kann der Federnschmuck des Vogels oder die Mähne des Löwen nicht in Betracht kommen, so farbenschillernd und majestätisch sie auch sein mögen. (Hebbel 77-78)

In privileging generally shorter, more succinct forms of literary expression over the perhaps overly inflated, Hebbel argued for more than a simple reduction in the size of literary works. He appealed to a specific type of aesthetic-information transfer in which the literary object was considered to have an essence that could be concentrated and freed of its ornamental excesses or perhaps even unnecessary attributes (those of the baroque

forms implied with the title "die asiatische Banise"). In this context, there is a sort of core literariness that could be located within and despite of the ornate surroundings. But the lasting significance of the observation is simply that there exists a "Kern des Kerns" of literature at all. Such a radical understanding of literature removes literariness from the entirety of its medium and suggests that the literary soul of a text may be considered beyond and outside of the whole of the work.

The growing popularity of the anthology reflected in print media the major categorical changes in the understanding of literature as a whole, and these changes were largely reflected by the changing form of the book at the same time. As Hebbel described, the movement of the printed book to ever-smaller forms represented a process of physical condensation of the literary object: the folio shrank to the larger octavo, the larger octavo to the smaller, and the smaller octavo to the quarto. This momentum of literary compaction was facilitated by developing print technologies, which in turn influenced changes in readership and the book by suggesting a representational quality or a literary potency in the condensed and abbreviated forms.

The ever-emerging consciousness of interconnectivity, that early knowledge of something we now causally refer to as globalization, is also evident in the medium of the book and its condensing physical properties. In moving from the massive baroque forms and stately folios of the past, the emergence of multiple, condensed texts, appearing together and signifying more, reflected the perception of growing richness and plurality in the world. And yet we are left to question whether the medium of the anthology appeared as a media reaction to the growing awareness of the vast literary world or if it

was these forms that produced such awareness by enacting vast literary worlds in digestible volumes. In either outcome, Scherr's anthology emerges as a crucial model of the world-literary both *through* and *because of* the medium of literary abbreviation.

To collect the ideal parts of a literary whole is to communicate the impression of an entirety through textual displacement. But in what ways specifically does such communication occur in Scherr's collection? The anthology of *Weltliteratur* contains the specific challenge of presenting *a* whole of *the* whole in literature. How did Scherr carry out the condensation of massive texts and the representation of the quintessential quality of each of the included works? In his preface, Scherr declared the mission of the *Bildersaal* to provide an inclusive history of "Poeisie" in examples (Scherr 6). The goal of presenting literary history in examples immediately raises the question of selection. What examples exactly? And how to present them? What technique would possibly be sufficient to present a collective literature?

As the collector, Scherr willfully embraced the challenge of these questions. The sweep of his objective in the *Bildersaal* knew few boundaries:

> Vom Volkslied bis hinauf zur Tragödie bietet der
> Bildersaal die ganze Skala dichterischen Schauens,
> Empfindens und Gestaltens. Er umfasst alle poetischen
> Gattungen und Formen: Epik, Lyrik, Dramatik, Didaktik,
> Idyllik und Satirik, den indischen Slokas, wie den
> griechischen Hexameter, den altgermanischen Stabreim wie
> das neupersische Gasel, den Strophenbau des Alkäos und
> der Sappho wie den der Troubadours und der Minnesänger,
> den Parallelismus des hebräischen Psalmisten und den
> römischen Senarius wie die Terzine des Dante, die Ottave
> des Ariost und die Redondilien der spanischen
> Romanzeros, – kurz, sämmtliche morgenländische und
> abendländische, antike und modern, nördliche und südliche
> Rhythmen, Metren und Weisen. (Scherr 6-7).

176

These hyperbolically inclusive intentions concerning the gems of international literary history run into real problems when faced with the question of method and implementation. The range of Scherr's interests is as impressive as it is daunting.

And yet, Scherr too understood the challenges of mediation amidst such a wealth of material. Acknowledging the danger of his book growing into a monstrous collection of everything, Scherr stated that his collection operates with specific restrictions to prevent its expansion into unfeasibility: "Dabei hatte sich aber mein Buch, sollte es nicht ein Buchmonstrum werden, auf die Darstellung der Geschichte der Poesie im strengeren und strikteren Sinne zu beschränken (Scherr 7). Despite Scherr's clear awareness of the rough beast of *Weltliteratur*, slouching toward the anthology to be born, his choice of limitations in the service of prevention is noteworthy indeed: He omitted prose (or the literature in *Weltliteratur*): "Die sogenannte 'schöne Prosa' (Roman, Novelle, u.s.w.) mußte daher ausgeschlossen werden" (Scherr 7).

It is perhaps an obvious decision to omit entire prose works from an anthology that claims to give a sample of the world body of letters. Single works of the massive baroque alone, whose disappearance Hebbel credited to the age of the anthology, would barely fit into the already immense collection of Scherr's volume, dedicated as it was to the dual axis of time and space in letters. Other prose forms of the Western canon were equally unpresentable in a collection as ambitious as that which as Scherr brought forth.

What is *Weltliteratur* without literature? Or perhaps better yet, how does *Weltliteratur* function without the novel? Without the *Novelle*? Without its lengthier forms? Without its literariness beyond short poems and aphorisms? It seems to be an

177

obvious infraction to the idea of *Weltliteratur* to conceive of the whole without this perhaps most literary of the literary world, but *Bildersaal der Weltliteratur* included these as well. Although Scherr stated that these forms must be kept out of his collection, the reality is rather that prose remains an invaluable part of *Weltliteratur*, but its inclusion is dependent first on a radical transformation in its very form as prose. Scherr's collection included "prose" works, but as the abbreviated fragments from the larger whole of the text, usually in the form of poetry. Goethe's prototypical Bildungsroman *Wilhelm Meister*, for example, was presented as three poems: *Lied des Harfenspielers*, *Mignons Lied*, and *Philine's Lied* (Scherr 161). It is thus as much of a shift in genre, form, and medium as it is an abbreviation of prose to fit the *Weltliteratur*-idea. The spatial constraints of the anthology (or any other book which professes to represent a textual entirety) create a mode of literariness in which the text is not only excerpted, but fundamentally transformed in the way in which it communicates its concept of literature and the literary whole. In the transformative space of Scherr's gallery, prose becomes poetry to fit the medium – prose becomes *verdichtet*. But the implication of this shift is less about the transition in genre; instead, it is evidence of the fact that the work, a novel for example, can appear as fraction of its entirety, as metonymy.

The medium of the anthology of fragments thus enacts a number of constraints in the way in which an idea of the literary whole is produced, whether referring to individual entireties, such as novels, or genres, or national literatures and beyond. In Scherr's *Bildersaal*, the exemplary case of world-literature mediation comes to light. Rather than focusing on any notion of the so-called abuses to the concept of literary

originality in the excerpting of larger texts, or the genre shifts from prose to poetry, it is important to take this example as a concise metaphor for literary mediation and the creation of a world-literary understanding. Scherr's *Bildersaal* demonstrates the limits of the underlying world idea as they are shaped by the material contours of the medium: *Weltliteratur*, it seems, is all that is the anthology.

As a gathering of the most relevant representatives of *Weltliteratur*, *Bildersaal der Weltliteratur* employed a specific methodology of textual excerpting. Which fragments are chosen to represent the whole text? Must the texts be isolated units such as poems, single acts of plays, or otherwise poetologically coherent pieces? Perhaps more importantly still is the greater significance of representation that occurs in the process of anthologizing *Weltliteratur* through textual fragmentation. Scherr's anthology undertook a logic of representation that is nearly a taxonomy in itself. *Weltliteratur* is divided between Orient and Occident, the latter much richer than the former, divided into subdivisions of national literatures and greater linguistically-driven sub-categories, such as Germanic or Romance literatures. These categories were then divided in terms of both chronology and genre, with each genre appearing in the order of its respective position within the given literary history. In terms of German literature, which is by and large the single most substantial section, the order is as such:

> I. Vorzeit und Mittelalter (A. heidnisch-germanische Heldendichtung; B. Christlich-germanische Heldendichtung; C. Die Nationale Heldensage; D. höfisch-ritterliche Heldendichtung; E. Der Minnesang, F. Die Lehrdichtung; G. Uebergang zur Reformationszeit); II. Die Reformationszeit; III. Anfänge der neuzeitlichen Kunstpoesie; IV. Deutscher Klassik Aufgang; V. Sturm und Drang; VI. Deutscher Klassik Glanzhöhe; VII.

> Genossen der göthe-schiller'schen Zeit; VIII. Die romantische Schule; IX. Schwaben; X. Aus der Romantik heraus und wider sie; XI. Zerrissenheit (Das "Junge Deutschland"); XII. Oestreicher; XIII. Politische Poesie und poetische Politik; XIV. Alte Geleise und neue Bahnen; XV. Deutsche Dichterinnen; Anhang, Sechs Volkslieder (Scherr 1869; Vol. 2).

The implementation of the excerpts within the index suggests, however, that its boundaries are fluid and that the works spill beyond their parameters. German literature, for example, begins with ellipses – "[…] Er (Beowulf) war ein weiser König" – signifying both its greater literary unity beyond the fragment and the position of the work in the larger tradition (Scherr 17). And yet the whole remains. What follows is a series of categories that compromise the entirety of German literary history through the entirety of German literary genres, in turn through the entirety of works which are represented by selected parts. These parts exemplify what Hebbel called the "Quintessenz der Quintessenz" of the work, the literary nucleus that stands for the meaningful totality of the text. Thus, each text excerpt appears in a process of order moving downward, for example, from world-to-Occident-to German-to genre-to author-to work-to-excerpt. From each of these excerpts the direct lineage to the greater *Weltliteratur* is always visible. The reader sees at all times the text and its paratextual attachment to *Weltliteratur*.

Although anthologies of this sort may rely on excerpts simply as a matter of pragmatic compromise based on the size-constraints of the print medium against the backdrop of world literary infinity, the effects of collecting and excerpting provide an invaluable metaphor for *Weltliteratur* and the way in which texts are approached within

their specific world frames. The mode of literary mediation at work in Scherr's collection is a mode of metonymy that invariantly accompanies the concept of *Weltliteratur*. The world, or any other semblance of entirety, is the central concern of *Weltliteratur*; yet, this is always mediated not through real-existing totalities (with the exception of attempts such as Moretti's), but through fragments, pieces, and excerpts. It is always dependent on parts representing the whole, on the metonymy of *Weltliteratur* that is so keenly demonstrated in the *Bildersaal* as a compilation of the world's literature and as a collection of textual images (*Bilder*) standing in for the entirety of a literariness that is not immediately visible. This is evident in the conception of the anthology as a *Bildersaal* (*portrait gallery*) and its treatment of texts exactly as masterful portraits in the gallery of world letters.

The name *Bildersaal der Weltliteratur* announces its method of presentation. The title tells the reader that the following is a gallery of images and the images on display are *the* texts of world literature. The seemingly contradictory mix of text and image communicates the complexity of distinction between these ostensibly incommensurable media. Neither completely literal nor completely figurative, neither ironic nor genuine, the title of the anthology proclaims a necessary ambiguity in the collection to follow. It declares the compulsory compromises of such a project. It pronounces that *Weltliteratur*, if it can be at all, must be both text and image. The text-image relationship in Scherr's collection is also the means with which the problem of size is addressed. Textual excerpts represent the entirety of the works they refer to (as metonyms), but in the otherwise minuscule fragmentation of the work, the textuality functions as an image representing

the text, whose legitimate whole, its rest, exists somewhere else. The appearance of the text fragment becomes a sort of visual shorthand for the literary whole that is too large to fit the medium. In an overview of the cultural treasures he intends to include, Scherr explained how his method of presenting the literary was largely based on the way in which he believed readers experienced such traditions, namely as a series of portraits, paintings, or images (*Gemälde*) and songs (*Gesänge*):

> Die Fabenpracht und der Tiefsinn des Orients, die gottvolle
> Plastik und mannhafte Weisheit der Alten, die lodernde
> Phantasie und heiße Leidenschaft der Romanen, die
> Geisteshoheit und Gemüthskraft der Germanen, die
> melodieenreiche Schwermuth der Slaven – dies alles zieht
> in unsterblichen Gesängen und unvergänglichen Gemälden
> an uns vorüber. (Scherr 1869: 6; Vol. 1)

Providing the proper frame for precisely this text-image configuration, *Bildersaal der Weltliteratur* was a space in which the most (perceived) meaningful pillars of literary significance were displayed. It is a collection that fully embraces a progressive view of the literary object as something more complex than simply a collection of utterances on paper. It is a space in which *Weltliteratur* appears in its most metaphoric and thus accurate sense, as a finite assembly of representatives, collected and presented under the constraints of an editor, whose selections from the seemingly infinite body of work to choose from are also limited and determined by external factors of literary mediation and material constraints.

Scherr's marvelous title subtly frames the following collection as a series of submissions that are at once text and image – the representative portraits of *Weltliteratur*. If the *Bilder* of this collection include both full works and excerpts alike, what then is the

nature of the text-image of *Weltliteratur*? This logic of organization itself stages a central aspect of larger literary representation – it shows that both text and text fragment can to some degree signify the same effects of literariness in occupying a respective position within the critical collection of the whole. It is essentially confirmation that the experience of literariness within a given text is secondary to the position of the text within the material space of its exhibition.

Enter the Museum

In the 1869 second edition of *Bildersaal der Weltliteratur*, Scherr added a forward to the collection with updated retrospect on the collection itself. Notably, this forward included a quote in Latin to perform a sort of commencement ceremony, an announcement that the reader should now enter the space of the anthology: "Introite! et hic dii sunt" (Scherr 1869: 5; Vol. 1).[94] Scherr commented that the function of the forward, as well as the "Introite! et hic dii sunt," was an attempt to announce the essence of the collection (*das Wesentliche*), a sentiment that echoes Hebbel's claim to the anthology as the medium for presenting the literary *Kern*, or the quintessential. The essential is announced in Latin – "Enter! For here too are gods" – the commanding quote beckoning entry with a performative invitation to the physical space. This overture has a specific history; it is attributed to Heraclitus, who, standing in his kitchen (a socially lower space), called his

---

[94] Before the epigram command in Latin, the anthology begins with a signifier for the physical entry point to the space of the collection. The introduction begins with the bold-ink declaration: "Zum Eingang" (Scherr 1869: 5; vol 1).

guests to enter and be among gods in the unexpected place.[95] In the German literary tradition, however, Heraclitus' words are widely known via Lessing. Lessing's *Nathan der Weise* begins with the *Introite*! as an epigraph to the drama. Just as Lessing, the father of modern German literature, invites his readers to the canonical drama and the tradition that follows it, Scherr also invited his readers with the canonical ceremony of Lessing, via Aristotle, via Heraclitus, to enter the space of his collection, where the gods of letters were also to be found.

Scherr employed the words of others, validated in meaning by the canonical authority of their sources. The significance of *Introit* command is not to be overlooked in its initiation of the anthology. It is not merely a commencement to the anthology. Instead, the command or invitation sets an essential tone for the collection as a figurative space and thus frames a means with which the collection is to be approached by the viewer/reader. It is a call to enter the space of the *Bildersaal* as a gallery with a material threshold to be crossed and a physical space to be occupied. It also instructs readers to commence in gazing at the monuments of *Weltliteratur* as they appear displayed in their rightful corridors. With such performative beginnings, the introduction prefigures the anthology not just as a collection but as a space. This reveals the logic of the collection as an essential metaphor for *Weltliteratur* as a containable group of works. *Weltliteratur* is experienced in this case as a central depository in a physical space, an archive with physical dimensions staging a particular mode of viewership for the objects it contains. Scherr concluded his forward with a personal invitation to enter the space he has shaped:

---

[95] The anecdote of Heraclitus in its popular usage is traced back to the work of Aristotle, specifically his *On the Parts of Animals* (Aristotle 14).

> In dieser Welt, zu welcher wahrlich kein Rückwärtsweg,
> sondern ein wieder aufzunehmender Vortschrittspfad führt,
> lade ich alle, welche noch nicht verlernt haben, und alle,
> welche noch lernen wollen, Geist und Herz an den
> Gebilden ewiger Schönheit zu laben und zu adeln. Damit
> thue ich die Pforte zum "Bildersaal der Weltliteratur"
> wiederum auf: —"Tretet ein!" Auch hier sind Götter.
> (Scherr 1869: 8; Vol. 1)

The performative element of Scherr's gesture, the opening of the gateway to the gallery, affirms the conception of the anthology project and the significance of the title, which is not simply a clever name but a reference to the real existing physicality of the archive as a storage space in the pages of the anthology.

In addition to establishing the physical space of *Weltliteratur*, the *Introite* epigraph also initiates a sort of textuality that is pervasive throughout the journal and indicative of the greater mechanics of textual circulation, transfer, and of the path toward a sense of *Weltliteratur*. Scherr began the brief forward with the Latin epigraph, but a mere few pages further he concluded with the same; this time in German – "Tretet ein! Auch hier sind Götter" (Scherr 1869: 8; Vol.1). In the context of *Weltliteratur* as textual circulation, it is a striking detail that the epigraph undergoes translation within the introduction, precisely the sort of textual movement so frequently thought to be the very process of the world-literary ideal. The excerpted command embodies the movement of a developing literary history and the key players of the textual conveyance necessary in establishing a classic. Here, the path begins with Heraclitus in Greek via Aristotle, transferred to the Latin, picked up by Lessing, and then applied by Scherr in both Lessing's Latin and Scherr's Lessing-esque German in order to communicate a new meaning through the words of a number of canonical predecessors.

Beyond its literary trajectory and translation, the epigraph also functions in the critical sense on which the anthology depends – as a fragment representing the whole. As an excerpted text, such a fragment speaks on behalf of the totality that exists elsewhere and of the legacy of other works and figures it alludes to. It is an abbreviation of an entire work, a genre, a national literary tradition through a metonymic transfer. Just like the many abbreviated fragments to follow in the anthology, the epigraph is an excerpt that connotes a larger whole, and as such, a series of wholes that become one. In framing the text that follows, the epigraph signifies the coming mode of reading, a mode based on a process of condensing literariness into a brief form, pointing always to the whole while occupying precious little storage space in the depository of *Weltliteratur*. Ultimately, such a mode of textuality does not function on a purely literary level, but also on the level of an inter-semiotic transfer. If the text fragment operates as a short-hand signifier for a literary totality elsewhere, then it is first as an image, like a snapshot or a portrait (one of many *Bilder*), that the fragment communicates its attachment to and representation of the work/text/book as it is thought to exist elsewhere.

If the texts of the *Bildersaal* assume an image quality as portraits then it is made possible through the internal order of the material literary gallery, a process of staging spectatorship that is formally commenced by the invitation to enter the physical space of the anthology as a gallery. Scherr's appropriation of the command *Introite* at the beginning of his introduction, and the transformed ownership (*Tretet ein!*) at the end of the introduction, thus serves multiple functions: it announces the opening of the gates to a physical space, beckons entry, and commences a method of reading necessary texts as

images in the gallery of *Weltliteratur*. As an intertextual fragment that changes from Latin to German in rapid time, it also suggests that, for the texts in the collection to come, they too have undergone the same transformation in becoming world literature.

The language of physical space that dominates Scherr's conception of the anthology was certainly not restricted to the figurative domain of the literary collection. Conceived as a gallery of images with a physical point of entry (*Pforte*), the operative notion in the collection is not specific to the gathering of texts, but to the spatial edifices that house the aesthetic objects of interest in multiple contexts. Scherr's *Bildersaal* is conceived, as the name so clearly suggests, as a museum. Just as the timeline of *Weltliteratur* around 1800 intersects with a multitude of critical concepts in intellectual history, the connection between the realization of this literary ideal as an anthology and the role of the museum in the nineteenth century is immense.

The history of the museum stretches well into antiquity. The etymology of the word museum, again from Latin via Greek (*mouseion*), reveals its ancient roots and its past context as a temple for the muses, evident in classical examples such as the museum at Alexandria in the third century (BCE) as it is in the *Bildersaal*, where there too are gods.[96] Following the ancient context of the temple of muses, multiple models of museological comparison can be found in the middle ages and the early modern period; however, the museum as an institutional space experienced a shift in the eighteenth century with the gradual widespread development of museums throughout Europe

---

[96] See *Museums in Motion: An Introduction to the History and Function of Museums*. In their overview of the history of the museum, Edward P. Alexander and Mary Alexander elaborate on the example of the museum of Ptolemy Soter at Alexandria (Third Century BCE) or the collection at the Acropolis in the Fifth Century in demonstration of the earliest context of the museum as a place of aesthetic and scholarly inquiry (Alexander and Alexander 3-4).

(Alexander and Alexander 5-6).[97] Such developments gave way to the arguably most pronounced period of rising museum culture in the nineteenth century.

The flourishing of European museums, particularly art museums, paralleled a number of the key historical developments of the industrial revolution, political upheavals and the spread of democracy, as well as nationalism (Alexander and Alexander 32; Benedict 79). The establishment of national museums signified national authority through both commercial/colonial reach as well as public display of refinement and culture. The impetus of the nineteenth-century museum illustrates Didier Maleuvre's claim that the "nation became the legitimate vestal of memory and of the past's ruins" which is evident in the establishment of many of the art institutions that remain central today: in France the Louvre (1793); in Spain the Prado Museum (1820); in England the National Gallery (1824) as well as the British Museum (1852); and in Berlin Altes Museum (1830) (Maleuvre 9). In keeping with the democratic developments of the nineteenth century, the widespread establishment of museums can be seen as a part of the revolutionary efforts to appropriate the elements of culture that were once the sole property of the aristocracy, opening the world of art and culture to the people and establishing therewith a national identity from the bottom up.[98] Maleuvre argues that history "is not a stream in which museums are thrown, on a par with other cultural formations," rather that "museums *manufacture* history; they engage its image and

---

[97] ibid, 5-6. Alexander and Alexander also describe a particular trend in the development of art museums from formerly private collections in the eighteenth century, listing the establishment of such monumental staples in the world of art museums as the Vatican collection at the Pio-Clementine, the Uffizi Palace in Florence (from the Medici collection), and the Hapsburg collection in the Belvedere Palace at Vienna (Alexander and Alexander 27-28).
[98] See Tony Bennettt on the opening of the museums for the masses in nineteenth-century Europe and its effects on the shifting gaze of a new viewing public in the museum (Bennett 73).

concept" (Maleuvre 12). The museum, and with it the struggle to appropriate varying notions of history, is thus an essential battleground for the greater political turmoil of nineteenth-century Europe and its conceptualization and treatment of material objects is hardly divorceable from the underlying historicism of its creators.

As a figurative museum, *Bildersaal der Weltliteratur* should be considered within the changing discourse in which the other major museums of Europe developed. Scherr openly confronts his political interests and the clear associations between his museum and the revolutionary movement of 1848.[99] In the forward to the first edition written at the crucial time of revolution, Scherr politicized his museum to the extent that he nearly overlooked his literary intentions. The forward functions more as a soapbox for Scherr to convey his thoughts on the political circumstances and the fate of German liberalism in light of the recent revolution. Scherr's interest is perhaps less than surprising given that it was around the time of the publication of *Bildersaal* that he was forced to flee to Switzerland to escape arrest due to his activities during the revolution.[100] After pages of political speech, seemingly unrelated to the anthology that follows, Scherr snapped out of his politics and returned to the smaller matter at hand, world literature:

---

[99] This is most evident in the introduction to the third edition of his *Bildersaal* in which he argues that the proper German character should come not from nationalism but a cosmopolitan gaze and a universal approach to the world perhaps as it performed in his collection (Scherr 1885: 5). Marion Steffen describes the political activities of Scherr during the 1848 revolution which informed Scherr's *Bildersaal* in the first and subsequent volumes (Steffen 393).

[100] In addition to Steffen's biographical portrayal, Scherr's political activities during the 1848 revolution and his subsequent fleeing to Switzerland are also described in the book *Verbrecher Mensch? Die Beobachtungen des Historiker Johannes Scherr* (Hippler 33-36). What is remarkable about this portrayal of Scherr is its author, Fritz Hippler. Hippler, the director the NS-propaganda film *Der ewige Jude*, published his mainly political examination of Scherr's life and work in 1987. Hippler's publication appears as an attempt to view German history, through Scherr, in reaction to the "Historikerstreit" and its discussion of the specific atrocities of German history. A proper investigation of Hippler's argument and its strange connection to Scherr would require an investigation that would exceed the scope and focus of this chapter and dissertation.

> Doch Verzeihung, daß ich hier das Spruchwort: wessen das
> Herz voll ist, geht der Mund über – gerechtfertigt habe. Ich
> sollte und wollte eigentlich von dem "Bildersaal der
> Weltliteratur" sprechen und hätte die Vorrede zu
> demselben wohl am geeignetsten mit Kundgebung des
> Dantes eröffnet, welchen ich unseren trefflichen
> Uebersetzungskünstlern schulde. Ich hole das Versäumte
> hiermit nach […]. (Scherr 1848: V-VI)

While Scherr excused himself for deviating from his intention to open the *Bildersaal* with

a quote from Dante, he did not follow through with the action. He offered merely the idea

of doing so, suggesting that Dante would have done nicely in this spot if the thoughts on

1848 had not been as important. Immediately following his apology to the reader, he

addressed the *Bildersaal* and *Weltliteratur* in an albeit still national/political context: "Ein

Buch wie das vorliegende ist nur in Deutschland möglich" (Scherr VI, 1848).

　　　In the revised forward to the second edition, Scherr removed his political

digression, opting instead for a brief note on the political circumstances during the

anthology's debut: "Dieses Buch ist zuerst in den Jahren 1848-49 erschienen, also zu

einer Zeit, welche keine Zeit hatte für das Schöne, weil sie von halben Revolutionen und

ganzen Reaktionen vollauf in Anspruch genommen war. Trotzdem wurzelte das Buch

ein" (Scherr 1885: 5). The noteworthy division between the political and the aesthetic

(*das Schöne*) gives the impression that the two sides have little to do with one another;

yet, in terms of history and of cultural appropriation, this is far from the case. Scherr's

Bildersaal is indeed a product of its time and context, and its very conceptualization as a

museum of the aesthetic is inseparable from the political ideas and the engagement with

the image and material of a specific desired history. In comparing the forward to the

multiple editions, it is therefore fitting that the establishment of the *Bildersaal* parallels

the establishment of other major museums of the period. Its origin may be located within the democratization or otherwise political context of the nineteenth century, but the institutional space of the museum also involves a rich conceptual history beyond the strictly political. In the changing editions, Scherr's museum of the world literary began with a political manifesto, then with the mention of an intended but forgotten quote from Dante; it was later revised once the anthology had been established, opting finally for the words of Lessing (et al.), and calling for entry to the space which, by the second edition in 1869, had become a structure of its own, a museum with a gate of entry.

In order to take Scherr's anthology seriously it is necessary to examine the political circumstances that are so clearly attached to its publication as well as its prominent points of overlap with the development of museums proper. But as in all things, it would also be reductive to dwell on this aspect alone. *Bildersaal der Weltliteratur* remains chiefly concerned with presenting a semblance of the world literary whole, which is achieved in the structure of the anthology as a collection of aesthetic fragments in the service of a central idea, as a museum of literature. Presenting *Weltliteratur* as such an institutional space, Scherr prefigured a manner of exhibiting the world as a collection of national fragments just prior to the great living model of the world museum in the 1851 "Great Exhibition." In the magnificent glass "Crystal Palace," the first World's Fair in London also attempted a world semblance with the mid-nineteenth-century exhibitionary logic found in earlier "collections (whether of scientific objects, curiosities, or works of art) [that] had gone under a variety of names (museums, *studiolo*, *cabinets des curieux*, *Wunderkammer*, *Kunstkammer*) and fulfilled a variety of

functions (the storing and dissemination of knowledge, the display of princely and aristocratic power, the advancement of reputations and careers)[…] (Bennett 86).[101] For the world of the "Great Exhibition" and the *Welt* of the *Bildersaal*, the logic of the world museum required an understanding of the collection as a central world-narrative, supported by the metonymic and metaphoric function of its collected and exhibited parts.

As an anthology, a museum, and a compilation of textual fragments, *Bildersaal der Weltliteratur* exhibited its world-literary collection through the same act of collecting with which other museums, archives, and assemblages achieved their significance. In all of these examples there exists a mode of representation that depends on the interplay between parts and wholes, a process of mediating a semblance of the whole through collecting and connecting a multitude of parts. Eugenio Donato describes precisely this interaction between parts and whole in his reading of the museum and its underlying mode of representation.

> The set of objects the Museum displays is sustained only by
> the fiction that they somehow constitute a coherent
> representational universe. The fiction is that a repeated
> metonymic displacement of fragment for totality, object to
> label, series of objects to series of labels, can still produce a
> representation which is somehow adequate to a
> nonlinguistic universe. Such a fiction is the result of an
> uncritical belief in the notion that ordering and classifying,
> that is to say, the spatial juxtaposition of fragments, can
> produce a representational understanding of the world.
> (Donato 223)

---

[101] See Tony Bennettt *The Exhibitionary Complex*. Bennettt notes the specific impact of the Crystal Palace exhibition as a shift in the principles of private ownership and public access to the information of the collections in precious museums and fairs.

Similarly, Mieke Bal writes that objects of a collection produce a narrative through a relationship of representation that is either synechdochic or metonymic, but always metaphoric: "the object can only be *made* to be representative when it is made representational, standing for other objects with which it has this representational capacity in common" (Bal 111).

What is *Weltliteratur* if not a fiction of a "coherent representational universe" through a collection of texts? The function of *Weltliteratur* collections is entirely dependent on exactly the "repeated metonymic displacement of fragment for totality." The mechanics of representational displacement in the museum are arguably the same at hand in other collections, such as the aesthetic, bouquet-like arrangements of texts and text fragments in anthologies and miscellanies, as well as in other archives, libraries and repositories of information and culture. This idea is echoed by numerous scholars concerned with collections of various kinds, particularly in the nineteenth century when the newly mediated view of museum spectatorship provided a way of picturing and viewing such a world display. Bennett, for example, describes in the logic of museum collections an

> […] ambition towards specular dominance over a totality
> [which] was even more evident in the conception of
> international exhibitions which, in their heyday, sought to
> make the whole world, past and present, metonymically
> available in the assemblages of objects and peoples they
> brought together and, from their towers, to lay it before a
> controlling vision. (Bennett 79)

Leah Dilworth also observes in accord with Donato and Bennett the same metonymic representation in anthologies, catalogs, encyclopedias and other collections, noting that

"[i]n these genres the component texts gain power by being 'representative,' and the collection becomes something more than the sum of its parts" (Dilworth 8). Dilworth explains that the anthology in particular occupies a specific history in that "the anthology as a collection reminds that the history of the book and the museum are intertwined; the paradigm of the museum or collection has always inhabited the book[…]" (Dilworth 8). The wonderfully articulate example of *Bildersaal der Weltliteratur* typifies the convergence of the museum and literary anthology as well as the way in which text fragments function, not simply as metonymic representations of the greater work, but also as displaced figures of genre, epoch, national literature, and finally *Weltliteratur* as a whole.

Collecting is a mode of possessing. While unpacking his library, Walter Benjamin observed that collecting objects, in his case books, was a method of possession and renewal of the world (Benjamin 390). Scherr declared explicitly the possession of the world-literary archive in his collection. Didier Maleuvre also maintains that "collecting is a way of taking possession of the world, a way of domesticating the exotic by keeping a tribal mask on the mantelpiece, of securing the distant past through an antique statue, and of enshrining personal memory by means of a souvenir" (Malevure 115). The obvious difference between these forms of collecting (perhaps the context of the museum in general) and the collecting of literary texts in Scherr's *Bildersaal*, is a matter of materiality. Collecting and exhibiting strictly material objects differs somewhat from the gathering of text fragments within the anthology. While there is indeed a materiality of the book, whose spatial constraints and physical from are comparable to the space of the

194

museum, it is nonetheless a different matter when the object of the collection is not the book per se, but literature (and all of it). A true collection of literature as objects could be conceived of as a library with its gathering of books as multiple entireties. But unlike the potentially endless Borgesian library, which some call the universe, the space of the anthology is limited. The collection thus depends on precisely the mode of metonymic representation that allows a part of a work to act as the whole. In *Bildersaal der Weltliteratur*, this is the operative mode of textuality. The possession of the text is less dependent on the entirety of the work as it is on its very presence within the spatial frame of the anthology, its full textuality exists elsewhere and is secondary to the larger world-context presented by the collection.

Employing a means of visible storage, the museum is faced with the challenge of presenting the objects that most succinctly represent the governing idea of the totality in question, which, in Bennett's terms, requires the fiction of representation. For Hebbel, the anthology functioned in precisely the same way. It was a book with collected texts and texts fragments as the literary essence of the greater work (the fiction of the whole). In the case of the *Bildersaal*, the underlying idea or fiction is *Weltliteratur*. But what are the means of storage at work in the collection? How exactly does the anthology operate as visual storage? And what are the literary effects of presenting a text as a displaced fragment of metonymic representation within the greater body of *Weltliteratur*?

Addressing such questions within a collection as massive and comprehensive as *Bildersaal der Weltliteratur* presents an inherent challenge of focus. The observer is faced with decisions of selection that require concentration on single fragments at the

195

necessary expense of neglecting the hundreds of pages of surrounding texts. Although this is indeed a challenge, it is also emblematic of the very problem of *Weltliteratur* and of the process of metonymic representation of the whole through single parts. Not only is the present inquiry limited by space, any discussion of a volume as large as Scherr's enormous collection must also avoid the impression of attempting a comprehensive summary and opt instead for the very metonymic representation enacted by the collection itself. The ability to illustrate the significance of *Bildersaal der Weltliteratur* is therefore dependent on the analysis of single fragments from the whole of the anthology, an approach that mirrors the practice of representation at work in the museum and anthology.

A Portrait of the Novel as a Fragment

Few works from the collection permit such exemplary entry into the logic of the *Bildersaal* as the poetic fragments that signify the whole of Novalis's novel *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*. Scherr called Novalis the prophet of Romanticism.[102] But the unique nature of *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* as a novel is of equal relevance to the decisive role of Novalis as the prophet of the literary epoch. *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* complicates the division between the whole and the part in that it is itself an incomplete novel. Following Novalis's untimely death of tuberculosis in 1801, his friends Ludwig Tieck and Friedrich Schlegel edited the incomplete manuscript of *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, resulting in its

---

[102] In another of his ambitious literary histories, Scherr declared in his 1854 *Geschichte der deutschen Literatur* that "Fichte und Schelling sind die Iniziatoren der Romantik, Novalis ist ihr Prophet" (Scherr: 1854 129).

1802 publication. Novalis conceived of *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* as a counter to

Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* as the exemplary form of the novel genre (Behler 179). The

unfinished literary response to Goethe was in itself a series of poetic parts assuming a

unified mission of early Romanticism. Azade Seyhan describes the novel fragment as "a

configuration of various literary forms which narrate the story of their own historical and

formal production" (Seyhan 116). Such various literary forms correspond to the

prototypical declaration of German Romanticism declared in Schlegel's now eminent

fragment 116 from the *Athenaeum*:

> Die romantische Poesie ist eine progressive
> Universalpoesie. Ihre Bestimmung ist nicht bloß, alle
> getrennten Gattungen der Poesie wieder zu vereinigen und
> die Poesie mit der Philosophie und Rhetorik in Berührung
> zu setzen. Sie will und soll auch Poesie und Prosa,
> Genialität und Kritik, Kunstpoesie und Naturpoesie bald
> mischen, bald verschmelzen, die Poesie lebendig und
> gesellig und das Leben und die Gesellschaft poetisch
> machen, den Witz poetisieren und die Formen der Kunst
> mit gediegnem Bildungsstoff jeder Art anfüllen und
> sättigen und durch die Schwingungen des Humors
> beseelen. (Schlegel 69)

But if the desired unity of prose, poetry, and other modes of literary expression was

realized in the unfinished and posthumously published work of Novalis, then its

appearance in the *Bildersaal* as two fragments and as poetry alone, is particularly

striking. As a key portrait in the gallery of *Weltliteratur*, the complete novel *Heinrich von*

Ofterdingen is on display, but the dubious totality of *Ofterdingen* is specific to the

Bildersaal. Before its exhibition, it was a fragment, with the desired Romantic mix of the

poetic. In the gallery of *Weltliteratur* it suggests a unity, a whole novel, in the monolithic

poetry once embedded within the prose.

German Romanticism begins with Novalis. Or at least in the *Bildersaal* it does. Novalis's work is framed by a series of genre taxonomies that preclude any hierarchy indicated by the first appearance in a subsection of the world literary order; it is a beginning that branches out toward the inseparable categories beyond its locations – Romanticism, Germanic literature, then Western and finally *Welt*-literature. In this framing we can see exactly how Novalis's novel *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* is excerpted and refracted, but it always remains in the critical proximity of and affixed to the specific frame and context of an outwardly developing literary totality. It functions as a metonymic representative of the greater novelness, within the genre, the period, the language, and the literature. The metonymic displacement of the whole *Ofterdingen* in the *Bildersaal* is emblematic of a number of media and narratological shifts in the service of the *Weltliteratur* idea. Moreover, the Novalis fragment is also illustrative of the greater mechanics of representation with the spatial, media constraints of the anthology, an illustration of the process of transformation that turns a text in its entirety into an excerpted bit of information, filling in for the whole while lacking in its textual totality. It is an example of a process of transformation from literary text to image, a process of becoming a portrait for the gallery. This transformation occurs throughout the anthology and, as it will be shown in coming chapters, in multitudes of textual constellations and collections.

