

Views from the Other Side: Colonial Culture and Anti-Colonial Sentiment in Germany

around 1800

by

Chunjie Zhang

Department of Germanic Languages and Literature  
Duke University

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jonathan Hess, Supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Michael Hardt

\_\_\_\_\_  
Walter Mignolo

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ann Marie Rasmussen

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of Doctor  
of Philosophy in the Department of  
Germanic Languages and Literature in the Graduate School  
of Duke University

2010

ABSTRACT

Views from the Other Side: Colonial Culture and Anti-Colonial Sentiment in Germany

around 1800

by

Chunjie Zhang

Department of Germanic Languages and Literature  
Duke University

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jonathan Hess, Supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Michael Hardt

\_\_\_\_\_  
Walter Mignolo

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ann Marie Rasmussen

An abstract of a dissertation submitted in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree  
of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of  
Germanic Languages and Literature in the Graduate School  
of Duke University

2010

Copyright by  
Chunjie Zhang  
2010

## Abstract

It is received wisdom that Britain and France played the leading role in overseas expansion in the eighteenth century while the German lands lacked both a central political authority and colonies of their own. We know from the work of scholars such as Susanne Zantop that German intellectuals were fascinated by encounters with non-European cultures, and German genres of travel writing, popular drama, and the philosophy of history all manifest an obsession with thinking about forms of cultural difference. In many cases, such efforts are wrought with ambivalence. The German world traveler Georg Forster is torn between the passionate admiration for a paradise-like Tahiti and the judgment of Tahiti as uncivilized. August von Kotzebue, Germany's most popular playwright around 1800, wrote dramas set in the New World and other exotic locales. In his *Bruder Moritz* (1791, *Brother Moritz*), the protagonist seeks to educate the child-like Arabs at the same time as he criticizes his aunt's racial condescension as lacking empathy. In Johann Gottfried Herder's philosophy of history, sympathy for the slaves in European colonies is accompanied by a belief in European cultural superiority. In all these examples, there is more at stake than the fantasies of German colonial rule that Zantop called our attention to a decade ago. My dissertation targets precisely the equivocal nature of the German colonial imagination around 1800 and suggests a different reading strategy.

Postcolonial scholarship has critiqued the ways in which visions of European cultural and racial superiority supported the expansion of colonialism. Recently, scholars have also foregrounded how European culture gave rise to a critique of colonial atrocity. My dissertation, however, stresses the co-existence of both Eurocentrism and the critique of colonial violence and understands this seeming contradiction as a response to the challenge from cultural and colonial difference. I identify emotion or the mode of sentimentalism as the channel through which the alleged cultural otherness questions both colonial violence and European superiority with universal claims. In my analysis, non-Europeans are not only the colonized or the oppressed but also regain their agency in co-constructing a distinct vision of global modernity.

The dissertation concerns itself with both canonical works and popular culture. I first explore Georg Forster's highly influential travelogue *Reise um die Welt* (1777/1778, *A Voyage Round the World*), documenting the interplay between Enlightenment anthropology and the impact of South Pacific cultures. Kotzebue's cross-cultural melodramas imagine different orders of love, sexuality, and marriage and challenge the noble form of bourgeois tragedy as theorized by Friedrich Schiller. Contested by Immanuel Kant, Herder's universal history inaugurates a new logic of organizing different cultures into an organic ongoing process of historical development and, at the same time, articulates cultural relativism as a paradigm shift. My reading strategy

through cultural and colonial difference unearths the pivotal roles which the impulses from the non-European world played in the construction of German culture around 1800.

By acknowledging both Eurocentrism and anticolonial critiques in these German texts, this dissertation stresses the impact of cultural otherness on the architecture of German thought through sentimentalism and provides both historically and theoretically differentiated understandings of the German colonial imagination in the global eighteenth century.

## Contents

Abstract .....	iv
List of Figures .....	xi
1. Introduction: Transmodernity, Archaeology, and German Colonial Culture .....	1
2. Georg Forster's <i>Reise um die Welt</i> (1777/1778): European Ethnography and Pacific Sentiment.....	19
2.1 Introduction: The Frame of the South Seas and Georg Forster's Eyes.....	19
2.2 <i>Reise um die Welt</i> and its Impact.....	35
2.3 Cannibalism and Forster's Empathetic Relativism.....	38
2.4 Visit to Tanna: Violence, Self-Preservation, and the Love of Peace .....	44
2.5 Desertion on Tahiti.....	51
2.5.1 Forster's Agreement: Bread, Sex, and the Human Heart.....	52
2.5.2 Forster's Disagreement: Inequality, Revolution, and Enlightenment Progress.....	61
2.5.3 Forster's Cultural Relativism.....	64
2.6 Conclusion.....	66
3. August von Kotzebue's Exotic Melodramas: Sentimentalism, Sexuality and Refusal of Tragedy.....	68
3.1 Introduction.....	68
3.1.1 Kotzebue and Colonialism.....	68
3.1.2 Kotzebue's Popularity and His Critics .....	73
3.1.3 Kotzebue and Schiller: Happy Sentimentalism and the Mode of Melodrama.....	84

3.1.4 Kotzebue and Goethe: Love in a Trio Constellation.....	93
3.2 Social Divergence and Spatial Differences: Bruder Moritz, der Sonderling, oder die Colonie für die Pelew-Inseln .....	101
3.2.1 Introduction.....	101
3.2.2 Moritz's Ambiguous Alter Ego: the Arab Omar.....	109
3.2.3 Sex and Morals.....	117
3.2.4 The Refuge to the Pelew Islands: Gesture of a Utopian Wish-Fulfillment.....	123
3.2.5 Concluding Remarks: the Ideal Man Moritz and Spatial Rupture.....	127
3.3 Internal Integration and External Challenge: Gurli, or the Female Noble Savage in Die Indianer in England .....	129
3.3.1 From Yarico to Gurli: Femininity, Morality, and Savagery.....	129
3.3.2 Kotzebue's <i>Die Indianer in England</i> and Gurli's Double Naïveté .....	134
3.3.3 Gurli's Instinctive Morality and her Challenge to the Internal Frontier .....	139
3.3.4 Gurli's Childishness and Her Integration.....	144
3.3.5 Conclusion.....	147
3.4 Heroic Peruvians and Melancholic Spaniards: Kotzebue's Peru Dramas Die Sonnenjungfrau and Die Spanier in Peru, oder Rollas Tod .....	149
3.4.1 General Background .....	149
3.4.2 Cora, the Ideal Woman.....	153
3.4.3 Rolla, the Ideal Man .....	165
3.5 Concluding Remarks.....	180

4. The Universal and the Sentimental: Geohistorical Hierarchy and Anti-Colonial Critique in Johann Gottfried Herder’s Philosophy of History .....	184
4. 1 Introduction: How Relativistic is Herder’s Philosophy of History? .....	184
4. 2 Organic Development and Cultural Uniqueness in Herder’s Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit .....	199
4.2.1 Herder’s Sources: Travel Narratives.....	199
4.2.2 Development or Geohistorical Hierarchy .....	203
4.2.3 Historicization of Geography and Invention of Tradition .....	210
4.2.4 Cultural Uniqueness’s Historical Limits.....	214
4.2.5 Subversion from Within: Herder’s Critique of European Colonial Practices.	219
4.2.6 Concluding Remarks: Herder and the Plural Centers of Gravity .....	221
4. 3 Africa and Europe in Herder’s Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit .....	222
4.3.1 Introduction.....	222
4.3.2 Situated Felicity and Inevitable Development .....	230
4.3.3 Climate, Race, and the “Pitiful” Africans.....	235
4.3.4 The Idea of Europe and the Spirit of Trade .....	244
4.3.5 Conclusion: Herder’s Universalism or European Identity.....	255
4. 4 From Sinophilia to Sinophobia: China, History, and Recognition .....	256
4.4.1 The Fashion of China .....	256
4.4.2 Hegel, Fanon, and Recognition .....	262
4.4.3 Leibniz and Sinophilia.....	264

4.4.4 Herder and Sinophobia .....	268
4.4.5 Macartney’s Journey and China’s Economic Dominance.....	273
4.4.6 Conclusion.....	277
4. 5 From History to Ethics: Herder’s Anti-Colonial Letters .....	278
4.5.1 Herder’s Anti-Colonial Critique.....	278
4.5.2 Equal Authenticity and Refutation of European Standards.....	285
4.5.3 The Iroquois Perpetual Peace .....	288
4.5.4 Nemesis.....	297
4.5.5 Superior or Decaying Europe .....	299
4. 6 Concluding Remarks.....	302
5. Conclusion .....	304
Bibliography .....	308
Biography.....	330

## List of Figures

Figure 1: Johann Reinhold Forster and Georg Forster at Tahiti (1780) by John Francis Rigaud, Collection Rheinberger, Vaduz .....	19
Figure 2: Percentage of Performances at Mannheim Theater from 1779-1870, copied from <a href="http://www.augustvonkotzebue.de">www.augustvonkotzebue.de</a> .....	74
Figure 3: W. Grainger after Thomas Stothard, The Voyage of the Sable Venus from Angola to the West Indies, Original in the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University.....	134

# 1. Introduction: Transmodernity, Archaeology, and German Colonial Culture

When present-day German Studies scholars think about the term “postcolonial studies,” the foremost reference occurring to us would likely be Susanne Zantop’s path-breaking work on German colonial fantasies in the pre-colonial period from 1770 to 1870. Zantop’s work sheds light on the little studied German discourse about the European colonial enterprise and unearths German intellectuals’ fascination with non-European cultures in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. Zantop’s study is primarily concerned with Germany’s intellectual preparation around 1800 for its colonial deeds after 1871. She argues that precisely the lack of actual colonies causes Germans’ desire for colonial expansion and fuels their fantasies of material and sexual possession of the New World, in particular South America.

Although Zantop’s work takes into consideration the lack of a unified German political authority in the eighteenth century, her theoretical framework is indebted to postcolonial criticism based on French and British contexts. In other words, Zantop interprets the German colonial imagination with the colonizer-versus-colonized model and reads the German texts as an epistemic violence which permeated print culture and created a justification for European cultural and racial superiority. Drawing on this theory, Zantop treats German lands as a unified political entity or, in our modern-day

jargon, a nation state.<sup>1</sup> Hence for Zantop, Germans in the eighteenth century are in one way different from but in the end similar to the European colonial powers such as France and Britain.

Zantop's insightful explanation, however, leaves some key questions unanswered. Did non-European cultures merely play a passive role in German and European discourse before the thriving imperialism of the nineteenth century? Do utopian visions of the South Seas and the myth of the noble savage only reflect colonial desire? How should we deal with the Enlightenment Sinophilia with the colonizer-colonized model? Does the pervasive and harsh critique of colonial atrocities in numerous German texts merely play a marginalized role as Zantop asserts? Furthermore, if we keep in mind the German fragmentation in the eighteenth century, then is the framework of proto-national literature, in which Zantop situates German discourse, still a valid approach? Zantop's argument about Germany's precolonial fantasy runs the risk of projecting the later pattern of nation states onto a past which tells a different story.<sup>2</sup> In

---

<sup>1</sup> Zantop draws on Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994); Robert J. C. Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995); Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995). Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993).

<sup>2</sup> Katherine Arens's recent critique of the reception of Said's *Orientalism* in German Studies warns us not to "import" theoretical models developed in a totally different context without carefully differentiating concrete historical conditions. She trenchantly points out that the reified model of colonizer and colonized, based on the Hegelian "ubiquitous Master-Slave dialectic," actually effectively *others* and *marginalizes* eighteenth-century "*germanophone cultures* in a Europe where a unified Germany did not exist." In other

other words, the conventional category of national literature, developed in nineteenth-century literary criticism, bears some limits for our understanding of German eighteenth-century literature and culture. My discussion of Zantop's landmark work aims both at finding a way of dealing with the distinctive German situation and at refining the debate on the postcolonial framework her study represents.

The German world traveler Georg Forster is torn between the passionate admiration for the paradise-like Tahiti and his judgment of Tahiti as uncivilized while he voyaged with Captain James Cook to the South Pacific from 1772 to 1775. August von Kotzebue, the most popular German playwright around 1800, wrote dramas set in the New World and other exotic locales. In his play *Bruder Moritz, der Sonderling, oder die Colonie für die Pelew-Inseln* (1791, *Brother Moritz, the Strang One, or the Colony on the Pelew Islands*), the protagonist seeks to educate the child-like Arabs at the same time as he criticizes his aunt's racial condescension as lacking empathy. In Johann Gottfried Herder's philosophy of history, sympathy for the slaves in European colonies corresponds to his revolutionary concept of the equal authenticity of every culture seen

---

words, studies on eighteenth-century German colonial imaginary and cultural differences, which uncritically draw on Said, ignore alternate historical particularities. Katherine Arens, "Said's Colonial Fantasies: How *Orientalism* Marginalizes Eighteenth-Century Germans," *Herder Yearbook* VII(2004). Peter Wilson also points out the limits of the projecting the pattern of the unified Germany onto its fragmented past: "As a result, central European history has generally been viewed from a national perspective, imposing the frontiers of later states onto the past and writing about parts of the empire as if these were already independent countries." Peter H. Wilson, "The Empire, Austria, and Prussia," In *A Companion to Eighteenth-Century Europe*, ed Peter H. Wilson. (Blackwell Publishing, 2008), <[http://www.blackwellreference.com/subscriber/tocnode?id=g9781405139472\\_chunk\\_g978140513947218](http://www.blackwellreference.com/subscriber/tocnode?id=g9781405139472_chunk_g978140513947218)>.

as a historical stage in world history. At the same time, Herder also discloses his belief in European cultural superiority. In all these examples, there is more at stake than the fantasies of German colonial rule that Zantop called our attention to a decade ago. Although Zantop's work enhances the visibility of how the "precolonial" Germans produced "truths" about the non-European world, her reading strategy, largely confined with the colonizer-versus-colonized model, only recognizes Germans as the sole speaking subjects and ignores the agency of non-European cultures in the discourse.<sup>3</sup>

My dissertation targets precisely the ambivalent nature of German colonial culture around 1800 and suggests a different reading strategy. The discourse of the global eighteenth century is characterized by the expansion of colonialism and capitalism and, at the same time, registers the interplay of transcultural exchanges, intermediaries, and interferences, including both German/European and non-European contributions. Hence representative texts studied in both Zantop's work and my dissertation are not only a locus purely inscribed by German colonial fantasies but also reflect the voices and challenges of non-European knowledge and culture. Furthermore, I stress the pervasive sentimental moments in the German texts as the channels through

---

<sup>3</sup> Russell A. Berman argues that Enlightenment not only supports the ideology of empire but also gives rise to the critical spirit which questions empire. Like Zantop, Berman's reading of German travel narratives, however, is largely confined within the framework of European discourse and contends that the German *Sonderweg* characterizes German colonial ideology. My approach differs from Zantop's and Berman's studies by enhancing the visibility of non-European impact in German discourse. See Russell A. Berman, *Enlightenment or Empire: Colonial Discourse in German Culture* (Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 7.

which non-European cultures enter into European discourse and complicate European sense of superiority and identity.

Two theoretical discussions enable me to unearth the non-European impact and reconceive German colonial culture around 1800. First, the project of decentralizing Europe to a local culture in Latin American Studies helps me locate Germany within the global geopolitical situation in the eighteenth century. Second, Foucault's archaeological inquiry inspires me to pursue a discursive or non-essentialist reading strategy to approach text as inter-text. This reading strategy goes beyond the limits of an author-centered search for the essential or the "real" meaning of a text and enables me to discover or equally acknowledge various, often contradictory, voices in one text. Let me start with the first one.

According to the sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein's world-system analysis, the rise of Europe in world history started with Columbus's "discovery" of America in 1492.<sup>4</sup> In particular, the end of the eighteenth century proves a crucial time for European colonialist and capitalist expansion. Hence European economic, social, industrial, and cultural modernity is not a product manufactured within the European peninsula. Rather it is a result of Europe's global expansion and colonial exploitation since 1500.

---

<sup>4</sup> See Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World System III: The Second Era of Great Expansion of the Capitalist World-Economy, 1730-1840s* (San Diego: Academic Press, 1989); — — —, *Historical Capitalism with Capitalist Civilization* (London and New York: Verso, 1983).

Wallerstein explains European modernity from the global geographical perspective and refuses to see European world-economy as a natural result of European tradition, and this tradition as the most superior in the world.

The Latin American philosopher Enrique Dussel, however, points out that Wallerstein's approach overstates European centrality in world economy in the last five hundred years. Instead, Dussel stresses China's enormous productive power from 1400 to 1800 in a polycentric world economy (including the Hindustani and Islamic world) and identifies Europe's peripheral position during this period.<sup>5</sup> Dussel elaborates that, until the eighteenth century, China "was the greatest producer of commodities, and that the China Sea was an unequalled mercantile site within the world-system [...]."<sup>6</sup> Europe, through its colonial enterprise in the Americas and the Industrial Revolution around 1800, gradually gained global domination, principally carried out by Britain and France.<sup>7</sup>

Dussel's attempt to decentralize Europe in the conception of world history is intrinsically related to his critique of the historical lineage from European modernity to

---

<sup>5</sup> Also see Giovanni Arrighi, Takeshi Hamashita, and Mark Selden, *The Resurgence of East Asia: 500, 150 and 50 Year Perspectives* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003). This socio-economic study supports Dussel's opinion and offers detailed data analysis of East Asian, in particular Chinese economic predominance in world history until early nineteenth century.

<sup>6</sup> Enrique Dussel, "World-System and "Trans"-Modernity," *Nepantla: Views from South* 3, no. 2 (2002): 227.

<sup>7</sup> I argue in the chapter on Enlightenment representations of China that intellectual Sinophobia in the eighteenth century is less an imperial distortion of Chinese culture; rather it reflects the abstention from Sinophilia and the cry for European alterity and identity.

postmodernity, which excludes non-European cultures in the world system.<sup>8</sup> As Walter Mignolo points out, we should stop seeing modernity as the goal for the non-European world community. Rather we should see modernity as “a European construction of history in Europe’s own interests.”<sup>9</sup> Likewise, postmodernity is also a construction within the tradition of European modernity; hence Dussel argues:

Postmodernity’s critique of modernity [...] critiques it as “modern” and not as “European” or “North American.” [...] Postmodernity’s “post” does not eliminate its Eurocentrism since postmodernity assumes that future humanity obviously will reach the same “cultural” situation as postmodern Europe and the United States to the degree that humanity modernizes by the process of “globalization” (which is considered irreversible and inevitable). This belief in modernizing “inevitability” makes postmodernity profoundly Eurocentric.<sup>10</sup>

Instead, Dussel coins the term “transmodernity,” which stresses the concurrence of the process of modernity in different places on the globe and maps out a new geopolitical consciousness. In a transmodern world system, the European Industrial Revolution “was Europe’s response to a ‘vacuum’ in the East Asian market, especially China and Hindustan; [...] This ‘vacuum’ attracted the ‘possibility’ of being ‘filled’ by a European

---

<sup>8</sup> Dussel’s attempt is different than Dipesh Chakrabarti’s project of provincializing Europe. While Chakrabarti claims the indispensability and the inadequacy of European thought founded in European Enlightenment, he does not recognize the historical marginality of Europe in world history and still holds on to the centrality of European intellectual heritage. Dussel’s point, however, powerfully enhances the visibility of non-European cultures and their values in the making of world history. See Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000).

<sup>9</sup> Walter Mignolo, *The Idea of Latin America* (Malden and Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), xix.

<sup>10</sup> Dussel, “World-System and “Trans”-Modernity,” 233.

production that had been growing since the fifteenth century.”<sup>11</sup> The notion of transmodernity is able to incorporate the non-European world into the discourse and represents world history in a polycentric way. Transmodernity, Dussel elaborates, “demands a whole new interpretation of modernity in order to include moments that were never incorporated into the European version.”<sup>12</sup> Dussel’s decentralization of Europe enhances the visibility of the non-European world in the process of global modernity and offers us a new concept to understand our global history and envision our future.

Taking seriously the notion of transmodernity and identifying the years around 1800 as a historical turning point of European global domination in the world system, we need to read German texts around 1800 not merely as colonial fantasies but also as a set of discourses reflecting on and negotiating with both European and non-European knowledge. Foucault’s archaeological inquiry is helpful to actualize this consciousness at the level of reading strategy and textual analysis.