Marking a breaking point (or is it a starting point?), the roman numerals *VIII* introduce "Die romantische Schule" (Scherr 242). This distinction is then followed by another numerical signifier (*I.*), declaring the first of the essential "Romantiker" of

German literary history. The markers continue: "Novalis." Under the pen name and in parenthesis, the author's true given name is indicated (Friedrich von Hardenberg) followed by a signification of the first of Novalis's text: *1) Das Lied vom Wein. (aus "Heinrich von Ofterdingen")*. The order of the titles introduces a hierarchy of signifiers that ends with the name of the novel. The significance of this arrangement is evident in the order of appearance. *Die romantische Schule* appears as the most important category for the following selections, its magnitude announced by its bold ink and large font, towering over the other introductions and titles. Moving down the list, in shrinking fonts, the name of the novel is introduced as a parenthetic side note below the title of the poem taken from the novel.

How do these paratextual directives inform the signification of the texts to follow? Scherr tells us that prose cannot be included in his anthology; thus, Novalis's novel appears appropriately in an abbreviated form. But the abridged figure is not an excerpt of prose; it is a poem – *Das Lied vom Wein* – doing the work of the novel.[103] The poem begins its departure into *Weltliteratur* from its introductory remarks, those titles and indicators of paratextual accompaniment. A nearly seamless transition occurs between the parenthetic "*aus Heinrich von Ofterdingen*" and the poem's beginning: "Auf grünen Bergen wird geboren." Such a transition poses the classic question of literary analysis: who is speaking here? Novalis? Or his other, the parenthetic Friedrich von Hardenberg? We are told it comes from *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*. Is it Heinrich himself

---

[103] Although the central focus is mainly on the first of Novalis's works – *das Weinlied* – the novel is exhibited by two poems, out of order of their appearance in the novel, but of the same scene. The other is *Mädchenlied*, another of Klingsohr's performances.

perhaps? *Das Lied vom Wein*, as it is displayed in the *Bildersaal*, appears in the novel *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* as a spoken poem, performed at a party by Klingsohr the poet. The omniscient, extradiegetic narrative voice relates the events of the novel, relaying the voice of Klingsohr who announces the intention to perform "ein Weinlied." Klingsohr's performance is introduced with the third-person omniscient voice, announcing the start of the poem: "Klingsohr sang" (Novalis 103). The completion of the recital of *das Weinlied* is signified by the return of the narrative voice, relaying an eruption from the crowd of listeners: "'Ein schöner Prophet!' riefen die Mädchen" (Novalis 105). The change in voice, first the quoted cries of joy from the girls of the audience, followed again by the omniscient narrator, weaves the poem into the fabric of the text, maintaining its vital part in the novel.

But *das Weinlied* works drastically differently in the *Bildersaal*. Klingsohr is absent. As is the voice that tells the reader that Klingsohr is the author and performative voice of the poem that follows. In the *Bildersaal*, Klingsohr's narrative authority for the performance is replaced by an indexical listing of competing paratextual voices: German Romanticism, Novalis (Hardenberg), or Heinrich von Ofterdingen in oscillating significance of bold and light ink, as well as grand and timid fonts. Instead of ending with a reaction from the audience, an indicator of the poem as a performance within the narrative, *Das Lied vom Wein* is halted abruptly by a single black line, a mark of where the poem was cut from the vine, a sign announcing its completion without the narrative return of cheers or cries from the characters within the story. On the other side of the line, another moment of indexical introduction announces the second entry for Novalis: *2)*

Mädchenlied ("aus Heinrich von Ofterdingen"). As noted, *Mädchenlied* is also from

Heinrich von Ofterdingen, appearing before *Das Lied vom Wein* as the first of

Klingsohr's two spoken performances. The poem is also concluded with a sharp black

line, removed equally from the narrative context in the novel. Following these poetic

representatives of a greater novel that exists elsewhere, Novalis is represented by 5

additional examples of his oeuvre.[104] Yet, the poems that follow are of little use for the

analysis of *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* as it is displayed in the gallery of *Weltliteratur*, as

their significance defers beyond the novel, pointing elsewhere to Novalis, Romanticism,

and beyond.

To compare these two poems in the context *of* the novel *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*

with their context *as* the novel *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* in the *Bildersaal*, is to

acknowledge that the latter is not only a fragmented presentation of the poems, but also a

seemingly radical uprooting, decontextualization, and transmedia translation. However,

the significance of this observation is not to defend the idea of any pure totality of the

work that has been violated in its excerption. As its history already demonstrates,

Heinrich von Ofterdingen as a novel was a problematic case long before it was featured

as a portrait in Scherr's gallery. In fact, the very selection of *das Weinlied* had already

served to perform the totality of the same. Ludwig Tieck and Friedrich Schlegel

published the same poem (in this appearance as *Lob des Weins*) in their *Musen-Almanach*

für das Jahr 1802. In this volume of the publisher *Cotta*, the poem *Lob des Weins* also

spoke for Novalis and the fragmented novel, listed in the table of contents with a note on

---

[104] The other selections are 3) *Symbolum*, 4) *Hinüber*, 5) *Das Geheimniß der Liebe*, 6) *Poesie*, 7) *Hymne an die Nacht* (Scherr 243-244).

its greater significance: "Die beyden vorhergehenden Gedichte gehören zu einem noch ungedrückten und leider unvollendet gebliebenen Roman, *Heinrich von Afterdingen*, welchen Tieck aus der Handschrift unsers unvergeßlichen, durch einen frühzeitigen Tod uns entrissenen Herzensfreundes herausgeben wird" (Tieck and Schlegel, iv). The editorial note mentions the second (*Die beyden Gedichte*) poem from the novel – *Bergmanns-Leben* – a poem of miners in the fourth chapter. The early use of the poem or poems in the service of the novel as a whole may be attributed to the contemporaneous editorial activities of Tieck and Schlegel perhaps eager to publish a tribute to their recently lost friend, but this appearance is also a negotiation of metonymic displacement of a whole work through the media fragmentation and reframing of a printed collection. The later appearance in the *Bildersaal* performs essentially the same function in representing a novel that is constantly framed in and against its fragmented structure. In the *Bildersaal*, the example of *Ofterdingen* achieves a symbolic significance through the way in which it succeeds in representing an idea of the novel, the author, the genre, and *Weltliteratur* despite and because of its decontexualization and genre translation into a portrait of a novel.

Like all other fragments in the *Bildersaal*, *Das Lied vom Wein* bears the mark of its decontexualization. When read together with the parenthetic promise that the following poem is a part of the greater whole, the black line announcing the completion of the poem shows the mark's incision, the scar where the cut was made and where the flower was snipped for inclusion in the bouquet. This black line and the suggestion of the fragment's entirety (*aus Heinrich von Ofterdingen*) announces specifically the

decontextualization of the work. The lack of the poem's original context, if this vague and perhaps unattainable category exists at all, is a crucial element in the function of the *Bildersaal* and of *Weltliteratur* as it is understood.

If we return to Hebbel's observation that the anthology as a form depends on the quintessence of literature and on the presentation of the *Kern des Kerns* of a text, we must ask to what degree a poem like *Das Lied vom Wein* functions as such. This poem, clearly taken from its context to perform German Romanticism in the world catalog, presents paradoxically a quintessential literariness as a radical decontextualization of its literary totality. We are left wondering how *Das Lied vom Wein* represents any of those categories (Novalis, Romanticism, German literature, *Weltliteratur*) when it is so clearly and deliberately displaced from its already contested "original" origin of appearance.

The answer is that the quintessence is not in the poem in itself. It is a mistake to look for Novalis or *Weltliteratur* within the iambic meter of the poem. Its rich description of the natural creation of grapes, the nearly mystical transformative process of fermentation, and the bacchanalian splendor of the resulting wine perform differently within the narrative of *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* as they do under the fluctuating fonts of the introduction in the *Bildersaal*, grafted together with scattered verse from Novalis and within sight of the tale-end of the preceding epoch – "Genossen der göthe-schiller'schen Zeit."[105] In the *Bildersaal*, it is precisely the quality of the poem as an excerpt that takes precedence over its interpretable content. The anthological quintessence is not the result

---

[105] Between Goethe and Schiller, who occupy a section that is more or less their own – "Deutscher Klassik Glanzhöhe" – and "Die Romantische Schule," this section appears to be for those contemporaries of Goethe and Schiller worthy of entry but within a space of differentiation between the two greatest names of German letters (Scherr 231-242).

of one or a few of the most Novalis-esque poems, the most Romantic, or the most *Weltliterarisch*; rather, it is the product of the paratextual interplay between the format (the Roman numerals, indicators of genre, authorship, work of origin) and the text as image that first achieved the significance of the *Bild* in the *Saal* of *Weltliteratur*.

In the *Bildersaal* collection, *Das Lied vom Wein* is attributed to layers of authorship and context. It is essentially a quotation in the service of a single literary idea. In *Signature, Event, Context*, Jacques Derrida remarks that "[e]very sign, linguistic or nonlinguistic, spoken or written (in the usual sense of this opposition), as a small or large unity, can be cited, put between quotation marks: thereby it can break with every given context, and engender new contexts in an absolutely nonsaturable fashion" (Derrida 320). As a "break" from one context to another, the quoted, the cited, or the bracketed-recontextualized is signified by the marks of quotation. As an anthology, *Bildersaal der Weltliteratur* does not present its fragments or its collected finished poems within quotation marks; yet, each bears the marks of translation from one context to the next through other means (paratextual information, black lines indicating starts and ends, neighboring works, etc.). In both cases, as quotation marks or other modes of bracketing new contexts, the print-media architecture of textual appearance is the primary mode of signification. Reflecting on the function of quotation, W.V. Quine argues that quotation marks enact a specific and dominant mode of signification over what is contained between their borders: "A quotation is not a *description*, but a *hieroglyph*; it designates its object not by describing it in terms of other objects, but by picturing it. The meaning of the whole does not depend upon the meanings of the constituent words" (Quine 26).

Quotation marks announce a mode of signification before, or perhaps completely in place of the words between the marks; they mark a mode of representational textuality, a sort of metonymic pointing to a greater whole by presenting the cited passage as an image fit to hang in a gallery.

To view *Das Lied vom Wein* or any other fragment from the anthology as an image or a sort of hieroglyph is to validate the logic of the anthology as Scherr conceived of it. It remains a collection of images, a portrait gallery. In a nearly literal sense, Scherr beckoned his readers to enter a space and gaze at the collected works of *Weltliteratur*. In order to represent lengthy works and abbreviate the impossibly massive literary world, he opted for a method of presentation in which text becomes image, a metonymic promise that the rest of the text, like the *Welt* of *Weltliteratur* exists elsewhere but is partially on display here. The brilliance of Scherr's method is in the metaphor it employs. In this collection we observe the crucial function of the narrative of the literary whole. It is the semblance of a world-totality that is formed by an architecture of collected, connected, and cooperating texts, but the world it implies is precisely the finite group that it exhibits. It is not to be dismissed as another failed *Weltliteratur*, as this is how *Weltliteratur* always functions. Scherr attempted to mediate with print media the entirety of literature through an abbreviation of a central group of works. In doing so, his collection promotes a framing of texts that become largely determined by their attachment to and positioning within a framework of delivery. *Bildersaal der Weltliteratur* does not feature all that is the case, but it illuminates the way in which we come to read literature with such an *all* or such a *Welt* in mind.

In October 1937 the National Socialist literary journal *Weltliteratur: Romane,*

Erzählungen und Gedichte aller Zeiten und Völker engaged in a confrontation with its

core concept: "*Weltliteratur?*" Dawning the cover of the issue, the single word inquiry

provoked readers to consider the mission of the journal in their hands by questioning the

very foundation of its subject. What is *Weltliteratur*? The answer to their question, as

well as the question itself, appeared as a defense of the literary vision against those

unrealized readers and perhaps imaginary critics who had resisted what this vague literary

idea might imply.

> Es mag sein, daß manche Menschen noch nicht Zugang zu
> unserer Zeitschrift gewonnen haben, weil sie sich vor dem
> Begriff "Weltliteratur" fürchten. Sie verwechseln diesen
> Begriff mit der Sache "Allerweltsliteratur" und glauben, es
> würde ihnen in dieser Zeitschrift ein Literatursalat
> vorgesetzt, der keine andere Wirkung haben könne, als
> ihnen den Magen zu verderben.[106]

By 1937 the concept of *Weltliteratur* was commonly used in German-speaking literary

circles, and its association with Goethe was widely known.[107] The editorial *Weltliteratur?*

---

[106] The editorial "Weltliteratur?" appeared without naming its author; however, as the editor of the issue, it may be attributed to Hellmuth Langenbucher as listed *Weltliteratur: Romane, Erzählungen und Gedichte aller Zeiten und Völker.* Ed. Hellmuth Langenbucher. Nr. 25. October 1937, (1).

[107] In the pre-war years of the twentieth century alone, there were numerous volumes dedicated to *Weltliteratur* as a general concept of international literature and in the specific context of the notion as the vision of Goethe. In particular significance as a predecessor to *Weltliteratur/Die Weltliteratur*, the literary historian, avid nationalist, and anti-Semite Adolf Bartels published in 1913 *Einführung in die Weltliteratur: von den ältesten Zeiten bis zur Gegenwart*; and in 1918 *Weltliteratur: Eine Übersicht, zugleich ein Führer durch Reclams Universalbibliothek*. In a more general sense, *Weltliteratur* was also used in a great deal of collections as a general organization principle of internationally known and canonical works of the world. As an example of a few such contemporary titles, see: Alexander Baumgarten, *Geschichte der Weltliteratur*, 1897; Carl Busse, *Geschichte der Weltliteratur*, 1910; Paul Wiegler, *Geschichte der Weltliteratur: Dichtung fremder Völker*, 1920. The specific context of *Weltliteratur* as a theory of Goethe's was equally present and in the academic publications such as Georg Brandes, "Weltlitteratur" in *Das*

is featured alongside the bold heading of the name Goethe, introducing his short stories *Novelle* and *Märchen*. Both literally and figuratively, the resistant designation of *Weltliteratur* in this editorial appears directly in contrast to and in appropriation of Goethe. The layout of the cover page splits the gaze of the reader, directing a reading that questions the general concept of *Weltliteratur* while both criticizing and validating its attribution to Goethe, the patron saint of German letters. But it is unsurprising that the journal *Weltliteratur*, an instrument of National Socialist ideology, would resist the utopian connotations of the worldly concept on terms of alleged literary cosmopolitanism and equally foreseeable that it would seek to involve Goethe in order to lend legitimacy to its claims. It is hardly remarkable that such a journal would endeavor to distance itself from what its editors conceived of as a sort of nauseating internationalism in literature. It is, therefore, tempting to read this understanding of *Weltliteratur* as a specific sort of Nazi corruption of an otherwise cosmopolitan ideal. However, as reasonable and well intentioned as it may be, such a view would only reinforce the utopian narrative of *Weltliteratur* by contrasting the idea as a bright reality against the dark dream of radical ideology. More importantly still, such a reading would overlook the importance of the distinction between *Weltliteratur* as a concept and *Allerweltsliteratur* as an entity. Beyond the obviously malicious intent from which it emerges, this critical distinction articulates a crucial function of *Weltliteratur* in multiple contexts, making visible through

---

literarische Echo, 1899; Else Beil, *Zur Entwicklung des Begriffs Weltliteratur*, 1915; Fritz Strich, *Dichtung und Zivilisation*, 1928.

its political hyperbole what is at stake in all practices of *Weltliteratur* as collections of literary texts.

Publication of the journal *Weltliteratur: Romane, Erzählungen und Gedichte aller Zeiten und Völker* first began in October 1935 by the publisher *Wiking Verlag*. *Wiking* had published another journal with the same name from 1915 to 1925, but despite the intentional impression of continuity with the former version, the 1935 series marked the beginning of a distinctly separate publication, differing most notably in its ideological tendencies and as a direct instrument of propaganda through literary means.[108] Under the editorial direction of Hellmuth Langenbucher, the initial edition of *Weltliteratur* was published monthly until the pivotal month of September 1939, when the invasion of Poland incited the official beginning of the war. After a short hiatus, publication of the journal resumed, but changes were made in the title, management, and content of the periodical. In January 1940, with the new editor, Friedhelm Kaiser, and the new publisher, *Schwerter Verlag*, the journal recommenced as *Die Weltliteratur: Berichte, Leseproben und Wertung*.

The administrative reinvention and the change in title both reflected the new conceptualization of the journal as a directly political instrument of the *SS-Ahnenerbe* which oversaw the publication.[109] The objective of the *Ahnenerbe-Stiftung Verlag* was

---

[108] The 1935 and 1940 editions appear, misleadingly, to be a continuation of the same-titled journal also by the publisher *Wiking* which ran between 1915 and 1925. According to Josef Thomik, the impression of continuity given by the use of the name *Weltliteratur* is clearly disrupted by the content of the earlier journal which he identifies as "ideologisch neutral." The difference in the two publications is evident in the overwhelmingly ideological focus of the latter journal as "grundsetzlich nationalsozialistisch" (Thomik 39).

[109] See Michael H. Kater, *Das „Ahnenerbe" der SS 1935-1945*: "Das 'Ahnenerbe' steht für den Versuch Heinrich Himmlers, der seine Hausmacht von 1933 bis 1944 wie kein anderer Paladin der Partei in alle erdenklichen Lebensgebiete des nationalsozialistischen Staates vorschob, die politische Macht auf den

the promotion of party values and the support of cultural outlets intended to advance

three main objectives: "völkische Kulturpolitik," "politische Schriften," and

"kämpferische Wissenschaft" (Thomik, 41). In its new format and conceptual

reconfiguration, *Die Weltliteratur* exhibited a striking increase in the starkness and

aggression of the ideological agenda that, although also evident in the earlier edition of

Weltliteratur, was performed by less blatant means and with more attention to the literary

manifestation of party ideology.[110] Conceived of as a didactic weapon of the *SS*, the

revised edition undertook a specific function in the organization and presentation of

literature as a cultural means to a political end.

The conceptual revisions to the structure of the 1940 edition are also evident in an

increased abundance of directly political, decidedly unliterary editorials, as well as

changes in imagery intended to reflect such politics. In Kate Sturge's terms, the journal is

"copiously illustrated with woodcut illustrations of the books reviewed, portraits of

völkish types and landscapes," an emphatically ideological aesthetic in the layout of the

journal (Sturge 2004: 105). Yet, the most arresting modification in the new version was

the subtle, but compelling change in the title that moved from *Weltliteratur* to *Die*

Weltliteratur. The addition of the definite article "die" in the title is a profound

---

Bereich des geistigen Lebens auszudehnen" (Kater 7). The publication of *Weltliteratur/Die Weltliteratur*
parallels the history of *das Ahnenerbe* in its evolution. Kater describes the 1935 founded *Ahnenerbe* as a
"Forschungs- und Lehrgemeinschaft" dedicated to the study of early Germanic history with strong political
motivations. As in the case of the journal, Kater also describes the conspicuous change in the tone of the
institution at the outbreak of the war, moving from a mission of pseudo-academic inquiry to a blatant
instrument of cultural-political propaganda in the war effort (Kater 8).

[110] Thomik refers to the 1935-1939 *Weltliteratur* as "bereits nationalsozialistisch geprägte Zeitschrift," but
he also identifies the clear rupture in blatancy of ideology in the redefinition of the journal as *Die*
Weltliteratur under the *Ahnenerbe-Stiftung*: "Das Erscheinen der im Vergleich zur 'Weltliteratur'
ideologisch gestraffteren Zeitschrift 'Die Weltliteratur' ist somit im Zusammenhang zu sehen mit den
literaturpolitischen Bemühungen der leitenden Kräfte des 'Ahnenerbes'" (Thomik 38).

demonstration of the perception of the world and the journal's mission to represent this vision through the corresponding practices of cultural insularity and tacit violence towards the non-represented cultures and literatures forced beyond the boundaries implied by the journal. The addition of the definite article is also a definitive statement about the status of *Weltliteratur* in general. In particular contrast to its predecessor without the definite article, the singular "die" of the new title proposes an act of distinction in its indexicality; it marks distance between a general and all-inclusive body of world literature and the exclusive delineation of a chosen selection worthy of the article's specific designation. The definite article enacts a limit to the otherwise infinite mass of world literary output. In this process of distinction, the journal is established as an instrument of validation, a frame of legitimacy, and a point of entry through which those authors and texts granted admission are accepted and presented as the invaluable parts of the whole, *die Weltliteratur*.

What exactly is the difference between *Weltliteratur* and *die Weltliteratur* in the journal? Returning to October 1937, the editorial defense of the journal sought to implement its legitimacy by distancing its *Weltliteratur* from *Allerweltsliteratur*, a distinction that is equally predicated on the crucial differentiation between a meaninglessly broad signifier for everything and a slightly more discriminating, but still vague counterpart. In this difference, *Weltliteratur* appears as a concept, while *Allerweltsliteratur* is simply everything, the meaningless totality of the literatures of the world. The conceptual contours of the selective *Weltliteratur* reflect the specific vision of

organization based on distinct qualities that distinguish certain literatures from the ineffectually massive universe of letters.

> Wir pflegen Weltliteratur nicht als Allerweltsliteratur, um
> es noch einmal hervorzuheben, sondern als Dichtung, die
> charakteristischer Ausdruck des Volkes ist, aus dem sie
> herausgewachsen ist. Wir wollen keine literarische
> Weltsprache, sondern es ist uns darum zu tun, die Völker so
> kennenzulernen, wie sie wirklich sind, und dabei kann uns
> kein internationales literarisches Kauderwelsch helfen,
> sondern nur eine Dichtung, die aus dem Lebensboden ihres
> Volkes herauswachst.[111]

In such a formation *Weltliteratur*, or *die Weltliteratur*, is explicitly a finite choice of texts to be strictly distinguished by its essential relationship to an ethno-nationalist fantasy of origin. It is unambiguously opposed to the notion of *Weltliteratur* as an open international exchange. In clear contrast to other widely held assumptions, it is an understanding of the notion that actively resists the common utopian tones of *Weltliteratur* by underscoring the perceived fundamental differences of national literatures rather than their common interconnectivity. This view holds that a common literary denominator, a literary *Weltsprache*, would be nothing more than meaningless gibberish (*Kauderwelsch*), an incomprehensible Babel at the foot of an impossible tower of *Weltliteratur*.

The obvious biases of the journal point to the fantasy of a desired world, a fantasy that is perpetuated by the portrayal of acceptable literature and its greater ethno-political affiliation with the NS-regime. The resulting concept is a transparent farce of the world-literary in its disproportionate ratio of NS-German to so-called "world" writers. Of the just over 100 authors of short works, excerpts, and poems in the 1935-1939 *Weltliteratur*,

---

[111] Again, anonymous editorial (likely Hellmuth Langenbucher) in *Weltliteratur: Romane, Erzählungen und Gedichte aller Zeiten und Völker.* Ed. Hellmuth Langenbucher. Nr. 25. October 1937, (1).

only roughly a third are from outside of Germany; moreover, the definite majority of this prized international fraction consists of Austrians. Viewed cartographically, the countries of those contributing authors to the *Weltliteratur* edition represent remarkably the formal boundaries of the Third Reich, as well as the boundaries of future interest, a nearly exclusive focus on central Europe and the allies of the NS-regime.[112] In the later issues of the post-1939 *Die Weltliteratur*, the frequency of translations and foreign writers appears drastically scaled back from the already limited condition of its predecessor.[113] The desired geographic emphasis is a demonstration of the hyper-subjective principle of organizing literature through a manipulation of world space as a desired political map. In a later issue, the location of *Weltliteratur* is explicitly identified not simply as central European, but as the political entity of National Socialist Germany: "Daß ihr [Weltliteratur] Standort dabei immer das nationalsozialistische Deutschland ist, darf als selbstverständlich gelten. Und ebenso das andere: daß es für uns keine andere 'literarische' Weltanschauung gibt als die politische Adolf Hitlers, nach der die gemeinsame Ordnung der Völker nur auf der Ordnung des Einzelvolkes nach seiner Eigenart beruhen kann" (Kaiser, 2-3 Feb. 1940). The *Weltliteratur* of this journal is, therefore, overwhelmingly based on a conscious effort to distinguish between some

---

[112] The November 1936 issue contains an unlikely exception to the otherwise invariant manner of organizing texts along mainly NS-German writers and largely sympathetic writers from the allies of the Reich; this was the non-European exception of Hervey Allen, a US-American writer with a fragment from the German translation of his adventure novel *Antonio Adverso*: *Denis und Maria: Vorgeschichte zu einem großen Roman* in *Weltliteratur*, 14, November 1936.
[113] Reflecting what Kate Sturge describes as a general prohibition of enemy literatures after 1939, the translations of foreign literature in *Die Weltliteratur* are perhaps unsurprisingly limited to the ideological province of the journal's depiction (Sturge 2002: 155).

literatures as significant *Weltliteratur* and others as meaningless *Allerweltsliteratur*, the simple byproduct of the culturally insignificant, if not degenerate.

It is, however, hardly surprising that a National Socialist journal would purport a vision of literature that resists the notion of *Weltliteratur* as a trans-national exchange, that reinforces a belief in the fundamentally ethnic origins of literary creation, and that intentionally chooses its mode of perceiving the world and its literature as a political ideology. The very conceptualization of the journal as the violent instrument of NS-propaganda challenges other understandings of *Weltliteratur* even as a largely contested concept. Yet the severity and tenor of the ideology should not serve as evidence of the degree to which this particular *Weltliteratur* deviates from the real *Weltliteratur*, as such an argument would do nothing more than to reinstate the implicit belief that there exists a true entity of *Weltliteratur*, but that this collection, like Scherr's *Bildersaal der Weltliteratur*, and other collections that have followed it, has simply missed the mark. Of course, it is imperative to acknowledge that this case is indeed unique in that it so deliberately appropriates a cosmopolitan idea in the service of such a dark and extreme ideological opposite. But instead of regarding this as another failure of *Weltliteratur*, it is necessary to consider this indeed complex case as a drastic example for the way in which a collection of texts, even in the most extreme and transparent subjectivity, operates under the logic of a unifying principle of literary organization, a fiction of totality, and in the case of this and other collections of *Weltliteratur*, a semblance of a world. It is, then, necessary to examine the journal not as the obvious failure of *Weltliteratur* that it is, but as an inquiry into the ways in which it succeeds in creating its world. How does this

213

journal achieve the depiction of a *Weltliteratur* that is not *Allerweltsliteratur*? How does the journal as an assemblage of texts, paratextual imagery, and criticism realize the semblance of a world that is by definition a political-cultural fantasy? Finally, how can this extreme example serve to illustrate similar modes of reading and representation that are equally inherent in other collections of *Weltliteratur*? *Weltliteratur: Romane, Erzählungen und Gedichte aller Zeiten und Völker* and *Die Weltliteratur: Berichte, Leseproben und Wertung* offer a unique and widely under-explored case for the conceptual history of *Weltliteratur* and may inadvertently illustrate, through contrast, the way in which all collections somehow distinguish between *Weltliteratur* and *Allerweltsliteratur*.

The World Fantasy and the Spatial Reality of Letters

The distinction between *Welt* and *Allerwelt* contradicts the dominant theories of *Weltliteratur* as a central canon of world masterpieces, as the unknowable totality of world literary output, or in the contemporary sense, as a process of circulation and exchange.[114] Such a differentiation paradoxically embraces these prevailing notions of *Weltliteratur* while rejecting them in favor of another approach. This view actively acknowledges the world-literary entirety, only to dismiss the overwhelming majority of the literature of the world in favor of the literature of an alternative world fantasy; it

---

[114] The contemporary process-oriented notion of *Weltliteratur* is nonetheless also largely concerned with the result of circulation in the form of the collection, particularly the collection as the anthology of world literature. Those decisive elements of inclusion, exclusion, and editing that Johannes Scherr addressed in the *Weltliteratur* of 1848 are arguably even more present today, as the *Weltliteratur* collection in the anthology has become a contested practice. See David Damrosch 2004: 43-45; 2003 124-133; Lawall, "Anthologizing World Literature"; Schulte 137-141; Thomsen 56- 60.

suggests *Weltliteratur* as a multinational canon, but it asserts direct control over its formation; and it demonstrates textual circulation and exchange by accentuating precisely its role as the agent of limitation in exactly such a literary economy. As a collection of texts, the sum total of the journal therefore reflects an intentional sphere of the world literary that is predicated on the division between the world as a multitude of political, cultural, linguistic entities and the world as an ideologically sanctioned space. It is fundamentally a conscious attempt at shaping an imagined world through an act of inclusion on the one hand, and on the other hand, through an act of violent exclusion in deciding what in the world as a textual collection should be ignored or denied existence. The organizing principle of texts in *Weltliteratur/Die Weltliteratur* is the world as a political fantasy, an ideological imaginary that has the potential to be anywhere but is never everywhere. It is a privileging of this world over the reality of the real-existing literatures of a host of cultures, nations, and languages.

While the central narrative of the publication is indeed the articulation of political power, the practice of this narrative is dependent on the limits of the world imagination as they are actuated by the configuration of the textual fragments which make up the world-composition in the journal. The print assemblage of texts creates and upholds the political narrative and world picture by sustaining a coherent depiction of the world first as a political territory. As a serial collection of literature, the journal also enacts a material structure for the conceptual entirety of *Weltliteratur*. In this sustained narrative, the collection performs a diegetic function in which the notion of the world-literary is internal and fully dependent on the inclusion of literature within the material structure of

the journal as a print medium. Within this configuration, the world narrative is maintained by the collective textuality of the *Weltliteratur* assemblage, a paratextual web of German-language literature (original and in translation), images, criticism and propaganda. As such, this *Weltliteratur* depends on the practice of textual organization that serves a dual function: the literature of the journal creates an understanding of the world while also using the same world imaginary as a frame of influence on the literature contained within its confines. Thus the *Welt* of the journal is at once a spatial fiction and a critical constraint for the interpretive potential of the texts it includes.

If *Weltliteratur/Die Weltliteratur* demonstrates the conscious effort to construct a world view through literature, it is equally an attempt to control literature through the same intentions. Yet the geographic imagination as a critical frame of *Weltliteratur* is not specific to the NS-vision in this periodical. Instead, as Pascale Casanova writes, it is commonplace in the order of literary works that the "territories of literature are defined and delimited according to their aesthetic distance from the place where literary consecration is ordained" (Casanova 23). The aesthetic contours of literary texts are fundamentally attached to the often fictional qualities of the territories from which they are thought to emerge. Since literary capital, moreover, is disproportionately concentrated in specific places, with the result that the spaces themselves act as agents in the dissemination of literary value, knowledge, and aesthetic merit, the often fictionalized

spaces become capable of bestowing their featured texts with preset literariness on the sheer basis of their cultural-spatial affiliation.[115]

If the late eighteenth-century rise of literary translation in Germany contributed to the disruption of French hegemony as the homogenous space of literary capital, the alternative auxiliary language of German offered an example of a diffusion process in national consciousness in Europe through a changing culture of literary mediation.[116] Inseparable from this context of literary translation, a defining feature of the early concept of *Weltliteratur* was the awareness of the potential role of literature in eroding cultural hegemony and shaping one's own. As an instrument of literary control, the NS-journal attempted to execute precisely such a form of territorial dominance by fabricating the periodical as a space formed and upheld by literature but with measurable impact on the literary market, as well as with the contrast of a controlled division between a national and a world consciousness.

Die Weltliteratur ventured to command a literary-spatial politics as a reflection of the 1939 initiative to prevent and control foreign influence in Germany through the restriction of literary translation. This practice sought to control the shape of the literary world perception by a manipulation of literary circulation through the control of

---

[115] Casanova describes such a process in the context of Paris as the dominant territory of the literary imagination (Casanova 23).

[116] Casanova credits Herder for the greatest challenge to French literary hegemony by "establishing a necessary link between nation and language," which "encouraged all peoples who sought recognition on equal terms with the established nations of the world to stake their claim to literary and political existence" (Casanova 75). Antoine Berman maintains that the practice of literary translation, particularly around the time of German classicism, has been a critical "instrument for the constitution of a universality" (Berman 14). The practices that later produced the emergence of popular literature, what Casanova calls the "Herder effect," as well as the impetus toward what Berman describes as a "universality," are indicative of the role of translation as a critical matter of power and national consciousness through literature (Casanova 79).

translation practices (Strothmann 195-196).[117] Literary translation in *Die Weltliteratur*

clearly reflects the "kämpferische Wissenschaft" aspect of the *Ahnenerbe* by regarding

the import of certain foreign literatures as a threat to its operative world idea. The editor

of *Die Weltliteratur*, Friedhelm Kaiser, pushed for the creation of a regulatory

commission that would monitor and limit the translation of foreign titles into German as a

means of defense against what he regarded as the clear dangers of translated literature

(Strothmann 196). In particular contrast to other notions of *Weltliteratur*, the limitations

of translation and the book market emphatically restricted the international exchange of

literature in the name of a domestic *Weltliteratur* in Germany.[118]

In limiting the importation of authors and cultures, the NS-regime became deeply

concerned with the control of literary translation as a matter of state security. Marked by

"blanket bans on translations from 'enemy nations,'" the onset of the war brought on

what Kate Sturge describes as a caesura in the practice of literary translation in Germany

(Sturge 2010: 53). Seizing control of the territorial image of the world was attempted thus

first through a control of the channels of literary circulation in translation. In the editorial,

Die Waffen des Geistes, Friedhelm Kaiser reiterated his view of the literary journal as a

weapon of defense which served to create, through literary means, a growing world-

empire, while acting as a bulwark against the infiltration of the enemy via literature and

---

[117] Dietrich Strothmann reports of an official press release from April 1939 stating: "Immer noch sei ein ungebührlich großer Markt an ausländischen Übersetzungen in Deutschland. Die heimische Produktion leide darunter. Noch lägen Verträge vor, doch werde die Flut der Übersetzungen gestoppt werden" (Srothmann 195).

[118] "Die Genehmigungspflicht für Übersetzungen aus den Fremdsprachen ins Deutsche, die von den staatlichen Kontrollbehörden als Präventivzensur angeordnet wurde, hinderte den freien literarischen Austausch, seit die NS-Kulturführung den deutschen Buchmarkt beaufsichtigte " (Strothmann 196)

literary translation.[119] Kaiser positioned his *Weltliteratur* as an instrumental part of "die Waffen des Geistes – neben und hinter den Waffen aus Stahl und Eisen," and as a needed intervention in the world market of letters (Kaiser, Feb. 1940, 2): "Man wird daran merken, daß uns nichts ferner liegt, als zu 'Ausländern.' Anderseits darf und braucht der geistige Austausch zwischen den Völkern weder dem Zufall, noch allein kaufmännischer Spekulation überlassen zu bleiben" (Kaiser Feb. 1940: 2). As an instrument of *Weltliteratur*, the journal thus functions as a material depository of literature in active reflection of the world as a desired political space, constrained by the rigid regimentation of textual exchange between acceptable cultures. In its control of world space through translation, circulation, and the storage of *Weltliteratur*, the journal demonstrates clearly the central role of the collection in producing an operative knowledge of the world and the world literary.

Controlling the world in the journal depends on the continued narrative in which the constrained borders of the desired global unit appear in literature. The subject of the inaugural issue in October 1935 was, for instance, the former East Prussian territory depicted in Heinz Gerhard's novel fragment, *Schicksal an der Memel*. Excerpted from the original *Kameraden an der Memel*, the story commenced a literary depiction of an eastward glance at the formerly German *Memelland*. The novel fragment fictionalizes territory and ethnicity as a literary account of the pre-war conflict; yet, the literariness of the portrayal is also accompanied by an editorial addressing the real political significance

---

[119] Sturge also states that Reich officials regarded literary translation as a weapon of defense both for their political aims and as a weapon to be cautious of from enemy nations: "Translation is, then, a weapon – and when used against Germany it must be combated or at least contained for the safety of the receiving discourse" (Sturge 2004: 126).

of the excerpt, including a foreboding threat of Hitler's interest in the matter.[120] The very

start of this editorial, and with it the entire journal, begins by setting its subject as well as

its subject matter. The first sentence of the journal begins: "Das ganze deutsche Volk,

darüber hinaus die ganze Welt schaut auf das Land an der Memel, das einen

verzweifelten Kampf um seine Selbstverwaltung gegen die litauische Willkürherrschaft

führt" (Langenbucher Oct. 1935: 1). As such, issue one immediately establishes its geo-

political emphasis by stating directly a correspondence of identity between "das ganze

deutsche Volk" and "die ganze Welt" in the shared cultural-political gaze toward the

East.

That such obvious politicization of literature would exist in an NS-journal is,

again, hardly revolutionary findings; the journal clearly spells out its vested interest in

precisely such a literary politics. Yet the performance of such intentions is highly

revealing as an example of a world, a *Weltliteratur*, as an exhibited collection of

profoundly controlled texts. For the literary fragments allowed admission to the limited

and selective world space of the journal, there emerges an interplay between the gathered

parts of the collective textual whole. Functioning as an assemblage of paratextual images,

political criticism, poetry and prose excerpts, the collection becomes an aggregate text

narrating the underlying ideology of the political institution, its territorial fantasy, and its

real-existing intentions in the world. But the establishment of the geo-political narrative

is not solely a matter of mimesis, that is, of literary representations of the desired world-

---

[120] With clearly threatening tones, Langenbucher wrote of the past context of the issue and its future
implications under the new regime: "Mehrfach schon hat der Führer des deutschen Volkes zum Ausdruck
gebracht, daß er der Behandlung der Memeldeutschen durch die Litauer seine schärfste Aufmerksamkeit
schenkt" (Langenbucher Oct. 1935: 1).

space and actual developments in world-politics. Instead, it is also a matter of literary mediation; the journal is a microcosm of a world and its function as such depends on its material form, its interface of scripts, images, commentary, criticism, and, of course, literature. It is, therefore, necessary to examine not simply what kind of world the journal communicates, but the way in which it does so. Examining the journal *Weltliteratur/Die Weltliteratur* as both medium and message alike, it becomes evident that the very communication of worldness, much like its narrative of the political world, is largely dependent on the way in which the finite texts of *Weltliteratur* are arranged as a collection.

In the layout of the journal, the poems and prose fragments are always in sight of the paratextual images and editorial propaganda which direct readings, not simply of the literature in itself (often equally ideological as it is), but also of the formation of the world projection. In thematizing the contemporary territorial conquests through literary means, the operative notions of both world and literature become inextricably involved, enacting a mutual process of influence. A demonstration of the resulting reflexive mode of political-literary narration occurs in the first issue, as the title of Heinz Gerhard's novel is modified to fit the central narrative of the journal as a forum of its presentation. Adapting the title from *Kameraden an der Memel* to *Schicksal an der Memel* (in sight of the commentary of its political significance) alters the emphasis of the title as *Schicksal* when read in concert with the neighboring parts of the journal. In this alteration, the novel fragment undergoes a sort of intralingual translation in order for the text fragment to contribute to the narrative of the journal and its world image. The literariness of the

fragment is thus achieved first through excerpting, rebranding (in its title), and grafting to the neighboring texts and images of the journal to fulfill the mutual purpose of literary expression and political threat.

Commencing in the first issue, the narrative of contested world territory occurs consistently as a central theme in later issues. As a feature on the literature of *Sudetendeutsch* minorities or translations of Flemish literature, this gradual narrative addresses the literary output of designated allies while enacting a textual emphasis on the contentious "world" geography as a nearly direct focus on the world as a space between the Maas and Memel rivers. In a befitting teleology, the first edition of the journal *Weltliteratur* (1935-1939) ends its initial literary fantasy, its eastward longing, with a climactic finish in September 1939. As German tanks entered Poland, the linear account of world letters presented a literary Poland, the text-image relationship coming to a narrative crescendo with a woodcut illustration of *Wehrmacht* soldiers on the front of a world-literary expansion into "Umstrittene Erde."[121]

With the illustration of *Wehrmacht* soldiers and the heading "Umstrittene Erde" in September 1939, the journal connects its organizing principle to real events, enacting a diegetic transfer from the literary to the lived-experience of an actual war, thereby restating the fictional manifestation of the real territorial desire and creating a sense of nostalgia for a country and culture of its own creation and within its own world narrative. In turn, however, the conceptual cartography of the world it represents is mirrored in control of the material structure of the journal as a sort of territory itself. The structural

---

[121] The featured story of the September 1939 issue is *Umstrittene Erde* by Herybert Menzel, a title and corresponding image that depicts the current political events as they unfold in central Europe.

positioning of the texts and images both communicates, and becomes communicated by, the world-narrative that belies the journal.

In its collective framing of prose, poetry, imagery and propaganda, the featured works and images are grafted together in the print-medium structure of the journal, a figurative space and ideological sphere that is maintained by its material parameters. Within the layout, the text fragments and images appear in close proximity to one another, dividing the gaze of the reader and effectively binding the text fragment to the collective text of the journal as a larger frame. Thus, the illustration for the literary invasion of Poland in the last issue of *Weltliteratur* (September 1939) depicts the political events while the paratextual imagery enacts on neighboring and future works a sort of interpretational gravity, drawing each work into the greater narrative. The *Weltliteratur* that follows an image of this sort is deeply immersed in the journal as a figurative world geography and it submits equally to the concert of mutual influence in the centerless network of paratexts serving the world as an ideological space. Once such a space is established through the progressive publication as a spatial configuration of works, the central means of *Weltliteratur* mediation becomes the act of signification through proximity in which the presented fragments of literature are ordained into the world-literary simply through their importation into the material perimeters of the literary-spatial fantasy as a print medium. In the textual space of *Weltliteratur* as a collection, the territorial significance is essential for the transfer of meaning. The texts within this frame become subject to both the political and aesthetic laws of the world in which they appear.

In a convergence of contemporary affairs and the central narrative of the journal as a process of structural signification, the annexation of Austria was covered by the issue *Deutsche Dichtung in Österreich* in June of 1938. Effectively stripping Austrian literature of its singularity, a process of transference occurs in which *österreichische Dichtung* becomes *Deutsche Dichtung in Österreich* upon importation into the geography of the world-literary fantasy. Simply by means of the literary annexation, the Austrian imports into the collective text of the publication become integral parts of the single-world imagination. Through sheer presence within the world space of the journal, they are joined to and allied with the paratexual directives and the invariant core-message of the NS-*Weltliteratur*. Despite the willingness and ideological involvement of many of the featured authors, the aesthetic contours of the presented literature are nonetheless also largely constrained by the world-frame as a print medium. Austrian literature in 1938 may not appear to be a fitting example of radical appropriation since the ideological bond is arguably less than a forced conclusion; but, the cultural translation that projects *Weltliteratur* as *Deutsche Dichtung* in this issue remains significant, not in its mere reflection of existing geo-cultural politics but also in its demonstration of the journal as a literary space of such politics. What is obvious in this explicit example of world-literary annexation is performed subtly and consistently throughout the entire journal as a process of the spatial-textual transfer of meaning between the controlled parts of the textual whole as a world constellation.

If there exist such radical processes of spatial-textual transfer in *Weltliteratur/Die Weltliteratur*, then it would be a mistake to dwell alone on the principally ideological

perversions of the world picture, and in doing so, overlook the lessons that this extreme

case study can offer for the greater context of *Weltliteratur* as a practice. As a frame of

exhibition, the collective textual space of the journal, a world unto itself, employs a sort

of interpretational gravity, a textual weight that is at once imaginary in its conception,

and entirely real in its effects on the literature it presents. Through the interconnection of

literary texts and images, the journal exemplifies a central feature of all *Weltliteratur*

collections, namely that its mode of world mediation is dependent on precisely the textual

collective as the chief signifier of the critical "worldness" of *Weltliteratur*. In the case of

this NS-periodical, there is hardly a more articulate expression of the way in which the

collection functions as world knowledge than the process of appropriation and refraction

of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, the idea of *Weltliteratur*, and the uses and abuses of his

name and oeuvre in this clear and ominous *Weltliteratur*.

Goethe und die Weltliteratur to *Goethe und Die Weltliteratur*

The enthusiastic anti-Semite, nationalist, and later NS devotee Adolf Bartels wrote in

1932 that "Goethe war während seines ganzen Lebens ein guter Deutscher, auch in seiner

Altersperiode trotz Weltliteratur, Orientalismus und übervölkischem Sozialismus"

(Bartels 187). "Trotz Weltliteratur" is a phrase that fittingly describes the character of

Goethe throughout the journal and the Reich in general. To make Goethe a German, a

good NS-German "trotz Weltliteratur," may well have been the essential task of the

editors of the identically titled journal a few years later. How did the editors depict

Goethe *trotz Weltliteratur*? Equally, how was *Weltliteratur* itself depicted if it involved

such a negative preposition in literary speech? The exact treatment of Goethe in the journal reveals a manipulation of Goethe as a text, an image, and a literary legacy that is emblematic of the capability of a controlled collection of texts, a world of literature, to fully mold its textual contents so that a figure of considerable world reputation could be used both with and against the term he is considered to have created for means he could not have imagined.

It is hardly a coincidence that issue 25 (October 1937) would be both the decisive declaration of the world literary mission of the journal, the distinction between *Welt* and *Allerwelt*, and at the same time, the issue that presents for the first time short stories of Goethe. The focus on Goethe, as well as the famed idea that provides the conceptual structure and title of the periodical, is an intentional attempt to address the discord between the perceived concept of *Weltliteratur* and its association with Goethe with the increasingly apparent hyper-nationalism of the journal. This issue is the first of a series that deals with Goethe in a way that draws his legacy into the hands of the editors and appropriates the cultural capital of his name for the indoctrination of other works in the publication. It is a unique case in which the name, oeuvre, and image of a celebrated author, arguably the most central *Dichter* and *Denker* of Germany, performs a semiotic function as the representative of German literature itself, enacting a degree of interference and influence within the world as a collection of texts simply by being featured within its borders. To examine Goethe in the journal is to identify a textual afterlife of the powerful literary figure that is discernibly a product of the world in which he appears. With this world-specific Goethe, the cultural celebrity of his name is also

226

used to ordain, indoctrinate, and influence the other featured works simply by a mode of endorsement through proximity, or a sense of signification through the shared presence within the collection that is *Weltliteratur* and not *Allerweltsliteratur*.

The Goethe issue reveals two core functions for the greater context of the journal as the space of the world literary. The first is the general attempt to appropriate Goethe in order to lend legitimacy to the magazine and the ideological aim of its single and collected parts of the literary whole. Without some acknowledgment of Goethe and his role in the very idea the journal claimed to be addressing by its own admission, there would remain a lingering shadow of doubt concerning the authority of the literary notion as it was presented in the pages of the journal. Thus *Weltliteratur/Die Weltliteratur's* appropriation of Goethe is a means of validating its own idea more than it was an attempt to project the notion of an NS-sympathetic Goethe. In the short editorial, *Weltliteratur?*, Goethe is mentioned, but only as a side note to the concrete articulation that the journal is "der Dichtung von Völkern gewidmet, mit denen wir besonders gute außenpolitische Beziehungen unterhalten" (Langenbucher 385).

As the second matter of significance, Goethe appears as a symbol, a metonymic force, instead of a real-existing figure of literary history.

> Der Name Goethes, mit dem sich für uns und für alle Welt verbinden: höchster geistiger Ausdruck unseres Volkes und sichtbarste, ewig gültige Leistung vor aller Welt, soll uns dabei Verpflichtung sein, unsere Arbeit so durchzuführen, daß sie einem durch gegenseitige Achtung bestimmten Verhältnis der kulturellen Zusammenarbeit zwischen den Völkern dienlich sei. So, und nicht anders, bitten wir die Arbeit unserer Zeitschrift zu verstehen. (Langenbucher 385)

This full extent of the attention to Goethe in the editorial is crucial in its emphasis on Goethe as a name – "Der Name Goethes, mit dem sich für uns und für alle Welt verbinden." The editor also speaks of exchange among the peoples of the world, but he has already revealed the game, that the term "Austausch" means domination and that the

Figure 6. The cover of the October 1937 issue depicts the name of Goethe in a clearly overriding position above the other concepts of the shared page. The dominance of the bold-ink Goethe towers over the questionable concept of *Weltliteratur* below. The layout of the cover page enacts a conceptual hierarchy in which Goethe's name appears as a central signifier, or as its own textual legacy and fiction, while also occupying a sort of typographic propinquity with the concept of a questionable *Weltliteratur*. This shared space enacts a bond between Goethe and the famed notion while the editorial that follows rewrites the same notion to fit the journal and its ideal.

term "Völker" means racial entities. Yet, even in this sense, it is through the name of Goethe that these ends are to be achieved. Goethe, in this regard, is the metonymic expression of the ideal image of the literary looking-glass-self, a symbol with which to justifying world(literature) domination.

It is equally as a symbol or a semiotic proclamation that Goethe as a cultural force appears to smile down on the concept of the journal and approve of the *Weltliteratur* below. The layout of the issues creates a semiotic correspondence between his name and the word "Weltliteratur." At a somewhat subliminal level, this typographic bond can be seen as arguably more significant than the direct commentary on his oeuvre or theories for the context of the journal, which accounts for the almost total lack of attention thereof in the editorial. Instead, readers of the journal see the bold print announcing the single-word name "Goethe," any additional signification beyond the single moniker acting as redundant, superfluous Johanns and unnecessary Wolfgangs insulting the reader with their excessive signification and assault to the brevity of literary fame. Here, the powerful meaning of Goethe is a given, an expression in emboldened ink, but below this confident articulation *Weltliteratur* appears with a question mark, further evidence to the reader that, in case they too had wondered, the bond between the central idea of the journal and the central genius of German letters is indeed strong even if the cosmopolitan idea remains questionable.

In its technique of presentation, the appearance of Goethe in the journal reflects to some degree the complicated and difficult case that Goethe was for the proponents of the NS-cultural industry. Throughout the course of the journal, there is a palpable sense of

reservation and distance maintained in approaching the works and ideas of the author extraordinaire; yet, the journal employs alternative methods of appropriation by drawing on the image of Goethe, the power of his name, and a vague sense of his legacy through the layout of the journal. *Weltliteratur*/*Die Weltliteratur* deals with Goethe by boldly publishing his name or proudly presenting his likeness without delving into his writings. The journal thus applies a sort of semiotic appropriation of Goethe while simultaneously rejecting the problematic oeuvre that often contradicted the Reich and its party line.

By all measures Goethe presented a difficult case for NS-officials, occupying a highly ambivalent position in the new literary history of the Reich. Robert Mandelokow described the official NS-approach to Goethe as a combination of "Gleichgültigkeit, Unkenntnis und Berührungsangst" (Mandelkow 78). The largely cosmopolitan character of Goethe the *Weltbürger* posed an obstacle for the appropriation of his works and person in terms of a strictly national basis of interpretation. Furthermore, Goethe was rather critical of many of the emerging characteristics of early German nationalism that NS-propagandists would later mold into the concrete evidence of *Seele*, *Geist*, and *Volk* (John 93).

> Wer seine Interessen so vielfältig streute, wer seine
> Wurzeln in der klassischen Antike sah, im hohen Alter den
> Orient und den fernen Osten – Indien und China –
> entdeckte, wer nicht müde wurde zu betonen, was er
> fremden Literaturen verdankte und diese Wertschätzung
> auch zeitgenössischen Künstlern und Gelehrten – etwa
> Alessandro Manzoni, Thomas Carlyle oder den
> Mitarbeitern des Pariser Globe – zuteil werden ließ, konnte
> sich dem Zugriff der faschistischen Ideologie gegenüber als
> einigermaßen resistant erweisen. (John 93)

In 1932, on the eve of institutional fascism, Fritz Strich spoke to an audience in Weimar with the talk "Goethe und die Weltliteratur," a decisive expression of the idea that would appear as a book years later, and in which the cosmopolitanism of Goethe appeared almost as a call to an alternative future. In the same year, and simultaneously in honor of the centennial observation of the death of Goethe, Thomas Mann described the German "Weltbürger" as a specifically non-national thinker, quoting his remarks that "[k]eine Nation hat ein Urteil über das, was bei ihr getan und geschrieben ist. Man könnte dies auch von jeder Zeit sagen" (Mann 336-337). Mann also described a political disinterest in Goethe, particularly in terms of the growing sense of nationalism in his time (Mann 325); and finally, Mann referred to Goethe's "undeutsche Plattheit" (Mann 337). In his summary of the figure of Goethe, Thomas Mann describes a cultural legacy that appears fundamentally at odds with the tenants of National Socialism.

Sentiments expressing the conceptual clash between Goethe's image and the Third Reich were also expressed by the chief architects of NS-humanities. Alfred Rosenberg, for example, declared Goethe to be unfit for use in the mission at hand.

> Goethe ist für die kommenden Zeiten erbitterten Kämpfe
> nicht brauchbar, weil ihm die Gewalt einer typenbildenden
> Idee verhaßt war und er sowohl im Leben wie im Dichten
> keine Diktatur eines Gedankens anerkennen wollte, ohne
> welche jedoch ein Volk nie ein Volk bleibt und nie einen
> echten Staat schaffen wird. (Mandelkow 78)

In almost direct contradiction to the journal, the rejection of Goethe as an amiable figure for NS-ideology stems almost exclusively from those elements that make up his legacy as the cosmopolitan *Weltbürger* of Weimar. Precisely such an image of Goethe, taken largely from his collected writings, is the exact image of a world-literary idealist whom

Fritz Strich would later valorize in his seminal study of the concept carrying that same name as the journal.[122]

Yet, despite the chorus of voices declaring Goethe to be the intellectual opposite of National Socialism, there were attempts to prove an inherent fascism to Goethe as well. In his 1934 *Goethes Sendung im dritten Reich*, August Raabe attempted to make the case for Goethe as a precursor to Hitler, arguing for the existence of a common thread joining both, but ultimately made good by the latter, maintaining "daß Goethes Sendung in Hitler ihre Erfüllung und ihr End gefunden [hat] (Raabe 56)."[123] Similar attempts were made, again in the decisive commemorative year of 1932, by the anti-Semite proponent of German literature Adolf Bartels who attempted to draw an unexpected link between Goethe and Bartels's own musings on "einer deutsch-völkischen und antisemitischen Literaturbetrachtung" (Mandelkow 80).[124] More exact attempts were made to enlist Goethe through appropriation of the figure of Faust, who to NS-ideology appeared to offer a useful character study of proto-fascism and ethno-nationalist ideology when taken

---

[122] See also John Pizer *Imagining the Age of Goethe in German Literature, 1970-2010*. Speaking mainly of Goethe's postwar legacy as a contested cultural beacon, Pizer notes that a postwar return to Goethe, namely through the concept of world literature presented by Strich in 1946, was seen by some as a way to embrace a new cosmopolitism as a contrast to the destructive nationalism of the NS-era (Pizer 113).

[123] Mandelkow notes Kurt Tucholsky's mockery of Raabe's attempt to join Goethe and Hitler: "Kurt Tucholskys Beitrag zum Goethejahr 1932, die Satire 'Hitler und Goethe. Ein Schulaufsatz,' karikiert in kongenialer Vorausschau die Anbiederungsversuche der Nationalsozialisten an den Weimarer Dichter, die in Schriften wie der 1934 erschienen 'Goethes Sendung im Dritten Reich' von August Raabe zu dümmlichen, aber ernstgemeinten 'Parallelen führen sollten '" (Mandelkow 79).

[124] Mandelkow refers to Bartel's 1932 "Goethe und der Nationalsozialismus" and later, appearing however in the same year, his book *Goethe der Deutsche*, which Mandelkow describes as poorly received even amongst enthusiastic National Socialists (Mandelkow 80).

out of context, as in the oft misappropriated quote from Goethe's Faust: "Blut ist ein ganz besonderer Saft" (Van Linthout 53).[125]

In a postwar reflection on the particular (and particularly ambivalent) relationship between "das Faustische" and German culture, the germanist Hans Schwerte published his 1962 *Faust und das Faustische: ein Kapitel deutscher Ideologie*, in which he discussed the changing perception of the Faustian character within the specific context of German cultural history and thought – *die deutsche Ideologie*. In a remarkable turn, this same Hans Schwerte was among the editors of the journal *Weltliteratur/Die Weltliteratur* and also at the center of a still relevant case of hidden NS-identity in the postwar years. During his involvement with the journal, Schwerte was known by his original given name of Hans Ernst Schneider, which he changed simply to Hans Schwerte after the war to avoid the consequences of his NS-membership and willing employment with the *SS-Ahnenerbe*. Schwerte continued his career as a professor of *Germanistik* and director at the *Technische Hochschule Aachen* until his hidden identity was discovered in 1995 and his criminal past was revealed (Thomik 6). Aside from its significance as a case of hidden NS-identity, the case of Schwerte/Schneider is also evidence of the task presented to *Germanistik* and its *Weltliteratur* in the postwar years to confront the legacy of the Third Reich in its appropriation of the humanities. Although arguably less than formative in its lasting contribution, Schwerte/Schneider's publication of the conservative ideal of Faust

---

[125] Quoting also the famous-"Auf freiem Grund mit freiem Volk zu stehn" from Faust II – Mandelkow states: "Goethes 'Faust' vor allem wurde im Dritten Reich zum vielbenutzten Zitatreservoir nicht nur, sondern in der Überholung der Faustfigur zum 'faustischen Menschen' zur Leitfigur des neuen nationalsozialistischen Menschentyps" (Mandelkow 82). Ine Van Linthout also explains that a common means with which Goethe was appropriated to fit the NS-ideal was to take out of contexts single passages or fragments from his works that were easily adaptable to the ideological contexts of their choosing.

draws a line of continuity from the former NS-context, both in and around the journal, into later developments of academic inquiry. As a scandal for the humanities, the Schwerte/Schneider affair is also further evidence for the lasting consequence of the consistent bias of such ideas beyond the official context of the journal as a single and now defunct publication.

Notwithstanding the attempts to promote Goethe for NS-ideology, the cultural position of the figure as an intellectual and literary force remained largely problematic for NS-officials. It is widely noted that the propagandists of the cultural industry tended to overlook Goethe in favor of other exemplary figures in German literary history; yet it may still be regarded as a gradual development from an outright rejection of Goethe to the simple preference of other representatives of a projected literary heritage in German letters. The indifference toward Goethe was preceded by an initially aggressive rejection in the form of a sort of character assassination; Goebbels attempted to paint Goethe as a freemason, the decidedly un-German champion of *Weltbürgertum* and utopian ideals of peace, as well as the possible murderer of Schiller by poisoning in a bizarre conspiracy theory (Mandelkow 78-79). While the aggression of this slander may have become less extreme or decreased entirely in the course of the NS-era, Goethe remained a figure of controversy and indifference for the party. In place of Goethe, NS-officials tended to turn to Schiller, Kleist, Hölderlin, and the Romantics as ideal figures for their cause (Mandelkow 79).

Although Schiller is largely absent in the journal despite brief mentioning – he is described in one issue as a "granitener Block in der gesamtdeutschen Leistung, als Fanal

der Freiheit, zu dem die Jugend sich heute wie einst bekennt" (Langenbucher 240-241).[126] In a much more direct application of the alternative figures of German letters, the May 1940 issue of *Die Weltliteratur* featured Hölderlin's 1799 ode *Der Tod fürs Vaterland*. Presented within a frame within another text, a paratextual insertion to the editorial *Der französische Vorstoß in Nordeuropa,* the ultra-patriotic tone of Hölderlin's poem appears to be crafted specifically for the NS-context, a Romantic call to arms easily re-contextualized into the contemporary pathos of war propaganda.[127] In the same issue, a single page removed from Hölderlin, another poem breaks its surrounding text as a paratextual interjection—*Vor der Totenmaske Kleists*, by Gustav Leuteritz. This tribute to Kleist, equally in the service of the NS-appropriation of an imagined and desired German literary tradition, points toward a greater enthusiasm throughout the journal for Heinrich von Kleist as the exemplary poetic forefather of the Reich and all that it stands for.

Kleist had been celebrated by the journal on other occasions, most notably as the focus of the October 1937 issue of *Weltliteratur*. In observation of the 160th anniversary of Kleist's birthday, the issue presents the short story *Der Zweikampf* and a portrait of the writer on the cover by Karl Bauer. The Kleist issue also features editorial commentary in which Kleist is presented as a poetic soul driven by the exclusive longing for *Volk* and *Vaterland*, arguing that his untimely death by suicide in 1811 was the direct result of this unfulfilled desire. It is a remarkable aspect of the transparent attempts at appropriating

---

[126] Thomik presents Langenbucher's article on "Schwäbische Dichtung" as a particularly direct example of the NS-appropriation of literary history in the case of Schiller (Thomik 70-71). Langenbucher wrote about Schiller in *Weltliteratur* (Dec. 1936).

[127] The patriotic tone of Hölderlin's poem was used in multiple contexts in the NS-era, including the 1941 Luftwaffe propaganda film *Stukas*, directed by Karl Ritter, in which the poem is sentimentally recited by two officers as they reflect on a wounded comrade and their greater cause.

the figure and oeuvre of Kleist for contemporary ideological means that Kleist appears, not only as a fitting pre-fascist, ethno-nationalist model for the journal, but also in specific opposition to Goethe as the mistaken and unworthy heir to the legacy of German literature. The unidentified editorialist argues: "keine Zeit ist geeigneter, als die in der wir leben, Heinrich von Kleists 'Geburtstag zu feiern' und endlich den Sinn der Leistung zu begreifen, die dieses Dichters Leben und Werk für unser Volk darstellt," adding as a conclusion – "Lang genug allzu lange hat Kleist im Schatten Goethes gestanden" (October 1937: 587). By contrast to Goethe, Kleist is comparatively more German in his embodiment not of a cosmopolitan character, but of a strictly German spirit.

> […] Kleist war auf dem Wege, eine Dichtung zu schaffen, die mehr als die des großen Weimarers deutsch im tiefsten Sinne dieses Wortes war, weil ihre Form einzig durch die innere Lebenswirklichkeit unseres Volkes bestimmt werden sollte. In klassischer Höhe baute der Goethe des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts seine Dichtung, sie nährend aus den edelsten Quellen antiker und deutscher Bildung, über dem Leben des Volkes auf; neben ihm suchten die Romantiker das "Land der deutschen Seele" in geistigen, seelischen, kulturellen, politischen Gütern und überkommenen Werten der deutschen Vergangenheit (587).

Accordingly, the celebration of Kleist in the journal is an effort to endorse Kleist, to depict him as the "Dichter seines Volkes" through his inherently *völkisch* literary tendencies, and perhaps most importantly, to demonstrate how this writer, comparable only to Shakespeare in his artistic stature as the creator of "die deutschesten Werke" is the proper giant of German literature in specific contrast to the falsely celebrated Goethe. The editorial ends with a declaration of a new period of German literature, based as much

on the endorsement of Kleist as the dismissal of Goethe: "Die Zeit, in der wir heute

leben, ist wie keine andere zuvor die Zeit Kleists" (588).

In March of 1940, Goethe and Kleist were both addressed within the issue *Volk*

im Kriege, with the cover illustration of a *Wehrmacht* soldier. This issue featured the
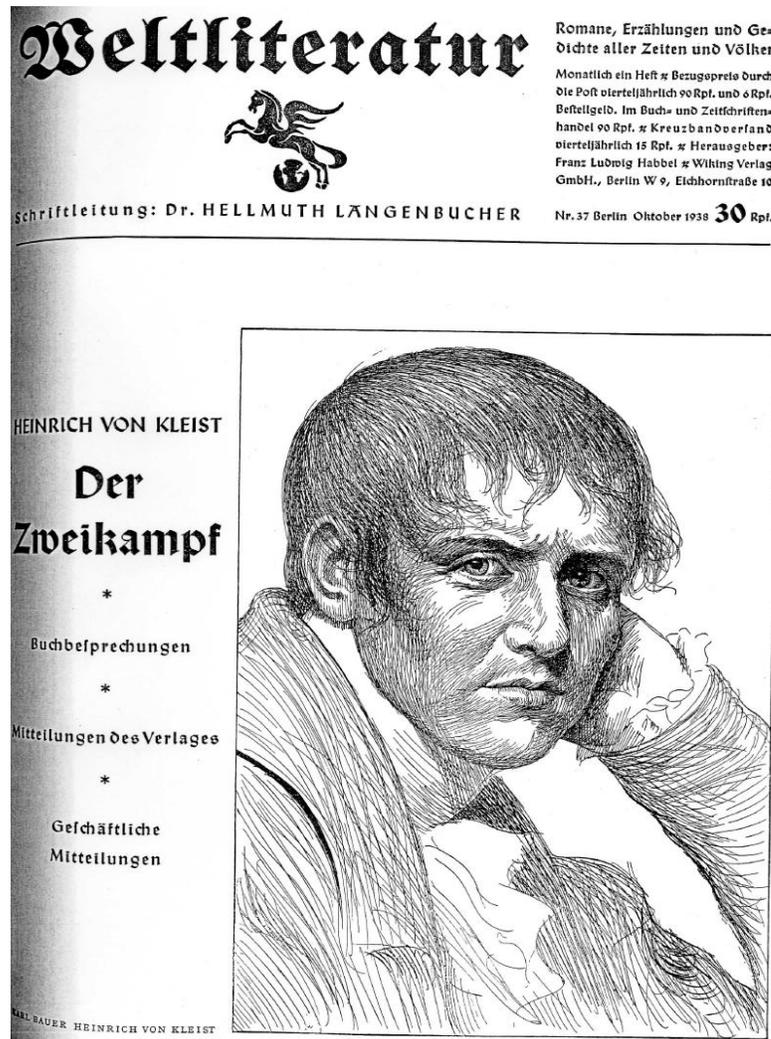

Figure 7. Heinrich von Kleist on the cover of the October 1938 issue. In observance of Kleist's birthday, his image and legacy were shaped to fit an image of the writer and journal alike.

fragment *"Es erliege der Fremdling!,"* an excerpt from Kleist's *Der Prinz von Homburg*. Goethe, on the other hand, was addressed within the specific context of the concept of *Weltliteratur*. In a short article titled *Deutschheit und Weltliteratur*, Sigmund Graff (here Leutnant Sigmund Graff) discusses perspectives on the concept of *Weltliteratur* in terms of its problematic creator. Graff's take on Goethe, and the concept the journal appears to be in constant conflict with, is a rhetorical sleight of hand, emblematic of the function of the greater journal, that is, a process of unified signification based on a string of connected ideas. Graff restated a semiotic correspondence between Goethe and the famed word while failing to offer substantial reflection on Goethe or *Weltliteratur* as an idea. In the meantime, the journal's dual featuring of Goethe and Kleist as literary subjects served to transfer literary significance between the two authors for the same intended purpose.

Graff's article begins, as so many do, with the declaration of Goethe as creator: "Weltliteratur! Goethe hat das Wort geprägt" (Graff 26). Yet, Graff poses the question of whether or not the idea that emerges from Goethe's term still bears any significance in the current age. His answer is emphatically positive: "Hat diese Goethische Auffassung heute nicht ihre Berechtigung? Ja: denn es ist deutsche Auffassung schlechthin" (Graff 26). The striking effect of this perspective is the simultaneous consideration of Goethe as the forefather of *Weltliteratur* as well as the appropriation of the same notion as something primarily national in its conception and current application. It is subtly transferred into exactly the sort of national context in which the literature of Kleist as the most German of writers is presented.

> Es ist keine Gefühlsduselei, der wir uns hingeben, sondern
> es ist die Deutschheit selbst, die wir behaupten, wenn wir

uns mitten im schwersten Entscheidungskampf unseres
Volkes zur Goethischen 'Weltliteratur' und damit zu dem
Geiste bekennen, der den Geist des anderen achtet, wo aus
ihm eine übernationale Kraft emporsteigt und damit für uns
wie für alle anderen fruchtbar wird. (Graff 26)

Essentially the argument is a self-congratulatory tautology in which *Weltliteratur* equals

a sort of essential nationalism, since the NS-propagandists turn to Goethe's *Weltliteratur*

in the midst of the war raging around them. Such a perplexing argument functions,

however, not in the logical consistency of its claim, but simply in that it draws a

conceptual connection between the name Goethe and the necessarily valuable concept of

Weltliteratur. It is essentially a means of appropriating the cultural significance of

Goethe's *Weltliteratur* while avoiding any serious confrontation with the literary concept

or with the ideas of Goethe, however ambivalent they may indeed be. Precisely this

process of meaning-making runs throughout the journal as a result of the controlled and

limited space of the world literary, as it is demonstrated by the journal as a carefully

controlled collection of *Weltliteratur* (not *Allerweltsliteratur*).

By vaguely addressing Goethe and a notion of *Weltliteratur* in close proximity to

the profoundly nationalist ideology (*Deutschheit selbst*), Graff's short article employs the

common method of signification for the journal; it is a process of signification through

mutual association. While the justification for a core Germanness in the idea of

Weltliteratur is weak, an association remains resonant in the print-medium delivery of the

ideas. The bold-ink title loudly declares a common bond through its coordinating

conjunction: *Deutschheit und Weltliteratur*. The simple proximity of these terms, joined

together as one, is argument enough to enact a sense of their conceptual union. This

239

method is employed in the same piece in order to connect Hitler and Goethe through a

indistinct definition of the concept of *Weltliteratur*:

> Adolf Hitler hat einmal das schöne Bild von dem Baum
> gebraucht, der am weitesten seine Äste nach allen Seiten
> hin ausstreckt, weil er am tiefsten im Mutterboden der
> eigenen Erde wurzelt. Dieses Bild drückt am sinnfälligsten
> aus, was wir – in Goethes Sinne – trotz Kampf und Krieg
> unter "Weltliteratur" begreifen. (Graff 26)

While Graff argues for a sort of internationalism that is, to follow the metaphor, rooted in

the fundamentally national, the true significance of his claim is simply in his drawing a

corollary between Hitler and Goethe via *Weltliteratur*. Again, this association is achieved

largely without dealing with the difficult legacy of Goethe, functioning instead purely as

a means of signification through association, or as a transfer of ideas through the

connected names which share the page.

Yet, Graff also paints a vivid picture of the *Weltliteratur* that is understood by the

creators of the journal. Using Hitler's arborous imagery of nationalism, Graff explains the

way in which *Weltliteratur* is understood as a process of branching out that appears to

grasp forth into the world, that seems to grow to great spans and reaches, but which, in an

opposing reality, is deeply rooted in the single, subjective ground of a solitary, and in this

case ethno-nationalist perspective. In a literary example of such a *Weltliteratur*, Graff

explains how national difference in literature can be overcome by embracing the solitary

perspective of its consideration:

> Wir kämpfen gegen England. Aber William Shakespeare
> wird auch noch in der wutverbissensten Phase dieses
> Kampfes für uns etwas Verehrungswürdiges bleiben, das
> wir mitbesitzen. Wir verteidigen die deutsche "Idee," die
> wir von Shakespeare haben, als unseren eigensten Besitz

genau so, wie wir den Kölner Dom und den Bamberger
Reiter verteidigen. (Graff 26)

Beyond its obvious problems, such a depiction of *Weltliteratur* is oddly insightful in its

open admission to the operative subjectivity of the *Weltliteratur* concept. The perception

of the German ownership of *Weltliteratur* (*etwas Verehrungswürdiges das wir*

mitbesitzen) echoes Johannes Scherr's similar claims decades prior to a central ownership

of the world literary, which is magnified much further in the hyper-subjectivity of the

Reich. More importantly, it also openly demonstrates a cognizance of the role of such

subjective perception in the consideration of literature as *Weltliteratur*. By defending, or

more accurately preferring "die deutsche 'Idee' von Shakespeare" over another

Shakespeare, Graff makes a rather profound statement about the status of *Weltliteratur* in

general. It is not, as Damrosch would argue decades later, an "elliptical refraction," but a

specifically one-sided approach in which the foreign is merely an illusion, its roots

remaining deeply and inescapably entangled in home soil.[128]

In his discussion of the idea and property of the world-literary Shakespeare as

NS-German, Graff essentially spells out the very relationship the journal maintains with

Goethe. In the equally "wutverbissensten Phase" of an assault on the early nineteenth-

century ideals of *Weltbürgtum*, *Weltliteratur/Die Weltliteratur* opted for a fleeting and

subjectively suitable Goethe, an idea that is as NS-German as the fiction ascribed to the

Kölner Dom or the Bamberger Reiter. The idea of Goethe in the journal is thus

---

[128] The willing one-sidedness of this fundamentally national approach directly opposes the theoretical
world literature which is described by David Damrosch. See specifically the notion of the elliptical
refraction of national literatures in the theory of world literature (Damrosch 281-284).

emblematic of the idea of *Weltliteratur* in the journal, and it is an idea that is largely visible in the graphic representation of the famed figure of German literature.

In November 1941, Goethe dawned the cover of *Die Weltliteratur* with an almost terrifying image, a portrait not of the usual neo-classical idol or the secular deity, but of a demonic master, a daunting figure, stern in his gaze and severe in his intentions.[129]
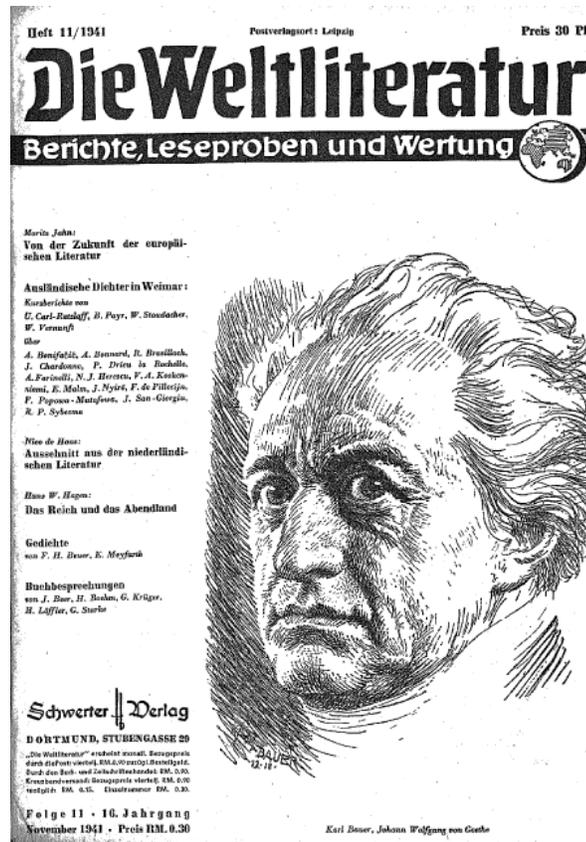
Figure 8. The cover image of the November 1941 issue portrays an increasing investment in the appropriated Goethe of the journal. Goethe's face appears severe, his features hardened, his eyes harsh, his hair blown back and his brow ruffled in a stern and menacing look of contemplation. This is the face of Goethe as he appears in the journal, a paratextual image to fit the progressively growing legacy of the journal.

---

[129] The cover image of Goethe by Karl Bauer originally appeared as the cover image of the 1927 *Der Nationale Goethe: Ein Wegweiser für unsere Tage, zusammengestellt von Ernst Strumpf*. As a precursor form of nationalist appropriation, Bauer's Goethe in *Die Weltliteratur* was far from a distant context of appearance in 1941.

Figure 9. This likeness of Goethe by the same artist (Karl Bauer) appeared over a decade before the illustration of Goethe for cover of the journal (see figure 4). This earlier depiction is also attached to the NS-political context of Bartel's biography, yet by comparison to the 1941 illustration, this early NS-Goethe appropriation appears softer than the plainly transformed severity of the later image in the journal.