Instead of organizing knowledge according to conventional categories of author and his/her oeuvre, Foucault introduces the concept of discourse to describe the whole interplay of exchanges and intermediaries. Foucault proposes that we should discard the idea of subject and author as the constituting principle and conceives of history as

---

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.: 231.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.: 223-24.

interrelated and interacting statements or domains of objects.<sup>13</sup> Foucault calls this method archaeology because it does not “treat discourse as document, as a sign of something else, as an element that ought to be transparent [...]; it is concerned with discourse in its own volume, as a *monument*.”<sup>14</sup> In other words, the archaeological reading frees the reader from the coercion of finding the “real,” intrinsic, or consistent meaning of a single text and hence rehabilitates the entity of text as an inter-text, a discursive field reflecting the interferences of various forces.

I deem this reading strategy extremely useful for dealing with contradictory statements within one text or one author’s thought. Foucault elaborates:

For archaeological analysis, contradictions are neither appearances to be overcome, nor secret principles to be uncovered. They are objects to be described for themselves, without any attempt being made to discover from what point of view they can be dissipated, or at what level they can be radicalized and effects become causes. [...] By deriving [...] the contradiction between two theses from a certain domain of objects, from its delimitations and divisions, one does not discover a point of conciliation. But neither does one transfer it to a more fundamental level; one defines the locus in which it takes place; it reveals the place where the two branches of the alternative join; it localizes the divergence and the place where the two discourses are juxtaposed.<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> Foucault contends: “One has to dispense with the constituent subject, to get rid of the subject itself, that’s to say, to arrive at an analysis which can account for the constitution of the subject within a historical framework. And this is what I would call genealogy, that is, a form of history which can account for the constitution of knowledges, discourses, domains of objects etc., without having to make reference to a subject which is either transcendental in relation to the field of events or runs in its empty sameness throughout the course of history.” Michel Foucault and Colin Gordon, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 117.

<sup>14</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 138-39.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 151-52.

In the case of German colonial imaginations around 1800, this archaeological reading not only unearths the so-called colonial fantasies, as Zantop's work demonstrates; more importantly, it discloses seemingly contradictory statements: critique of the slave trade, sympathy with the miseries of the colonized, euphoric praise of South Pacific nature and culture, and lamentations over European moral debauchery. If contradictory statements within one text or one author's thought reflect the opposition between distinct discursive formations, then our German texts provide a locus in which the European and the non-European knowledge collide, mingle, and negotiate with each other. If Foucauldian archaeology "describes the different spaces of dissension," then my reading aims at understanding the discordance as a sign of the different attitudes Europeans have toward non-European knowledge. In order to link Foucault's archaeology to the transmodern conditions around 1800, I read the contradictions in the German texts as expressions of that geopolitical situation – including both Europe's invention of its superiority and anti-colonial sentiment as reactions to the challenge of non-European cultures.

I examine texts spanning three representative genres: Georg Forster's travel writing, August von Kotzebue's popular dramas, and Johann Gottfried Herder's philosophy of history. These authors' works reflect both their purported European superiority and their condemnation of European colonialism and its violence. I organize

these authors' works into genres to conceive of them as cultural practices which emerge and thrive in specific historical conditions, which individually represent aesthetic tastes of different social groups, and which, as forms and spaces, incorporate European and non-European knowledges. Engaging with both highbrow and popular literature and culture, I choose the works of Forster, Kotzebue, and Herder in order to include a wide socio-historical spectrum of German colonial culture and expand the German canon of postcolonial criticism beyond Immanuel Kant, Heinrich von Kleist, or Johann Wolfgang Goethe.

I do not use genre as a category to draw strict and absolute dividing lines between the texts I investigate.<sup>16</sup> Rather, I connect genre with European/German cultural activities around 1800: scientific traveling, writing plays for performance, and philosophizing about human differences. These different cultural and historical practices inform and determine the expression and the function of each genre. Although Foucauldian archaeology refuses the possibility or legitimacy of the search for a deeper meaning, I argue that these genres or cultural practices contain meanings or substances

---

<sup>16</sup> Jonathan Culler's proposition of non-genre literature already points out the egregious limits of genre criticism and contends that literature, which intentionally breaks generic boundaries, enables us to become aware of the limits of our understanding and to invent new "conventions." Jonathan Culler, "Toward a Theory of Non-Genre Literature," in *Theory of the Novel*, ed. Michael McKeon (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000).

which go beyond their generic borders and form a shared colonial culture and anti-colonial sentiment in Germany and Europe around 1800.<sup>17</sup>

These cultural practices, however, were not distinctively German. Peter Wilson points out that, despite religious, political, economic, and linguistic differences, a common sense of belonging existed among European peoples in the eighteenth century.<sup>18</sup> Wilson argues that technological, economic, and military developments in the eighteenth century integrate and transform European powers into one European collectivity with global predominance, though not without internal conflicts. This collective Europe is marked by shared forms of institutions,

best defined as cultural practices and assumptions, both formal and informal. In short, they were a way of doing things, coordinating activities, setting priorities, and allocating resources. Individual elements were not unique, but their combination was distinctly European. [...] More importantly, these institutions, such as state structures and forms of education, were present across Europe and not merely in those countries engaged in overseas trade or conquest.<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> Two theoretical positions have inspired me toward this connection between genre and cultural activity. Fredric Jameson's definition of the novel as a genre, which contains and emits "its ideological message long after the extinction of its host," makes clear the deep connections between historical conditions and ideological and literary expressions. Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1981), 151. In *The Origin of the Work of Art*, Martin Heidegger's emphasis of action as the fundamental way of connecting materials or objects to being encourages me to think that the form of art, genre, registers and contains a particular way of practice. Genre is thus the mediation between practice and culture.

<sup>18</sup> Peter H. Wilson, "Introduction," in *A Companion to Eighteenth-Century Europe*, ed. Peter H. Wilson (Blackwell Publishing, 2008),

<[http://www.blackwellreference.com/subscriber/tocnode?id=g9781405139472\\_chunk\\_g97814051394722](http://www.blackwellreference.com/subscriber/tocnode?id=g9781405139472_chunk_g97814051394722)>

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

As a matter of fact, when Forster, Kotzebue, and Herder speak about non-European peoples, their counterpart is always Europe; they barely speak of differences between German and non-European cultures. Hence they were less concerned with German specificity than with European context. Russell Berman's emphasis on European internal conflicts and the German *Sonderweg* (special way) and his doubt about the validity of term Eurocentrism are thus in this context untenable.<sup>20</sup> Forster lived in different parts of Europe (Prussia, Russia, England, and Poland) and voyaged with a British expedition round the world. Kotzebue spent almost all his adulthood in Russian service and lived in today's Latvia for decades. While Königsberg, where Herder studied with Kant, was a center of German book fairs, presses, and intellectual life, it switched back and forth between Prussian and Russian rules in the eighteenth century.

Hence being German in the eighteenth century is not being politically or territorially German, which in fact did not exist. Being German rather means being culturally, linguistically, and intellectually German. At the same time, the German way of life shares great similarities and affinities with other European cultures in the eighteenth century. Hence a perusal of German texts and contexts will enrich the current research paradigm of postcolonial studies, predominantly defined by the transatlantic

---

<sup>20</sup> See Berman, *Enlightenment or Empire: Colonial Discourse in German Culture*, 15-16.

links between Britain, France, and North America in the eighteenth century.<sup>21</sup> I call the genres or cultural practices I engage with in this dissertation “colonial culture” in order to illuminate the inextricable connection German lands had with other European powers’ colonial enterprise and German intellectuals’ deep obsession with the so-called colonial world. Walter Mignolo’s critique of coloniality as the darker side of European modernity also prompts me to highlight the colonial nature of these cultural practices.<sup>22</sup>

I will start with Georg Forster’s influential travelogue *Reise um die Welt* (1777/1778, *A Voyage Round the World*), depicting his life as a naturalist on board Cook’s second expedition to the South Pacific. A committed student of Carl Linné’s project of natural history, Forster claims absolute objectivity in scientific observation. At the same time, he confesses to sentimental moments in the encounters with indigenous peoples. I juxtapose Forster’s firm belief in objective knowledge to his sentimental uncertainties in order to show how the cultural identities of Forster’s Europe and Polynesian societies collide, blend, change, and regenerate. The South Pacific is less a passive object under imperial gaze than an active agent which intrudes upon Forster’s perceptive senses.

---

<sup>21</sup> Peter Wilson points out that “there is a need to look beyond the Atlantic seaboard and at the majority of Europeans for whom life was often very different. It is also important in this present age of closer political integration and means of rapid communication to remember that eighteenth-century Europe was divided into many different states and hundreds of thousands of communities varying considerably in size and internal stratification.” Wilson, “Introduction.”

<sup>22</sup> Mignolo contends: “There is no modernity without coloniality, because coloniality is constitutive of modernity. [...] Modernity is the name for the historical process in which Europe began its progress toward world hegemony. It carries a darker side, coloniality. Capitalism, as we know it today, is of the essence for both the conception of modernity and its darker side, coloniality.” Mignolo, *The Idea of Latin America*, xiii.

New Zealand cannibalism, violent encounters on Tanna, and the celebration of the earthly paradise Tahiti in Forster's travel narrative all reveal how Forster negotiates between his pre-established European superiority and the uncertainties, differences, and changes the South Pacific inflicted upon both his sentiment and his intellect.

Forster's portrayal of the utopian South Seas exerted tremendous influence on his contemporaries. In Kotzebue's *Bruder Moritz, der Sonderling, oder die Kolonie auf Pelew-Inseln* (1791, *Brother Moritz, the Strang One, or the Colony on Pelew Islands*), the German nobleman Moritz is so disappointed by the moral debauchery at home that he decides to emigrate to a South Pacific island with his family. The exotic setting in this play is, however, not a singular phenomenon in the corpus of Kotzebue. The most successful and popular playwright of his day, Kotzebue has been dismissed as superficial and commercial both by his canonical contemporaries such as Goethe and Schiller and is largely ignored by present-day literary critics. In contrast, I deem it indispensable to take seriously Kotzebue's works and his popularity both as a representative voice of the desires of common people and a counter-genre to the bourgeois tragedy.

Kotzebue portrays Indians, Arabs, Pacific Islanders, and black Africans; he sets his plays in the South Seas or Peru; and he celebrates human sentiments without tragic ending. Around 1800, the literary elites around Goethe and Schiller in Germany saw tragedy as the highest form of art because only the tragic ending bears the function of

cleansing the soul, educating the moral senses, and punishing deviant desires. They despised Kotzebue's extreme popularity and criticized his plays as "immoral." Kotzebue, however, invoked "exotic" characters and settings to avoid tragic endings and created a different imagination of love, sexuality, and family. The cultural otherness in Kotzebue's plays challenges the authority of tragic punishment, and allows "deviant" relationships to survive in geographical locations other than Europe. Colonial cruelty is also harshly critiqued by Kotzebue. At the same time, the exotic characters in Kotzebue's plays are typically depicted as intellectually inferior to white Europeans. This fact reflects, on the one hand, the self-ascribed European superiority; on the other hand, it also registers the collective desires for a different organization of love, sexuality, family, and society. I will focus on five plays by Kotzebue: *La Peyrouse* (1797), *Die Sonnenjungfrau* (1789, *Virgin of the Sun*), *Die Spanier in Peru* (1795, *Spaniards in Peru*), *Bruder Moritz* (1791), and *Die Indianer in England* (1789, *Indians in England*).

Herder's philosophy of history is also tremendously influenced by non-European cultures registered in travel literature. A central figure in the history of European intellectual history, Herder endeavors to incorporate and organize a wide array of European and non-European cultures in the realm of history. In *Auch eine Philosophie zur Geschichte der Menschheit* (1774, *Yet Another Philosophy of History towards the Education of Humankind*), while Herder establishes the notion of historical development legitimizing

European superiority, he stresses each culture's uniqueness. Instead of following numerous critics' praise of Herder's relativism, I rather read Herder's concept of equal authenticity as a result of his anti-colonial sentiment. Contested by Immanuel Kant, Herder theorizes sentiment as the most fundamental feature of being human. By connecting Herder's theory of sentiment to his anti-colonial critique, we notice how non-European knowledge sustains influence on Herder's sentiment and intellect. I investigate Herder's portrayal of Africa and China in contrast to his construction of Europe in his magnum opus *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (1784-1791, *Ideas of a Philosophy of History of Humankind*). In the end, I turn to Herder's anti-colonial critique in *Briefe zu Beförderung der Humanität* (1793-1797, *Letters toward Advancement of Humanity*), in which the logic of historical development transforms into an ethic, which stresses the revenge of history as the necessary result of colonial atrocities. The contradiction between Herder's Eurocentric idea of historical development and his anti-colonial sentiment is the best example for the interactive discourse inscribed by the forces of both European and non-European knowledge.

By connecting Herder's philosophy, Forster's travelogue, and Kotzebue's dramas through anti-colonial sentiment, my reading of German colonial culture around 1800 endeavors to make visible the contribution of non-European knowledge in the making of German/European cultural identity. At the same time, I do not aim at downplaying

the fact, as Said reminds us in *Culture and Imperialism*, that Europe did rule. Rather, by keeping in mind the uncertainties evoked by non-European cultures in German and European discourse around 1800, we decentralize Europe's imperial image from global ubiquity to local specificity and enhance the visibility of non-European cultures in European knowledge production.

## 2. Georg Forster's *Reise um die Welt* (1777/1778): European Ethnography and Pacific Sentiment

### 2.1 Introduction: *The Frame of the South Seas and Georg Forster's Eyes*



Figure 1: Johann Reinhold Forster and Georg Forster at Tahiti (1780) by John Francis Rigaud, Collection Rheinberger, Vaduz

In this image by the well-known British painter Rigaud, the young man in the foreground intensively observes the bird his father is holding. As the title of the painting tells us, the background of the luxurious greenery is the tropical landscape of the legendary island of Tahiti in the South Seas. The ship at the horizon and the two men's clothing inform us that they are European visitors. The young man's hand is about to draw the bird on paper, to record the ephemeral sight in a longer lasting form. Strangely enough, the painter does not show him in the process of drawing but induces our eyes to concentrate on the point of his pen, which will touch the paper at any moment to document the details of the bird's decaying body. This portrayal reminds us of the Greek statue of the Laocoön group, in which, according to Gotthold E. Lessing, Laocoön is captured at the moment before the real drama starts: his hand struggles in vain to tear away the head of the serpent and he is about to cry at the snake's approaching bite. Similarly, the pen's tip in the young man's hand also keeps our imagination in great suspense. The painting tempts us to ask: What is he going to draw?

Apparently, we can answer the question easily: he is going to draw what he sees. But will his drawing precisely reflect what he sees? Will he add anything else to the bird or omit some parts because his cultural background or some spontaneous ideas prompt him to do so? If the pen is not only the pen of a painter but also the pen of a writer, what is the relationship between what a writer sees and what she/he writes? As a matter of

fact, the young man depicted in the picture, Georg Forster (1754-1794), provoked extraordinary enthusiasm for the South Seas and Tahiti among eighteenth-century German and European intellectuals not primarily through his paintings but through his famous writing: *Reise um die Welt* (1777 English version, 1778 German translation, *A Voyage Round the World*). The book belongs to travel literature, which, along with encyclopedias, immensely contributes to both intercultural understanding and misunderstanding in the eighteenth century. After the novel, travel literature was the second most favorite and successful genre of eighteenth-century European print culture.<sup>1</sup>

Forster, the naturalist on board James Cook's second voyage to the South Pacific, thoroughly describes this expedition to the South Pacific from 1772 to 1775. Cook's three voyages round the world in the late eighteenth century bolstered British national confidence which had been weakened by the Seven Years' War and the war for American independence. Cook became a national hero representing Britain's pioneer ventures to waters and lands previously uncharted and undocumented by other rival

---

<sup>1</sup> Lüsebrink points out: "Daniel Roche beziffert die Zahl der in Europa erschienenen Reisebeschreibungen für das 16. Jahrhundert auf 456, für das 17. Jahrhundert auf 1566 und für das 18. Jahrhundert auf 3520 Werke, von denen viele eine europaweite Verbreitung, u.a. in Form von Übersetzungen, erhielten. Zwar betrafen knapp zwei Drittel der Reisebeschreibungen des 18. Jahrhunderts Europa (2049), vor allem Reisebeschreibungen über Asien (561) und Amerika (505), deren Zahl sich im Laufe des 18. Jahrhunderts verfünffachte, stießen jedoch auf ein ungewöhnlich stark angestiegenes Leseinteresse." Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink, "Faszination und Wissensdurst. Zu den Grenzen und Möglichkeiten interkulturellen (Miss-)Verstehens in den Werken Georg Forsters und seiner Zeitgenossen," *Georg-Forster-Studien* XII(2007): 78.

European powers.<sup>2</sup> Forster's book, as Herbert Uerlings comments, is marked by an extreme market success and a powerful combination of empirical observations and philosophical reflections on intercultural encounters.<sup>3</sup> In the British context, Forster's travel narrative "is [also] in many ways a milestone for romantic period travel writing, establishing the principles which would increasingly be demanded from scientific travel writers over the next half-century."<sup>4</sup>

Let's come back to the questions we posed before: Does Forster's narrative truly reflect what he saw during this voyage? In other words, is there a discrepancy between what the traveler tells us in the writing and what the reality might have been? Forster consciously reflects on these questions in the preface to his book. First he criticizes one way of producing travel narratives:

Die Philosophen dieses Jahrhunderts, denen die anscheinenden Widersprüche verschiedener Reisenden sehr mißfielen, wählten sich gewisse Schriftsteller, welche sie den übrigen vorzogen, ihnen allen Glauben beymaßen, hingegen alle andre für fabelhaft ansahen. Ohne hinreichende Kenntniß warfen sie sich zu Richtern auf, nahmen gewisse Sätze für wahr an, (die sie dazu nach eigenem Gutdünken verstellten,) und bauten sich auf diese Art Systeme, die von fern ins Auge fallen, aber, bey näherer Untersuchung, uns wie ein Traum mit falschen Erscheinungen betrügen. Endlich wurden es die Gelehrten

---

<sup>2</sup> Harriet Guest, *Empire, Barbarism, and Civilisation: James Cook, William Hodges, and the Return to the Pacific* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 9-10.

<sup>3</sup> See Herbert Uerlings, "Geschlecht und Fortschritt. Zu Georg Forsters Reise um die Welt und dem Diskurs der 'Universalgeschichten des weiblichen Geschlechts'," in *Beschreiben und Erfinden. Figuren des Fremden vom 18. bis zum 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Viktoria Schmidt-Linsenhoff Karl Hölz, Herber Uerlings (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2000), 14.

<sup>4</sup> Nigel Leask, *Curiosity and the Aesthetics of Travel Writing, 1770-1840: 'from an antique land'* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 41.

müde, durch Declamation und sophistische Gründe hingerissen zu werden, und verlangten überlaut, daß man doch nur Thatsachen sammeln sollte.<sup>5</sup>

Although it is not clear to which philosophers Forster critically refers, he ridicules the speculative nature of contemporary philosophical anthropology, presumably the Scottish Enlightenment's "conjectural history."<sup>6</sup> Instead, he promotes the collection of facts based on empirical observation. Ten years later, this belief in empirical evidence leads Forster to impugn the objectivity of Kant's theory of race and human monogenesis.<sup>7</sup>

Another reason for Forster's complaint about speculative sophistry is directly connected with the fabrication of the travel narrative of Cook's first journey to the South Pacific. The head of the British Admiralty, Lord Sandwich, did not approve of the style of Cook's journal. Hence he commissioned the essayist and poet John Hawkesworth, who did not take part in the journey, to adapt Cook's journals and to compose the official

---

<sup>5</sup> Georg Forster, *Reise um die Welt*, ed. Gerhard Steiner (Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag, 1983), 17.

<sup>6</sup> Larry Wolff points out the speculative nature of Rousseau and Voltaire's anthropological thoughts. Ludwig Uhlig indicates that Forster here debunks the "theoretical or conjectural history" of the school of Scottish Enlightenment, to which his travel observations are actually deeply indebted. Larry Wolff, "Discovering Cultural Perspective: The Intellectual History of Anthropological Thought in the Age of Enlightenment," in *The Anthropology of the Enlightenment*, ed. Larry Wolff and Marco Cipolloni (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 12-13; Ludwig Uhlig, *Georg Forster: Lebensabenteuer eines gelehrten Weltbürgers* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004), 86-87.