As a graphic signifier for his altered function in this particular *Weltliteratur*, Goethe

appears as a startling image, rendered in the particular aesthetic styling of the artist Karl

Bauer, who also depicted Heinrich von Kleist in the journal.[130] Bauer appears to have been the artist of choice for producing the somehow fittingly NS-renderings of German literary greats. In 1932 a similar depiction of Goethe by Bauer was featured as the cover image of Adolf Bartels' nationalist love letter *Goethe der Deutsche*, in which Bartels argued for a superlative Germanness to Goethe despite the problematic ideas of cosmopolitanism and *Weltliteratur*. Comparing the 1932 Goethe by Bauer (for an NS-publication) to the 1941 Goethe by Bauer (for another NS-publication), reveals again the interpretive gravity of the journal as a sphere of *Weltliteratur* with its own aesthetic rules. As if intensified, the 1941 Goethe seems aged, hardened, and fiercely serious about his cause – a poetic Meister aus Deutschland. While the 1932 likeness is less than warming, its depiction of softer facial features and a more contemplative Goethe fails to communicate the same degree of intensity as the stern face of the great poet well within the space of *Die Weltliteratur*.

It is necessary to state once again that merely pointing to the appropriation of Goethe for reasons of NS-propaganda does not lead to a crucial discovery in itself, nor does it to attempt to provide proof for the obvious Nazism of this Nazi journal. Just as it was less than surprisingly that the editors of the journal would opt for a controlled *Weltliteratur* over an unpredictable and vast *Allerweltsliteratur*, it is surely no shock to

---

[130] Bauer made his illustration career with his productions of German literary figures. In their article *Dichter- und Zitaten-Quartett mit Bildnissen von Karl Bauer: Eine Dokumentation,* Jutta Assel and Georg Jäger explore the 1937 Quartett game of German literary figures, illustrated by Karl Bauer. In keeping with the stern appearance of his other portraits, Bauer's renderings for the game appear quite severe. The game included Lessing, Goethe, Schiller, Kleist, Eichendorff, Körner, Uhland, Grillparzer, Keller, Liliencron, Löns, and Eckart, all of whom were depicted with a sense of stern NS-authority. Around the time of these creations, Bauer also did portraits of Hitler and Goebbels and was awarded in 1938 the Goethe Medallion by Hitler for his association with National Socialism (See Assel and Jäger: *Dichter- und Zitaten-Quartett Mit Bildnissen von Karl Bauer: Eine Dokumentation*).

informed readers to conclude that Goethe, like others, appears to speak for and with the ideological interests of the creators of the journal. The historical gravity of the journal's political message often obscures other readings, leaving spectators to dwell solely on the content of the journal, and accordingly, the abuses of literature and literary history that made this possible. However, without any denial of the severity of this aspect, it is also necessary to look beyond the message of the journal, or rather, to take its sinister biases as perhaps a given in order to investigate not just what *Weltliteratur* means in this journal, but also the way in which it sets out to mean *Weltliteratur*. In doing so, it will become clear that the case of Goethe and *Weltliteratur* in this journal is unique in what it demonstrates; that the journal is not just the platform of NS-propaganda, but also a finite space of literature as a collection that openly acknowledges its subjectivity in establishing the working confines of a world of literature. If the journal operates with an internal logic, capable of appropriating and reshaping its contents to fit its message, it is essentially a collection of parts that work together in the service of a central fiction. In this case, the idea in question is ideology, but the way in which it sets about to achieve this end is largely through the same methods with which other collections create their own core narratives, their worldness.

Text, Image, Context

In August 1940, another crucial piece of English cultural history was featured in Die *Weltliteratur*, a fragment image from the Tapestry of Bayeux underscored with the title/description *Wilhelm der Erorberer landet in England*. In his article on *Deutschheit*

245

und Weltliteratur, Graff argued for the right to defend the NS-German idea of Shakespeare and thus divulged the contours of literary possibility for the works presented within the journal. In precisely such terms, the image of the medieval tapestry is not intended to document the pivotal 1066 battle that changed European history; it is a display of a restructured textual significance for the context of the current campaign against the English. The same summer months in which this issue appeared marked the beginning of the so-called *Battle of Britain* and what would later result in the September Blitz offensive that devastated London. The tapestry fragment depicts five men unloading horses from a fleet of long ships. The visible Latin text of the background narrates the landing of Norman soldiers on English soil – *hic exuent caballi de navibus* (the "horses leave the ships"). As a threatening homage to the war events occurring or about to occur around the publication of this issue, the image, and with it the historical context, is set against the British.

In their titles alone, the featured pieces of the issue point to their invariant significance for the cause against England and the pending penetration of English soil through a series of historical and literary accounts of similar actions in history: *Der Sprung über den Kanal*, by Gaius Julius Cesar concerning the Roman invasion of Britain in 55 BCE, *Der Sieg des Festlandes* by R.H Hodgkin on the battle of Hastings, as well as *Die Schlacht von Hastings* (*aus der Ballade von Tailleser*) by Ludwig Uhland, and finally the least subtle of the titles, *"Ich fasse dich, England!"* by Karl Alexander von Müller. These titles are introduced with a short editorial comment – *Der Kampf um die britischen Inseln* – in order to spell out directly the matter at hand.

> Währen England in dem Krieg, den es 1939 leichtfertig und vermessen vom Zaun brach, mit den ausgeklügelten Methoden des Fernkampfes und der Blockade siegen zu können hoffte, steht es nun selbst vor dem Schicksal, das es so oft in seiner Geschichte anderen Völkern bereitet hat. Fast immer war es in der günstigen Lage, von seiner Insel wie von einer uneinnehmbaren Festung aus operieren zu können. Umsomehr denken wir jetzt an die wenigen ereignisreichen Daten der Weltgeschichte, in denen siegreiche Feinde den Boden Englands betraten. (Kaiser 141)

The purpose of the texts of the issue, as well as the cover image, is to represent that NS-German vision of the coming invasion by appropriating the fabula of past literary and historical events. To this end, each text and image sings a single but crucial part of the greater chorus line.

The example of the August 1940 issue clearly illustrates the interaction between text, text-fragment, and image, that runs throughout the journal, an interaction that is fully facilitated by instituting a complete control over the storage space of *Weltliteratur* so that the interpretive potential of the text is always determined by the sum of the collective space in which it appears. The image of the fragmentary tapestry of Bayeux is a clear refraction of the historical context, an act of framing and excerpting a text-image for an intentionally subjective function. The narrative quality of the Tapestry appears to speak from the distance of a millennium in order to inform the present day. In order to function as literary text while fulfilling the ideological function, the interpretive space of these accounts must be already well-enough established by the journal itself. As a collection of seemingly invariant works of ideology, the medium of the periodical becomes a text in itself, amounting to a critical space that affects the interpretive potential

of each presented work. The journal as a medium thus acts, to borrow from Emily Apter,

as a "translation zone" of sorts, in this case defining the epistemological contours of its

subjects and manipulating their range of information transfer (Apter 6). Once hosted by

the print-media contours of the journal's space, the interpretive range of its literary-image

features become constrained to the point that the Latin description of horses docking for a

battle nearly a thousand years in the past, comes to endow the landing of V-2 rockets

with a degree of literariness.

Figure 10. The cover of the August 1940 issue features the illustration and text from the Tapestry of Bayeux in a textual transfer to the current events of the war. Here the image and paratextual script become an essential narrative element to the issue and greater fiction of the journal as a whole.

In both word and image, the figure of Goethe occupies a position within the journal that compares to the image of the Bayeux Tapestry and to many others within the journal. It is a relationship in which the literary significance, the semiotic capabilities, and the general meaning of the writer and the written are fundamentally shaped by the frame in which they appear, a collection of parts working as a whole, a network of associated sources each with a similar history, a world unto itself. Through a spatial-textual transfer, a sort of signification through proximity, Goethe and others become advocates for the world fantasy of the journal. The invaluable cultural capital of Goethe's name becomes grafted to the greater text that emerges from the spatial frame. By mere presence in the journal, it appears irrelevant that the works and ideas of Goethe are, at very least, anachronisms forcibly wedged between NS-writers. These works may even disrupt the otherwise invariant features of the journal, but the company of the canonical writer amidst the non-elective affinities of the NS-crowd and their endorsed "world" literary counterparts – the less than shocking Knut Hamsun, Robert Brasillach, or Benito Mussolini, for example – functions as an inadvertent endorsement of Goethe, and in turn, as an endorsement from Goethe for the works, writers, and opinions that surround him in the collected finitude of the journal's material borders.

The semiotic correspondence that is established between images and texts, the same that implies a common bond between Goethe and the world of the journal, is performed not simply as the matter of propaganda that it is, but rather also as a textual event that is critical for all practices of *Weltliteratur* in the form of collections. *Weltliteratur* is practiced as a process of structural distinction between a collected,

249

interconnected group of texts and the incomprehensible totality that surrounds them. But the delineation of this single grouping against the rest, particularly in its classification as "world," produces a new interpretive sphere, a novel literary world in which the limitation and possibility of each work appears in concert with the other parts of the collection, all subject to the aesthetic laws of the central collection. In the clear context of propaganda, such a world and its resulting textual influence is conspicuous, but much of the plainly observable processes of literary signification are precisely those which are to be found in any set assemblage of *the* world of literature.

A mere few months after *Die Weltliteratur* focused on the invasion of England, Goethe was again enlisted in the periodical and again in the context of Great Britain and its literary history. In the midst of reciprocal air raids between the Luftwaffe and the RAF, the December 1940 issue turned its attention to the literary cause of a contemporary matter of importance for the war and with similar text-image relations and a special appearance by Goethe. The issue begins with a cover image of an antique map of Ireland. Just to the east of the island across the Irish Sea, the map features a bit of land, a meaningful surplus of another country. While it may seem to be mere happenstance that it is visible at all, the geographic excess of the nation to the east of Ireland is not the collateral geography in a view intended solely for Ireland. Rather, this imagery is a highly deliberate addition of Wales, the Isle of Man, and Scotland as the decidedly Celtic areas of Great Britain. However, the positive imagery of the Celtic regions is arguably secondary to the territory that is not featured, that is, the intentional absence of the English. As it is later plainly expressed, the topical focus of this December 1940 issue is

Celtic literature; yet, the broader function of the issue, and with it its assemblage of texts, images, and contributors, is an attempt to form an imagined national literature in the specific contrast to the English enemy. And yet, the literary significance of this seemingly Anglo-themed issue, as well as its ethno-political intentions, is intertwined with an imaginary Goethe and an imaginary German literature, whose cultural authority is achieved and transferred to the intended cause through a series of media relays via layout, paratexts, text-image relations, and a general manipulation of an otherwise dominant literary history – aspects which are advanced through the world-context and the material limits of the journal as a practiced *Weltliteratur*.

The objective of the issue is revealed almost immediately in the editorial *Irland, die Hochburg keltischen Seelentums*, in which the author, Werner Deubel, describes a connection between the Irish and the Germans through a supposed mutual struggle against the English. Although he makes an attempt to historicize the relationship between the Germans and Irish, particularly in the context of National Socialism, Deubel's argument consists largely of the attempt to divide the usual cultural homogeneity of Great Britain, as well as the assertion that there exists a fundamental difference between the Irish and English based essentially on a difference in race.[131] Deubel's predictable racial division between the Irish and English is an attempt to paint the Irish as a pure race against the English as an "entartete Rasse." In establishing this racial dichotomy, the article drives toward another division that goes beyond the mutual political conflict with

---

[131] Deubel attempts to bring about historical context in the Irish-German bond by noting the events of World War I in which Germans officials attempted to deliver stolen weapons to Sinn Fein activists via Sir Roger Casement who was caught in the scheme and subsequently executed by the English. The episode is used to demonstrate a previous bond that is thought to be continued in the view of National Socialism (Deubel 233).

England, establishing ultimately an alleged bond between the Irish and NS-Germany based on the shared positions in a common struggle for *Geist* and *Seele*. Yet the rhetoric of such a division is transparent in its connection to the war with England. Like the issue as a whole, the editorial appears simply as an expression of contempt for the English with the simultaneous endeavor to paint the Irish as a potential ally to the readership of the journal.

The message of this particular propaganda may obscure the crucial element of the function and significance of the journal, namely that the political message is dependent on the literary medium and its purpose for the war. The creation of an ideologically sound world is dependent on the selection of chosen fragments of translated texts which are presented together to serve as a whole. The processes of literary influence that occur within the closed space, and the interpretive vacuum of a limited world of literature, are the result of the semiotic cooperation between the composed textual parts of the greater collection. It is as such that a literary narrative of the fantasized world can be created in which war alliances are built on Celtic literature in German translation.

Deubel's article introduces the issue as an analysis of Celtic literature. As a pseudo-inquiry into to the literary history of Celtic letters in Europe, the article briefly discusses the influence of such literature on the medieval literary tradition, stressing the naturally poetic soul of the Celts as a *Volk* and the unjust appropriation of such literature by the English (Deubel 234). Yet, in his remarks on Celtic letters, Deubel also reveals the internal logic of the journal as a collection of texts which produces a world of literature with its own aesthetic laws and standardized constraints for literary potential. He refers to

the "erhabene Schwermut der spätkeltischen Volksdichtung," which is demonstrated by the parenthetically articulated author-amalgam, "Macpherson-Ossian." There is hardly a more infamous case of translation fiction (or forgery) in the history of European literature; yet, in the contextual vacuum of the journal, *Ossian* is restored to a monumental piece of Celtic literature. Without the slightest allusion to the complex history of the Ossian case, Deubel refers to this feature of Celtic letters as an integral aspect of the literary propaganda for the Irish-German connection against the English.

In 1940, the originality of Ossian was a well-known affair. It is highly doubtful that Deubel, as well as the other creators of the journal, and even a large portion of its readership were unaware that this chosen piece of exemplary Celtic literature was indeed the most widely recognized case of pseudotranslation. And yet, the editorial simply used it for its purpose as an illustration of "spätkeltische Volksdichtung" and a particular point of intersection with German literary history. But again, it is necessary to stress the perhaps predictable nature of such an observation. It must be repeated that it is hardly surprising that such an instrument of NS-propaganda would attempt to rewrite even a well-known literary history for its own gain. And yet, it is not simply *that* the journal sets about to present the imagined Celtic Bard as viewed over a century prior and without knowledge of Macpherson's part, but *the way in which* it does so. In its manipulation of this major event in literary history, the journal demonstrates a fundamental characteristic of its general function by presenting Goethe as an agent of this act of literary manipulation, which, in turn, affects the figure of Goethe as well. It is therefore important, not simply to demonstrate that in addition to the rest of history, the Nazis were

also grossly wrong about *Ossian*, but that the mechanics of this particular act of appropriation may provide a specifically telling example of the way in which literary meaning is transferred within the boundaries of *Weltliteratur* as a collection of texts with its own logic, rules, and properties of intersemiotic translation.

The particular *Weltliteratur* of this journal allows (or requires) a specific reading of Ossian. To observe the way in which this *Ossian* functions is to recognize that its legitimacy as an alternative literary history, and in turn its greater political relevance, is dependent on the transfer of cultural value and literary knowledge from Goethe as a figure of cultural significance. In the December 1940 issue of *Die Weltliteratur*, the claims to a kinship with Celtic literature, and thus with the Irish in a struggle against Anglo-hegemony, are achieved through a subtle transfer of meaning in which another fictional Goethe lends legitimacy to a world fiction through a material-semiotic proximity to the political claims and highly forced literary interpretations which are metonymically present in the neighboring text, images, and contributor names. Within the material confines of the journal's layout, the figure Goethe acts as an essential element of paratextual signification in which other fictions, the absolute appropriation of this Ossian reading (for the sake of potential allies), is ordained with a degree of credibility simply through association with the trusted cultural-literary value as an image of the central figure of German letters.

In order for the Goethe of the journal to endorse the political fiction at work in the issue, it is essential that the collected texts of the journal be considered as interrelated elements of the same central narrative of this *Weltliteratur*. The function of Goethe in this

issue, as in the journal as a whole, is fully intertwined with the operative notion of totality that is created by the journal as a print medium. Through the presentation of a multitude of texts on each page, the layers of text, image, and commentary produce a world whole as an assemblage of interwoven parts. As a multitude of texts, this literary unit (this *Weltliteratur*) is always a matter of the paratexts that accompany any of its presented ideas, and it is as an act of paratextual transfer that Goethe comes to sanction not just an idea of Ossian in European literary history, but also a general matter of ethno-nationalist propaganda.

It may be necessary to clarify what is meant by "paratext" in the context of the journal, since the term itself implies a textual element that accompanies a central or main text of sorts, whereas the journal, or any collection for that matter, is always a multitude of texts at once, which complicates such a relationship in the distinction between central and accompanying texts. Gérard Genette calls paratexts "those liminal devices and conventions, both within and outside the book, that form part of the complex mediation between book, author, publisher, and reader: titles, forewords, epigraphs, and publishers' jacket copy are part of a book's private and public history" (Genette i). In the context of a collection, the liminality of the paratext is not in relation to any single text but in relation to myriad texts at once, whose positions are always equally paratextual when viewed as a whole. Although there remain subtle degrees of variation, for example in the epigrams to specific texts or the titles of single pieces, the larger constellation of texts and images in the journal as a collection remains paratextual. An epigram commences Deubel's editorial in the form of a Celtic aphorism on the subject of oppression by the English. The

following "main" text is surrounded by Celtic illustrations which are included to demonstrate a similarity between ancient Celtic engravings with ancient Germanic engravings. With illustrations of this sort, the layout of the print medium presents a host of texts within the single view of the page, or as a series of connected texts throughout the journal. The textual variety includes images, scripts, as well as literary fragments and criticism. Individually, each of these texts may have an altogether different interpretive sovereignty; however, the positioning within the larger fabric of the *Welt*-constellation of the journal binds them to the invariant central text that is the progressive creation of the journal.

Actual Celtic literature takes the form of a small selection of texts which follow Deubel's introduction. Within the view of the illustrations, a bold print title declares the commencement of literature in layers: "Aus dem Ossian," followed by the lighter print and smaller font, "von James Macpherson," concluding below this with another layer of authorship, this time in italics – "Goethes Uebertragung der Lieder von Selma." Communicating three layers of authorship and translation, the layout of the introductory remarks surrounding the fragment presents an amalgam of literary authority combining Ossian, Macpherson, and, of course, Goethe. These paratextual directives commence the following fragment with a sense of ambiguous authorship and translation, resulting in a sort of hyper-visibility of author and translator to which the translated text appears secondary. Goethe's translated *Ossian* makes up three quarters of the full page and is halted by a black line signifying its completion. Beyond this abrupt textual border, another fragment of Celtic literature begins, a poem titled *Unser Erbe*. But this selection

256

appears without any listed authorship, which is a stark contrast to the dominating

announcement of authorship visible in the neighboring Ossian-Macpherson-Goethe trio.

In a footnote it is explained that the poem is taken from a collection of German

translations – "Die älteste Lyrik der grünen Insel."[132] The layout thus prefigures a reading

by directing the way in which the concept of textual authority is to be understood.

Why would the *Ossian* fragment be so heavily adorned with paratextual indicators

of its mediation in authorship and translation while neighboring works, also written and

translated, would appear simply as anonymous German-language echoes of Celtic

literature? The paratextual hyper-presence that accompanies *Ossian* should be credited to

the literary celebrity of Goethe, which is amplified by the lack of anything comparable in

the other titles of this issue. But stressing Goethe's involvement with *Ossian* presents

something of a challenge for a journal that endeavors to provide an example of the *Geist*

of the Celtic *Volk* if its means of cultural mediation is achieved only through a fragment

of translated poetry. Moreover, the translated text selected to fulfill this function appears

as a mere afterthought to the authorities of its textual conveyance through translation and

publication within the specific confines of *Die Weltliteratur*. As a supposedly emblematic

fragment of Celtic literature, this bit of Ossian fiction merely refers back to an equally

fictional Goethe.

---

[132] Although no author is listed, *Die älteste Lyrik der grünen Insel* was a 1923 volume of Irish poetry in German translation. Its editor, and the translator of the poem featured in the journal, was Julius Porkoný. Porkoný was an expert of Celtic language and literature and an avid supporter of Irish nationalism. Although he was raised as a Catholic in Austria, served in WWI, and was himself a German nationalist, Porkoný was stripped of his academic appointment as the chair of Celtic Philology at Berlin in 1933 after it was revealed that he was ancestrally Jewish and he fell victim to the newly enacted race laws (O'Dochartaigh 87). Through connections, Porkoný was able to flee to from Germany in 1938 and escape the darkest years of the regime by living abroad. Such biographic details may have been omitted to avoid publicizing the journal's dependence on a scholar who was made *persona non grata* by precisely the forces at work in the journal.

Aus dem Ossian

von *JAMES MACPHERSON*

Goethes Uebertragung der Lieder von Selma

„Stern der dämmernden Nacht, schön funkelst du im Westen, hebst dein strahlend Haupt aus deiner Wolke, wandelst stattlich deinen Hügel hin. Wonach blickst du auf die Heide? Die stürmenden Winde haben sich gelegt; von ferne kommt des Gießbachs Murmeln; rauschende Wellen spielen am Felsen ferne; das Gesumme der Abendfliegen schwärmt übers Feld. Wonach siehst du, schönes Licht? Aber du lächelst und gehst; freudig umgeben dich die Wellen, und baden dein liebliches Haar. Lebe wohl, ruhiger Strahl. Erscheine, du herrliches Licht von Ossians Seele!

„Und es erscheint in seiner Kraft. Ich sehe meine geschiedenen Freunde, sie sammeln sich auf Lora, wie in den Tagen, die vorüber sind — Fingal kommt wie eine feuchte Nebelsäule; um ihn sind seine Helden, und siehe! die Barden des Gesanges: Grauer Ullin! Stattlicher Ryno! Alpin, lieblicher Sänger! und du, sanftklagende Minona! — Wie verändert seid ihr, meine Freunde, seit den festlichen Tagen auf Selma, da wir buhlten um die Ehre des Gesanges, wie Frühlingslüfte den Hügel hin wechselnd beugen das schwachlispelnde Gras.

„Da trat Minona hervor in ihrer Schönheit, mit niedergeschlagenem Blick und tränenvollem Auge; schwer floß ihr Haar im unstäten Winde, der von dem Hügel her stieß. — Düster ward's in der Seele der Helden, als sie die liebliche Stimme erhob; denn oft hatten sie das Grab Salgars gesehen, oft die finstere Wohnung der weißen Colma. Colma, verlassen auf dem Hügel mit der harmonischen Stimme; Salgar versprach zu kommen; aber ringsum zog sich die Nacht. Höret Colmas Stimme, da sie auf dem Hügel allein saß.

Colma.

„Es ist Nacht! — ich bin allein, verloren auf dem stürmischen Hügel. Der Wind saust im Gebirge. Der Strom heult den Felsen hinab. Keine Hütte schützt mich vor dem Regen, mich Verlaßne auf dem stürmischen Hügel.

„Tritt, o Mond, aus deinen Wolken! erscheint, Sterne der Nacht! Leite mich irgend ein Strahl zu dem Orte, wo meine Liebe ruht, von den Beschwerden der Jagd, sein Bogen neben ihm abgespannt, seine Hunde schnobend um ihn! hier muß ich sitzen allein auf dem Felsen des verwachsenen Stromes. Der Strom und der Sturm saust, ich höre nicht die Stimme meines Geliebten.

„Warum zaudert mein Salgar? Hat er sein Wort vergessen? — Da ist der Fels und der Baum, und hier der rauschende Strom! Mit einbrechender Nacht versprachst du hier zu sein; ach! wohin hat sich mein Salgar verirrt? Mit dir wollt' ich fliehen, verlassen Vater und Bruder! die Stolzen! Lange sind unsere Geschlechter Feinde, aber wir sind keine Feinde, o Salgar!

„Schweig eine Weile, o Wind! still eine kleine Weile, o Strom! daß meine Stimme klinge durchs Thal, daß mein Wanderer mich höre. Salgar! ich bin's, die ruft! Hier ist der Baum und der Fels! Salgar! mein Lieber! hier bin ich; warum zauderst du zu kommen?

„Sieh der Mond erscheint, die Flut glänzt im Tale, die Felsen stehen grau, den Hügel hinauf; aber ich seh' ihn nicht auf der Höhe, seine Hunde vor ihm her verkündigen nicht seine Ankunft. Hier muß ich sitzen allein.

„Aber wer sind, die dort unten liegen auf der Heide? — Mein Geliebter? Mein Bruder? — Redet, o meine Freunde!

Sie antworten nicht. Wie geängstet ist meine Seele! — Ach, sie sind tot! Ihre Schwerter rot vom Gefechte! O mein Bruder, mein Bruder! warum hast du meinen Salgar erschlagen? O mein Salgar! warum hast du meinen Bruder erschlagen? Ihr wart mir beide so lieb! O du warst schön an dem Hügel unter Tausenden! Er war schrecklich in der Schlacht! Antwortet mir! hört meine Stimme, meine Geliebten! Aber ach! sie sind stumm! stumm auf ewig! kalt, wie die Erde, ist ihr Busen!

„O von dem Felsen des Hügels, von dem Gipfel des stürmenden Berges, redet, Geister der Toten! redet, mir soll es nicht grausen! — Wohin seid ihr zur Ruhe gegangen? In welcher Gruft des Gebirges soll ich euch finden! — Keine schwache Stimme vernehme ich im Winde, keine wehende Antwort im Sturme des Hügels.

„Ich sitze in meinem Jammer, ich harre auf den Morgen in meinen Tränen. Wühlet das Grab, ihr Freunde der Toten, aber schließt es nicht, bis ich komme. Mein Leben schwindet wie ein Traum, wie sollt' ich zurück bleiben. Hier will ich wohnen mit meinen Freunden, an dem Strome

---

Unser Erbe

Wir sind ein Volk von Kämpfern aus königlichem Blut.
Es fochten unsre Ahnen mit ungebrochnem Mut;
Was alte Mären sangen, sie haben es vollbracht:
In leuchtend hehren Taten getrotzt der Übermacht.

Die Herzen, die gebrochen in grenzenlosem Leid,
Die Hände, die gestritten den alten, harten Streit,
Sie haben nicht vergebens gekämpft in blut'ger Wehr:
Der Enkel Haupt, es beugt sich dem Joche nimmermehr.

Noch schirmen ihre Schwerter die Scholle unentwegt,
Die ihrer Väter Asche in ihrem Schoße trägt;
Noch glühen ihre Herzen in lodernd heißem Brand,
Erfüllt von heil'gem Zorne im Kampf fürs Vaterland.

Kein frevler Feind soll jemals den Boden noch entweihn;
Sind doch von Blut und Tränen gedüngt die Fluren sein;
Kein Schandpreis schlechten Friedens uns je entreißen
    mag
Das Erbe unsrer Väter von heut zum jüngsten Tag!

Aus dem Buch „Die älteste Lyrik der grünen Insel", Max Niemeyer Verlag, Halle S.

235

Figure 11. Fragments of "Celtic" literature in the December 1940 issue of *Die Weltliteratur*. The Ossian excerpt is heavily annotated with marks of authorship and of celebrity translation while the following poem appears without such commentary, only a footnote suggesting its original appearance in an anthology of Irish poetry.

The editors of the journal were hardly acting arbitrarily when they made their decision to publish Goethe's translation of Ossian in order to fulfill their literary task for the representation of Celtic literature. This selection occurred among a backdrop of alternative selections, as there were several German translations of Ossian by the mid-nineteenth century, including translations by largely significant literary figures, such as Herder and Lenz, whose cultural legacies might have been more easily manipulated to appear in step with the function of the journal.[133] The undeniable value of the figure of Goethe in German literature and cultural history preempts his role as translator. The inter-lingual mediation thus sanctifies the literary value of the translated simply in that it is translated by Goethe. As such, the texts which come into literary contact with and through Goethe become subject to a process of national-literary approval. By sheer mediation through Goethe, Ossian, Macpherson, an abstract notion of Celtic literature as a whole is deemed worthy of entry into the highly specific sphere of NS-German letters that is this collection of *Weltliteratur*. This act of literary emergence requires a textual hierarchy that is achieved at the basic paratextual level and played out as a matter of material appearance in the form of the journal as a print medium, dependent on the use of headings, scripts, and other paratextual elements that stress translator visibility and its larger intentions for a world of literature.

---

[133] Alternative translations of Ossian into German are discussed in *Homer des Nordens und Mutter der Romantik*: *James Machpherson's Ossian und seine Rezeption in der deutschsprachigen Literatur,* Howard Gaskill and Wolf Gerhard Schmidt. The following contemporary translations are listed: *Darthula, ein Gedicht Ossians – anonyme deutsche Erstübersetzung* (1766); *Carthon von Michael Denis* (1768); *Die Gesänge von Selma von Goethe* (1771); *Ossian für Frauenzimmer* (1775); *Auszüge aus Fingal* von Micahel Reinhold Lenz (1775-1776); *Karrikthura. Probe einer neuen Übersetzung Ossian* von Gottfried August Berger (1779); *Ossian Übersetzungen für Volkslieder* von Johann Gottfried Herder (1779); *Berrathon* von Freidrich Leopold Graf zu Stolberg (1806); *Temora. Siebter Gesang* von Christian Wilhelm Ahlwardt (1807).

Of course, the subject of Goethe, Ossian, and national-literary emergence is not strictly a matter of paratextual framing in the journal, nor is it limited to the solely positive signifiers of paratextuality in the form of printed directives like title and image. A key feature of this late Ossian fiction also stems from the profound contextual silence, the lack of commentary on the literary history of *Ossian*. In *Die Weltliteratur* there is no mention of *Ossian* as the most widely known synonym for pseudotranslation or literary forgery. And yet, the lack of commentary amplifies the underlying subjectivity of this particular textual appearance. It is the erasure of Macpherson's creation and of his translation as forgery through which a new context is created. *Die Weltliteratur* repositions the link between the source and target text by manipulating first and foremost the role of the translator. This process of textual repositioning is also the result of the control over the collected works of *Weltliteratur*. In its decisive break from *Allerweltsliteratur*, the totality of texts in the journal no longer contains the background of the counterfeit bard who duped eighteenth-century intellectuals with their own desires. Instead, in the isolated space of a new literary world, this fiction is born again, validated by an equally fictional image of Goethe, and used to speak for an alliance, literary and otherwise, in the NS-German war effort.

Goethe's relationship with Macpherson's Ossian most likely began in 1769 when he encountered the double volume *Works of Ossian, The Son of Fingal* in the library of his father (Niggl 30). During the correspondence between Herder and young Goethe, Herder encouraged Goethe to translate *Ossian*. Goethe took Herder's advice, producing a translation of a fragment from the Temora section of the seventh book (Niggl 31). Goethe

worked on this 1771 translation specifically as the single Gaelic "original" to be shared in publication by Macpherson (ibid. 31; Goethe 1.1: 843). In 1771 he also translated the *Songs of Selma*, this time from English, which he later sent to Herder for evaluation. After making minor alterations to his first version of the *Songs of Selma*, Goethe included his translations as a decisive narrative component to his 1774 *Die Leiden des jungen Werther*. The role of *Ossian* in Goethe's breakthrough epistolary novel is essential, offering a narrative parallel to Werther's demise. As Werther's state worsens, he drifts from the classic bard Homer to the Gaelic bard Ossian, his passionate alliance with Ossian coinciding with his death. In the story, Werther himself is the translator of Ossian and his rendering of the sentimental text is a transfer of voice in which Werther speaks his emotional turmoil with the voice of Ossian as he has translated him and in expression of his (Werther's) innermost melancholy.

And yet a striking detail of Goethe's translation of Ossian in *Die Weltliteratur* is that there is no mention of Werther or the translation as an integral part of the text, which is noteworthy indeed considering it is not Goethe's 1771 translation, but his 1774 version (precisely the Werther revision) that makes up the critical fragment of Celtic letters in this special issue of the journal.[134] In an act of contextual displacement, the voice of Goethe's 1774 *Ossian* is moved from the perspective of the fictional Werther within the narrative to the words of an ambiguous, if not seemingly real Celtic bard whose soulful poetry could be used to bind the people of modern-day Ireland to the followers of National Socialism in a mutual effort against alleged English tyranny. The journal

---

[134] John Hennig presents a detailed comparison of the Werther version and Goethe's 1771 initial translation in which the changes in translation between the versions is emphasized (Hennig 77-87).

dismisses the fictional Werther in place of a fictional Goethe, transferring the voice back to the translator while denying the absence of the real creator and the great literary fiction that underlies its history.

In his editorial, Deubel cites the effect of *Ossian* on German literature, particularly on the *Sturm und Drang* movement and on Goethe.[135] Yet the details of this influence are not mentioned. *Ossian* is presented as an integral piece of *German* literature and Goethe's oeuvre without discussing either aspect in detail. Instead of commenting on Werther, Deubel simply cites an indistinct association with Goethe. Similar to the function of Goethe throughout the journal, such an Ossian functions equally as a metonym for a fantasy of internationalism in letters, this time as a projection of the domestic authorities of German literature. In presenting *Ossian* in metonymic signification, the contours of Goethe's cultural legacy become pliable – the figure of Goethe is freely molded to fit the journal without dealing in detail with specifics of his work. What is left is an abstraction of Goethe as a force of literary meaning, which, although largely outside of literature itself, becomes a formative medium for all that is to be considered literary in its midst.

The appearance of Goethe's translation of Ossian in *Die Weltliteratur* is a clear example of the way in which the space of the collection dominates the interpretive potential of the literary content by defining and controlling its potential for signification. In the journal, Goethe's *Ossian* is presented as a quotation; each stanza begins with

---

[135] Deubel writes: "entsinnen wir uns der blitzartig zündenden Wirkung und ungeheuren Seelenerschütterung, die von der erhabenen Schwermut der spätkeltischen Volksdichtung (Ossian-Macpherson) auf den deutschen 'Sturm und Drang,' insonderheit auf Goethe ausging" (Deubel 234).

quotation marks as a reiteration of this reproduced speech act.[136] Quotation marks do not

appear in other published versions of Goethe's *Lieder der Selma*, nor are quotation marks

employed in the presentation of other literary excerpts in the journal. Therefore, it is

unnecessary and redundant for the literary journal to present the translations with

quotation marks after already going to such lengths to provide evidence of its other

modes of textual mediation via Ossian, Macpherson, and Goethe at once.

The result of this arguably calculated addition to the text is an emphasis on its

displacement. The dominant mode of its textuality is its very movement into this specific

space of *Weltliteratur*, the quotation marks signifying the act of both an interlingual and

intersemiotic translation. The quotation marks also eliminate the traces of past textual

events; they erase the fictional voice of Werther and disrupt the "original" voice of

Ossian in order to signify instead the mediation via Goethe and the new political fiction

this entails. Consequently, the quotation marks surrounding Goethe's translation of

Ossian do not perform the communication of direct speech, but the act of communication

itself within the highly controlled world space of the collection. As was the case with the

marks in Scherr's *Bildersaal*, the quotation marks accompanying the fragments in the

journal demonstrate what Derrida described as a break or a cut from one context to the

next. In the journal, the signification of Ossian's quotedness occurs through marking its

cut as a statement of approval for the fragment, creating a sense of performed belonging

within the collected *Weltliteratur*. It is the cut that stresses its fundamental difference

---

[136] Strangely, the quotation marks of this particular passage are left incomplete. The selection begins with quotation marks but the concluding marks are absent. It should be assumed, however, that this omission is typographical error or other oversight.

from *Allerweltsliteratur*. Yet the agency of this cutting is awarded to Goethe. Accordingly, the resulting function of this text within the journal is not a matter of the imagined Celtic bard, but about stressing how he came to speak German and rally support for a distant political cause.

In *Weltliteratur/Die Weltliteratur* it may be difficult to see the forest between the trees. It is not easy to approach a matter as sensitive and blatantly subjective as NS-propaganda without losing sight of anything other than that same NS-propaganda; it is difficult to discuss Goethe without defaulting to a number of literary historical constants; or to discuss the problematic and widely know case of pseudotranslation in Ossian while merely gleaming the surface of the rich history of European literary relations that made the projected fantasies of a literary past become a real existing poetic corpus. Yet, it remains necessary to look beyond these major moments in literary scholarship in order to comprehend the valuable lesson of this unusual journal and its unexpected lesson for the contested idea of literary wholeness. The significance of this journal for the concept of *Weltliteratur* is mostly overshadowed by the magnitude of its contents and the obvious slant that its presentation employs; however, it is precisely in these matters that a true contribution to the concept of *Weltliteratur* may be extracted from the journal. When we read the NS-periodical, we are not simply reading a warped vision of *Weltliteratur*, but *Weltliteratur* itself – the practice of *Weltliteratur* as a collection of texts, images, and criticism always involves a series of rules and an internal logic that distinguishes its boundaries, its formal laws of collecting, from the otherwise meaningless totality of the world that surrounds it. It is always fundamentally about the difference between

264

Weltliteratur and *Allerweltsliteratur*. This distinction is necessarily inherent in every collection of texts as a practiced *Weltliteratur*, but it is articulated by the hyper-subjective journal as an instrument of ideology. Instead of dismissing the journal as mere propaganda (even though it is indeed that without disputing its horrid and real context), the extent of this subjectivity should not be viewed as grounds for pure dismissal, but as a control in the comparative view of other collections. This practice of *Weltliteratur* differs in the content of its message and the degree to which it is achieved by its practitioners, but its mechanics are not dissimilar to those in other manifestations of practiced *Weltliteratur*. This collection should therefore be viewed as a unique example of *Weltliteratur* in which the practices are hyper-visible, the intentions are clear, and the effects traceable.

The example of Goethe in the journal, particularly within the context of Ossian, is an exemplary case for the potential of a single literary figure or a single text as it is framed within and fully dependent on a finite collection of world literature, a *Weltliteratur* that is not *Allerweltsliteratur*. Goethe simply represents what is at stake throughout the journal and throughout other collections of *Weltliteratur* which equally create their world totality in opposition to the totality that surrounds it. The collection functions with an internal logic of textual organization that controls not simply what is available (and thus capable of being literature), but also the aesthetic and epistemological contours of those very literary texts. As such, Goethe appears as a figure that is shaped by the world frame, as well as a formative force in shaping others in his paratextual midst. If the whole is the sum of its parts, the collection of *Weltliteratur* as a semblance of a world

whole is dependent not simply on the fact that the texts form an assemblage, but also on the visible proximity of the multiple texts in the shared pages of the journal. Within this world of literature, both Goethe and *Ossian* take on meanings that are produced by the frame in which they appear; they become agents of this meaning themselves and they too function to communicate a similar degree of literariness to their surroundings. *Weltliteratur/Die Weltliteratur* makes transparent the transfer of literary knowledge that occurs between texts within the controlled space of a delineated world of literature, but with this clear example, it is possible to look to other collections in order to identify similar Goethes and Ossians, paratextually bound in the service of an entirely different *Weltliteratur* altogether.