<sup>7</sup> Forster's essay *Noch etwas über die Menschenrasen* (1786) criticizes the nature of metaphysical and biblical conjecture in Kant's *Bestimmung des Begriffs einer Menschenrasse* (1785) and *Mutmaßlicher Anfang der Menschengeschichte* (1786). Kant responds with the essay *Über den Gebrauch teleologischer Prinzipien in der Philosophie* (1788). This essay and the debate with Forster mark the starting point of Kant's occupation with teleology in nature, which culminates later in Kant's *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (1790). See John H. Zammito, *The Genesis of Kant's Critique of Judgment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 207-09; Uhlig, *Georg Forster: Lebensabenteuer eines gelehrten Weltbürgers*, 201-04.

account of the expedition. Hawkesworth's book, however, incurred censure for exaggerating a sexual scene in Cook's journal and articulating doubts about the power of Providence.<sup>8</sup> Therefore the British Admiralty supported Cook and published his own travel account of his second voyage for the sake of factual reality. Forster, however, justifies the existence of his *Reise um die Welt* by indicating that Cook's journal reflected a divergent perspective due to their different activities and tasks during the voyage. Furthermore, Forster indicates that the tedious collections of facts only results in an accumulation of details but fails to produce general views of nature and humanity.

Therefore his method is:

Ein Reisender, der nach meinem Begriff alle Erwartungen erfüllen wollte, müßte Rechtschaffenheit genug haben, einzelne Gegenstände richtig und in ihrem wahren Lichte zu beobachten, aber auch Scharfsinn genug, dieselben zu verbinden, allgemeine Folgerungen daraus zu ziehen, um dadurch sich und seinen Lesern den Weg zu neuen Entdeckungen und künftigen Untersuchungen zu bahnen.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> See Neil Rennie, "The Point Venus "Scene," Tahiti, 14 May 1769," in *The Global Eighteenth Century*, ed. Felicity A. Nussbaum (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007); Forster, *A Voyage Round the World*, 430-31n. Rennie notes that Hawkesworth died because of his describing the scandalous Point Venus scene of sexual intercourse and granting it a religious and ritual atmosphere. Thomas and Berghof comment that Hawkesworth's book was not received completely negatively. But it incurred censure because Hawkesworth denied the divine intervention for the survival of Cook's ship Endeavour after running onto the Great Barrier Reef. Forster mentions in the preface of his *Voyage* that Hawkesworth's book is received with great contempt for his inaccurate observation, unnecessary digressions, and sophistical principles.

<sup>9</sup> Forster, *Reise um die Welt*, 17.

As was common in the age of Enlightenment, the metaphor of “light” here symbolizes truth and epistemic authority.<sup>10</sup> Forster claims: “[A]llein in diesem *erleuchteten* Jahrhundert glaubt man keine Märchen mehr, die nach der romantischen Einbildungskraft unsrer Vorfahren schmecken.”<sup>11</sup> Forster uses the metaphor of light to claim his epistemological belief in a reality which should serve as the solid ground for general anthropological principles. Forster thus calls his book a philosophical travel account (*philosophische Reisebeschreibung*), in which the eyes of the traveler should not only fulfill the demands for accurate description and systematization of human societies, climate, topography, flora and fauna, but also draw universal conclusions about culture and nature.

Enlightenment standards of natural history and anthropology, representatively formulated by Carl Linné, Buffon, Rousseau, Adam Smith, or Adam Ferguson are

---

<sup>10</sup> Light gained enormous attention in eighteenth-century intellectual debates of aesthetics, philosophy, and physics. Newton’s famous treatise *Opticks, or a Treatise of the Reflexions, Refractions, Inflexions and Colours of Light* (1704) revolutionized common view of the white light. The metaphor of light changed its function from symbolizing divine bliss to reason, knowledge, and freedom. The French *philosophe* Marquis de Condorcet asks in his *Sketch for a Historical Picture of the Human Mind*: “[...] will man approach a condition in which everyone will have the knowledge necessary to conduct himself in the ordinary affairs of life, according to the light of his own reason, to preserve his mind free from prejudice, to understand his rights and to exercise them in accordance with his conscience and his creed [...]?” Isaac Kramnick, ed. *The Portable Enlightenment Reader* (New York: Penguin Books, 1995), 27. The powerful statement by Immanuel Kant in his essay *What is Enlightenment?* confirms Condorcet’s question: Enlightenment is man’s release from his self-incurred tutelage.

<sup>11</sup> Forster, *Reise um die Welt*, 14. (my italics)

clearly at work.<sup>12</sup> In a sense, Forster is fulfilling Rousseau's vision of traveling philosophers, who perfectly combine philosophical perspective with empirical observation.<sup>13</sup> If we follow the logic of Michel Foucault's archaeological inquiry, Forster's writing thus draws on and also contributes to a new mode of being and configuration of knowledge, which profoundly alters the order of things at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century and signifies the emergence of modern sciences.<sup>14</sup>

We can use the metaphor of the truth-seeking eyes to summarize Forster's method of travel writing and his positive belief in both perceiving and interpreting human and natural diversity. The act of seeing is the intrinsic occasion when reality is communicated with human cognitive perception. To travel thus means to see, and to write is to impart and represent what one has seen, to transpose the unknown human world into perceivable and acceptable knowledge, and to create a reality, an order of things ensured by sight. Then the readers can visualize and imagine what the traveler

---

<sup>12</sup> Georges-Louis Leclerc Comte de Buffon's *Histoire naturelle*, Carl Linné's *Systema Naturae*, Rousseau's two discourses, Adam Ferguson's *Essay on the History of Civil Society*, and Adam Smith's *Enquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* are all significant expressions of eighteenth-century European endeavor to systemize and historicize the natural and human world. See Larry Wolff and Marco Cipolloni, ed. *The Anthropology of the Enlightenment* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007); Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992); Uhlig, Georg Forster: *Lebensabenteuer eines gelehrten Weltbürgers*.

<sup>13</sup> Wolff, "Discovering Cultural Perspective: The Intellectual History of Anthropological Thought in the Age of Enlightenment," 15-17.

<sup>14</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 24.

has experienced. Therefore, according to Forster, travel writing is the linguistic representation of a visual reality, a world of imagination based on eyewitness accounts. Forster's announced neutrality, however, meets censure by twentieth-century critics of travel writings.<sup>15</sup>

Stephen Greenblatt warns us that voyagers are "liars [...] whose position virtually required the strategic manipulation and distortion and outright suppression of the truth."<sup>16</sup> Greenblatt's unwavering skepticism indicates that it is an epistemological fallacy to believe that travel literature corresponds to reality. He contends that we can only be certain that travel writing reveals to us "the European practice of representation."<sup>17</sup> In other words, travel writing turns out to be the mirror image of how the authors think and practice upon other people. It does not penetrate into unknown terrain and offer unbiased knowledge. Instead of presenting different cultures, travel writing utterly confirms what is already known to the authors, in particular the European cultural superiority. From this perspective, Forster's truth-seeking eyes turn into an organ imbued with imperial intentions.

---

<sup>15</sup> See Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), 13. "Great as the difference was between themselves and the natives, almost all European voyagers believed that they could communicate across it through the giving of gifts and the display of representations." Greenblatt supports this point by citing Columbus's log-book.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

Mary Louise Pratt, in particular, strives to show the connections between the rising significance of modern sciences and scientific expeditions and the commercial and imperialistic interests of European colonial nations. She points out that the project of global natural history, founded by Carl Linné's *Systema Naturae* (1735), is carried out by traveling naturalists such as Forster along with the supplemental activities of printing, collecting, drawing, establishing museums and botanical gardens for plant and animal specimens. Pratt argues that the seemingly innocent and disinterested project of natural history in fact produces exploitable knowledge for later commercial purposes. European travelers "are chiefly present as a kind of collective moving eye on which the sights/sites register."<sup>18</sup> The act of seeing foreign human cultures and flora and fauna is likened to the act of scanning for "possibilities of a Eurocolonial future coded as resources to be developed, surpluses to be traded, towns to be built."<sup>19</sup>

Following Greenblatt's skepticism and Pratt's critique of the symbolic violence travelers have done to non-European territories, the blank paper in the image we observed at the beginning of this chapter then functions as a mirror which should both document the bird as a colonial object and reflect Forster's white, male, and imperial ego

---

<sup>18</sup> Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, 59.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

in a self-congratulatory way.<sup>20</sup> Forster certainly takes part in Britain's imperial project, yet I argue that Forster's travel writing also discloses moments in which his cultural identity is challenged, changed, and regenerated through his encounters with non-European cultures. The following example will demonstrate the differences between Forster as an intellectual and the imperial intention of political authority.

The British Admiralty's official instruction to Cook discloses Britain's imperial ambitions in the South Pacific. It is well-known that Cook's second voyage mainly set out to search for the hypothetical continent of the South – the Antarctic. Yet as the instruction documents, it was not only scientific curiosity but also the colonial intention to explore and take possession of new land that made this voyage realistic:

If you discover Cape Circumcision, you are to satisfy yourself whether it is a part of that Southern Continent which has so much engaged the attention of Geographers & former Navigators, or Part of an Island. If it proves to be the former, You are to employ yourself diligently in exploring as great an Extent of it as you can [...], as may be useful either to Navigation or Commerce; you are also carefully to observe the nature of the soil & the produce thereof; the Animals & Fowls that inhabit or frequent it; the Fishes that are to be found in the Rivers or upon the Coast, & in what plenty; [...] If you find any Mines, Minerals, or valuable Stones, you are to bring home Specimens of each, as also of the Seeds of Trees, Shrubs, Plants, Fruits & Grains peculiar to the Country, as you may be able to collect [...]; You are likewise to observe the Genius, Temper, Disposition and Number of the Natives or Inhabitants, if there be any, & endeavour by all proper means to cultivate a Friendship and Alliance with them, making them Presents of such Trinquets as they may value, inviting them to Trafick, & shewing them every kind of Civility & Regard; [...] You are with the consent of the Natives to take possession of convenient Situations in the Country in the Name of the King of Great Britain, and to

---

<sup>20</sup> Yomb May, for example, reads Forster's travelogue completely in the light of imperial violence and ideological colonization and subjugation. Yomb May, "Kultur im Zeichen des Geschlechts: Eine genderorientierte und postkoloniale Lektüre von Georg Forsters *Reise um die Welt*," *Georg-Forster-Studien* XIII(2008).

distribute among the Inhabitants some of the Medals with which you have been furnished to remain as Traces of your having been there. But if you find the Country uninhabited you are to take possession of it for His Majesty by setting up proper Marks & Inscriptions as first Discoverers & Possessors.<sup>21</sup>

Clearly, the naturalists were hired to collect and document plants, animals and minerals, hence they are part of the imperial project of controlling information and appropriating land. On the other hand, the naturalists also retain a certain independence on board as “experimental gentlemen,” a humorous denotation by the crew which reflects the unconventional and exceptional status of the scientists on board.<sup>22</sup>

The instruction also commands Cook to “Demand from the Officers & Petty Officers the Log Books & Journals they may have kept, & to seal them up for our inspection, and enjoining Them & the whole Crew, not to divulge where they have been, until they shall have permission so to do.”<sup>23</sup> Cook followed this command to the letter when they arrived at South Africa after the expedition, a place where the crew would come into contacts with many other European ships. Due to their civil status, Forster and other scientists on board were not subject to this restriction of the Royal Navy.<sup>24</sup> This

---

<sup>21</sup> James Cook, "The Voyage of the Resolution and Adventure 1772-1775," in *The Journals of Captain James Cook on His Voyages of Discovery*, ed. J. C. Beaglehole (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), clxviii.

<sup>22</sup> Uhlig, Georg Forster: Lebensabenteuer eines gelehrten Weltbürgers, 52.

<sup>23</sup> Cook, "The Voyage of the Resolution and Adventure 1772-1775," clxx.

<sup>24</sup> Forster writes: " Da wir nunmehr in eine bekannt See gekommen waren, wo europäische Schiffe oft gesehen warden, so rief Cap. Cook alle Offiziere und Matrosen zusammen, und forderte ihnen im Namen des Admiralitäts-Collegii ihre Tagebücher ab, die alle zusammengepackt und versiegelt wurden. Diejenigen Personen, die nicht unmittelbar zum Militaire gehörten, waren dieser Verordnung auch nicht unterworfen, sondern behielten ihre Papiere, indem sie ersucht wurden, die besondern Lagen unsrer Entdeckungen nicht vor ihrer Ankunft in England bekannt zu machen." Forster, *Reise um die Welt*, 954-55.

distinctive quality of intellectuals on board gave Forster more freedom and distance to reflect and comment on the events he experienced. For example, Forster harshly criticizes Cook for firing on the islanders in order to land at the island Tanna. This case shows that Forster's position and attitude differed considerably from Cook's. I deal with this case in greater length later in this chapter. It is thus indispensable to identify the differences intellectuals may have in comparison to political authorities and not to imbue Forster's writing entirely with imperial intentions and a colonizing attitude.

Then our questions become: Are European travelers also influenced, challenged, changed by cultural difference? Does their identity, a psychic, cultural, social, and historical construction of the self, remain unaltered and motionless in their encounters with "unconventional" or "unimaginable" values and practices such as cannibalism or open homosexuality in Polynesian customs in Forster's time?<sup>25</sup>

As we saw previously, Forster believes in an immediate connection between reality and perception. At the same time, he is also conscious of emotion as a possible hindrance in the epistemological task of gaining factual knowledge:

Zuweilen folgte ich meinem Herzen und ließ meine Empfindungen reden; denn da ich von menschlichen Schwachheiten nicht frey bin, so mußten meine Leser doch wissen, wie das Glas gefärbt ist, durch welches ich gesehen habe. Wenigstens bin ich mir bewußt, daß es nicht finster und trübe vor meinen Augen gewesen ist. Alle Völker der Erde haben gleiche Ansprüche auf meinen guten Willen. So zu denken war ich immer gewohnt. [...]

---

<sup>25</sup> Lee Wallace, *Sexual Encounters: Pacific Texts, Modern Sexualities* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003).

mein Lob und mein Tadel sind unabhängig von National-Vorurtheilen, wie sie auch Namen haben mögen.<sup>26</sup>

An ambiguity in Forster's epistemology emerges. On one hand, he endeavors to show his determination in reaching factual reality, which is primarily concerned with ethnography and cultural differences. On the other hand, confessing the influence of sentiments also introduces uncertainties and doubts about his confidence in objectivity, which Forster has taken so much pain to establish in the mind of his readers. In other words, these human "weaknesses" break the continuity of his search for anthropological truth and indicate the inevitability of subjective or affective interferences in the construction of reality. Leask uses the term "affective realism" to describe and synthesize this phenomenon in Forster's reflection, and points out its correlation with contemporary sentimentalism.<sup>27</sup> In fact, Forster was an avid reader of the fashionable sentimental literature of the time, such as Goethe's *Werther* and Lawrence Sterne's *Sentimental Journey*, while composing his travel narrative.<sup>28</sup> Forster's work demonstrates a strong capacity for empathy and a precise sensibility for possible, situation-related intercultural misunderstandings between the travelers and indigenous people.<sup>29</sup>

---

<sup>26</sup> Forster, *Reise um die Welt*, 18.

<sup>27</sup> Leask, *Curiosity and the Aesthetics of Travel Writing, 1770-1840: 'from an antique land'*, 42.

<sup>28</sup> Uhlig, *Georg Forster: Lebensabenteuer eines gelehrten Weltbürgers*, 77-78.

<sup>29</sup> Lüsebrink, "Faszination und Wissensdurst. Zu den Grenzen und Möglichkeiten interkulturellen (Miss-)Verstehens in den Werken Georg Forsters und seiner Zeitgenossen," 92-97.

Recognizing the impact of sentimentalism, I suggest instead that we juxtapose the affective vulnerability to the demands for realistic rigidity in Forster's statement, in order to identify and illustrate the co-existence in his writings of an Enlightenment understanding of civilization with moments of passion aroused by intercultural encounters. In other words, the cold and distanced imperative of lucid description is accompanied and simultaneously questioned by sentimental moments which blur the boundaries between the self and the other and confound the Enlightenment divisions between civilization and savagery, Europeans and their alleged others.

David Marshall's study of eighteenth-century aesthetic experience is extremely helpful to clarify this point from a different angle. Marshall argues that aesthetic experiences – reactions and sentiments aroused during encounters with art, literature, or theater – are not disinterested or distanced; rather they mark the moment of blurring the boundaries between fiction and reality.<sup>30</sup> "The frame of art here identifies an ambiguous and paradoxical place; [...] The frame of art intrudes upon rather than excludes the world."<sup>31</sup> If we can draw an analogy between the mode of aesthetic experience à la Marshall and Forster's Pacific ventures, then the frame of art transforms into the frame of the South Seas, the locus where the cultural identities of Forster's Europe and

---

<sup>30</sup> David Marshall, *The Frame of Art: Fictions of Aesthetic Experience, 1750-1815* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005).

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

Polynesian societies collide, mingle, change, and regenerate. Instead of being the passive object of the imperial gaze, the South Pacific also intrudes upon its European spectators and coerces them into metamorphosis. For example, Cook conforms to the Tahitian custom and dresses himself with a piece of local cloth because the chief O-Tu would only come on board upon this condition.<sup>32</sup>

Transference of foreign and different cultures into European experience and identity through travel writing should receive more attention in the theorization of travel writing as a genre of encounter, contest, change and creation of practices and perspectives. Harriet Guest points out that to identify the discontinuity in travelers' accounts offers us a possibility of going beyond the limits imposed on our understanding of empire, barbarism, and civilization:

If the Cook voyages are now available as a collection of texts and artifacts all of which are articulated in the context of Eurocentric history and modernity, they are nonetheless about encounter, about the way the 'prior assumptions' of European explorers were contested or changed, their smooth discursive continuity or disclosed as fragmented by events they could not always predict or integrate unproblematically into their historiography. The fractures or discontinuities these historically specific encounters expose may be characteristic of the modern self, and of the self-reflexive enlightenment historiography that contributes to its production and generation, and they may help us to

---

<sup>32</sup> See Forster, *Reise um die Welt*, 304-05. Forster writes: "Captain Cook stand auf dem Bord des Schiffs und bat Se. Majestät herauf zu kommen; Dieselben blieben aber unverrückt sitzen, bis sich der Capitain, der Tahitischen Etiquette gemäß, in eine unglaubliche Menge des besten hiesigen Zeuges hatte einkleiden lassen, und auf die Art zu einer ungeheuer dicken Figur geworden war. Sobald dieser Punkt des Ceremoniels beobachtet war, wagte sich O-Tu aufs Verdeck des Hintertheils und umarmten den Capitain [...]. [...] Capitain Cook war hiebey am übelsten dran, denn dem wards unter der Last seines Tahitischen Ceremonien-Kleides, ohnehin schon zu warm."

analyse the 'limits that are imposed on us', and to 'experiment with the possibility of going beyond them'.<sup>33</sup>

In the ensuing pages, I show the interplay of European observation and Polynesian influence by concentrating on three representative events during Forster's voyage: New Zealand cannibalism, the violence on Tanna, and the desertion on Tahiti. These events, the traces of Forster's South Pacific perception, not only demonstrate the seeming contradiction between Forster's affective household and his Enlightenment ideology of civilization and teleology, but they also purposely enunciate the importance of the geographical locality in which Forster's ambiguous remarks are generated. Before unfolding the three stories, I will first introduce the historical background of the emergence of Forster's travel narrative and the contemporary impact of this work.

## **2.2 Reise um die Welt *and its Impact***

The original version of Forster's travelogue in English was not a great success in Britain. The head of the British Admiralty Lord Sandwich denied Georg's irascible father Johann Reinhold Forster, the officially appointed naturalist on board, the right to publish the official travel journal although he was supposed to do so. Therefore the Forsters decided that they should privately publish a travel account in Georg's name. Although the twenty-two-year old tried his best to publish *A Voyage Round the World* as

---

<sup>33</sup> Guest, *Empire, Barbarism, and Civilisation: James Cook, William Hodges, and the Return to the Pacific*, 26-27.

early as March 17, 1777, Cook's journal, available from April 30, 1777, won the attention of the British readership through both the beautiful engravings by the painter on-board William Hodges and Cook's reputation as a great adventurer and a national hero.<sup>34</sup>

In comparison to Cook's and Bougainville's rather technical and nautical reports on Tahiti, the German translation (1778/1780) of Forster's meticulous narrative documenting Tahitian nature and culture was received with enthusiasm among German intellectuals and made Forster a celebrity.<sup>35</sup> For the Germans, Forster's world travel experience and his personal appearance in Germany can be likened to the landing on the moon and having an astronaut at one's dinner table in the 1960s. In other words, although political authorities in the German-speaking lands showed little interest in competing with Britain, France, Russia, or Spain for scientific circumnavigations, German intellectuals stood out in constructing the discourse of the South Seas. They employed the Pacific data for the debates about human nature, historical development, and physical anthropology, in particular they contributed to idealizing Tahiti and its harmonious nature and culture.<sup>36</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 9-10.