World Literature and the Digital Market
Chapter Five

> The frontiers of a book are never clear-cut; beyond the title, the first lines, and the last full stop, beyond its internal configuration and its autonomous form, it is caught up in a system of references to other books, other texts, other sentences: it is a node within a network. And this network of references is not the same in the case of a mathematical treatise, a textual commentary, a historical account, and an episode in a novel cycle; the unity of the book, even in the sense of a group of relations, cannot be regarded as identical in each case. The book is not simply the object that one holds in one's hands; and it cannot remain within the little parallelepiped that contains it: its unity is variable and relative (23).

-Michel Foucault

Although both collections are wildly different in the qualitative depiction of a world and its literature, both *Bildersaal der Weltliteratur* and the Nazi periodical *Weltliteratur/Die Weltliteratur* share a common bond; they both paradoxically succeed at a task which is fundamentally impossible. They present *Weltliteratur*. In a sense, Johannes Scheer was successful in producing his *Gesamtbild des dichterischen Schaffens* with all of its media compression, genre neglect, and willful dismissal of countless literatures on a grand scale. In a way, the NS-journal achieved in delivering an exclusive world of letters despite its openly contradictory approach to what this world must necessarily entail in

order to uphold its dark vision for both the figurative and literal world. In both of these collections, the success of *Weltliteratur*, as tongue-in-cheek as such a classification may indeed be, is largely a matter of packaging; it is perhaps simply that the operative world fiction is announced as such and thus precedes the collection. As readers, we enter the *Bildersaal* to gaze upon the masterpieces of world letters and in the Nazi periodical we are forced to acknowledge that which is aggressively demarcated as *Welt*-literatur. And yet, it is necessary to examine the degree to which the so-called success of *Weltliteratur* in these collections is dependent on how, if it all, the notion of the world literary presents itself as such. Would Scherr's museum of abbreviated literary wonders function with the same degree of world literariness if the concept was not declared integral by its place in the title or explained in detail in its introductory remarks? Would the NS-journal be able to sustain its absurd claims of a literary collection that is anything but sheer propaganda if its editors had not ordered readers to see the final product as a new literary world order?

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the answer to such question is not that simple. It is indeed clear that the declared organizing principle of *Weltliteratur*, indicated in the title that hovers over the collection, enacts the first step to reading even single parts as essential pieces within the larger world context, prefiguring a canonical place at the table and putting the text in concert with a seemingly endless world around it. And yet, closer inspection of these collections has revealed that an essential feature of their success as *Weltliteratur* stems simply from an array of practices in the collection and presentation of textual fragments, translations, images, and commentary – practices that contribute to the formation of a collective literary world independently of any notion of *Weltliteratur*.

The world of these collections is upheld by the gathering and storage of myriad literary fragments; it is the creation of an at least partial transnational literary archive. As the storage space of *Weltliteratur*, the textual conglomeration itself amounts to the underlying fiction as an operative totality more than any single textual inclusion. Although the execution of this fiction is perhaps subliminal, the ultimate communication of the resulting worldness is fully dependent on the medium of its delivery. In the case of Scheer and *Weltliteratur/Die Weltliteratur*, the medium of literary entirety is print. In both cases, the world is all that is the case within the printed confines of the collection; the meaningful intermingling of text, image, and commentary in this space is bound by the materiality of paper and ink. Poignant as the two previous examples are in their differing views of *Weltliteratur*, both collections point to the potential of the concept at hand by illustrating, through their mutual approaches to the same end, that the mediation of the contested subject may take many forms. If the critical center of *Weltliteratur* is secondary to the form of its mediation, then it is necessary to consider first and foremost the means with which the differing worlds of literature are communicated. Such an inquiry, moreover, must move beyond the attachment to the proper name of the concept and beyond the strictly print-media based means of collection, exhibition, and comprehension.

The world-literary imagination is always dependent on the media epistemology of its respective era. When technologies and media shift, so too shift the understandings of categories of world and literature alike. To extend the concept of *Weltliteratur* beyond the literary as a strictly print-based medium is to view the fantasy of a global body of

literature through the contemporary media of our digital era. The pivotal shift in information and communication brought forth with internet communication and digital technologies has drastically altered the way in which once seemingly stable categories are defined and studied in terms of their respective discipline. The recent turn toward such changing perspectives in the humanities has found its novel ground in the emerging field of the digital humanities. As a bundle of disciplinary properties, the digital humanities has been described as "less a unified field than an array of convergent practices in which print is no longer the primary medium in which knowledge is produced and disseminated" (Burdick et al. 122). It is not by mere coincidence that the recent return to the notion of *Weltliteratur* has occurred alongside the rise of the digital era and an age of media change comparable only to those other pivotal moments in history such as the invention of moveable type.[137] The early murmurs of *Weltliteratur* coincided with changing ways of knowing the world through technological advancements, transformations in the perception of time and space, and alterations in the publication and circulation of literature. The magnitude of these late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth-century changes is equally experienced today in the digital era. Where then is *Weltliteratur* now?

The technological developments of the last decades have brought with them pivotal transformations in the way in which once stable categories are viewed by

---

[137]Burdick et al. note: "We live in one of those rare moments of opportunity for the humanities, not unlike other great eras of cultural-historical transformation such as the shift from the scroll to the codex, the invention of moveable type, the encounter with the New World, and the Industrial Revolution" (Burdick et al. iiv). This moment of opportunity for the new media views of humanities coincides with the renewed interest in the old concept of world literature, which Emily Apter describes as a "disciplinary rallying point of literary criticism and the academic humanities, becoming increasingly prominent from the mid-1990s on" (Apter 1).

enabling perspectives previously unfeasible without technological assistance. Franco Moretti has famously and controversially demonstrated how a radical change to the disciplines of literary study has occurred with the implementation of digital technologies and quantitative methods which allow the critical distance of his "distant reading." For Moretti, the advantage of digital technology is the facilitation of novel perspectives of literary objects long since under careful scrutiny, perspectives that are indeed so radically different that their result is, as Moretti would have it, "a specific form of knowledge" (Moretti 2007: 1).

It is a crucial detail that Moretti introduces the very need for a new condition of knowledge as a reaction to the unsolved problem of *Weltliteratur* (Moretti 2004: 149). Moretti begins his contentious *Conjectures on World Literature* with the elegiac reflections of the failed dreams of Goethe and Marx and Engels: "Well, let me put it very simply, we have not lived up to these beginnings: the study of comparative or international literature has been a much more modest intellectual enterprise, fundamentally limited to Western Europe, and mostly revolving around the river Rhine […] (Moretti 2004: 148). Addressing the perennial problem of inclusion in the view of a truly "world" collection of literature, Moretti describes the need to return, perhaps once and for all, to that "old ambition of Weltliteratur," now that the "literature around us is now unmistakably a planetary system" (Moretti 2004: 148). The case could be made that such a literary system has always been planetary, but this would detract from a distinction that is essential to Moretti's claim, namely that, in terms of *Weltliteratur*, the "question is not *what* we should do – the question is *how*" (Moretti 2004: 148). In shifting from the

271

what to the *how*, Moretti argues for a new mode of reading to solve the persistent

problem of our literary world; but this new mode is also fundamentally dependent on data

sets, processing, and modes of information storage which are made possible by digital

technologies.

Moretti's call for novel perspectives has in a way demonstrated the fact that new

technologies facilitate new views of what has been there all along. However, even if the

gaze of literary observation is shifted – as radically as through the practice of distant

reading – what remains is that those previous manifestations, the *what* of *Weltliteratur*,

have proved to be problematic when viewed from the new perspectives brought forth

with the development of new media. This is less vindication for Moretti or an argument

for a *telos* of literary history as it is for the simple observation that the practices of what

we think of as *Weltliteratur* will undoubtedly be represented by the media through which

we experience the very idea of literature in its most general sense.

Regardless of any loyalties to or against Moretti and his radical distant reading,

the invaluable contribution of his intervention may stem from a slight divergence from

his central argument. Moretti has ultimately demonstrated that the *what* and the *how* of

Weltliteratur are fundamentally and inextricably intertwined (there is no *how* without

what). In this new perspective, *Weltliteratur* reemerges as a collection of textual

fragments in the anthology, as an interplay of images, texts, and commentary in the

layout of a printed monthly journal, and again in the radically different perspective of

those abstract marks and figures of big data that promise a larger reality, omnipresent and

unseen as it may well be. The practice of *Weltliteratur* is thus fully dependent on the

specific medium of its appearance. When technology and the modes of delivery change from past world-literary media into new forms, the previous ways of knowing and practicing *Weltliteratur* fall somewhat to the wayside, leading to novel views of literature for a new era. Consequently, the perennial concept of *Weltliteratur* experiences its greatest return, its phoenix-like rise from the ashes, at precisely the moments when its practices are altered by the emergence of a new medium that enables a novel view and as such, a new collection of the world literary.

We are left with the realization that *Weltliteratur* is always understood and imagined through and with the media of its day and the contours of its appearance are shaped by these media. The most recent wave of *Weltliteratur* scholarship, perhaps more accurately "world literature" given its epicenter in the North American academic context, occurs at a noteworthy moment for technology and intellectual history. Moretti's Conjectures first appeared in 2000 at a time when internet technologies were settling in as the new commonplace and the landscape of all modes of knowing began to welcome or at least accept this new reality.[138] While the latest discussions on world literature may not be pure reflections or direct applications of digital media, they are undoubtedly informed by a changing discourse of globalization, which is in turn directly influenced by the categorical changes in the media with which we begin to approach such notions.

---

[138] While distant reading is indeed Moretti's coinage, literary analysis through data should not be credited to Moretti alone, nor should the case be made that Moretti single handedly commenced the renaissance of the new world literature debates; however, Moretti's work does indeed signify an articulate and timely intervention into the old literary notion at precisely the moment when the media landscape was changing in its most radical form in decades. The case may be made that the other newly formed inquires into the changing world of literature are independent of Moretti's specific work, but not of the context of the greater media shift, that stem.

In the digital changes of the present age, the conditions of literary knowledge create largely new ways in which literariness is conceived of and experienced. If the previous ways of imagining and practicing *Weltliteratur* have been the convergences of common reading practices with the emergence and implementation of the early global literary media of print technologies, it is necessary to ask how contemporary media have changed the common practices of perceiving literary totality in recent years. It is also necessary to examine the way in which these new medial perspectives of the macro imagination of literature have shaped the way in which the single texts occur within the newly defined landscapes of the re-imagined literary universe. Beyond the declared view of world literature through the specific practice of distant reading, what are the common experiences and places of *Weltliteratur* today? What are the common understandings and practices that exceed the formal theoretical notions of *Weltliteratur* as a stable concept? This final section is an investigation into the framework of the textual organization based on a latent idea of totality that has been a pervasive feature of collections of world literature in the past decades and centuries; it is an attempt to locate the latent notion of the world as an assemblage in the contemporary media and common practices of textual organization that we employ in our everyday understanding of literature in the digital age.

Literary Totality in the Age of Digital Exhibition

If the mid nineteenth-century imagination of *Weltliteratur* took the print-media form of the anthology in order to mediate the entirety of letters, how do we experience the *Gesamtheit des literarischen Schaffens* in the age of hyperlinks, ebooks, and digital

databases? If the propagandists of NS-culture sought to sort their *Welt* from *Allerwelt* in the form of the serial printed journal, how and with which literary media do we practice such a distinction today? How is such literary totality conceived of in an age which seems to be more preoccupied by the concept than ever before? Finally, how is *Weltliteratur* made visible with digital technologies?

The emergent field of the so-called Digital Humanities is largely dedicated to exactly those questions that seek to examine the foci of humanistic scholarship within the methods of world-knowledge production, the new conditions of knowledge that are now so intricately connected to everyday perception and that are capable of illuminating novel perspectives. The Digital Humanities extends the study of literature and literature itself beyond print media by also exploring the technologies with and through which the notion of the literary is most certainly understood. Rather than turning solely to so-called "new media" beyond paper and ink, this broad field of inquiry asks how literature is understood as a multimedia process of aesthetic and cultural knowledge. Such an approach is crucial to the recent scholarly return to the old notion of *Weltliteratur*, as this youngest wave of attention is clearly driven by the expansion of both the understanding of world space and the literary beyond monolithic definitions and within an increasingly transmedia array of practices. Accordingly, it is necessary to embrace methodologies of the digital humanities, not as a trendy techno-fetishism, but as a widening of the perspective of the idea once practiced exclusively with print media in order to ask the question: what and where is *Weltliteratur* now?

Of course, print media is far from dead or passé. The anthology and the journal are still the common means of collection and displaying the literary world as we know it. David Damrosch demonstrates the perennial problem of the concept as a matter of canon formation in the practice of world literature anthologies. Although the journal has become perhaps less widespread in the age of online magazines, the form of a serial collection of texts, with emphasis on the collective element of the periodical, is indeed alive and well in classic literary publications, book review columns, and in the literary segments of mixed-content serials. However, in terms of the common experience of literary totality, the ever-widening universe of letters is perhaps most profoundly expressed in the digital archives of world literature as they are presented by the advanced technologies of global commerce.

Today, the experience of the literary whole is a common affair, a nearly banal practice of textual interaction without the fanfare and self-announcing entirety of previous world-literary manifestations. In the age of digital technology, readers of all sorts casually consult the ever-increasing digital archives of literature provided by Google Books, Amazon.com, and other massive digital libraries that present an operative semblance of all that is the case in literature. If the most recent concepts of *Weltliteratur* entail a sense of literary entirety, or at least (and of course, not simply at least) the sum total of all that is good in the world of literature, then it is necessary to look beyond the former print-media of the *Weltliteratur* collection as an anthology or journal; instead we must look toward the colossus of literary archives that the internet facilitates. The experience of *Weltliteratur* is undoubtedly located more within the endless Borgesian

276

library of Google's scanned texts, or in the commercial archive of all that is literally and literarily consumable at Amazon, the giant of online book commerce. At the junction of literature and commerce, these contemporary colossi of the literary market involve the economic realities of a global literary market, a neo-liberal marriage of capitalist constraints and global interconnection. These views of literature within global capitalism usher Goethe's figurative "Weltmarkt" into the literal exchange of books; they are perhaps the most literal expressions of what Casanova describes as a market-based literary economy: "a space in which the sole value recognized by all participants – literary value – circulates and is traded" (Casanova 13).

The massive collections of digitalized literature at Google and Amazon also enable those new conditions of literary knowledge and facilitate a sort of quantitative turn to the once solely qualitative province of humanistic inquiry. With trends such as "cultural analytics," literature is reevaluated precisely because of a changing notion of literary entirety, or a shifting view of the real-existing world of literature, is facilitated by these technologies of digital collecting and archiving.[139] Yet, these are the academic approaches to the new-found totality of literature in the digital view. The profound impact of Google and Amazon on the changing understanding of literary totality is that these collections present the world of literature with a sense of regularity and nonchalance. Readers commonly turn to Google as the definitive book depository for the scanned consolidation of once separate super libraries or to Amazon as the commercial

---

[139] Within "comparative data studies," Behdad and Thomas describe disciplinary changes in the study of literature with big data: "Spurred by the work of Lev Manovich and Noah Wardrip-Fruin, the field of 'cultural analytics' has emerged over the past five years to bring tools of high-end computational analysis and data visualization to dissect large scale cultural datasets" (Presner 2011: 201). See also: (Burdick et al. 30).

storage space that doubles as a modern day library of Alexandria. There is indeed a consciousness of the immensity of these collections, and it is a consciousness that produces a perhaps latent but no less pertinent understanding of what it means to speak of the world of literature. These algorithm-driven collections of previously unheard of volumes have become the commonplace for the way in which literature is experienced, producing a shift in the location of world literature and facilitating a common interaction with a sense of literary entirety.

Despite the shared latent sense of the entire literary universe, there remain drastic differences between the contemporary commercial digital library collections and the previous attempts to practice *Weltliteratur* as a manifestation of a theoretical-utopian idea of the early nineteenth century in Central Europe. It must be stressed that there are profound distinctions between the past practices of the idea as they appear in Scherr's *Bildersaal* or the NS-journal and the contemporary commercial practices of digitalizing and presenting the world of literature. A comparison of these different forms requires the flexibility of perception to look beyond the media difference in order to explore the commonalities of an underlying world-literary consciousness. Rather than dwelling on the obvious differences and the shortcomings of collections that appear so at odds with one another, the focus of this inquiry is instead to ask how these wildly different worlds of literature are similar in their effect on the way texts are read within the imagined whole. How do these new libraries share an experience of *Weltliteratur* with the collections of the past? In what ways do they differ as their mediation transforms from the page to the screen in representation of the page?

Until now the practice of *Weltliteratur* has occurred in the pages of anthologies and journals, where the textual associations and the links between literary works have transpired as a matter of textual proximity. As worlds of literature, the collection of texts necessarily stresses its own composition, dividing the gaze of the reader to both text and format and calling attention to its paratextual surroundings. In all such collections, it is through the connections between any given "central" text and its paratextual company that the greater world-constellation is understood. When *Weltliteratur* is at stake, the forum of textual presentation and the neighboring elements of world letters are necessarily visible and involved in the textuality of the so-called single text. The print medium of the anthology and the journal facilitates precisely the divided paratextual gaze in the shared space of the page.

In the volumes of pages that create the total *Bildersaal der Weltliteratur*, each text or fragment gives way to another. A fragment of *Dantons Tod* by Georg Büchner signifies an end to a view of German literature by giving way to the Austrian Franz Grillparzer, the same transition as the departure from German *Volkslieder* to another glimpse of Germanic letters in the beginning of Scandinavian literature, specifically *Edda* (*Völuspa*, *Sigurd und Brunhild*, and *Havamal*). In the NS-journal, the works of the world collection function with a similar mechanics of proximity; the signification of each text is dependent on the political solidarity of its paratextual neighbors. By importing the semiotic grandeur of canonical literature in the face of Goethe or Kleist (made visible on the cover page), the forum of presentation itself becomes endowed with a literary significance to be distributed to the shared tenants of the space of the page, which always

implies the connection between single texts as a permanent reminder of the links in the network, the greater fabric of the world constellation in letters.

        With the total world constellation always at stake in *Weltliteratur* collections, the positioning of literary works in such collections determines the success or failure the communication of its totality. For David Damrosch, the anthology is the playing field of ever changing literary understandings; it is a medium that is forever struggling with the inclusion and presentation of its materials (poetry, drama, prose, as well as non-fictional works) and the inclusion and presentation of an increasing wealth of contributors: "What, really, does belong in such a collection, and how should these materials be ordered and presented?" (Damrosch 130). Damrosch poses the central question to the problem of the anthology as a practice of world literature by emphasizing the challenge of organization that such collections present. The very notion of *Weltliteratur* suggests a matter of qualitative or quantitative totality and thus necessarily demands a confrontation with textual proximity. When put to print, even the most inclusive collections of literature are forced to commit their contents to the unavoidably qualitative hierarchies of physical positioning. As such, the problem of what to include in the collection is combined with the problem of how to include them. While Damrosch praises the general impetus for expansion in later editions of world literature anthologies, he also calls attention to the practice of presentation that this inclusion demands.[140] And yet, despite his attention to

---

[140] Looking at the changing versions of Norton anthologies, Damrosch emphasizes the practice of textual ordering in the combination of perhaps unlikely bedfellows: "In the 1995 edition [Norton anthology], this arrangement places six pages of Inuit Songs in between Kafka and D.H. Lawrence […]," noting also that "[t]he new edition of 2002 has reshuffled the deck somewhat, giving the Inuit some company by moving up a few pages of Zuni ritual poetry that appeared later in the sections. The Zuni now come in between Kafka and the Inuit, who are now followed by Tanizaki (Lawrence having been dropped) and then T.S. Eliot. The

the applied theory of world literature in the practice of the anthology, Damrosch remains

generally focused on the concept as a widening zone of possible inclusion despite the

cultural, temporal, and linguistic origins of the text. Changing world views are indeed

crucial to the discourse of world literature; nonetheless, the emphasis on an ever-

widening practice of inclusion that reflects these changes may serve to eclipse the

significance of the collections by unintentionally arguing for the existence of a collection

that produces the real world through quantity and diversity alone. To avoid such an

unwanted emphasis, it is necessary to look at the way in which the mediation of

Weltliteratur occurs specifically without the sense of inclusion and to examine the formal

constellation of the collection that makes do by mediating a sense of entirety without the

burden of the impossible entirety that underlies its reality.

It is often overlooked that the experience of *Weltliteratur*, the practice as a

collection, is never simply about the contents of the storage space, but also always about

the way in which the single parts of the world constellation fit together. Damrosch's

interest in the positioning of Kafka and Inuit Songs may take the form of commentary on

the way in which broadened horizons of cultural contributions are reflected in the

pedagogical practices of literary materials, but it also raises the question of proper textual

affiliation by noting a sort of taxonomy that ignores a perceived difference between the

two contributions. The combination of Kafka and Inuit Songs is interesting because it

suggests a pair that seems to be unusual when considered as the once disparate, now

reconciled single elements of the world of literature. In the print medium of the

---

old march of Western masterpieces is gone, but it's not all clear what forms of organization are to take its
place" (Damrosch 130-131).

anthology, the medial cohabitation of such an unlikely couple appears as a rupture of once dominant norms. It invites cultural confrontation and in doing so obscures its greater significance, which is not the minor scandal of seemingly incommensurable literary cultures, but the very fact that multiple texts are mediated in such a way that they necessarily communicate with one another insofar as they share the same single frame of view and produce together the same ends, the world itself. The very appearance of *Weltliteratur*, as it is practiced with full intent or by sheer happenstance, is fully dependent on the way in which several texts are joined together to speak for the whole. Accordingly, the importance of the formal practice of *Weltliteratur* as a collection is not simply a matter of what is collected and presented as the whole, but also the way in which these once separate elements are now joined as the exquisite cadavers of a new being.

Amazon.com: Digital, Commercial, Canonical

The problem of textual proximity is renewed when the boundaries of the world literary collection are extended beyond the material confines of the book. If the split gaze of the printed layout is no longer the sole medium for world plurality in letters, how does the notion of a world of literature, at once singular and manifestly plural, take its form? Where now are the textual cacophonies of shared pages and fragmentary collectives of literature? In what way are the single works of literature bound together in the service of the world whole now that the largest archives are no longer the necessarily physical

depositories of books and the massive, multi-volume collections of anthologies and periodicals?

Unlikely as it may indeed seem, the commercial context of Amazon.com provides an articulate example of these new textual entireties; it is at once novel in its commercial-digital context and remarkably similar in its presentation of small textual groupings to those analog collections of world literature. In the digital age, an all too common experience of textual organization appears as a specter of related texts accompanying each book available for purchase within the ephemeral catalog. At Google Books, viewing most titles will produce another view, a cluster of "related books" that underscore the viewed volume with a thematic kinship. At Amazon, viewing a potential literary purchase yields a similar collection, but this marketable association appears as a tool of capitalist-materialist organization as "Customers Who Bought This Item Also Bought." These related books and orbiting texts of an unseen literary affiliation express the field of a specific type of literary relationship; it is a relationship that demonstrates the networked fabric of the literary whole while representing, perhaps paradoxically, that although the world of literature is vast and unknowable, the single volumes exist not within a chaotic universe of endless letters, but in tightly kept (albeit ephemeral) groups of texts. The single works of our new literary entirety appear to exist not within an endlessly global everything, but within the thematically bound clusters of literary micro-provinces which are linked infinitely to others to form that vast world/universe. This mode of organization, when considered alongside the print-media predecessors, is much like the shared layouts and paratextual bonds of the anthology and the journal.

Goethe's Faust provides an example of indisputable canonical value in Western literary history.[141] Faust is an almost invariantly central text in anthologies of world literature, particularly those pillars of pedagogy and institutions of literary masterpieces: *The Longman Anthology of World Literature*, *The Norton Anthology of World Literature*, and the *Bedford Anthology of World Literature*. As John Guillory has noted, these, like all anthologies, are expressions of the socioinstitutional constraints in the establishment and upholding of literary canons (Guillory 28-29). The primary function of these volumes is pedagogy, or the communication of a well established literary ideal to an audience of students. Yet Guillory also argues that the communication of canonicity, or the educational context of literature in the anthology, is about the illusion of totality. In the same sense that the notion of *Weltliteratur* masquerades as totality, the anthology communicates its qualitative collection as a core expression of literary value, but these qualitative undertones also suffer from the problem of quantity that plagues the idea and practice of any world of literature.

> It would be better to say that the canon is an *imaginary* totality of works. No one has access to the canon as a totality. This fact is true in the trivial sense that no one ever reads every canonical work; no one can, because the works invoked as canonical change continually according to many different occasions of judgment or contestation. What this means is that the canon is never other than an imaginary list; it never appears as a complete and uncontested list in any particular time and place, not even in the form of the omnibus anthology, which remains a selection from a

---

[141] The canonical stability of Faust finds its most apt justification as the primary text of the publisher *Reclam* and its *Universalbibliothek*. To highlight yet another example from Goethe in this exploration of *Weltliteratur* is not to unintentionally undo the arguments of previous chapters by fixating on the single-source mythos of a fictional narrative and its alleged author, but to examine the way in which Goethe's legacy is itself caught up within the very practices that form that same notion he is thought to have created.

> larger list which does not itself appear anywhere in the
> anthology's table of contents. (Guillory 30)

If the performance of an ideal canon takes place in the anthology as a list communicating an imaginary totality, then it may be surmised that the single texts of this totality are also imaginarily ordained as its representatives. The formation of canonical value appears as an expression of social forces external to the text.

Accordingly, that *Faust* is a staple of world literature anthologies is inseparable from the realm of the socio-institutional imaginary and its audience of students. However, the effect of such recognition must not necessarily result in relativism in the comparative value of single texts, or the suspicion that the uncontested position of *Faust* in the great list is strictly a matter of social forces beyond literary aesthetics, an arbitrary order of literature at best. It is instead evident that the stable position of central works in anthologies is inseparable from the social forces of literary knowledge and that these forces are crucial in the practice of *Weltliteratur* as an imaginary totality represented by single works which allude to a greater notion of belletristic wholeness. But as is the case with *Weltliteratur*, it is necessary to resist the temptation of identifying simply that each work appears within an imaginary realm of value and order; the issue at hand is to move beyond this observation in asking how these individual texts work together as a literary assemblage to create the illusion of a totality, which although non-existent, is capable of producing real and lasting effects on the way in which we conceive of both the whole and its individual parts.

In these terms, *Faust* may occupy a central position in a canonical fiction, but the fictional quality is secondary to the fact that it succeeds to uphold this fiction as a

connected part of a larger whole. Any single text may be dismissed as merely upheld by cultural authorities, but as a greater constellation, the single text is necessarily intertwined with its surroundings to communicate the world semblance of literature. In the *Norton Anthology of World Literature*, Goethe's *Faust* appears in the section "An Age of Revolutions," a section which commences with literature in the broad sense of the term and with examples of eighteenth and nineteenth-century intellectual history in political writings, correspondence, historical documents, and philosophy.[142] *Faust* is positioned between *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano or Gustav Vassa, the African, Written by Himself*, by Olaudah Equiano and an excerpt from *Facundo: or, Civilization and Barbarism* by Domingo F. Sarmiento.[143] In the *Longman Anthology of World Literature*, the nineteenth century begins with *Faust*. In a position demonstrative of the characteristic *Goethezeit*, Faust commences what appears to be the Long Nineteenth Century while signifying the end of the Enlightenment; *Faust I* and excerpts from *Faust II* divide sections of the Enlightenment and Romanticism (in a section of the sub-chapter).[144] In the *Bedford Anthology*, *Faust* is situated between slave and

---

[142] *Declaration of Independence*; *Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen*; Olympe de Gouges, *The Rights of Woman*; Edmund Burke, *From Reflections on the Revolution in France*; Jean-Jacques Dessalines, *Liberty or Death: Proclamation to the Inhabitants of Haiti*; William Wordworth, *The Prelude, From Book X, from Book XI*; William Wordsworth, *To Toussaint, L'Ouverture*; Simon Bolivar, *from Letter from Jamaica*; *Declaration of Sentiments (The Seneca Fall Women's Right Convention of 1848)*.

[143] The remaining section contains texts and text excerpts by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Frederick Douglas, Herman Melville, Anna Barbauld, William Blake, Friedrich Hölderlin, William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Anna Bunina, Andres Bello, Percy Bysshe Shelley, John Keats, Heinrich Heine, Giacomo Leopardi, Elizabeth Barret Browning, Alfred Lord Tennyson, Robert Browning, Walt Whitman, Charles Baudelaire, Emily Dickenson, Christina Rossetti, Rosalia De Castro, Stéphane Mallarmé, Paul Verlaine, José Marti, Arthur Rimbaud, and Ruben Dario.

[144] *The Longman Anthology* presents "The Age of Enlightenment" with excerpts (in order of appearance) from Jean-Baptiste Poquelin [Molière], Marie de Zayas y Sotomayor, Chikamatsu Monzaemon, Matsuo Basho, François-Marie Arouet [Voltaire], Alexander Pope, Jonathan Swift, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, and Eliza Haywood. This section leads into "The Nineteenth Century" and with it *Faust*. After *Faust* completes, the section "Perspectives: Romantic Nature" begins, featuring works from William Blake,

emancipation narratives/African American Folk Songs one the one side, and Alessandro

Manzoni, Lord Byron, John Greenleaf Whittier, Nietzsche, and Inazo Nitboé on the

other.[145]

The canonical function is highly visible in these collections. Despite each

collection's particular arrangement of world texts and the inclusion of once neglected

works of the previously peripheral, there remains a stable presence by a select group of

largely European texts. The comparative canonicity of world literature anthologies is not

unlike the concept of the "invariant core" proposed by Anton Popovič on the subject of

poetry translation. A number of translators translating the same poem will produce

different renderings, yet there will remain a number of constant, common elements within

each of these variations. These stable elements, according to Popovič, are the "invariant

core" of the poem, which "is represented by stable, basic and constant semantic elements

in the text, whose existence can be proved by experimental semantic condensation"

(Bassnett 35). It is, as Susan Bassnett describes, "that which exists in common between

all existing translations of a single work" (Bassnett 35). The continued presence of

certain texts in world literature collections produces a notion of the canon as an

William Wordsworth, John Keats, Annette von Droste-Hülshoff, Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin, and Henry David Thoreau.

[145] *Bedford's* subsections frame clusters of works in specific periods of interest. As in other collections, Goethe's *Faust* appears in between the Enlightenment and Romanticism (with a look at literature in between these poles as well). "In the World: Enlightenment and the Spirit of Inquiry" contains works from Voltaire, Descartes, Locke, Baien Miura, Kant, Jefferson, Wollstonecraft, Rousseau, Ramprasad Sen, and Olaudah Equiano. In the next section, "In the World: Slave Narrative and Emancipation" features Harriet A. Jacobs, Frederick Douglass, and African American Folk Songs before merging into *Faust* and the section "In the World: *Faust* and the Romantic Hero, featuring Alessandro Manzoni, Lord Byron, John Greenleaf Whittier, Nietzsche, Inazo Nitobé, and Wordsworth. This Faustian group then gives way to "In the Tradition: The Romantic Lyric" with Charlotte Smith, Blake, Hölderlin, Novalis, Alphonse de Lamartine, Keats, Droste-Hülshoff, Heine, Leopardi, Rosalía de Castro, Coleridge, Ghalib, Pushkin, and Walt Whitman.

expression of a sort of "experimental semantic condensation." This "condensation" is perhaps what Damrosch sees in the canonical masterpieces whose constant presence in collections of world literature comes about "not because they float forever in some eternal realm but because they adapt so effectively to the changing needs of different times and places […]." (Damrosch 135). Damrosch may appear to posit a universalism approach in assessing canonical masterpieces, but the principle of adaptability is not the same as essential value, regardless of the stable position within an invariant core of sorts. Instead, the invariant presence is attributed to the powerful linkage between these dominant works and the multiple collections in which they exist.

A leading characteristic of world literature today is its variability: different readers will find interest in different constellations of texts. While figures like Dante and Kafka retain a powerful canonical status, these authors function today less as a common patrimony than as rich nodes of overlap among many different and highly individual groupings (Damrosch 281). Regarding these works as "nodes of overlap," Damrosch resists the potentially universalist notions of world literature while effectively resisting its conceptual opposite as well, namely relativism. The resulting effect is that the world semblance of the collection, and the role of individual masterpieces therein, is about the system of links that occurs within each group and the power of single nodes to interfere, dominate, and reproduce assumed literary value.

The image of canonical literary texts as nodes invokes again the underlying imagination of a network structure. Similar to the literary imagination of the eighteenth century – as techno-organic technologies of infrastructure, communication, and natural

science helped provide the epistemological framework for the imagination of the whole – the world-literary entirety of today also takes the active form of the network. And yet, the figure of the network with its nodes and connections challenges the idea of the *Weltliteratur* anthology simply as the presentation of the canon as it is imagined by its creators. The imagery of nodes in a network suggests that the sum total of the collection is perhaps secondary to the ways in which the nodes attach to others. As a network, *Weltliteratur* appears to be less about the final impossible whole and more about the way in which each text joins its paratextual surroundings, bellowing its literary echo, and interacting with its setting. In the same sense that Damrosch notes the positioning of Kafka and Inuit songs, editors of other world literature anthologies are careful to challenge once dominant genres and national literatures by presenting the cohabitation of old European masters with informational texts, once marginal literatures, and genre-spanning inclusions. Accordingly, the collection as a network requires attention to the way each single text, each node, connects to the others in the seemingly endless web. Focusing on the connections reveals the previously ignored significance of *Weltliteratur* as a practice, namely that the medium of delivery, that is the means with which texts are connected to produce the semblance of a world whole, is perhaps what is of greatest consequence in the communication of a textual conglomerate as a world.

Faust shows a degree of variability in its appearance as world literature. In some anthologies, the paratextual company of Goethe's masterwork might straddle emblematic texts of the European Enlightenment and Romanticism, while in others it borders with African American folk songs. In these textual groupings, the appearance of *Faust* (or

289

Goethe in general) as *Weltliteratur* is dependent on its connection to these neighboring

works, just as the condensed fragments of Scherr's *Bildersaal* adhere to one another to

produce a unified poetic semblance of the world, or as the image of Goethe haunts the so

ideologically driven paratexts of the NS-journal. In all cases Goethe's work appears in

concert with or in contrast to the neighboring texts, endowing them with a reverberating

canonicity and gaining the aura of the surrounding works as well. *Faust*, as with all

individual nodes of *Weltliteratur*, is always visibly connected to others. What is

discernible is never the whole composition, but the simultaneous vision of the single

work and a few connections, which appear to be endless (suggesting the world-whole)

but are experienced always in a finite view.

Because print-media collections have been the central instrument of world literary

organization, it is through these forms that the notion of *Weltliteratur* is staged and

understood. In these forms, the practice of *Weltliteratur* becomes an act of selection of a

few texts from a nearly infinite body in order to reflect a notion of totality. In these

forms, the politics of canon formation is practiced in the structural order of the featured

texts. Yet the choice of selection, of canon formation, and of the meaningful performance

of the whole through parts is not specific to any one medium of textual collection (the

anthology or the journal, for example), but in the act of collecting itself. It is in this sense

that the vista of *Weltliteratur* broadens as an array of practices in the collecting of texts in

the service of any number of literary worlds. And it is in this sense that Amazon.com,

with its digital, commercial approach to literature, presents a most articulate example for

the way in which single texts are positioned within a collection of others, always in the service of some kind of world whole.

Amazon's algorithm-based organization of recommended book titles is also a collection through which the questions of canon formation and the position of texts amidst a wealth of others may equally be posed. More importantly still, although Amazon shares other modes of literary mediation in that it is just one of many perspectives of the great constellation, it does indeed offer a novel view of the connections of *Weltliteratur*, a view that provides truly new insight into the subjective intervention of the organizer of the collection. Because Amazon's algorithms produce an organization of literary titles based on masses of consumer data, its collections of recommendations are formed by crowdsourced knowledge of literature, a knowledge based largely on literary expectations, assumed canonical values, and the always operative forces of both the figurative and literal market of literature. Despite (or perhaps because of) this rather abstract view of textual order, the appearance of *Weltliteratur* in this digital market reveals both contradictions in and similarities to the previous collections and storage practices of *Weltliteratur*, but its lasting significance is most palpably observed in its confirmation of the importance of the connections between each single text within the world literary network.