<sup>35</sup> See Cook, "The Voyage of the Resolution and Adventure 1772-1775."; Louis de Bougainville, *A Voyage Round the World* (Amsterdam, New York, and London: N. Israel, Da Capo Press, and Frank Cass & Company Ltd, 1967).

<sup>36</sup> See John Gascoigne, "The German Enlightenment and the Pacific," in *The Anthropology of the Enlightenment*, ed. Larry Wolff and Marco Cipolloni (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007); Dirk Sangmeister, "Das Feenland der Phantasie: Die Südsee in der deutschen Literatur zwischen 1780 und 1820," *Georg-Forster-Studien II* (1998); Justus Fetscher, ed. *Die Pazifik-Reisen der 1760er und 1770er Jahre in der deutschen Literatur*,

Upon his arrival in Germany, Forster was soon offered a professorship of natural history in Kassel at Collegium Carolinum. The famed German novelist Christoph Martin Wieland published excerpts from Forster's book in three volumes of his influential journal *Der Teusche Merkur*. Inspired by Forster's philosophical travelogue, Wieland also conceived the protagonist of his novel *Geschichte der Abderiten* (1774-1780, *History of the Abderites*) as a traveling philosopher to explore human diversity.<sup>37</sup> Forster's description of Tahiti also inspired Carl Ignaz Geiger's satirical and utopian phantasmagoria *Reise eines Erdbewohners in den Mars* (1790, *Voyage of an Earth Resident to Mars*). The renowned German South America traveler and naturalist Alexander von Humboldt held Forster's travel writing as the pioneering work in a new era of scientific research carried on by Charles Darwin:

I have here attempted to indicate the direction in which the power possessed by the observer of representing what he has seen, the animating influence of the descriptive element, and the multiplication and enlargement of views opened to us on the vast theatre of natural forces, may all serve as means of encouraging the scientific study of nature, and enlarging its domain. The writer who in our German literature, according to my opinion, has most vigorously and successfully opened this path, is my celebrated teacher and friend, George Forster. *Through him began a new era of scientific voyages, the aim of which was to arrive at a knowledge of the comparative history and geography of different countries.* Gifted with delicate aesthetic feelings, and retaining a vivid impression of the pictures with which Tahiti and the other then happy islands of the Pacific had filled his imagination, as in recent times that of Charles Darwin, George Forster was the first to depict in pleasing colours the changing stages of vegetation, the relations of climate and

---

Cross-Cultural Encounters and Constructions of Knowledge in the 18th and 19th Century: Non-European and European Travel of Exploration in Comparative Perspective (Kassel: Kassel University Press, 2004).

<sup>37</sup> Fetscher, ed. *Die Pazifik-Reisen der 1760er und 1770er Jahre in der deutschen Literatur*, 326.

of articles of food in their influence on the civilization of mankind, according to differences of original descent and habitation.<sup>38</sup>

The permeation of Forster's South Pacific experience and knowledge was registered in his own extensive German publications on botany, anthropology, politics, aesthetics, and his public dispute with Immanuel Kant on human genesis and races. At the same time, the dissemination and the impact of his travel account among the German intelligentsia was also facilitated and guaranteed by his friendship with Goethe, Schiller, Herder, and other prominent figures such as the Orientalist Johann David Michaelis, the anatomist Samuel Thomas Soemmerring, the philosopher and mathematician Georg Christoph Lichtenberg at the then famous University of Göttingen.<sup>39</sup>

### ***2.3 Cannibalism and Forster's Empathetic Relativism***

Cook's speculation of cannibalism, which denotes the boundaries of modern civilization in the eighteenth century, was not given credence after his first journey to the South Pacific. This conjecture, however, was empirically confirmed during their second circumnavigation. The European travelers were not only direct observers of the Maori anthropophagy in New Zealand but also its victims. During their third and last

---

<sup>38</sup> Alexander von Humboldt, *Cosmos: a Sketch of a Physical Description of the Universe*, 5 vols., vol. 2 (London: H. G. Bohn, 1849-1858), 436-37.

<sup>39</sup> John Gascoigne points out: "The German response to the "new world of the Pacific" in the late eighteenth century was very closely linked to that particularly German institution, the university – and especially to one particular university, that of Göttingen." Gascoigne, "The German Enlightenment and the Pacific," 144.

visit, the friendly relationship between Cook's crew and the local Maori induced the locals to tell the travelers a horror story:

Es habe nemlich, sagten sie, vor einiger Zeit ein fremdes Schiff allhier vor Anker gelegen, dessen ganze Mannschaft, in einem Treffen mit den Einwohnern, erschlagen und gefressen worden wäre!<sup>40</sup>

In fact, a group of Maori killed and ate a boatload of the crew on-board the consort ship *Adventure* after the travelers shot at the natives until they were out of ammunition. The reason for the exaggerated violence by the Europeans, as Forster stresses, was as small as the theft of a jacket.

Already during the second visit to New Zealand, Cook's crew noticed that the Maori ate their enemies. Indeed, cannibalism is one of the most intriguing and terrifying motifs in European ethnography and philosophy from the early sixteenth century to the nineteenth and even the twentieth century. Anthropophagi are exemplified by the Caribs in *Robinson Crusoe* or the Congo Africans in James Sligo Jameson's *Story of the Rear Column of the Emin Pasha Relief Expedition by the Late James S. Jameson...* (1890).<sup>41</sup> Cannibalism, on one hand, represents the typical travelers' lie.<sup>42</sup> On the other hand, the

---

<sup>40</sup> Forster, *Reise um die Welt*, 883.

<sup>41</sup> Tim Youngs, "Africa / The Congo: the Politics of Darkness," in *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, ed. Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 163.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid; Mary Baine Campbell, "Travel Writing and its Theory," in *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, ed. Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 272; Jonathan Lamb, *Preserving the Self in the South Seas, 1680-1840* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001), 103, 72.

consumer of human flesh also holds sway over the imaginative bounds of the science of natural laws and proves to be an original subject of universal history.<sup>43</sup>

Unlike those crew members who wished to punish the cannibalistic Maori, Forster understands cannibalism from the perspective of natural history and designates it as a phenomenon incident of a lower stage in the development of human society.<sup>44</sup> This attitude reflects a typical intellectual attitude in eighteenth-century Europe.<sup>45</sup> After citing two other examples of cannibalism in Germany and Brazil, Forster reflects:

Denn, so sehr es auch unsrer Erziehung zuwider seyn mag, so ist es doch an und für sich weder unnatürlich noch strafbar, Menschenfleisch zu essen. Nur um deswillen ist es zu verbannen, weil die geselligen Empfindungen der Menschenliebe und des Mitleids dabey so leicht verloren gehen können. Da nun aber ohne diese keine menschliche Gesellschaft bestehen kann; so hat der erste Schritt zur Cultur bey allen Völkern dieser seyn müssen, daß man dem Menschenfressen entsagt und Abscheu dafür zu erregen gesucht hat.<sup>46</sup>

Forster thus attributes historical legitimacy to cannibalism but, at the same time, emphasizes the ineluctable necessity to eliminate it for the sake of moral sentiments and historical development.<sup>47</sup>

---

<sup>43</sup> See the excellent study Cătălin Avramescu, *An Intellectual History of Cannibalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

<sup>44</sup> For the details regarding different reactions of the crew toward cannibalism, see footnote 47.

<sup>45</sup> See Avramescu, *An Intellectual History of Cannibalism*, 1-3.

<sup>46</sup> Forster, *Reise um die Welt*, 447-48.

<sup>47</sup> In his later essay *Leitfaden zu einer künftigen Geschichte der Menschheit* (*Guidelines of a Future History of Humankind*), Forster sketches four stages of the development of human culture. The last stage is the sensitive culture, which is accompanied by Enlightenment and reason. Clearly, at the same time of his harsh critique, Forster still holds European Enlightenment, at least the formulated ideals, as the highest stage ever achieved by humankind. History of human culture is for Forster a part of natural history. For more details see Johannes Rohbeck, "Naturgeschichte und Geschichte der Menschheit. Georg Forsters Geschichtsphilosophie

The Europeans, however, are not the representatives of mutual love and sympathy in Forster's eyes. Although Forster places them on a higher stage of history, he compares the anthropophagi to the cruelty of modern European civilization:

Was ist der Neu-Seeländer, der seinen Feind im Kriege umbringt und frisst, gegen den Europäer, der, zum Zeitvertreib, einer Mutter ihren Säugling, mit kaltem Blut, von der Brust reißen und seinen Hunden vorwerfen kann?<sup>48</sup>

In Forster's as well as in his father's and Cook's journals, the only person who showed genuine empathy and shed tears at the sight of Maori's cannibal behavior, was Maheine, a young man from the Society Islands, who was on traveling with Cook at that time.<sup>49</sup> At the expense of the Europeans, Maheine is cast in the role to demonstrate the dignified affective ability, through which cannibalism should be overcome and abandoned according to a social-evolutionary logic. In other words, Maheine's culture, which is

---

im Kontext der europäischen Aufklärung," in *Natur - Mensch - Kultur: Georg Forster im Wissenschaftsfeld seiner Zeit*, ed. Jörn Garber and Tanja van Hoorn (Hannover-Laatzten: Wehrhahn Verlag, 2006).

<sup>48</sup> Forster, *Reise um die Welt*, 448.