At Amazon.com, the US-American page and flagship website of the massive corporation, Goethe's *Faust* appears among a set of recommendations that surround an image of the book available for purchase. These recommendations are based on the mutual consumption patterns of titles overlapping with Faust, thus expressing an

alternative view of *Faust* and the canon as reader expectations. The results, however,

nearly reproduce the canonical organization of world literature anthologies by

demonstrating that those customers who bought *Faust*, also bought a number of equally

canonical works as well. We see an alternative mode of organizing and connecting

works, but the outcome is similar. Goethe's *Faust*, in the *Norton Critical Edition*

(translation by Walter Arndt), is surrounded by the maximum number of

recommendations – 102; these suggested works become visible be scrolling through 17

"pages" of recommended texts, each page containing the view of 6 related works.[146] The

---

[146] Christopher Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus*; Thomas Mann, *Doctor Faustus: The Life of the German Composer Adrian Leverkuhn as Told by a Friend*; Charles Baudelaire, *Flowers of Evil and Other Works/Les Fleurs du Mal et Oeuvres Choises*; Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Selected Poetry*; Charles Darwin, *The Development of the Theory of Natural Selection*; Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust: Die Tragödie, erster Teil*; James George Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study of Magic and Religion: A New Abridgment from the Second and Third Editions*; Francis Bacon, *Selected Philosophical Works*; Mark Twain, *The Mysterious Stanger*; Henrik Ibsen, *Peer Gynt*; Vaclav Havel, *Temptation*; Friedrich Schiller, *Wilhelm Tell*; Jana Hensel, *After the Wall: Confessions from an East German Childhood and the Life that Came Next*; Fyodor Dostoevsky, The *Brother Karamazov*; Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Uses and Abuses of History*; Mikhail Bulgakov, *The Master and Margarita*; Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust: A Tragedy*; Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust: Part Two*; Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust: Part I*; Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *The Sufferings of Young Werther*; Klaus Mann, *Mephisto*; Miguel De Cervantes, *Don Quixote*; Christa Wolf, *The Divided Sky: A Novel*; Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Twilight of the Idols and The Anti-Christ, or How to Philosophize with a Hammer*; Stendhal, *The Red and the Black*; Gustav Flaubert, *Three Tales*; Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*; William Blake, *English Romantic Poetry: An Anthology*; Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Maxims and Reflections*; Christopher Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus: With the English Faust Book*; Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*; Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust I and II*; Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust I*; *Faust* (Film with Emil Jannings*)*, DVD; Voltaire, *Candide: Or Optimism*; Miguel De Cervantes, *Don Quixote*; John Milton, *Paradise Lost*; Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*; Sigmund Freud, *The Freud Reader*; Mikhail Lermontov, *A Hero of Our Time*; Christopher Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus*; Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life*; E.T.A Hoffmann, *The Golden Pot and Other Tales*; John Milton, *Paradise Lost*; Mikhail Bulgakov, *The Master and Margarita*; Samuel Johnson, *The History of Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia*; Friedrich Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*; Dante, *The Inferno*; James Hogg; *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*; Samuel Beckett, *Murphy*; Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Shelley's Prose and Poetry*; Stendhal, *The Red and the Black*; David Mamet, *Faustus-Acting Edition*; Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*; Jacob Grimm, *Grimm's Fairy Tales*; Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*; Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*; Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*; Wisława Szymborska, *Poems and New and Collected*; Gustav Flaubert, *Three Tales*; Oscar Wilde, *The Portrait of Dorian Grey*; Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Confessions*; Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Theory of Colors*; Jeffery N. Cox, *The Broadview Anthology of Romantic Drama*; Molière, *Don Juan*; Thomas Mann, *The Magic Mountain*; Johann Wolfgang von Goethe,

cluster of recommended works immediately reveals a salient logic in its composition. Not only does *Faust* exist among a number of likely canonical invariants also evident in world literature anthologies (Voltaire, Kant, Swift, Dostoevsky, Shakespeare, Kierkegaard, and many others), the association also reveals a strong bond that might be regarded as the intertextual connections between Goethe's *Faust* and both the precursors and afterlives of this central tale of European literature. In this cluster of works, Goethe's *Faust* is associated with multiple versions of Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, Thomas Mann's *Doctor Faustus*, and other literary adaptations of the Faustian fabula (Mikhail Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita*, Klaus Mann's *Mephisto*, David Mamet's *Faustus*, as well as the other canonical literary depictions of hell and the devil in Dante and Milton). The position of *Faust* amidst related titles is evidence of a degree of

---

Italian Journey (1786-1788); Giovanna Verga, *Cavalleria Rusticana and Other Stories*; Antjie Krog, *Country of My Skull: Guilt, Sorrow, and the Limits of Forgiveness in the New South Africa*; John Milton, *The Major Works*; Marshall Berman, *All that Is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity*; Lyall Watson, *Dark Nature: A History of Evil*; Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and The Case of Wagner*; *Cliff's Notes (Faust I and II)*; Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*; William Blake, *Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience*; Oscar Wilde, *The Portrait of Dorian Grey*; Edward F. Edinger, *Goethe's Faust: Notes for a Jungian Commentary*; Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*; T.S. Eliot, *Selected Poems*; Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*; Thomas Mann, *Death in Venice, Tonio Kröger, and Other Stories*; Voltaire, *Candide and Other Stories*; Jonathan Swift; *Gulliver's Travels*; Gregory Orr, *Orpheus and Eurydice: A Lyric Sequence*; Alexander Pushkin, *Onegin*; Samuel Johnson, *The History of Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia*; Carolyn Merchant, The *Death of Nature: Woman, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution*; Vladimir Nabokov, *Lectures on Russian Literature*; Georg Büchner, *Complete Plays, Lenz, and Other Writings*; Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*; Giacomo Leopardi, *Operette Morali: Essays and Dialogues*; Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things*; Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Conversations of Goethe with Johann Peter Eckermann*; George Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss*; Henrik Ibsen, *Selected Plays*; Heinrich von Kleist, *Selected Writings*; Joanna Baillie, *Plays on the Passions*; George Bernard Shaw, *Plays*.
http://www.amazon.com/FaustTragedyNortonCriticalEditions/dp/0393972828/ref=sr_1_2?ie=UTF8&qid=1392917679&sr=8-2&keywords=faust

thematic unity between the associated works of the cluster. Unlike the method of textual collecting at work in the anthology, this commercial practice of collecting is at least partially driven by affinities which precede each text enough to govern an at least somewhat thematically coherent group.

It is in this sense that the commercial application of algorithms in sorting literary works most resembles a practice of *Weltliteratur* exhibition. Clearly, the consumable library of Amazon is not the sum total of all that is literary; it does not achieve an archive of Moretti-esque proportions, attempting to contain all that is and has been the case in letters. But as a collection, Amazon's digital representation of material objects which exist elsewhere, and ethereal ebook counterparts which exist nowhere precisely, points indeed to a sort of real-existing world of literature that is, to keep with other groups, a whole that is not whole. It presents an active semblance of an entirety through its representation of all that is available to the reader/consumer, thus guiding the shape of the world through market forces with the invisible hand of commercial involvement in the literary economy. While the sheer magnitude of its offerings suggests endlessness to the collection, the display of such endlessness is always ruptured by the view of clustered, recommended texts which demonstrate the reality that the greater world whole is experienced not through the whole itself but through small wholes which displace the unknowable entirety by representing it on a smaller scale. Amazon provides a view that is at once emblematic of the whole collection and the micro-grouping of a literary world within the world at large. As microcosms of the worlds of literature, these clusters of recommended works may serve to display the way in which *Weltliteratur* is commonly

294

experienced in the passive sense, namely, as a series of connections within an always greater wealth of totality. Perhaps most significant, however, is the way in which the evidence of a thematic coherence suggests the very real epistemological contours of the worlds in which we read.

To view *Faust* at Amazon is thus to observe at once Goethe's canonical masterpiece and its connections to the world of literature in which it exists. Within this split gaze, the text is accompanied by 102 surrounding works on the periphery of its central location. These texts provide a glimpse of a world in which *Faust* exists for an abstract collective of countless consumers. At the US-American Amazon.com, *Faust* clearly enjoys a predictable canonical status that reiterates the centrality of European classics in the collection of world literature; *Faust* is connected to Voltaire, Shakespeare, Cervantes, et al. But *Faust's* particular position in this world canon is also clearly governed by the specific limitations of reader/consumer expectations. There are patterns to the logic of organization in these works. Aside from the canon aspect, or that which may also be seen in an anthology of world literature, *Faust* reveals a distinctly dominant position among an abundance of German classics (Schiller, Hoffmann, Nietzsche, Mann, et al.). Here, *Faust* belongs clearly to German literature, and yet it also oscillates between this German dominance and an otherwise prevailing composition of similarities in genre and intellectual history. It shares a common bond with non-German works of world literature, in its association with English Romanticism, for example (William Blake, Percy Bysshe Shelly, Mary Shelley, *Anthology of Romantic Drama*), or with pivotal works of eighteenth and nineteenth-century ideas (Darwin, Nietzsche, Freud, Marx,

Rousseau, de Tocqueville). In both cases, these textual bonds are forged by a community of readers who are at once instrumental to and instrumentalized by the collection as world literature, a specifically US-American set of constraints in the formation of the collection.

As both world and German literature, *Faust's* positioning reflects the formation of both of these groups within the largely academic-driven context of North-American pedagogy and through necessary translation. Goethe's text, like its world counterparts, is also presented in translation among a number of other translations into English. Both the academic impetus of university-course reading lists and the necessary English language rendering of the German original reflect the processes of circulation a text must go through in order to be eligible and available to fit the world understanding of any given body of readers. This world of literature openly reflects the subjective gaze not simply of one editor or editorial team, but of a wealth of readers governed at least in part by the forces of institutional knowledge, limited linguistic capabilities, and a dependence on what is made actually available in the world.

These limitations are most evident in direct comparison to other collections. Looking at the location of *Faust* within the *Weltliteratur* of Amazon.de of Germany produces a view that expresses at once a high degree of canonical overlap and a clearly dominant sense of a unique position of the text within the culturally specific history of German literature.[147] This particular German manifestation of the world literature around

---

[147]Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Die Leiden des jungen Werther*; William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*; William Shakespeare, *Romeo und Julia, Hamlet, Othello*; Dante Alighieri, *Die göttliche Komödie*; *Lektüreschlüssel zu Johann Wolfgang von Goethe: Faust II*; Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers*; *Lektüreschlüssel, Faust I*; *Erläuterungen: Textanalyse und Interpretation zu Goethe, Faust I*; Friedrich Nietzsche*, Also sprach Zarathustra*; *Das Nibelungenlied*; Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre: Ein Roman*; *Textanalyse und Interpretation, Faust II*; Johann Nestory, *Der Talisman: Posse mit*

Faust involves a striking similarity to the collection in English translation across the

Atlantic, featuring a number of the same invariant pillars of central European, world

literature (Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, Cervantes, and Tolstoy). And yet, for every

---

Gesang in drei Aufzügen; William Shakespeare, *Gesammelte Werke*; Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Sämtliche Gedichte*; Franz Kafka, *Gesammelte Werke*; Thomas Mann, *Der Zauberberg*; Anna Mitgutsch, *Ausgrenzung: Roman*; Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Die Leiden des jungen Werther*; Friedrich Hölderlin, *Hyperion oder der Ermit in Griechenland*; Homer, *Odysee*; Franz Kafka, *Der Process*; Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Nathan der Weise: Ein dramatisches Gedicht in fünf Aufzügen*; *Interpreationen: Faust I und II*; Donella Meadows (et al.), *Grenzen des Wachstums- Das 30-Jahre-Update: Signal zum Kurswechsel*; Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quijote*; Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Gedichte*; Hellmut Schwarz, *Context 21 – Bayern: Language, Skills and Exam Trainer*; Franz Kafka, *Das Schloß*; Ernest Hemingway, *Der alte Mann und das Meer*; Thomas Mann, *Doktor Faustus: Das Leben des deutschen Tonsetzers Adrian Leverkuhn erzählt von einem Freunde*; *Goethes schönste Gedichte*; *Text und Kommentar: Maria Stuart (Friedrich Schiller)*;Ulrich Gaier, *Kommentar zu Goethes Faust*; William Shakespeare, *Romeo und Julia: Zweisprachige Ausgabe*; Arthur Schnitzler, *Fräulein Else und andere Erzählungen*; Friedrich Schiller, *Kabale und Liebe: Ein bürgerliches Trauerspiel in fünf Aufzügen*; Felix Mitterer, *Kein Platz für Idioten*; *Faust: nach Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*; *BIOskop SII- Ausgabe 2010 für Niedersachsen: Schülerband*; Theodor Fontane, *Effi Briest: Ein Roma*n; Hugo von Hoffmansthal, *Jedermann: Das Spiel vom Sterben des reichen Mannes*; Arthur Schopenhauer, *Aphorismen zur Lebensweisheit*; Cornelsen *Senio English Library- Literatur: Ab 11. Schuljahr- The Importance of Being Earnest*; Hermann Hesse, *Der Steppenwolf*; William Shakespeare, *Romeo und Julia*; Edgar Allan Poe, *Gesammelte Werke*; Friedrich Nietzsche, *Jenseits von Gut und Böse: Zur Genealogie der Moral*; Richard Friedenthal, *Goethe: Sein Leben und seine Zeit*; Friedrich Schiller, *Die Räuber*; Theoder Fontane*, Der Stechlin*; Oscar Wilde, *Das Bildnis des Dorian Gray*; Patrick Süskind, *Das Parfum*; Homer, *Ilias*; John Milton, *Das verlorene Paradies*; Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*; Ernest Hemingway, *Wem die Stunde schlägt: Roman*; Ulrich Plenzdorf, *Die neuen Leiden des jungen Werther*; George Büchner, *Woyzeck. Studienausgabe*; Iwan A. Gontscharow, *Oblomow: Roman*; Theodor Fontane, *Effi Briest: Roman*; Thomas Mann, *Buddenbrooks: Verfall einer Familie*; Robert Louis Stevenson, *Der seltsame Fall von Dr. Jekyll und Mr. Hyde*; Elfride Jelinek, *Die Liebhaberinnen*; Lessing: *Nathan der Weise, Lektüreschlüssel*; Seneca, *Handbuch des glücklichen Lebens: Philosophische Schriften*; Franz Kafka, *Der Process*; Rainer Maria Rilke, *Die schönsten Gedichte*; Ralf Ludwig, *Kant für Anfänger: Die Kritik der reinen Vernunft*; Heinrich Heine, *Deutschland: Ein Wintermärchen*; Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*; Bertolt Brecht, *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder: Eine Chronik aus dem Dreißighjährigen Krieg*; Bertolt Brecht, *Hunderte Gedichte*; *Frühlings Erwachen: Reclaim XL –Text und Kontext*; Alexander Puschkin, *Erzählungen*; Will Quadflieg, Gustaf Gründgens, Peter Gorski, *Faust* (DVD); Arthur Schopenhauer, *Die Kunst, Recht zu behalten*; Franz Kafka, *Die Verwandlung*; Franz Kafka, *Das Schloss*; Max Frisch, *Homo Faber: Ein Bericht*; Franz Kafka, *Der Prozeß: Ein Roman*; Franz Kafka, *Die Verwandlung*; Theodor Fontane, *Effi Briest*; Friedrich Nietzsche, *Also sprach Zarathustra*; Leo Tolstoi, *Anna Karenina: Roman*; Heinrich Böll, *Die verlorene Ehre der Katharina Blume: oder: Wie Gewalt entstehen und wohin sie führen kann, Erzählung*; Eich Hackl, *Abschied von Sidonie*; Ludwig Reiners, *Der erwige Brunnen: Ein Hausbuch deutscher Dichtung*; Friedrich Nietzsche, *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches*; *Lektürehilfen Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Faust – Erster Teil*; Iwan Turgenjew, *Väter und Söhne: Roman*; Karl Marx, *Das Kapital*; Hermann Hesse, *Siddhartha: Eine indische Dichtung*; Uwe Jansen, *Wilhelm Tell: Reclam XL – Text und Kontext*; Günter Grass, *Die Blechtrommel*; Friedrich Dürrenmatt, *Die Physiker: Eine Komödie in zwei Akten*; Theodor Fontane, *Effi Briest, Lektüreschlüssel*; Friedrich Nietzsche, *Der Antichrist: Versuch einer Kritik des Christentums*; Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*. http://www.amazon.de/FaustEineTrag%C3%B6dieErsterzweiter/dp/3423124008/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1389354839&sr=8-1&keywords=Goethe+Faust

element of canonical overlap in German translation, there exist concrete examples of cultural centrality in the collection. Not only do the single texts of world literature appear in German translation, the German originals construct in their entirety an altogether different view of the German literary canon. In this German world literature, *Faust* connects to Lessing, Hölderlin, Nestroy, Schiller, Büchner, Fontane, Heine and the philosophical texts of Schopenhauer and Kant alongside Nietzsche and Marx. These works also exist in English but their comparative positioning in world literature does not translate into the American-English arrangement without the foreignizing effect of a specific literary history. For all of its similarities to the American collection around *Faust*, Amazon.de exhibits a view of *Faust* that is decidedly German in its world depiction, just as the American collection, with its tendency toward English Romanticism, presents its own baggage of cultural-linguistic specificity in the imagination of the greater world constellation in which *Faust* floats.

At Amazon.fr of France, *Faust* has a similar relationship to a respective national-world literature of the French-specific grouping.[148] In French, *Faust's* world literary

---

[148]Dante, *La Divine Comédie*: L'Enfer, *Le Purgatoire, Le Paradis*; Christopher Marlowe, *Le Tragique Historie du Docteur Faust: Bilingue*; Victor Hugo, *La Fin de Satan*; Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Les souffrances du jeune Werther*; Jean Decottignies, *Les Diaboliques*; Honoré de Balzac, *La peau de chagrin*; Théophile Gautier, La *Morte amoureuse – Avatar et autres récits fantastiques*; Honoré de Balzac, *La Maison Nucingen – Melmoth réconcilié*; Paul Valéry, *Monsieur Teste*; Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Faust*: Tomes 1 et 2*; Paul Valéry, *"Mon Faust": Ébauches*; Louis Aragon, *Anicet ou Le panorama*; John Milton, *Le Paradis perdu*; Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Maximes er Réflexions*; Christopher Marlowe, *Le Docteur Faust*; William Shakespeare, *Hamlet-Othello-Macbeth*; Dante, *La Divine Comédie Coffret en volumes*; Franz Liszt: *Faust-Symphonie (CD-Léonard Bernstein)*; Geoffrey Chaucer, Les *Contes de Cantebury*; Gérard de Nerval, *Les Illuminés*; Aimé Césaire, *Discours sur le colonialisme, suivi de: Discours sur la Négritude*; William Shakespeare, *Othello*; Alfred de Vigny, *Poèmes antiques et modernes – Les Destinées*; Novalis, *Henri d'Ofterdingen*; E.T.A Hoffmann, *Contes fantastiques: Tomes 1*; Federico García Lorca, *Romancero gitan/ Chant funèbre*; Alexis de Tocqueville, *De la démocratie en Amérique*; Ovide, *Les Métamorphoses*; Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *Le Serpent vert: Conte symbolique*; Michel de Montaigne, *Essais*; Roland Dumas, *Sarkozy sous BHL*; Franz Kafka, *Le Procès*; Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ainsi parlait Zarathoustra*; William Shakespeare, *Le songe d'une d'été*; Virgile, *Enéide*; Boccace, *Le*

company takes yet another turn, while expressing clear similarities with the US-American

and German collections (again Marlowe, Dante, Milton, Shakespeare, and Cervantes).

There is not surprisingly a conspicuous current of Franco-centric literature surrounding

Faust. Whereas Rilke, Böll, or Hesse may join *Faust* as the periphery of literature in

Germany, or Twain, Melville, or T.S. Eliot in the United States, Amazon.fr displays

Faust among Balzac, Hugo, Valéry, Montaigne, and Baudelaire. Just as it is evident at

Amazon.com, the French collection also displays a large concentration of German works

appropriately translated into French and is demonstrative of comparable trends in genre

and the German literary canon in translation. In a brief comparative analysis of the

---

Décaméron; Mario Praz, *La chair, la mort et le diable da la littérature du xixe siècle. Le romantisme noir*; Michel Jarrety*, Lexique des termes littéraires*; Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein ou le Prométhée modern*; Hermann Hesse, *L'ornière*; Jean Bottéro, *La Plus vielle religion*: *En Mésopotamie*; William Shakespeare, *Othello*; Oscar Wilde, *Le Portrait de Dorian Gray*; Franz Kafka, *Le Château*; *Dictionnaire de poétique; Traite pratique de la diction française*; Dante, *La Divine Comédie – L'Enfer: Edition bilingue français-italien*; Jean Racine, *Phèdre*; Miguel Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quichotte*; Mikhaïl Bakhtine, *La poétique de Dostoïevski*; Marquis de Sade, *Les Crimes de l'amour: Nouvelles héroïques et tragiques*; Novalis, *Œuvres complètes*; C-S Lewis, *Un visage pour l'éternité: Un mythe réinterprété*; Charles Baudelaire, *Fusées – Mon Cœur mis à nu – La Belgique déshabillée – Amoenitates Belgicae*; René Guénon, Les *états multiples de l'être*; Guillaume de Lorris, *Le Roman de la Rose*; Ivan Tourguéniev, *Pères et fils*; René Guénon, *Aperçus sure l'ésotérisme islamique et le Taoïsme*; Vladimir Pozner, *Les Âmes mortes*; Franz Kafka, *La Muraille de Chine et autres récits*; Gérard de Nerval, *Les Filles du feu: Les Chimères, sonnets manuscrits*; Dante Alighieri, *Œuvres complètes*; Edgar Allan Poe, *Histories extraordinaires*; Alfred de Musset, *La Confession d'un enfant du siècle*; Stéphane Mallarmé, *Poésies*; Alexandre Pouchkine, *Boris Godounov: Théâtre complet*; Paul Claudel, *Le Soulier de satin ou Le pire n'est pas toujours sûr: Action espagnole en quarte journées*; Edith Hamilton*, La mythologie*; Franz Kafka*, Le procès*; Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust*; William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*; Sénèque, *De la providence – De la constance du sage – De la tranquillité de l'âme – Du loisir*; Anton Pavlovitch Tchekhov, *La Cerisaie*; Jean Renoir, *La règle du jeu (DVD)*; Carl-Gustav Jung, *Présent et avenir*; Georges Bernanos, *La grande peur des bien-pensants; La chanson de Roland*; Bernard-Marie Koltès, *Une part de ma vie: Entretiens (1983-1989)*; Jean-Paul Sartre, *L'existentialisme est un humanisme*; *Hésiode, La Théogonie, les Travaux et les Jours et autres poèmes*; Fédor Mikhaïlovitch Dostoïevski, *Crime et châtiment*; Denis Diderot, *Jacques le Fataliste*; Nicolas Machiavel, *Le Prince*; Nicolas Machiavel, *Le Prince*; *Le Zohar, tome 1*; Charles Baudelaire, *Le Peintre de la vie moderne*; John Keats, *Poèmes et poésies*; Baudiffier, *Précis de grammaire des lettres latines*; Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*; Eschyle, *Tragédies complètes*; Fédor Mikhaïlovitch Dostoïevski, *Les Frères Karamazov*; Albert Camus, *L'été*; Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *La Terre*; Claude David, *La Métamorphose et autres récits: Tous les textes parus du vivant de Kafka*; Friedrich Nietzsche, *L'Antéchrist/Ecco Homo*; Orson Scott Card, *La saga des ombres*.
http://www.amazon.fr/FaustJohannWolfgangvonGoethe/dp/2080700243/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=13893 54951&sr=8-1&keywords=Goethe+faust

American, German, and French collections surrounding *Faust*, there is a visible tendency toward shifting notions of world and national literatures which is indicated in the comparatively proportionate number of what might be regarded as the usual suspects of the world literature canon (those texts and authors that have been historically stable contributions in world literature anthologies) and the largely national-world elements that more clearly demonstrate the underlying biases and preferences and linguistic dominance of the collective consumer-reader aggregate. The location of *Weltliteratur*, it seems, is inextricably connected to the collection as a culturally determined space.

The celebrated Dutch author Harry Mulisch once famously declared: "I am world famous in the Netherlands," a witticism that pokes fun at the often local perception of global understandings, particularly in terms of literary fame.[149] But the irony of Mulisch's worldliness expresses arguably the same notion of world-literariness that we may observe in the collections at Amazon, collections which effectively perform the operative notions of world letters through the specific biases and fantasies of cultural capital that are inescapably bound to any group. Damrosch describes the same duality between the local and global in one of his conclusive theses on world literature, namely in his description of the "elliptical refraction," in which "works become world literature by being received into the space of a foreign culture, a space defined in many ways by the host culture's national tradition and the present needs of its own writers" (Damrosch 283). *Faust* appears in each of the groupings as a product of the foreign host culture while maintaining something of its original textual origin as well.

---

[149] Mulisch was quoted in *Der Spiegel* in the article "Nerv getroffen," July 7, 1986.

World literature is thus always as much about the host culture's values and needs as it is about a work's source culture; hence it is a double refraction, one that can be described in the figure if the ellipse, with the source and host cultures providing the two foci that generate the elliptical space within which a work lives as world literature, connected to both cultures, circumscribed to neither alone. (Damrosch 283)

To view the clusters of recommended works at Amazon is to view simultaneously a single text and the textual company it keeps as determined by the inexorable subjectivity of its particular cultural location. In a sense, we may regard these collections as an expression of the way in which *Weltliteratur* is commonly experienced, as a system of relayed literary knowledge as it circulates with the help of translation, approval by cultural authorities, and sheer material availability. It is at once a commercial application in the corporate book market, a living example of Damrosch's notion of the double refraction, and a display of both host and source cultures in the experience of literature.

In both the theoretical sense of dual literary foci advocated by Damrosch and the practical location of world texts in the national markets of online commerce, there is an obvious conclusion to be drawn concerning the variability of world literature on the basis of national bias. If world literature is in some way represented through a collection of texts, then it must be acknowledged that the notion of the world produced by the sum of collection is always a reflection of the will of those agents of the collection itself. Such subjectivity is evident in each collection – nowhere is such an active involvement as apparent as in the NS-fantasy of *Weltliteratur* in the journal of the same name – yet, in such clearly subjective examples as in the algorithm manifestations from big data, each radical difference in the varying practices of *Weltliteratur* collections serves to further

illustrate that the role of the single elements of any *Weltliteratur* is secondary to the underlying notion of totality in which they exist.

Research on the concept has perhaps mistakenly sought to investigate *Weltliteratur* solely in the success of the sum total of the collections which suggest such an end. Meanwhile, a matter of great significance has gone overlooked, namely the medium of literary connection in the production of the whole that is (and can never truly be) *Weltliteratur*. It is, therefore, necessary to explore not simply the greater collections of these literary worlds, but the way in which each text connects to its neighboring works. The lived experience of *Weltliteratur* takes the common form of small groups, but the processes of linking, of connecting, of both inter- and extratexutal cooperation between these always finite but seemingly endless glimpses into literary depths, are the common modes of experience for the concept of *Weltliteratur*. At Amazon, the efficiency of the market-driven organization and its advantage of digital visualization assists in illuminating the mechanics of the networked world of literature and the passive but prevailing modes of world-literary entirety which underlie the common understanding of the single text in its always changing global position.

Collaborative Filtering Software of Amazon's Consumable World of Literature

The practice of ordering titles of possible interest to accompany individual works of literature is primarily a commercial technology. Amazon generates its recommendations with the application of *collaborative filtering* software, which employs algorithms to collect and arrange masses of data so that individual items can be isolated from an

accumulation of information and classified within a set of product associations that are

determined by past patterns in consumer behavior. Individual items (in this case books)

are then recommended on the basis of their connections to other items which overlap in

the consumption patterns of an amalgamation of like-minded consumer/readers. These

software programs collect the preferences for each item through a series of links to those

with similar interests. In doing so, they are to identify products (again literature) within a

network of associations based on the similar tastes and collective overlapping interests in

the same titles (Riedl and Konstan 14). Amazon was among the earliest of high profile

corporations to uses collaborative filtering software for marketing and its

recommendation program has since become a characteristic feature of the company and

its business model; yet such recommendation programs are commonplace in marketing

and product recommendation in business in general. Such software is also commonly

used by other media companies to sell products of interest to likeminded consumers and

by various online news sources for recommending articles of particular interest to the

reader. Specifically in terms of recommending literature, Google Books also applies its

own collaborative filtering algorithm in order to suggest similar titles within its massive

archive of books.[150]

The recommendation systems at Amazon are essentially the application of a

variety of *collaborative filtering* tools. *Cluster models* pair each customer with a

specifically determined consumer base of interest; *user-to-user correlations* are used to

---

[150] It should be noted that while a similar exploration of textual grouping based on collaborative filtering programs could be conducted on any site that employs such software and has access to such a wealth of bibliographic-data (like Google), the focus here, in the interest of space and specificity, is Amazon's use of the software in the market of literature.

match up one customer with another on the basis of what has been identified as a

common interest in a particular product or item from the collection that the software

governs; there are also a variety of collaborative filtering applications that involve more

manually operation and that entail active cooperation from the consumer-subject, such as

Amazon's *Eyes* program, which functions to alert customers via email of

recommendations for newly added products that match up with specific interests

articulated by the customer, or by intersecting with the interests that have been expressed

in the direct participation of consumers in the rating and reviewing programs offered by

the website.[151]

  Of course there is a great and obvious degree of intentional subjectivity involved

in these methods. The programs are designed to rely on the influence of the individual

and his or her tastes. However, these are only a few features of collaborative-filtering

based recommendation programs at Amazon and they are arguably secondary to the most

prominent application of algorithm recommendation that Amazon employs. The digital

book seller goliath is perhaps most commonly known for *item-to-item collaborative*

filtering, a software program that relies not on the isolated bonds between individual

consumers or their described preferences, but on patterns that emerge from a matrix of

connections and links between products in the ephemeral catalog of choices, or links that

are generated from a filtration of masses of data on the consumer histories of each of the

products and their many overlapping nodes of association with other mutually consumed

items. Each product, in this case literary titles, is ordered on the basis of its points of

---

[151] For An overview of collaborative filtering programs and the detail of their usages at Amazon, see
(Linden, et al. 78; Schafer, Konstan, and Riedl, 1999, 159; Schafer, Konstan, and Riedl, 2001, 137).

intersection with other titles, creating recommendations which appear to be custom tailored to the consumer. In reality, the patterns of association between titles stem from the similar consumer histories of likeminded consumers and statistical intersection that each work shares among niche consumers. As a book recommendation program, *item-to-item collaborative filtering* software may serve to illustrate the latent patterns of aesthetic preference and information transfer within a greater community of readers and within a greater economy of literary works. Yet, while the connections between single works that are discerned from the massive pool of data may appear to be simply commercial, they may also point toward a number of underlying understandings of literariness and the way we experience and order literary works on the basis of perceived affinities.

To view the practice of collecting and ordering that these collaborative filtering programs support is to embrace fully a new condition of knowledge in the order of commercial literary works. The novel perspective of literary organization that is achieved through these methods of algorithmic clustering is also a new view of literary norms and the means with which such norms and aesthetic presuppositions are created and disseminated. Perhaps the most significant transformation in this digital literary order is that the traditional and once dominant method of top-down distribution has been challenged by these new models. The authority-based distribution of aesthetic laws, rankings, and criteria establishment in the norms and values of the cultural industry has traditionally been the jurisdiction of the established cultural institutions of academics and creative professionals (Guillory 28-29). The conventional control has been maintained by those who own the central machinery of relevant information in publishing and higher

education. Yet, the new view of consumer habits reveals something of a challenge to this once central authority. Connections between single items or texts are driven by the collective experience of a wealth of data. The outcome is that a number of smaller groups and niche interests emerge as powerful forces in the literary marketplace. The conglomerate data representing the pool of disparate reader-consumers produces a glimpse of literary knowledge that is distributed via links between previously scattered individuals. But how do the now connected nodes of the book market and their whispers of literary interest emerge from the vast wealth of data to defy or validate the former authorities of cultural value?

The success of Amazon's recommendation tactics results from an innovative approach to the balance between single works and the whole composition of possibilities (at least in the commercial sense) in which they exist. By locating each text at the point of its figurative intersection with other works, the view at Amazon effectively exhibits the way in which a common mode of literary knowledge is created and passed on. Each literary text occupies a different space in the world of literature when it is observed from the point of its connections, a view which requires a novel consideration of textual entirety not as a central body or as a hierarchical order, but as a network of overlapping, intersecting, and interconnecting nodes. "A network," Castells reminds us, "has no center, just nodes [and] [n]odes may be of varying relevance for the network" (Castells 3). To regard Amazon's recommendations as an alternative means of world-literary organization is to depart from the former top-down ordering of the established authorities of literary value and the conventional institutions of cultural capital as they are generally

expressed in the printed catalogs of syllabi and the published volumes of anthologies and journals. It is a world literature that is based on a more bottom-up principle in which the dominant mode of organization is the very distribution of literary knowledge among the masses of readers.

These algorithm-based patterns of literary consumption at Amazon, or any other massive force of digital literary data, display the measurable qualitative effects of quantitative order by sorting through the information of previously unseen literary history in commerce. Algorithms enact a logic of links in order to depart from the single center of literary value and to demonstrate the common, unseen forces of literary knowledge dissemination on a grand scale. No longer the strict domain of established positions of literary authority, the novel view of the algorithm reveals the connections between the always linked worlds of separate, yet largely congenial readers whose dominant conceptions about literature are illustrated in the data reflecting the past patterns of consumer behavior. Ultimately, the result of the software program is a means of organizing yet another world of literature, but this time as a depiction of a reader-based distribution of dominant values and pre-conceived beliefs. As such, Amazon's mode of textual order is based on knowledge of the text which precedes the direct engagement with each literary object, shifting the act of reading each text to the act of reading the location of the text within the network of possibilities.

Collaborative filtering programs, including Amazon's recommendation software and similar manifestations of literary data, administer *data mining* tactics in the creation of the images of connections and affinities between mutually consumed works. The

depiction of such data is used to infer the concealed literary correlations that may help

drive sales by making it clear customers that a similar work of interest is before them.

Essentially the mode of organization is based on the unseen "association rules" between

products, which, in further business applications, are used to "help a merchandiser

arrange products so that, for example, a consumer purchasing ketchup sees relish nearby"

(Schafer, et al., 119). In terms of marketing and business, such a practice seems to be

nothing less than common sense, however, the realm of literature, even if it too displays

strong market realities, presents a number of challenges in determining how to group

literary works simply as products or commodities to be traded. We are left to question

whether the "association rules" between foodstuffs are truly comparable to the

associations between cultural artifacts and whether we may speak of the same

commensurability between works of literature as that which binds condiments.

The very notion of a rule of association in literature is a challenge to literary

histories and the practice of reading any text as an autonomous aesthetic unit. The rules

of association in literature are perhaps synonymous with those elements of canon

formation, always bound to the dominant forces of cultural capital as they are determined

and reproduced by "the judges and gatekeepers of the canon," the defenders of literary

authority (Guillory 270). The history of *Weltliteratur* as a practice is a shifting set of

performances regarding the rules of literary association and how to implement them. But

the conventions that bind ketchup and relish are dependent on the lived experience of

these esculent commodities and repetition within the culturally specific context of their

appearance. The bond between these condiments in commerce is at least partially the

reproduction of common behaviors as they are practiced within any culture as an at least partially homogenous group. To reproduce the bond between these two is to reiterate the order of most US-American diners, staging the regularity of table condiments in pairs as common as salt and pepper. If recommendation of likely pairs of this sort relies on the reproduction of experience, how are the bonds of literary association forged? What is the reproduction of a literary experience? How does literary recommendation function if it is dependent on the communication of direct experiences?

Weltliteratur at Amazon appears as a consolidation of recommended titles which are ordered on a principle of expectations, pre-formed notions of value and beliefs, or speculation about what each of these texts might entail. Fundamentally, the organizing principle must be based on common understandings of each text *before* it has been read or before the reader/consumer has read the book or directly engaged with its internal textual content. Or so it would seem. In order for Amazon to effectively produce clusters of recommendations based on rules of association, the association must precede the work itself – as with the bond between ketchup and relish. And yet, in most cases, the books that are purchased are surely not the books that are already known to the reader (although, for a number of reasons this is surely sometimes the case). The order of literary works thus reflects a largely speculative element in the dissemination of literary knowledge. In these terms, the motivating forces of this textual organization are not the experiences of literature as they are formed by the traces of other texts which are known from the lived experience of a single reader, but the traces of a form of knowledge that is largely inherited, second hand, and fundamentally interactive. Such bonds are indicative

309

of a sort of expected textuality and one that is at least in part influenced by key actors within a greater structure of the collective literary experience. In such a case, any single text itself appears secondary to the world of literature in which it exists. Amazon's unusual digital *Weltliteratur* collections order texts along a pattern of association rules which appear to be formed not through a direct knowledge of the text, but through a knowledge of the text as it is relayed from a latent collective experience and through a network of subtle hints concerning its greater value in the textual whole.

In other words, Amazon's algorithms assist to promote a sort of textual assemblage that is governed in part by an understanding of the act of reading as a pre-textual event, one in which the interaction between text and reader occurs in some ways before the close reading of the internal literariness of the text. This view presents an order to the worlds of literature not as an endless literary universe, but as a planetary system of single texts that is latent in form and fundamentally limited by the agents of literary value that hand down textual traces in a sense of relays, establish and defend the cultural capital of the known markers of value, and stimulate the economy of letters by conveying texts and driving circulation through translation and publication. The grouping mechanism of Amazon's big data reveals hints of the collective literary unconscious that underlies this unseen and omnipresent literary universe, which is always governed by a form of literary knowledge concerning literature that is formed outside of and prior to the act of reading.

Franco Moretti's attempt to view the real entireties of world literature through distant reading essentially endeavors to circumvent those literary knowledge-forming bonds of pre-textual meaning-making which are so deeply embedded in the worlds of

literature we know. It is a purposeful preference of a view of the forest before the trees.[152]

Yet precisely these elements of textual association within networks speak for the

prospective value, thematic content, or possible points of interest to potential readers.

These factors convey an initial value by communicating at the most basic level that the

text is worth the attention of reading: "you invest so much in individual texts *only* if you

think that very few of them really matter" (Moretti 2004: 151). And yet, to break strictly

from the forces that connect readers to texts by suggesting, as Moretti puts it, that they

"really matter," is to ignore completely the process of knowledge formation as a literary

event; it is an approach that willfully ignores a powerful element in the formation of the

literariness of even individual texts. While distant reading may intentionally omit its

attention from these pre-textual forces, the view of textual entireties provided by Amazon

embraces directly the view of literary order on the basis of ephemeral cultural systems

that serve to direct both what to read and how to read it. Although it is surely far from the

intention of Amazon's recommendation software, the perspective of textual order on the

basis of quantitative associations and digital perspectives illustrates the changing

positions of texts within their networks. It is a nearly geographic depiction of the

invisible hand of the literary economy.

     Amazon's recommendation networks thus efficiently perform exactly the key

organizational element of other *Weltliteratur* collections by displaying each text amidst

the paratextual surroundings of other titles, enacting an interplay between the individual

---

[152] In reaction to Moretti's method, Damrosch states that "systematic approaches need to be counterbalanced with close attention to particular languages, specific texts: we need to see both the forest and the trees" (Damrosch 26).

text and its position in the world constellation of letters around it. As with Genette's definition of paratexts, the peripheral textual elements that assist the mediation of the literary text perform a sort of communication between the formal narrative elements of the book's interior and the elements of its mediation beyond the material limits of the book as a physical object. Paratexts mediate between the internal and external textualities of the book (Genette 32). The paratextual communication between these internal and external poles of textuality serves to illuminate the existence of a literariness beyond any text as a single or isolated unit. By very way of paratextual communication, we are reminded that the threshold between text and its mediation is fluid. In the same sense that the textuality of the book includes the paratextual devices of its material mediation, each single text in a collection of *Weltliteratur* necessarily involves a similar act of communication with the surrounding titles and fragments of the world constellation around it.

The lesson of paratexts draws attention to the interconnectedness of a text to its surroundings, but Genette's notion of paratexts deals generally with a division between a "main text" and its material accompaniments, such as book jacket, illustrations, commentary, marginalia, etc. (Genette 32). Collected bodies of *Weltliteratur*, on the other hand, lack such textual centrality while maintaining a comparable mechanics of communication between multiple textual marginalities. At Amazon recommended works surround any given "central" text, but the bonds between these works are more removed than the materially embedded paratexts of the printed book. Although the effect of this organization is paratextual in the sense that each work is surrounded by others, the

312

driving force of each affiliation is generated by relayed and assumed understandings of a limited literary world and the paratexts on display are cover images of available titles – references not to single elements of the book, but to entire works. The bonds of each of these networks consist of a series of textual relationships that are created largely *before* and *outside* of the text. Unlike the paratextual interaction between book-review praise on the jacket of a book and the text that lies within, Amazon's bonds display consumer attitudes toward literature presumably before the texts are read. Therefore, the affiliations at Amazon are not as much paratextual, but *extratextual*, formed outside of the material text and based on collective expectations of literary knowledge.

In the journal or anthology of *Weltliteratur* the bonds between texts are appropriately paratextual in their print-media connections, while Amazon's extratextual affiliations depict a contrasting relationship to the authority the collection. A general public readership, for Genette, is the targeted addressee of the paratextual message of both author and text (Genette 9). Contrarily, Amazon reveals the same public readership to be active in the process of textual influence and canon formation. As a body of literary consumers this public readership is an agent in the process of literary communication (Genette 9). Of course, granting literary authority or agency to a collective body of consumers is also to take a liberal approach to reading in general. The elephant in the room of the Amazon collections is the pervasive awareness that the driving logic of textual affiliation comes from purchasing patterns, not literary criticism in the classic sense. We are left to question the commensurability of these so clearly disparate patterns of organization in world literature.

Genette's understanding of the public readership also includes the agents of literary knowledge dissemination beyond the formal practices of reading, extending his notion to the actors of literary reception and the agents of textual circulation as well (Genette 74-75). In discussion of his "polysystems theory" of literary translation, Itamar Even-Zohar also argues that factors of textuality external to the material text are fundamentally intertwined with the greater literariness of the text. Even-Zohar goes as far as to regard the act of literary "consumption" as a sort of collective textual event: "All members of any community are at least 'indirect' consumers of literary texts. In this capacity we, as members, simply consume a certain quantity of literary fragments, digested and transmitted by various agents of culture and made an integral part of daily discourse" (Even-Zohar 36). Despite the literary-cultural extensions to consumerism, the true commensurability between Amazon's alternative *Weltliteratur* and that of the print-media authorities of past collections comes from the common characteristic in each collection between the single work and the world constellation around it. In each of these cases, the text appears as book title, fragment, or an author's name primarily in the metonymic sense. As one of the collected parts of world literature, each single text appears as a part standing in for a greater whole. In the journal and anthology, such metonymy is experienced in the collecting and joining of text fragments, which signify the entire work as well as its greater position in a taxonomy that expands outward toward the notion of world-literary totality. At Amazon, the surrounding recommended titles function as metonymic images, semiotic stand-ins for the entirety of the novel, genre, or

national literature elsewhere. This process of compressed, refracted, abbreviated literary shorthand is a constant in the collections of *Weltliteratur*.

Kleist's Media Afterlives

Where in Amazon's digital world literature are the once stable groups of national literatures? The unwavering presence of those Western classics such as Goethe, Voltaire, and Shakespeare in collections of world literature complicates the position of such masters as the representatives of a German, French, or English literature, as their location in world literature precedes their national status. As cornerstones in the permanent collection of the world literary museum, these canonical masters communicate the core of world literature beyond the national and are thus less fit to represent the subtleties of the *Weltliteratur* archive as an expression of the literary system or republic of letters. If the literary capital of these names precedes their experienced textuality, then their respective position as world literature is assured before and outside of the act of reading. This is not, of course, to restate the claim that the central figures of the Western canon are unjustly seated on the thrones of literary value; rather, such an observation is intended to demonstrate that a major element of the status of *Weltliteratur* is non-literary in its constellation and that the centermost core of such collections is perhaps so tenured that it is no longer subject to the same mechanisms of literary competition with which even classic works, marginal only to the most canonical, must contend.

The algorithms and big data of the commercial world of letters have decentralized these constellations so that the visual organization of world literature includes those

groups without the omnipresent centers of authority that appear invariantly across other collections. As such, these collections are evidence for the pervasive mechanics of world literary organization without the once necessary influence of the established center of aesthetic and cultural capital. The view of world literature as an archive of buyable goods at Amazon also enables the shifting center of comparable cultural perspectives, albeit restricted to those perhaps predictable mainstays of national-cultural hegemony paralleled by linguistic ubiquity and the market-power of massive economies: Amazon has affiliate cites in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, Germany, France, Spain, Italy, Mexico, Brazil, China, India, and Japan. In each of these national markets, the constellation of world literature is reflected by the comparative difference of literary perception and material access. Each grouping of texts surrounding any given work will ultimately reflect common bonds of literary association that are pervasive in the community of consumers in that respective culture/market. Therefore, this bottom-up organization of texts illustrates constellations of a literary knowledge as shaped by the existing constraints of access and availability through translation and publication in each culturally determined market; it is within these specific market-clusters that we can examine the constellations of *Weltliteratur* beyond and in contrast to the most invariant centers of a single world-literary authority.

In the midst of varying national markets, we are able to observe the unique position of writers whose status oscillates between highly canonical in the national context of the origin culture to nearly non-existent in the common-denominator collection of perceived world orders. Heinrich von Kleist, for example, is among the most central

316

figures in German letters, yet his legacy abroad, although far from marginalized, is less

than central in the literary imaginations of multiple cultural perspectives. However,

without the eclipsing shadow of canonical stability abroad, the legacy of Kleist beyond

Germany reveals an altogether different relationship to world letters and shows largely

different paths of textual circulation. In a comparative view of Amazon collections,

Kleist's slightly off-center canonicity abroad serves to support at once the obvious

conclusion that any given author or text enjoys a different status abroad than in its culture

of origin, and also that this different status is so highly determined by the factors that

drive its circulation beyond its origin culture and position amidst other works in

subjective canons and sub-canons of new host cultures.

Heinrich von Kleist occupies a central position in the (German) world literature

arrangements in Scherr's *Bildersaal* and the NS-journal. Among the most revered writers

of German literary history, Kleist's legacy is unmistakably canonical. It is perhaps the

ambiguous classification of Kleist's works within any strict genre that has also allowed

for such a liberal range of interpretation of his contribution to *Weltliteratur*. Scherr

regarded Kleist within German Romanticism whereas his legacy in the National Socialist

archive of literature was political beyond epochal classification, utilizing Kleist's rage

against Napoleon as an anachronistic role model for contemporary nationalism and

ideology. Yet the varying appearances of Kleist in these respective world collections are

nonetheless similar in their treatment of the writer as an unshakable cornerstone of

Weltliteratur. There is also little doubt that the literary legacy of Kleist is recognized in

comparative literature departments throughout the world as among the most central

317

contributors to German language literature; however, it would be difficult to make the case beyond these specific German contexts that Kleist has been considered equally central to the canon of world literature (Damrosch 2009: 511). To use North American collections of world literature as a sort of calibrated scale of world literary value would be to ignore the cultural subjectivity of such a collection as an agent of literary value itself. Any allusion to Kleist's lacking world position is as much a matter of neglect on the part of those largely US-American volumes of world literature as it might be the specific national biases of the German collections to promote one of the mainstays of German letters. Kleist, it seems, is world famous in Germany.

The example of Kleist restates the obvious conclusion that such collections are inherently bound to the biases of the editors and organizers of the collections. This quasi-revelation is a reiteration of the conclusion of past chapters, namely that the practice of *Weltliteratur* collections falls short of its goal, creating in its stead a functional group of texts, text fragments or metonymic representations of authors, texts, and larger literatures as *Weltliteratur* despite the underlying impossibility of such a category to exist. Instead, there exists a multitude of competing principalities in the republic of letters, each with its own rules and own methods for collecting and exhibiting a world of literature that exists by sheer insistence on its own existence. Just as in previous chapters, the paradox of success and failure in the practice of *Weltliteratur* is evident in the Amazon archives, but these collections are also void of the specific attachment to the single established centers of literary authority and allow thus for a novel view of the functional shortcomings of world literature in the capitalist market realities of cultural-literary constraints.

318

If Kleist is a world author in Germany and a German author in the world, where exactly does his oeuvre fit into the world literary collections of other nations? If Amazon's organization of texts may indeed be regarded as an expression of latent world-literary knowledge in changing national markets, then it may be used as a tool to visualize a comparison once reserved for the top-down exhibitions of literary collections as in previous chapters. At Amazon.de, the textual company of recommended works surrounding Kleist reiterate the foundations of what appears to be the reading list of *Germanistik* seminars and the scattered satellites of a greater *Weltliteratur*. But Kleist enjoys different company abroad. At Amazon.fr, Amazon.es, Amazon.it, as well as Amazon.com and its fellow anglophile cites in the UK, Canada, and Australia, Kleist is present in translations of varying availability and occasionally in the German original; however, the recommendations based on mutual association and consumer habits point toward less of a stable canonical arrangement, restating in a way the comparative canonicity beyond the German context. Precisely these alternative views of an author who is both world and German depending on the vantage point present a valuable opportunity to examine what Damrosch regards as a defining characteristic of world literature, namely that Kleist's works in these comparative world literatures circulate beyond their country of origin as "elliptical refractions of national literatures" and as texts that "gain in translation" (Damrosch 2003: 281). Such a status is also largely dependent on the way in which Kleist connects to the surrounding works; it is only as such that gains and losses of translation can be calculated and the mechanics of textual

refraction between nation and world may be measured. In either case, Amazon's altering algorithmic archives exhibit a different Kleist for each of his different host worlds.

By translation and sheer presence in foreign literary markets, Kleist achieves a degree of worldliness, but the specific bonds to the peripheral works of his textual company suggest not just the destination of this textual conveyance but also details about the particular travel itinerary. Close inspection reveals that, at least to some extent, Kleist enters the American literary scene through New York in the historical fiction of the American fin de siècle, that is, with the help of *Ragtime*, E.L. Doctorow's 1975 English language novel and partial adaptation of Kleist's 1810 Novelle *Michael Kohlhaas*. The majority of surrounding works accompanying Kleist, and specifically the English translations of *Michael Kohlhaas*, exhibit a readership that is largely interested in German literature in translation (including Kleist's contemporaries Goethe and Schiller) and world literature staples (like Joyce, Kafka, Hawthorne, Mann, et. al), but the two poles of canonicity in German and world collections are disrupted in a number of manifestations by a palpable bond with Doctorow's novel. It is this bond that so clearly illustrates how the textual affiliations of our limited world of literature join to create an intricate and seemingly endless fabric of a textual whole which we regard as a world of its own.

A work of historical fiction, Doctorow's Ragtime takes place in New York City at the turn of the century, in the era of the pre-jazz genre ragtime. In a meandering narrative, a number of characters are introduced, including historical figures – Harry Houdini, Sigmund Freud, J.P. Morgan, Henry Ford, and Emma Goldman to name a few – whose

fictional doings overlap and set forth a series of interrelated sub-plots throughout the course of the novel. A remarkable element to the novel is the narrative turn it takes in the twentieth of its forty chapters, when the character of Coalhouse Walker Jr. is introduced. Coalhouse is an African American man whose fate becomes intertwined with the figures of previous chapters when he begins a patient and persistent courtship of Sarah, the mother of Coalhouse's recently born baby and the house servant to the family of central characters (referred to simply as "father," "mother," and "mother's younger brother"). After slowly gaining Sarah's interest, Coalhouse becomes the central figure in the novel when he becomes the victim of racist bullying by a volunteer fire brigade. Coalhouse owns an automobile, which, for the year early twentieth-century context, is a considerable status symbol and also quite unusual given the circumstances of the racial inequalities of the period. On his way to New York, Coalhouse is prevented passage on a necessary stretch of road by a thuggish band of the local fire unit, demanding a fee for the use of the public road. Coalhouse politely protests and refuses to pay the unjust toll and is consequently forbidden passage. In order to inquire into the legalities of the clearly abusive fire brigade, Coalhouse temporarily leaves his car near the fire station under the supervision of two neighborhood boys. After finding out that the fire brigade, particularly its leadership and conflict agitator Willy Conklin, is too connected with the local law to side with an African American, he returns to find his automobile defecated in and vandalized.

After a number of failed attempts to right the injustice through the proper legal channels, Coalhouse Walker Jr. is pushed over the edge when Sarah, his wife to be,

naively attempts to petition the government on his behalf by approaching the visiting vice president at a political rally. Due to tensions following the recent assassination of William McKinley, Sarah's frantic charge toward the vice president calling "President! President!" (Doctorow 159) results in a presidential guard striking her in the chest with the butt of his rifle, leading a few days later to her death. From this point on, Coalhouse begins a murderous guerrilla campaign against the fire brigade in lieu of Willy Conklin, leading a band of sympathetic followers in violent insurrection. Demanding that his car be returned and restored to its original condition and that Willy Conklin be turned over to his justice, Coalhouse challenges the establishment of order with demands they will not meet and thus accepts his fate. He is eventually killed in a hail of gunfire after his demands are partially met through the restoration and return of his Model-T by Willy Conklin.

The story of Coalhouse Walker Jr. is a nearly exact retelling of Kleist's *Michael Kohlhaas,* save for the altered cultural context and specific amendments to the events. The name Coalhouse functions as a playful homophonic reminder that this early twentieth-century African American man is an echo of Kleist's sixteenth-century horse dealer of Brandenburg, an echo of the sixteenth-century historical Hans Kohlhase. Equally, the name of his adversary Willy Conklin resounds that of Junker Wenzel von Tronka, incorporating the anglicized "W" consonant and syllabic similarity and rhyme in the last name. The greatest similarity occurs in the countless examples of direct borrowing from the fabula of Kleist's Novella. A number of characters appear in Doctorow's New York as complete parallels to Kleist's sixteenth-century Brandenburg,

such as the African American activist and politician Booker T. Washington to Kleist's

Martin Luther. Whereas Kohlhaas declares his reign over "unserer provisorischen

Weltregierung," Coalhouse Walker Jr. declares his presidency the "Provisional American

Government (Kleist 39; Doctorow 187). The narrative turning point of *Ragtime* involves

the symbolism of the vehicle as the damaged property from which the conflict emerges.

Like the horses of Kohlhaas, Coalhouse Walker's horseless carriage Model T becomes,

the *Dingsymbol*, "the violation of which precipitates the catastrophe" (Kurth-Voigt 405).

It is unnecessary to recall each single episodic parallel between the two stories.

The latter half of *Ragtime* is indisputably written with the narrative blueprint of *Michael

Kohlhaas*.[153] Scholars are thorough in their observations of the parallels between the two

works, but it is in its conception also far from a secret. Doctorow himself declared his

borrowing as an homage to Kleist in an interview: "Kleist is a great master. I was first

attracted to his prose, his stories, and the location of his narrative somewhere between

history and fiction" (Friedl and Schulz 123). He continues to credit Kleist for *Ragtime* as

well: "*Ragtime* is a quite deliberate homage. You know, writers lift things from other

writers all the time. I always knew I wanted to use *Michael Kohlhaas* in some way, but I

didn't know until my black musician was driving up the Broadview Avenue hill in his

Model T Ford that the time had come to do that" (Friedl and Schulz 124). Doctorow

clearly enjoys Kleist's borrowing from the historical Hans Kohlhase, drawing his

fictional tale from real-life events and suggesting a process of relays of experiences and

---

[153] See Christian Moraru: *The Reincarnated Plot: E.L. Doctorow's Ragtime, Heinrich von Kleist's "Michael Kohlhaas," and the Spectacle of Modernity* (Moraru 92-116); Lieselotte E. Kurth-Voigt: *Kleistian Overtones in E.L. Doctorow's "Ragtime"* (Kurth-Voigt 404-414); (Hutcheon 136); and Bernd Fischer, *What Moves Kohlhaas? Terror in Heinrich von Kleist, E.L. Docotorow, and Christoph Hein* (Fischer 185-196).

events from which literature emerges. *Ragtime* is a notably American tale with its New York location, its robber barons, its racial tensions and political upheavals, and its Model T's with the power of 45 Brandenburg steeds. Yet the violent rage toward the abusers of the law, the vigilant fury from a man denied justice by the proper channels, and the destructive pillaging of a rebel determined to die after he loses his wife to the foolish violence, is all reborn in this transcultural context.

Doctorow notes that, beyond the plot elements of Michael Kohlhaas, he also admires the stylistic elements of Kleist's writing: "The other astonishing thing about Kleist is […] the rate of narrative advance, both in his plays and in his prose. The relentless almost predatory movement from one sentence to another. Nothing is still, in Kleist. Nothing is commentary. Characterization is never indulged for its own sake – it is rather a circumstance of plot" (Friedl and Schulz 124). Doctorow also borrows the relentless almost predatory movement of Kleist's syntax. Again, the scene of injury for Lisbeth/Sarah demonstrates a comparable use of relative clauses in addition to the parallels in the story.

> Es schien, sie hatte sich zu driest an die Person des
> Landesherrn vorgedrängt, und, ohne Verschulden
> desselben, von dem bloßen rohen Eifer einer Wache, die
> ihn umringte, einen Stoß, mit dem Schaft einer Lanze, vor
> die Brust erhalten. Wenigstens berichteten die Leute so, die
> sie, in bewußtlosem Zustand, gegen Abend in den Gasthof
> brachten; den sie selbst konnte, von aus dem Mund
> vorquellendem Blute gehindert, wenig sprechen. (Kleist 26)

> A militiaman stepped forward and, with the deadly
> officiousness of armed men who protect the famous,
> brought the butt of his Springfield against Sarah's chest as
> hard as he could. She fell. A Secret Service man jumped on
> top of her. (Doctorow 159)

Here Doctorow anglicizes Kleist's intricate German syntax with its multiple relative clause additions. Although Doctorow has Sarah's mouth bleeding a page later – "[…] her forehead was dry and hot and a bubble of blood on the corner of her mouth inflated and deflated with each breath" – the echoes of this literary borrowing continue in the telling of the Lisbeth/Sarah death (Doctorow 160).

At times Doctorow plays directly with his readers, not as much winking to them as shouting to indicate the Kleistian intertext behind the narrative. As Coalhouse and his men occupy J.P. Morgan's library in a dual act of residence and hostage taking, one of the men throws out an object from the fortress in order to communicate with the surrounding authorities. Once the initial fear subsides that the object is a bomb, the police examine the object and it is determined by an expert to be an artifact from Morgan's collection, a medieval drinking stein that once belonged to Frederick, Elector of Saxony a nod to both the historical Hans Kohlhase and Kleist's Kohlhaas (Kurth-Voigt 408). As Booker T. Washington enters the Coalhouse compound he observes a portrait of Martin Luther in Morgan's library (Kurth-Voigt 410). Doctorow, it seems, makes every effort to position his story alongside Kleist's, utilizing plot, syntax, character names, and overt references to the original.

Like a translation in the Benjaminian sense, Doctorow's Ragtime contains the echoes of Kleist's Novella. Yet the same textual afterlife of the once German tale is not without the continued presence of the early form. Through overt, at times heavy-handed reference to the original, the Coalhouse chapters of *Ragtime* stage a simultaneous retelling of Kleist's text while maintaining the textual sovereignty of the Kleistian

original. It is, for example, not simply that the character of Luther is depicted through Washington, performed as it is by a narrative depiction of Washington's gaze falling on an image of Luther. Instead, Doctorow's novel performs a double action of literary mediation by staging simultaneously the so-called original and its own new world text. As Christian Moraru notes, Doctorow's "performative rewriting turns performance itself into the thematic core of Doctorow's 'mother text,'" borrowing from Juri Lotman, "thereby appropriating the novella's cultural (intertextual) self-awareness" (Moraru 94). This practice of remediation, of overt intertextuality, and literary borrowing appears as a both an homage to the original and a critical commentary on the dubious purity of such a category; it suggests a chain of influence of interconnection in the creation and spread of the very idea of literature, whose subject matter has undergone a number of "imaginative transformation[s], each adding a new dimension and a modern perspective to the *Stoff*, often clothed in a new form as well…it is in this tradition of creative adaptation that Doctorow's tale of Coalhouse Walker Jr. must be seen" (Kurth-Voigt 411). *Ragtime* includes *Michael Kohlhaas* while also frequently reminding the reader that it is doing so.

The powerful intertextuality of *Ragtime* serves thus as a constant reminder of the textual conveyance from one time, language, or cultural context to another. Kleist also reminds his readers that the *Stoff* of the Novella to come is indeed equally derived from the real or at least reported events of history. The title, for example, suggests its emergence from a prior text (*Aus einer alten Chronik*), what Linda Hutcheon describes as

characteristic of literary adaptations to simultaneously preserve and alter textual origins in the creation of new works."[154]

> We find a story we like and then do variations on it through adaptation. But because each adaptation must also stand on its own, separate from the palimpsestic pleasures of doubled experience, it does not lose its Benjaminian aura. It is not a copy in any mode of reproduction, mechanical or otherwise. It is a repetition but without replication, bringing together the comfort of ritual and recognition with the delight of surprise and novelty. As adaptation, it involves both memory and change, persistence and variation. (Hutcheon 173)

Hutcheon describes novels like Ragtime as works of "historiographical metafiction," which are characteristically antagonistic to the notion of originality in that they strive to operate with a set historical discourse while disrupting such discourse with their own fictionality: "it is a kind of seriously ironic parody that effects both aims: the intertexts of history and fiction take on parallel (though not equal) status in the parodic reworking of the textual past of both the 'world' and literature" (Hutcheon 4). Doctorow's novel functions as an intertextual salute to both history and fiction in its adaptation of Kleist's 1810 Novella; but perhaps more importantly, it also demonstrates the external bonds of literary knowledge beyond the confines of the text within competing worlds of literature.

Heinrich von Kleist's *Michael Kohlhaas* and E.L. Doctorow's *Ragtime* share a number of bonds in Amazon's collections, demonstrating the intertextual affinities that form the association rules of literary worlds. At the US Amazon.com, the network of recommendations featured alongside *Michael Kohlhaas* features *Ragtime*, a relationship

---

[154] "Kleist hat Idee und Teile der Handlung einer historischen Quelle entnommen und dies auch im Titel durch die in Klammern gesetzen Worte 'Aus einer alten Chronik' belegt. Seine Informationen hat er vermütlich der von Peter Hafflitz für seine 'Märckische Chronik' (1570) verfaßten 'Nachricht von Hans Kohlhasen, einem Befehder derer Chur-Sächsischen Lande' zu verdanken" (Ensberg 34).

that is echoed elsewhere in the mainly North American context of Amazon.[155] The bonds

between the different echoes of this tale reflect the cultural world of their appearance, as

the connection between Doctorow and Kleist is almost exclusively North American.

Although *Ragtime* is available in German translation, Amazon.de reveals no association

between these works. Instead, Kleist appears in the center of the German and world

canon with little such interference from abroad. At Amazon.fr, on the other hand,

Ragtime in French is surrounded by *Michel Kohlhaas: D'après une ancienne chronique*

and *Michael Kohlhaas (film text)*.[156] A renewed interest in Kohlhaas may be linked to the

francophone context by the 2013 film *Michael Kohlhaas* directed by Arnaud des Pallières

and starring Mads Mikkelsen, as both the film and the novelization of the film are the

media afterlives of Kleist which join *Ragtime* in French translation. In this example of the

visibly differing particularities of the location of texts in varying cultural contexts, it is

evident that the textual affiliations within the collections reflect the canonical capital of

the host culture and the interference of translations, adaptations, and media afterlives of

the original text. Amazon's networks show measurable variation in the echoes of Kleist

---

[155] *Michael Kohlhaas A Tale from an Old Chronicle* (German Classics), translation by Frances H. King, contains the recommendation of *Ragtime* (http://www.amazon.com/Michael-Kohlhaas-Chronicle-German-Classics/dp/159569076X/ref=sr_1_3?ie=UTF8&qid=1391587190&sr=8-3&keywords=michael+kohlhaas); Kleist's *Kohlhaas* is also featured in *Heinrich von Kleist: Selected Writings*, Trans. David Constantine which also contains a network of peripheral texts including *Ragtime* (http://www.amazon.com/Selected-Writings-Heinrich-Von Kleist/dp/0872207439/ref=sr_1_4?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1391588982&s r=14&keywords=Heinrich+von+Kleist).
The Canadian Amazon page presents the same bond, but in reverse with *Ragtime* containing a connection to Kleist's *Kohlhaas* translated by Greenberg and with both editions in the ebook (Kindle) format. (http://www.amazon.ca/RagtimeNovelModernLibraryNovelsebook/dp/B004AP9W2I/ref=sr_1_1_bnp_1_ki n?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1391589432&sr=11&keywords=ragtime+doctorow). And: (http://www.amazon.ca/MichaelKohlhaasTheArtNovellaebook/dp/B009BWL2NW/ref=pd_sim_b_30).
[156] *Ragtime*, in the French translation by Janine Hérisson paperback, leads to: *Michel Kohlhaas: D'après une ancienne chronique* and the film text to the 2013 French language film, *Michael Kohlhaas*.

across multiple landscapes of reader expectations and the specific bonds between the connected texts are at times traceable to the relays of literary knowledge that ordain their value as an associated text of sorts.

The network of recommendations accompanying Kleist's Kohlhaas also contains J.M. Coetzee's similarly titled *The Life and Times of Michael K*. Although the title of Coetzee's novel most certainly invokes the name Kohlhaas through Michael K (although also with the Kafkaesque brevity of the single "K"), the intertextual borrowing is much less apparent in the novel. Instead, the bonds between these texts are largely external, communicated perhaps through the titles, through course syllabi, or through exchanged knowledge of Kleistian afterlives in South African literature. But these bonds too are visible at Amazon. The noted intertextuality that connects Kleist to Coetzee, like those between Kleist and Doctorow, occur outside of the texts within their positioning in the commercial constellation of *Weltliteratur*.

The links between the texts of the Amazon networks are at least in part expressions of once unseen affiliations between single works. Using the socially embedded forces of literary knowledge, the software organizes the vast world of literature into the sub-groups of literary interest and in doing so illustrates the driving forces and limits of textual circulation. To observe in comparable national markets the bonds between Kleist and Doctorow, between Kleist and Coetzee, or between Kleist and the film adaptations of his works is to confront the operative logic of textual positioning. With or without the accompanying category of *Weltliteratur*, we always read within

329

limited clusters of texts with meaningful interactions between the multiple parts of the total collection.

Amazon's networks are by no means comprehensive, nor are those of Google or another digital archive, but they depict nonetheless aspects of the qualitative textual relations in quantities that were heretofore unseen. Almost paradoxically however, such quantity does not lead to a notion of world literature as textual infinity, but as scattered principalities of tastes and beliefs. It provides a view of the world's literature, but the focus remains a province of sorts. World literature in this view may appear to be a nearly infinite archive of works with each text inextricably bound to others and in a multitude of ephemeral contexts; but we also see the limits of the connections, aesthetic tribalism, and dependence of the material availability and linguistic access via translation of worlds within worlds of literature. The anthology may appear to compress world literature into a volume, the journal in a series of monthly publications, and the commercial archive in all that is available for purchase, but within each of these limited collections, a concentrated center is always present, speaking for the whole with a limited collection of parts.

To regard the commercial order of literary texts as a means of archiving commensurable with the collections of past chapters is to view not just the formal assemblages of material texts and fragments with the self-appointed totality of *Weltliteratur* by name, it is to extend the view of *Weltliteratur* to the abstract but common experience of textual entirety in multiple concepts and through multiple media. The experience of *Weltliteratur* is determined by exactly those modes of textual order that produce a semblance of a larger literary world, a totality of letters, or a fiction of

endlessness and entirety that is at once imagined by its creators and participant observers

and real in the effects it produces for those who read, consume, or view its contents.

Afterword

It may be customary for studies of the concept of *Weltliteratur* to begin with Goethe at the dinner table on that January evening in 1827, but for the purposes of the preceding pages, such a commencement scene is most appropriately positioned as an afterword. If Goethe's words were not, as the case has been made, a performative utterance that transformed what had been simply "literature" to a global utopian *Weltliteratur*, they were perhaps comparatively performative in the discourse they set forth into the world. Yet this moment of origin is less the "big-bang" of our literary world as it is a single point of narrative departure for an emerging awareness of the vast literary universe around us. To distinguish between a world literary object and a narrative thereof is to acknowledge that the seemingly unyielding bond between signifier and signified in this *Weltliteratur* is questionable at best. Goethe's words did not enact a change to the object of world literature, but this perceived moment of genesis did indeed begin a series of lasting reflections on literature in the changing world. If the exchange between Goethe and Eckermann is a starting point of sorts, it is at once the commencement of the rift between the wildly inclusive term and the real-existing limitations to which it inevitably succumbs and also a heuristic anchor of sorts, framing an impossible union between "world" and "literature" ordained by an understanding of Goethe. To end with such a moment of origin is to resituate the origin scene within the scope of the discourse that has endowed it with weight and significance. From such a perspective we are free to explore the way in which such a scene has been used to create the idea of *Weltliteratur*. Focusing

332

neither on the object nor the narrative alone, this dissertation has attempted to deal with precisely the way in which ideas of *Weltliteratur* are constructed, that is, the way in which such impossible outcomes have been materialized, visualized, and realized in practice.

In 1833, Moritz Veit turned to Goethe's words in his imagination of the poetic universe as a network of literary journals mirroring the infrastructural net of Dutch canals; in an 1890 article in a magazine for fans and practitioners of the artificial auxiliary language *Volapük*, J.C. Poestion wrote of the realization of Goethe's *Weltliteratur* as a set of communication relays between once separate cultures through the common tongue of *Volapük* (Poestion 117-120); at the outbreak of the First World War, Fritz Strich first began his study of Goethe's *Weltliteratur* as a means of applying his expertise as a germanist and literary scholar to the ambitious project of understanding and promoting international peace, a project that would be interrupted by two wars, forced emigration, and worse before he completed his project with skepticism and cautious optimism in the fall of 1945 (Strich 1946: 7-10); less than a year before Strich's book was finished, the NS-vision of *Weltliteratur*, a radically darker *wish-fulfillment* of the same dream was still on the market. To speak of *Weltliteratur*, even as Goethe's alone, is to speak of multiple perspectives. There can be no true definite article to this term. Even in consideration of Goethe's *Weltliteratur*, only the indefinite article will do. Each of these visions appears as *a* notion of *Weltliteratur* through and by way of *a* specific Goethe.

And yet, both with and beyond Goethe as the discursive founder, the conflicting visions of this vague utopia have been played out as an array of practices in reorganizing

larger constellations of literary texts in the service of competing world visions. This dissertation has attempted to circumvent the obvious and sweeping disparity in the interpretive potential of this idea by first rejecting the possibility of its existence. If there is no true *Weltliteratur* as an object, if there is no objective notion from Goethe or from the marginal scribbling or afterthoughts of his contemporaries and predecessors, then it is an underlying imagination of a world that is constructed and experienced through and with literature. *Weltliteratur* does not exist as an entity, but it is a real-existing principle of textual order, an operative "world" idea through which literary texts are mediated. Beyond conjecture, *Weltliteratur* is a practice.

There is hardly a more articulate example of such a practice than that of Johannes Scherr's *Bildersaal der Weltliteratur*. As the compiler extraordinaire, Scherr the anthologist sought to realize Goethe's *Weltliteratur* by creating an inclusive image of world letters – *ein Gesamtbild* – and the metaphor of his imagery is crucial. For the first practice of world literary totality, Scherr borrowed the spectatorship of the museum and the metonymy of single portraits in a greater gallery. Most importantly, however, Scherr envisioned world letters as images – he *pictured* world literature. Already in 1848, and in the first and widely overlooked practice of the idea by name, Scherr's performance of *Weltliteratur* occurred as a way of envisioning literary entirety by remediating literature (as an image or portrait) and world (as a gallery or museum in the form of the anthology). Through his gallery, Scherr sought to compress myriad texts into a single, feasible unit: […] nicht aus hunderten, aber aus tausenden von Büchern […] gesammelt" (Scherr 7).

334

This 1848 vision was an early act of making visible a wholeness to literature that was previously unseen.

But Scherr's definitive attempt to realize *Weltliteratur* utilized the means of collection, translation, excerption, and exhibition that had been long since employed by Herder and other anthologists before him. In practice, Scherr's museum of world letters was determined by the media of its time, a conceptual museum whose space of display was nineteenth-century print and the philological practices of translation, fragmentation, and refraction of literary texts. Such cut-and-paste metonymy in the materialization of world literary wholeness has only continued steadily beyond Scherr in the growing wealth of anthologies and journals reflecting the radical swings of the political spectrum and the vulnerability of this vague and inviting idea. But in the drastically varying outcomes of the many compilers and curators of later world totalities, the constant and common element appears always as an array of practices in the arrangement and presentation of a limited number of literary texts (or fragments) as a whole.

If speaking of a single concept or unified theory of *Weltliteratur* falls short of consistency and feasibility, the underlying means with which these impossible ideas are delivered remain constant and accordingly central to the notion at hand. *Weltliteratur*, impossible and varied as it is, is always bound by the common means of realization, that is, those practices of collecting and ordering literary texts with which these imagined worlds become visible. To observe the many manifestations of *Weltliteratur* in the course of the last two centuries is to observe an uncertain image of the world as it is reflected in the collection and ordering of literary texts. The longer this literary history unfolds, the

more it becomes clear that these practices tell the real story of *Weltliteratur*; it is a history of a literary macro-economy becoming visible through a process of collecting, translating, and refracting as its appearance changes through the media shifts, technological advancements, and changing perceptions of both the literary and the world frame that enable it.

The common denominator of this world literary discourse is therefore not the object of the fabled narratives of literary totality and belletristic globalization, but the means with which such totality becomes discernible, and as such, knowable. *Weltliteratur* appears as the contradictorily shared dream of globalists and provincials, of Marxists and fascists, and of luddites and technophiles alike; yet it is not on account of the universalism of the end-product of such a literary whole, but in the shared practices of collection and exhibition that such resulting bodies of literature are made possible. It is thus necessary to look beyond the mythical object of literary entirety and the narratives that lend such notions their validation by questioning the ways in which these ideas are created by their media manifestations. Accordingly, the central concern of this dissertation has been the way in which *Weltliteratur* is experienced in terms of the ever-changing conditions of its own mediation, that is, not what this pervasive object of comparative literature is in itself, but how it is communicated to readers. In the course of its nearly two-hundred years of discursive history, the experience of *Weltliteratur* has changed in reflection of new perspectives and ideologies and with the advent of technologies that provide new views of literary masses and novel constellations of literary texts.

This dissertation has endeavored to explore the way in which a small selection of texts (and their metonymic representations) has contended with a seemingly limitless world. And yet, if the findings of this exploration are conclusive, they are equally indicative of a great wealth of research to come. The practices of textual collecting that both produce and are produced by changing understandings of the world demonstrate a conceptual thread that connects the world-literary imagination of our present age with that of the eighteenth century. In each of these global times, the organization of literature is profoundly connected to our perception of totality and our way of knowing the world. When our understanding of these categories changes, we reorganize and re-imagine the whole of literature as well. In a reciprocal process of influence, the organization of literature also influences the way in which we know totality and think about the world. Throughout multiple phases of globalization, literary systems and an imagination of a literary whole have paralleled the changing contours of world space. Because such changes are dependent on the technologies and media that frame the way in which the world as a global whole is pictured and known, the object of world literary totality remains forever in the process of formation through the always changing, media-specific practices that make its object possible.

The inseparability of the object and practice of *Weltliteratur* recasts Goethe's tableside proclamation – that the epoch of *Weltliteratur* is at hand – as an always contemporary statement and as a permanent challenge to the fluid notion of world-literary entirety. In this permanently contemporary view, Goethe's famed epoch was as much at hand in 1827 as it is today and as it will be in times to come with the appearance of even

newer modes of viewing and newer practices. Such a perpetual present tense of

Weltliteratur provides a new point of departure from which we are free to answer the call

to hasten the approach of another coming epoch of world literary exchange, or to

examine how such an epoch is constructed in our own time and how it has been

constructed in the past. In practice, such a *Weltliteratur* is always *an der Zeit*.

Works Cited

Alexander, Edward P. and Alexander, Mary. *Museums in Motion: An Introduction to the History and Functions of Museums*. Plymouth: AltaMira Press, 2008. print.

Anonymous. "Nerv getroffen." *Der Spiegel*. 7 July, 1986: 146. print.

Apter, Emily. *The Translation Zone: A New Comparative Literature*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006. print.

Aristotle. *On the Parts of Animals I-IV*. Trans. James G. Lennox. Ed. J.L. Ackrill and Lindsay Judson. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2004. print.

Assel, Jutta and Jäger, Georg: "Dichter- und Zitaten-Quartett Mit Bildnissen von Karl Bauer: Eine Dokumentation." *Goethezeitportal*. Web. Mar. 2013

Auerbach, Erich. "Philologie der Weltliteratur." *Sechs Versuche über Stil und Wirklichkeitswahrnehmung*. Frankfurt: Fischer Verlag, 1992. 83-96. print.

Andritzky, Michael and Hauer, Thomas. "Alles, was Netz ist." *Sinn und Sinnlichkeit vernetzter Systeme. Kataloge der Museumsstiftung Post unf Telekommunikation.* Ed. Klaus Beyrer, Michael Andritzky. Vol. 12. Heidelberg: Braus, 2002. 11-18. print.

Bal, Mieke. "Telling Objects: A Narrative Perspective on Collecting." *Cultures of Collecting*. Ed. John Elsner and Roger Cardinal. London: Reaktion Books, 1997. 97-115. print.

Bareikis, Robert P. "Die deutschen Lyriksammlungen des 18. Jahrhunderts." *Die Deutschsprachige Anthologie. Studien zu ihrer Geschichte und Wirkungsform*. Ed. Joachim Bark and Dietger Pforte. Vol. 2. Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1969. 48-139. print.

Bark, Joachim. "Zwischen Hochschätzung und Obskurität. Die Rolle der Anthologien in der Kanonbildung des 19. Jahrhunderts." *Autoren damals und heute: literaturgeschichtliche Beispiele veränderter Wirkungshorizonte. Amsterdamer Beiträge zur neueren Germanistik*. Ed. Gerhard P. Knapp. Vol. 31-33. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1991. 441-458. print

Barkhoff, Jürgen. *Magnetische Fiktionen: Literarisierung des Mesmerismus in der Romantik*. Metzler: Stuttgart, 1995. print.

Bartels, Adolf. *Goethe der Deutsche*. Frankfurt am Main: Diesterweg, 1932. print.

Bassnett, Susan. *Translation Studies*. New York: Routledge, 2008. print.

Behler, Ernst. *German Romantic Literary Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993. print.

Beil, Else. *Zur Entwicklung des Begriffs der Weltliteratur*. Leipzig: Voigtländer, 1915. print.

Benedict, Barbara. *Making the Modern Reader: Cultural Mediation in Early Modern Literary Anthologies*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996. print.

Benjamin, Walter. "Ich packe meine Bibliothek aus." *Walter Benjamin: Gesammelte Schriften*. Ed. Tillman Rexroth. Vol. 4. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1996. 388-396. print.

Bennett, Tony. "The Exhibitionary Complex." *New Formations*. *4* (Spring 1988): 73-102. print.

Berczik, Árpád. "Goethe, die Weltliteratur und die Anfänge der vergleichenden Literaturwissenschaft." *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Ernst-Moritz-Arndt-Universität Greifswald. Jahrgang XVI, Gesellschafts- und Sprachwissenschaftliche Reihe*. 2. (1967): 159-165. print.

Berman, Antoine. *The experience of the foreign: Culture and Translation in Romantic Germany*. Trans. S. Heyvaert. New York: SUNY Press, 1992. print.

Beyrer, Klaus. "Gebahnte Wege. Aspekte der Verneztung im historischen Landverkehr." *Sinn und Sinnlichkeit vernetzter Systeme*. *Kataloge der Museumsstiftung Post und Telekommunikation*. Ed. Klaus Beyrer, Michael Andritzky. Vol. 12. Heidelberg: Braus, 2002. 75-90. print.

Birte, Carolin Sebastian. *Von Weimar nach Paris: die Goethe-Rezeption in der Zeitschrift "Le Globe."* Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 2006. print.

Birus, Hendrik. "Goethes Idee der Weltliteratur: Eine historische Vergegenwärtigung." *Weltliteratur heute: Konzepte und Perspektiven. Saarbrücker Beiträge zur Vergleichenden Literatur- u. Kulturwissenschaft*. 1. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1995. 5-28. print.

Bleicher, Thomas. "Novalis und die Idee der Weltliteratur." *Arcadia*. 14. (1979): 254-270. print.

Bödeker, Birgit. "Konzepte von Weltliteratur in deutschsprachigen Versdichtungsanthologien des 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhunderts." *Weltliteratur in*

deutschen Versanthologien des 19. Jahrhunderts. Ed. Helga Eßmann and Udo Schöning. Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1996. 183-204. print.

Bödeker, Hans-Erich. "Reisen – Bedeutung und Funktion für die deutsche Aufklärungsgesellschaft." *Reisen im 18. Jahrhundert: Neue Untersuchungen*. Ed. Wolfgang Griep and Hans-Wolf Jäger. Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1987. 91-110. print.

Boffey, Julia and Thompson, John J. "Anthologies and Miscellanies: Production and Choice of Texts." *Book Production and Publishing in Britain 1375-1475*. Ed. Jeremey Griffiths and Derek Pearsall. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. 279-316. print.

Bohnenkamp, Anne and Martínez, Matías. "Vorwort der Herausgeber." *Geistiger Handelsverkehr: Komparatistische Aspekte der Goethezeit*. Ed. Anne Bohnenkamp and Martínez, Matías. Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2008. print.

Bollacher, Martin. "Goethes Konzeption der Weltliteratur." *Ironische Propheten: Sprachbewusstsein und Humanität in der Literatur von Herder bis Heine; Studien für Jürgen Brummack zum 65. Geburtstag*. Ed. Jürgen Brummarck, Markus Heilmann, Birgit Wägenbaur. Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 2001. 169-186. print.

Böhme, Hartmut. "Netzwerke. Zur Theorie und Geschichte einer Konstruktion." *Netzwerke. Eine Kulturtechnik der Moderne*. Ed. Jürgen Barkhoff, Hartmut Böhme, and Jeanne Riou. Köln: Böhlau, 2004. 17-36. print.

Boyle, Nicholas. "Johann Wolfgang von Goethe." *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy: Genealogy to Iqbal*. 4. Ed. Edward Craig. 125-129. print.

Borgards, Roland. "Blutkreislauf und Nervenbahnen: Zum physiologischen Zusammenhang von Zirkulation und Kommunikation im 18. Jahrhundert." *Gedächtnis und Zirkulation: Der Diskurs des Kreislaufs im 18. und frühen 19. Jahrhundert*. Ed. Harald Schmidt und Marcus Sandl. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2002. 25-38. print.

Brandes, Georg. "Weltlitteratur." *Das Literarische Echo*. 2. (1899): 1-5. print.

Burdick, Anne, Drucker, Johanna, Lunenfeld, Peter, et al. *Digital Humanities*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2012. print.

Casanova, Pascale. *The World Republic of Letters*. Trans. M.B. Debevoise. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004.

Castells, Manuel. "Informationalism, Networks, and the Network Society: A Theoretical Blueprint." *The Network Society: A Cross-Cultural Perspective*. Ed. Manuel Castells. New York: Edward Elgar, 2004. 3-43. print.

Chevalier, Michel. *Religion Saint-Simonienne. Politique Industrielle. Système de la Méditerranée*. Paris: Bureau du Globe, 1832. print.

Damrosch, David. "Frames of World Literature." *Grenzen der Literatur*. Ed. Simone Winko, Fotis Jannidis, and Gerhard Lauer. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009. 496-516. print.

-*What is World Literature?* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003. print.

-"World Literature in a Postcanonical, Hypercanonical Age." *Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization*. Ed. Haun Saussy. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 2004. 43-53. print.

-Derrida, Jacques. "Signature, Event, Context." *The Margins of Philosophy*. Trans. Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982. 307-330. print.

Deubel, Werner. "Irland, die Hochburg keltischen Seelentums." *Die Weltliteratur: Berichte, Leseproben und Wertung*. Ed. Friedhelm Kaiser. 12. (December 1940): 233-134. print.

D'haen, Theo. *The Routledge Concise History of World Literature*. New York: Routledge, 2012. print.

Dilworth, Leah. "Introduction." *Acts of Possession: Collecting in America*. Ed. Leah Dilworth. Piscataway: Rutgers University Press, 2003. 3-15. print.

Doctorow, E.L. *Ragtime*. London: Penguin, 2006. print.

Donato, Eugenio. "The Museum's Furnace: Notes toward a Contextual Reading of Bouvard and Pécuchet." *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structural Criticism*. Ed. Josué V. Hararu. Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1979. pp. 213-238. print.

Dondo, Mathurin. *The French Faust: Henri de Saint-Simon*. New York: The Philosophical Library, 1955. print.

Döring, Tobias. "Fictions of Translation: The Celts, the Canon and the Question of World Literature." *Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik: A Quarterly of Language, Literature and Culture*. 55.2 (2007): 107-122. print.

Ensberg, Peter. "Chronik – fiktiver Chronik – chronicle fiction: Wege der Geschichtsschreibung bei Hafftitz, Kleist und Doctorow." *Kleists Beitrag zur Ästhetik der*

Moderne. Ed. Peter Ensberg and Hans-Jochen Marquardt. Stuttgart: Hans-Dieter Heinz Verlag, 2002. 33-55. print.

Eßmann, Helga. "Weltliteratur Between Two Covers: Forms and Functions of German Translation Anthologies." *Translating Literatures, Translating Cultures: New Vistas and Approaches in Literary Studies*. *Göttinger Beiträge zur internationalen Überssetzungsforschung*. Ed. Kurt Mueller-Vollmer and Michael Irmscher. Vol 17. Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1998. 149-164. print.

Estrada, Ernesto. *The Structure of Complex Networks: Theory and Applications*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011. print.

Ette, Ottmar. "Europäische Literatur(en) im globalen Kontext. Literaturen für Europa." *Wider den Kulturenzwang: Migration, Kulturisierung und Weltliteratur*. Ed. Özkan Ezli, Dorothee Kimmich, and Annette Werberger. Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2009. 257-296. print.

Evan-Zohar, Itamar. "The Literary System." *Poetics Today* 11:1. (1990): 27-44. print.

Fain, Gordon L. *Ancient Greek Epigrams: Major Poets in Verse Translation*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010. print.

Fischer, Bernd. "What Moves Kohlhaas? Terror in Heinrich von Kleist, E.L. Doctorow, and Christoph Hein." *Heinrich von Kleist: Artistic and Political Legacies*. Ed. Jeffrey L. High and Sophie Clark. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2013. print.

Foucault, Michel. *The Archeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*. Trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith. New York: Pantheon, 1982. print.

-"What is an Author?" *The Foucault Reader*. Trans. Joseph V. Harari. Ed. Paul Rabinow. New York: Pantheon, 1988. 101-120. print.

Freud, Sigmund. "'A Child is Being Beaten' (1919): A Contribution to the Study of the Origin of Sexual Perversions." *Sigmund Freud: Sexuality and the Psychology of Love*. Trans. Alix and James Strachey. New York: Touchstone, 1997. 97-122. print.

Friedenthal, Richard. *Goethe und Seine Zeit*. München: Piper Verlag, 2011. print.

Friedl, Herwig and Schulz, Dieter. "A Multiplicity of Witness; E.L. Doctorow at Heidelberg." *Conversations with E.L. Doctorow*. Ed. Christopher D. Morris. Jackson: University of Mississippi, 1999. 112-128. print.

Gaskill, Howard. *Homer des Nordens und Mutter der Romantik*: *James Machpherson's Ossian und seine Rezeption in der deutschsprachigen Literatur*. Vol 4. Ed. Howard Gaskill and Wolf Gerhard Schmidt. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004. print.

Geerdts, Hans Jürgen. "Die Sozialistische Weltliteratur und Nordahl Grieg." *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Ernst-Moritz-Arndt-Universität Greifswald: Gesellschafts- und Sprachwissenschaftliche Reihe. Nordahl-Grieg-Ehrung in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik*. 1:12. (1963): 37-54. print.

Genette, Gerard. *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*. Trans. Jane E. Lewin. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. print.

Gelfert, Hans-Dieter. *Was ist gute Literatur?: wie man gute Bücher von schlechten unterscheidet*. München: Verlag C.H. Beck, 2010. print.

Gießmann, Sebastian. *Netze und Netzwerke: Archäologie einer Kulturtechnik, 1740-1840*. Bielefeld: transcript-Verlag, 2006. print.

-"Paris – Suez: Die Saint Simonisten und die Kanäle des Kolonialen."*Archiv für Mediengeschichte 7: "Medienlandschaften."* Ed. Lorenz Engell, Bernhard Siegert, and Joseph Vogl. (2007): 269-284. print

Glaser, Hermann. "Die Überwindung der Zeit: Geschwindigkeit als Lebensprinzip." *Die Post in Ihrer Zeit: eine Kulturgeschichte menschlicher Kommunikation*. Ed. Hermann Glaser and Thomas Werner. Heidelberg: Decker's Verlag, 1990. print.

Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. *Sämtliche Werke nach Epochen seines Schaffens*. Ed. Karl Richter, Herbert G. Göpfer, Norbert Miller, and Gerhad Sauder. 4 Vols. Münchner Ausgabe. München: Hanser Verlag, 1986. print.

-Goethes Werke: Herausgegeben im Auftrag der Grossherzogin Sophie von Sachsen. IV. Abtheilung: *Briefe März – September 1828*. Vol. 44. Weimar: Hermann Böhlaus, 1909. print.

Gombrich, Ernst Hans. "The Anatomy of Art Collecting." *Reflections on the History of Art: Views and Reviews*. Ed. Richard Woodfield. Phaidon: Oxford 1987. 168-178. print.

Goßens, Peter. *Weltliteratur: Modelle transnationaler Literaturwahrnehmung im 19. Jahrhundert*. Stuttgart: Metzler, 2011. print.

Graff, Sigmund. "Deutschheit und Weltliteratur." *Die Weltliteratur: Berichte, Leseproben und Wertung*. Ed. Friedhelm Kaiser. Nr. 1-2. (February 1940): 26. print.

Greenblatt, Stephen. *Cultural mobility: A Manifesto*. Cambridge: University Press, 2010. print.

Guillory, John. *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994. print.

Guthke, Karl S. "'Gipsabgüsse von Leichenmasken:' Goethe und der Kult des letzen Worts." *Jahrbuch der deutschen Schillergesellschaft*. Ed. Wilfried Barner, Walter Müller Seidel, and Ulrich Ott. Vol. 35. Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner Verlag, 1991. 73-95. print.

-Goethes Weimar und die grosse Öffnung in die weite Welt. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2001. print.

Hamm, Heinz. *Goethe und die frazösische Zeitschrift Le Globe: Eine Lektüre im Zeichen der Weltliteratur*. Weimar: Verlag Hermann Böhlaus, 1998. print.

Hebbel, Friedrich. "Zur Anthologien-Literatur." Sämtliche Werke. Vol. 12. Berlin: B. Behr's Verlag, 1903. print.

Hennig, John. "Goethe's Translations of Ossian's 'Songs of Selma.'" *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*. 45:1. (Jan. 1946): 77-87. print.

Herder, Johann Gottfried. *Werke in zehn Bänden*. Ed. Martin Bollacher. Vol. 1:9. Frankfurt: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1985.

Hippler, Fritz. *Verbrecher Mensch? Die Beobachtungen des Historikers Johannes Scherr*. Berg Starnberger See: Türmer Verlag, 1987. print.

Hohlfeld, Alexander Rudolf. *Goethe's Conception of World Literature. Fifty Years with Goethe, 1901-1951*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1953. print.

Houston, Natalie M. "Valuable by Design: Material Features and Cultural Value in Nineteenth-Century Sonnet Anthologies." *Victorian Poetry. Palgrave's "Golden Treasury" and Summer Anthologies*. Vol. 37:2. (Summer, 1999): 243-272. print.

Hutcheon, Linda. "Historiographic Metafiction Parody and the Intertextuality of History." *Intertextuality and Contemporary American Fiction*. Ed. O'Donnell, P. and Robert Con Davis. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989. 3-32. print.

Huurdeman, Anton A. *The Wordwide History of Telecommunication*. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2003. print.

Huyssen, Andreas. *Die frühromantische Konzeption von Übersetzung und Aneignung: Studien zur frühromantische Utopie einer deutschen Weltliteratur*. Zürich: Atlantis Verlag, 1969. print.

345

Illich, Ivan. *H20 and the Waters of Forgetfulness: Reflections on the Historicity of "Stuff."* Berkeley: Heyday, 1985. print.

Jäger, Georg. *Geschichte des Deutschen Buchhandels im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert: Das Kaiserreich 1870-1918. Teil I.* Frankfurt: Buchhändler-Vereinigung, 2001. print.

John, Johannes. "Der vereinnahmte und der geteilte Goethe: Zur Goethe-Rezeption in Deutschland nach 1933." *Über die Grenzen Weimars hinaus – Goethes Werk in europäischem Licht. Beiträge zum Jubiläumsjahr 1999. Osloer Beiträge zur Germanistik.* Ed. Thomas Jung and Birgit Mühlhaus. Vol. 27. Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2000. 135-170. print.

Kaiser, Friedhelm, *Die Waffen des Geistes: zur neuen Folge der "Weltliteratur." Die Weltliteratur: Berichte, Leseproben und Wertung*. Ed. Friedhelm Kaiser. 1-2. (February 1940): 1-67. print.

-"Der Kampf um die britischen Inseln." *Die Weltliteratur: Berichte, Leseproben und Wertung*. Ed. Friedhelm Kaiser. 8, (August 1940): 141. print.

Kater, Michael H. *Das „Ahnenerbe" der SS, 1935-1945: Ein Betrag zur Kulturpolitik des Dritten Reiches*. München: Oldenburg, 2006. print.

Kleist, Heinrich von. *Michael Kohlhaas*. Stuttgart: Reclams Universal-Bibliothek, 2003. print.

Koch, Manfred. "Deutsche Welterleuchtung oder globaler Ideenhandel? Der Topos von der Übersetzernation Deutschland in Goethes Konzept der 'Weltliteratur.'" *Athenäum: Jahrbuch für Romantik*. Ed. Ernst Behler, Manfred Frank, Jochen Hörisch and Günter Oesterle. Vol. 10. Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2000. 29-54. print.

-"Geistiger Handelsverkehr: Die Metaphorik in Goethes Weltliteraturkonzept und die Tradition der Gelehrtenrepublik." *Die europäische République des lettres in der Zeit der Weimarer Klassik*. Ed. Michael Knoche and Lea Ritter Santini. Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2007. print.

-*Weimaraner Weltbewohner: Zur Genese von Goethes Begriff 'Weltliteratur.'* Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012.

-"'Weltliteratur' – Ein Ambivalenter Erwartungsbegriff." *Weltgesellschaft. Theoretische Zugänge und empirische Problemlagen. Special Issue Zeitschrift für Soziologie*. Ed. Bettina Heintz, Richard Münch, and Hartmann Tyrell. (2005): 51-67. print.

Koschorke, Albrecht. *Körperströme und Schriftverkehr: Mediologie des 18. Jahrhunderts*. München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1999. print.

Kurth-Voigt, Lieselotte E. "Kleistian Overtones in E.L. Doctorow's 'Ragtime.'" *Monatshefte*. 69:4. (Winter 1977): 404-414. print.

Lamping, Dieter. *Die Idee der Weltliteratur: ein Konzept Goethes und seine Karriere*. Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner Verlag, 2010. print.

Langenbucher, Hellmuth. "Weltliteratur?" *Weltliteratur: Romane, Erzählungen und Gedichte aller Zeiten und Völker.* Ed. Hellmuth Langenbucher. 25. (October 1937): 385. print.

-"Heinrich von Kleist." *Weltliteratur: Romane, Erzählungen und Gedichte aller Zeiten und Völker.* Ed. Hellmuth Langenbucher. 37. (October 1938): 587-588. print.

-"Schwäbische Leistung im gesamtdeutschen Schriftum." *Weltliteratur: Romane, Erzählungen und Gedichte aller Zeiten und Völker.* Ed. Hellmuth Langenbucher. 15. (December 1936): 240-242. print.

Lawall, Sarah. "Anthologizing World Literature." *On Anthologies: Politics and Pedagogy*. Ed. Jeffrey R. Di Leo. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004. 47-89. print.

Lefevere, André. *Translating Literature: The German Tradition from Luther to Rosenzweig*. Assen: Van Gorcum, 1977. print.

Linden, G.; Smith, B.; York, J. "Amazon. com recommendations: Item-to-item collaborative filtering," *Internet Computing, IEEE*. (2003): 76-80. print

Linthout, Ine Van. *Das Buch in der nationalsozialistischen Propagandapolitik*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012. print.

List, Friedrich. *Das deutsche Eisenbahnsystem als Mittel zu Vervollkommnung der deutschen Industrie, des deutschen Zollvereins und des deutschen Nationalverbandes überhaupt. Mit besonderer Rücksicht auf württembergische Eisenbahnen*. Stuttgart/Tübingen: Cotta'scher Verlag, 1841. print.

Lovejoy, Arthur Oncken. *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea*. Harvard University Press: Cambridge, 1936. print.

Madsen, Peter. "World Literature and World Thoughts." *Debating World Literature*. Ed. Christopher Prendergast. London: Verso, 2004. 54-75. print.

Maleuvre, Didier. *Museum Memories: History, Technology, Art*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999. print.

Mandelkow, Karl Robert. *Goethe in Deutschland: Rezeptionsgeschichte eines Klassikers*. Vol. 2. München: Beck, 1989. print.

Mann, Thomas. "Goethe als Repräsentant des bürgerlichen Zeitalters (1932)." *Ein Appell an die Vernunft: Essays, 1926–1933*. Ed. Hermann Kurzke and Stephan Stachorski. Frankfurt: Fischer, 1994. 307-42. print.

Marek, Roman. "Creativity Meets Circulation: Internet Videos, Amateurs and the Process of Evolution." *Collective Creativity: Collaborative Work in the Sciences, Literature and the Arts*. Ed. Gerhard Fischer and Florian Vassan. Rodopi: Amsterdam, 2011. 205-228. print.

Martin, Alison E. "A Cosmopolitan Centre of Mankind" *Translation in the German Romantic Tradition. UCL Translation in History Lectures*. Web. 3.21.2013.

Martin, Ernst. *Goethe über Weltliteratur und Dialektpoesie. Straßburger Goethevorträge: zum Besten des für Straßburg geplanten Denkmals des jungen Goethe*. Straßburg: Verlag von Karl J. Trübner, 1899. 1-31. print.

Mattelart, Armand. *The Invention of Communication*. Trans. Susan Emanuel. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996. print.

-*Networking the World, 1794-2000*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000. print.

Mattelart, Armand and Mattelart, Michèle. *Theories of Communication: A Short Introduction*. Trans. Susan Gruenheck Taponier. London: Sage Publications, 2004. print.

Mendes-Flohr, Paul R. *Divided Passions: Jewish Intellectuals and the Experience of Modernity*. Wayne State University Press, Detroit. 1991. print.

Menzel, Wolfgang. "Die Masse der Literatur." *Die Deutsche Literatur*. Stuttgart: Hallberger'sche Verlagshandlung, 1836. 3-38. print.

Meyer, Hans. "Deutsche Literatur und Weltliteratur." *Deutsche Literatur und Weltliteratur: Reden und Aufsätze*. Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1957. 169-193. print.

Moraru, Christian. "The Reincarnated Plot: E.L. Doctorow's Ragtime, Heinrich von Kleist's 'Michael Kohlhaas,' and the Spectacle of Modernity." *The Comparatist*. 21. (May 1997): 92-116. print.

Moretti, Franco. "Conjectures of World Literature." *Debating World Literature*. Ed. Christopher Prendergast. London: Verso, 2004. 148-162. print.

-*Graphs, Maps, and Trees: Abstract Model for Literary History*. London: Verso, 2007.

Müller, Joachim. "Die Völkerverbindende Aufgabe der Weltliteratur." *Die Völkerverbindende Aufgabe der Weltliteratur und Die klassische Humanitätsidee: Zwei Vorträge*. Leipzig Shirzel: Verlag, 1948. 7-28. print.

Murphy, Ella M. "Carlyle and the Saint-Simonians." *Studies in Philology*. 33: 1. (January 1936): 93-118. print.

Musso, Pierre. "Aux origins du concept modern: corps et réseau dans la philosophie de Saint Simon." *Quaderni*. 3. (Winter 1987): 11-29. print.

Niggl, Günther. *Studien zur Literatur der Goethezeit*. Berlin: Duncker und Humblot GmbH, 2001. print.

Noyes, John K. "The World Map and the World of Goethe's Weltliteratur." *Acta Germanica: German Studies in Africa*. 38. (2010): 28-145. print.

Novalis. *Heinrich von Ofterdingen: Ein Roman*. Ed. Wolfgang Frühwald. Stuttgart: Reclam, 1965. print.

O'Dochartaigh, Pól. "Julius Pokorny: An Outsider between Nationalism and Anti-Semitism, Ethnicity and Celticism." *German Monitor*. 57.1 (2003): 87-118. print.

Otis, Laura. *Networking: Communicating with Bodies and Machines in the Nineteenth Century*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004. print.

Peters, John Durham. *Speaking into the Air: A History of the Idea of Communication*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000. print.

Piper, Andrew. *Dreaming in Books: The Making of the Bibliographic Imagination in the Romantic Age*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009. print.

Pizer, John. *The Idea of World Literature: History and Pedagogical Practice*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2006. print.

- *Imagining the Age of Goethe in German Literature, 1970-2010*. Rochester: Camden House, 2011. print.

-"'Goethe's world literature' paradigm and contemporary cultural globalization." *Comparative Literature* (2000): 213-227. print.

Poestion, J.C. "Die Weltletter." *Rund um die Welt: Eine Zeitschrift für Volapükisten und solche, die es werden wollen*. 15 July 1890: 113-128. print

Polianski, Igor J. "Das Netzwerk als Natursystem und ästhetische 'Pathosformel' der Moderne." *Netzwerke: Allgemeine Theorie oder Universalmetapher in den*

Wissenschaften? Ein transdisziplinärer Überblick. Ed. Heiner Fangerau and Thorsten Halling. Bielefeld: transcript-Verlag, 2009. 13-28. print.

Prendergast, Christopher. "The World Republic of Letters." *Debating World Literature*. Ed. Christopher Prendergast. London: Verso, 2004. 1-25. print.

Presner, Todd Samuel. *Mobile Modernity: Germans, Jews, Trains*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007. print.

-"Comparative Literature in the Age of Digital Humanities: On Possible Futures for a Discipline." *A Companion to Comparative Literature*. Ed. Ali Behdad and Dominic Thomas. West Sussex: Blackwell, 2011. 193-207. print.

Quine, Willard von Orman. *Mathematical Logic*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1951. print.

Raabe, August. *Goethes Sendung im dritten Reich*. Bonn: Röhrscheid, 1934.

Ragan, Mark A. Tress and Networks before and after Darwin. *Biology Direct*. 4:43. Web. (2009).

Rheinberger, Hans-Jörg. "Experimentalsysteme, Epistemische Dinge, Experimentalkulturen: Zu einer Epistemologie des Experiments." *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie*. 42:3. (Jun 1994): 405-418. print.

Riedl, John and Joseph Konstan. *Word of Mouse: The Marketing Power of Collaborative Filtering*. New York: Warner, 2002. print.

Saint-Simon, Henri Comte de. *Selected Writings of Science, Industry, and Social Organisation*. Ed. Keith Tayor. Trans. Keith Taylor. London: Croom Helm, 1975.

Schafer, J. B.; Konstan, J. A.; Riedl, J. "E-commerce recommendation applications," *Data mining and knowledge discovery*. (2001): 115-153. print.

- "Recommender systems in e-commerce."*Proceedings of the 1st ACM conference on Electronic commerce*. (November 1999): 58-166. print.

Schamoni, Wolfgang. "Weltliteratur' – Zuerst 1773 Bei August Ludwig Schlözer." *Arcadia* 43.2 (2008): 288-98. print.

Scherr, Johannes. *Bildersaal der Weltliteratur*. 2 Vols. Stuttgart: Kröner Verlag, 1869. print.

-Bildersaal der Weltliteratur: Dritte, neu bearbeitet und stark vermehrte Auflage. Stuttgart: Verlag von Gebrüder Kröner, 1885. print.

-Geschichte der deutschen Literatur: Mit fünfzig Portraits der ausgezeichnetsten Dichter und Gelehrten deutscher Nation. Leipzig: Verlag von Otto Wigand, 1854. print.

Schlegel, August Wilhlem and Tieck, Ludwig. *Musen-Almanach für das Jahr 1802*. Ed. August Wilhlem Schlegel and Ludwig Tieck. Tübingen: Cotta, 1802. print.

Schlegel, Friedrich. "Progressive Universalpoesie. Athenaeum-Fragment 116." *Schriften zur Kritischen Philosophie, 1795-1805*. Web. Meiner Verlag, 2009. 69-70.

Schivelbusch, Wolfgang. "Railroad Space and Railroad Time." *New German Critique*. 14. (Spring 1978): 31-40. print.

Schmidt, Harald and Sandl, Marcus. "Einleitung." *Gedächtnis und Zirkulation: Der Diskurs des Kreislaufs im 18. und frühen 19. Jahrhundert.* Ed. Harald Schmidt und Marcus Sandl. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2002. 9-24. print.

Schmidtgall, Harry. "Zur Rezeption von Harveys Blutkreislaufmodell in der englischen Wirtschaftstheorie des 17. Jahrhunderts: Ein Beitrag zum Einfluß der Naturwissenschaften auf die Ökonomie." *Sudhoffs Archiv*. 57: 4. (1973): 416-430. print.

Schmitt, Rüdiger. "Grußwort." *Weltliteratur heute: Konzepte und Perspektiven*. Ed. Manfred Schmeling. Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann 1995, 1-4. print.

Schrimpf, Hans Joachim: Goethes Begriff der Weltliteratur. Ein Essay. Stuttgart: J.B. Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1968. print.

Schulte, Rainer. "International Literature Transfer via Translation Anthologies." *International Anthologies of Literature in Translation*. Ed. Harald Kittel. Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1995. 134-148. print.

Schumpeter, Joseph. *History of Economic Analysis*. Ed. Elizabeth Boody Schumpeter. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994. print.

Schüttpelz, Erhard. "Ein absoluter Begriff: Zur Genealogie und Karriere des Netzwerkkonzepts." *Vernetze Steuerung: Soziale Prozesse im Zeitalter technischer Netzwerke*. Ed. Stefan Kaufmann. Zürich: Chronos, 2007. 25-46. print.

Sennett, Richard. *Flesh and Stone: The Body in Western Civilization*. New York: Norton, 1996. print.

Seruya, Teresa, Alexandra Assis Rosa, and Maria Lin Moniz, et al. "Introduction: Translation anthologies and collections: An overview and some prospects." *Translation in Anthologies and Collections: 19th and 20th Centuries*. Ed. Teresa Seruya, Lieven D'hulst, Alexandra Assis Rosa, and Maria Lin Moniz. Amsterdam: John Benjamin, 2013. 1-16. print.

Seyhan, Azade. *Representation and its Discontents: The Critical Legacy of German Romanticism*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.

Siegert, Bernhard. "Currents and Currency: Elektrizität, Ökonomie und Ideenumlauf um 1800." *Netzwerke. Eine Kulturtechnik der Moderne*. Ed. Jürgen Barkhoff, Hartmut Böhme, and Jeanne Riou. Köln: Böhlau, 2004. 53-68. print.

Smith, Adam. *The Wealth of Nations*. Ed. Kathryn Sutherland. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008. print

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999. print.

Stanitzek, Georg and Winkler, Hartmut. "Vorwort. Eine Medientheorie der Aufklärung." *Josias Ludwig Gosch: Fragmente über den Ideenumlauf*. Berlin: Kulturverlag Kadmos, 2006. 7-34. print.

Steffen, Marion. "Johannes Scherr als Anthologist und Kulturhistoriker." *Weltliteratur in deutschen Versanthologien des 19. Jahrhunderts*. Ed. Helga Eßmann and Udo Schöning. Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1996. 391-409. print.

Strich, Fritz: -*Dichtung und Zivilisation*. München, Meyer, 1928. print.

-*Goethe und die Weltliteratur*. Bern: Francke, 1946. print.

-*Goethe and World Literature*. Trans. C.A.M. Sym. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1949. print.

Strothmann, Dietrich, *Nationalsozialistische Literaturpolitik: Ein Beitrag zur Publizistik im Dritten Reich*. Bonn: Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, 1985. 195-196. print.

Sturge, Kate,*"The Alien Within": Translation into German during the Nazi Regime*. München: IUDICIUM, 2004.

- "Censorship of Translated Fiction in Nazi Germany." *TTR: Études sur le texte et ses transformations, Special Issue: Censorship and Translation in the Modern World*. Ed. Denise Merkle, XV. (2002): 153-69. print.

-*'Flight from the Programme of National Socialism'? Translation in Nazi Germany*, in *Translation under Fascism.* Ed. Christopher Rundle and Kate Sturge. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. 51-83. print.

Swyngedouw, Erik. "Metabolic Urbanization: the Making of Cyborg Cities.*" In the Nature of Cities: Urban Political Ecology and the Politics of Urban Metabolism*. Ed. Nik Heynen, Maria Kaika and Erik Swyngedouw. New York: Routledge, 2006. 21-40. print.

Tang, Chenxi. *The Geographic Imagination of Modernity: Geography, Literature, and Philosophy in German Romanticism*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008. print.

Thomik, Josef. *Nationalsozialismus als Ersatzreligion: die Zeitschriften 'Weltliteratur' und 'Die Weltliteratur' (1935/1944) als Träger nationalsozialistischer Ideologie: Zugleich ein Beitrag zur Affäre Schneider/Schwerte*. Ed. Josef Schreier. Aachen: einhard, 2009. print.

Thomsen, Mads Rosendahl. *Mapping World Literature: International Canonization and Transnational Literatures*. London: Continuum International Publishing, 2008. print.

Tresch, John. *The Romantic Machine: Utopian Science and Technology after Napoleon*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012. print.

Veit, Moritz. *Saint Simon und der Saintsimonismus: allgemeiner Völkerbind und ewiger Friede*. Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1834. print.

Weitz, Hans-J. "'Weltliteratur' zuerst bei Wieland," *Arcadia.* 22 (1987): 206-208. print.

Wiedemann, Condrad. "Vorspiel der Anthologie: Konstruktivistische, representative und anthologische Sammelformen in der deutschen Literatur des 17. Jahrhunderts." *Die Deutschspachige Anthologie*. Ed. Joachim Bark and Dietger Pforte. Vol. 2. Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1969. 1-47. print.

Wild, Rainer. "Überlegungen zu Goethes Konzept einer Weltliteratur." *Bausteine zu einem transatlantischen Literaturverständnis. Views on Literature in a transatlantic Context. Jubiläumsschrift zum zwanzigjährigen Bestehen der Partnerschaft zwischen den Universitäten Waterloo/Canada und Mannheim/Deutschland*. Ed. Hans W. Panthel and Peter Rau. Frankfurt: P. Lang, 1994. 3 - 11. print.

Wittmann, Reinhard. *Geschichte des deutschen Buchhandels*. München: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1999. print.

Wittman, Richard. "Space, Networks, and the Saint-Simonians." *Grey Room*. 40. (Summer 2010): 24-49. print.

Zantop, Susanne. *Colonial Fantasies: Conquest, Family, and Nation in Precolonial Germany 1770-1870*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1997. print.

Images

Batsch, August Johann Georg Karl. *Tabula affinitatum regni vegetabilis* (1802). Ragan *Biology Direct* 2009 4:43. http://www.biologydirect.com/content/4/1/43. JPEG File

Bauer, Karl. *Cover Image of Goethe der Deutsche*. Adolf Bartels. Frankfurt am Main: Diesterweg, 1932. image

Die Weltliteratur: Berichte, Leseproben und Wertung. Ed. Friedhelm Kaiser. (August 1940): 137. image

Die Weltliteratur: Berichte, Leseproben und Wertung. Ed. Friedhelm Kaiser. (December 1940): 235. image

Die Weltliteratur: Berichte, Leseproben und Wertung. Ed. Friedhelm Kaiser. (November 1941): 271. image

Georges-Louis Leclerc, comte de Buffon, in Volume 5 of "Histoire naturelle générale et particulière" (Imprimerie Royale, Paris, 1755). http://www.rjr-productions.org/extras/Buffon.pdf. JPEG.

Chambers, Ephraim. *Cyclopædia, or, An universal dictionary of arts and sciences : containing the definitions of the terms, and accounts of the things signify'd thereby, in the several arts, both liberal and mechanical, and the several sciences, human and divine : the figures, kinds, properties, productions, preparations, and uses, of things natural and artificial : the rise, progress, and state of things ecclesiastical, civil, military, and commercial : with the several systems, sects, opinions, &c : among philosophers, divines, mathematicians, physicians, antiquaries, criticks, &c : the whole intended as a course of antient and modern learning*
(1728). 84-85.
http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Anatomical_chart,_Cyclopaedia,_1728,_volume_1,_between_pages_84_and_85.jpg. JPEG

Das Pfennigmagazin der Gesellschaft zur Verbreitung gemeinnütziger Kenntnisse. 7 March 1835. image

Quesnay, François. Tableau Économique. Wikimedia Commons. 2014.
http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/4/42/Quesnay_Tableau.jpg/357px-Quesnay_Tableau.jpg. JPEG

Weltliteratur: Romane, Erzählungen und Gedichte aller Zeiten und Völker. Ed. Hellmuth Langenbücher. 25. (October 1937): 385. image

Weltliteratur: Romane, Erzählungen und Gedichte aller Zeiten und Völker. Ed. Hellmuth Langenbücher. 37. (October 1938): 587. image