<sup>49</sup> Forster observes that, at the sight of this cannibalism, the European travelers had fairly different reactions: "Einige schienen, dem Eckel zum Trotze, der uns durch die Erziehung gegen Menschenfleisch beygebracht worden, fast Lust zu haben mit anzubeißen, und glaubten etwas sehr witziges zu sagen, wenn sie die Neu-Seeländischen Kriege für Menschen-Jagden ausgaben. Andre hingegen waren auf die Menschenfresser unvernünftigerweise so erbittert, daß sie die Neu-Seeländer alle todt zu schießen wünschten, gerade als ob sie Recht hätten über das Leben eines Volks zu gebieten, dessen Handlungen gar nicht einmal für ihren Richterstuhl gehörten! Einigen war der Anblick so gut als ein Brechpulver. Die übrigen begnügten sich, diese Barbarey eine Entehrung der menschlichen Natur zu nennen, und es zu beklagen, daß das edelste der Geschöpfe dem Thiere so ähnlich werden könne!" Ibid., 444-45. Cook and Johann Reinhold Forster also documented the reaction of Maheine or Oediddee and the reactions of other European travelers. See Rod Edmond, "The Pacific/Tahiti: Queen of the South Sea Isles," in *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, ed. Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 140-42.

seen as more developed than New Zealand's in the South Pacific, stands for the equilibrium between cannibal barbarism and civilized arrogance and corruption.<sup>50</sup>

Therefore, instead of expressing solidarity with his fellow travelers who were devoured, Forster's narrative obviously betrays his sympathy with the Maori anthropophagy. He first contends that the arrogance of the leader of the team, Mr. Rowe, must have led to this tragic disaster:

Dieser unglückliche junge Mann hatte, bey einer sonst guten Denkungsart, die Vorurtheile der seemännischen Erziehung noch nicht völlig abgelegt. Er sahe z. E. alle Einwohner der Südsee mit einer Art von Verachtung an, und glaubte eben dasselbe Recht über sie zu haben, welches sich, in barbarischen Jahrhunderten, die Spanier über das Leben der amerikanischen Wilden anmaaßten.<sup>51</sup>

Sarcastically, Forster tells his readers the detail that Mr. Rowe's hand was later recognized in a basket with many other body parts. Furthermore, Forster also criticizes other examples of violent behavior of European seamen in the South Pacific. For example, during the same visit, a party of Cook's crew robbed a Maori of his tools and forced him to accept some nails as exchange. Therefore Forster understands the cannibal accident as Maori's self-defense and stresses the friendly character of the Maori:

Wenn ich bedenke, wie oft es den *Neu-Seeländern* ein leichtes gewesen wäre, uns umzubringen, [...] so werde ich immer mehr überzeugt, daß man nicht das mindeste von ihnen zu besorgen hat, wenn man nur seiner Seits sie in Ruhe läßt, und sie nicht

---

<sup>50</sup> Forster writes: "Nur allein Maheine, der junge Mensch von den Societäts-Inseln, zeigte bey diesem Vorfall mehr wahre Empfindsamkeit als die andern alle. Geboren und erzogen in einem Lande, dessen Einwohner sich bereits der Barbarey entrissen haben und in gesellschaftliche Verbindungen getreten sind, erregte diese Scene den heftigsten Abscheu bey ihm." Forster, *Reise um die Welt*, 445.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 885.

vorsetzlich böß macht. Eben daher dünkt es mir auch mehr als wahrscheinlich, daß die Matrosen der *Adventure* nicht würden erschlagen worden seyn, wenn sie sich nicht zuerst, und zwar gröblich, an den Neu-Seeländern vergangen hätten.<sup>52</sup>

Forster's humanistic attitude but also the generosity of the Maori, who cordially provided the travelers with fresh provisions, brought Forster to this conclusion.

Furthermore, Forster legitimizes the revenge of the Maori as an act engendered by the instinct of self-preservation and emotional eruption in more general terms:

Eben so ereignen sich auch im Privatleben Fälle genug, wo das Gefühl der Rache einige Entschuldigung für sich zu haben scheint. Giebt es nicht eine Menge von Beeinträchtigungen und Beleidigungen oder Beschimpfungen, wogegen kein Gesetz schützt? Oder wie oft geschieht es nicht, daß die Großen, Macht und Einfluß genug haben, die Gesetze zu verdrehen, und, zum Nachtheil des unglücklichen, freundlosen Armen, zu vereiteln? [...] Wenn ein Räuber sich an meinem Eigenthum vergreift, so darf ich nicht erst zum Richter laufen, sondern kann, in vielen Fällen, den Bösewicht gleich auf der Stelle dafür züchtigen; auf solche Art haben Stock und Degen manchen Schurken in Furcht und Schranken gehalten, der dem Gesetz Trotz bieten durfte.<sup>53</sup>

Obviously, Forster compassionately identifies with the New Zealanders, relativizes the savagery of the anthropophagus, and explicitly indicates the inefficiency and corruption of European jurisprudence. Forster's empathy also invalidates the difference between savagery and civilization by stressing emotional commonality. This relativism based on emotion not only creates a new understanding of the Maori cannibalism but also offers a critical view on European social structure and its inequality.<sup>54</sup>

---

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 899.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 893.

<sup>54</sup> According to Cătălin Avramescu, it was commonplace in the eighteenth century to employ non-European anthropophagy to criticize the diabolical aspects of European body politic. This strategy, however, results in

In the course of his narrative, Forster's sympathetic validation of the Maori's cannibalism preponderantly outweighs his rational definition of cannibalism as a sign of the underdevelopment of the New Zealanders. In other words, both Forster's experience with the friendly Maori and his witness of the travelers' arrogance induce his empathetic relativism, which blurs the boundary between civilization and savagery, rational jurisprudence and emotional revenge, Europe and the South Pacific.

#### ***2.4 Visit to Tanna: Violence, Self-Preservation, and the Love of Peace***

Cook's visit to the island Tanna, a part of today's archipelago nation Vanuatu, exemplifies violent fights for material self-preservation by both the islanders and the travelers. The armed islanders denied the travelers food supplies and even access to their island. Cook, after failing to dock the ship peacefully, enforced the landing with guns and cannons.<sup>55</sup> Since the weapons were not aimed at the Tannese: Cook's intention

---

the gradual disappearance of cannibalism as the subject of moral discourse because it "has been eclipsed by the State, the new agent of absolute cruelty." See Avramescu, *An Intellectual History of Cannibalism*, 262.

<sup>55</sup> Als wir ohngefähr noch zwanzig Schritte weit vom Ufer waren, rief Capitain Cook den Einwohnern zu, und gab ihnen durch Zeichen zu verstehen, daß sie die Waffen niederlegen, und sich vom Strande zurückziehen sollten. Auf diese Forderung achteten sie nicht; und vielleicht kam es ihnen gar *unbillig* und *lächerlich* vor, daß eine *Handvoll Fremde sich's beygehen ließ, ihnen, in ihrem eigenen Lande, Gesetze vorzuschreiben*. [...] Und sie also, wo möglich, im Voraus davon abzuschrecken, ließ Capitain Cook eine Flintenkugel über ihre Köpfe hinfeuern. Der unvermuthete Knall brachte auch wirklich den ganzen Haufen in Bewegung; so bald aber das erste Erstaunen vorüber war, blieben sie fast alle wieder stehen. Einer, der dicht ans Ufer kam, hatte sogar die Verwegenheit, uns den Hintern zu zeigen und mit der Hand darauf zu klatschen, welches, unter allen Völkern im Süd-See, das gewöhnliche Zeichen zur Herausforderung ist. Dieses Großsprechers wegen, ließ der Capitain noch einen Flintenschuß in die Luft thun; und da man dieses auf dem Schiffe für ein Signal hielt, so ward alles grobe Geschütz, welches aus 5 vierpfündigen Kanonen, zwey halbpfündigen Dreh-Bassen, und vier Musketons bestand, mit einem male abgefeuert. Die Kugeln piffen über die Indianer

was not to hurt or exterminate the indigenous people. Rather, he aimed to impress them with the superiority of European weaponry and to instill fear and gain respect. In other words, the Tannese refusal of Cook's landing potentially reduced the chances of survival for the travelers and endangered their self-preservation.

Therefore, Cook's violence, on one hand, is a coerced reaction to the islanders' denial and provocation – as one Tannese showed his backside and clapped on it – and, on the other hand, it has a symbolic function of establishing authority and generating a new order at Tanna.<sup>56</sup> In the same boat as Cook, Forster oscillates between his understanding for the Tannese's self-defense and his sympathy for Cook. The fact that the Tannese denied the travelers access to their island provoked Forster's judgment that they were vindictive (*rachsüchtig*), mistrustful (*mißtrauisch*), and thus not highly civilized.<sup>57</sup> Over the course of his stay, however, Forster's emotional identification with the Tannese increased after a marine killed a local man.

---

weg, und kappten etliche Palmbäume; dadurch erreichten wir unsern Zweck, daß nemlich in wenig Augenblicken nicht ein Mann mehr auf dem Strande zu sehen war. Forster, *Reise um die Welt*, 734. My italics.

<sup>56</sup> Klaus R. Scherpe rightly points out that experience at the frontiers of foreign encounter is always loaded with extremity, danger, and sensitivity in both physical and mental terms and challenges the secure distance of the dominating, in this case Forster's, narrative and culture. Klaus R. Scherpe, "Die Gewalt des Fremden. Über Representation," in *Der schöne Schein der Kunst und seine Schatten*, ed. Hans Richard Brittnacher and Fabian Stoermer (Bielefeld: Aisthesis Verlag, 2000).

<sup>57</sup> See Forster, *Reise um die Welt*, 772, 75, 84.

Forster explains the Tannese distrustful and violent behavior by pointing to the universal principle of self-preservation.<sup>58</sup> At the same time, Forster attributes the distrustful nature of the Tannese to the lack of communication with honest and peaceful people.<sup>59</sup> Thus he is convinced that the encounter with the more “civilized” Europeans must promote the love of peace and more refined manners among the Tannese:

“Vielleicht würde der Umgang, mit uns Europäern, Nutzen stiften, und den Wachstum der Sittlichkeit befördert haben.”<sup>60</sup>

At the same time, however, Forster’s contacts with the Tannese also induced him to attribute fundamental human goodness to them: “Ohnerachtet im vorhergehenden angemerkt worden, daß die Tanneser von mißtrauischer und rachsüchtiger Gemüthsart sind; so kann ich ihnen doch bey alledem einen gewissen Grad von Gutherzigkeit und

---

<sup>58</sup> Forster contends: “Selbsterhaltung ist ohnläugbar das erste Gesetz der Natur.” Ibid., 772.

<sup>59</sup> Forster conjectures the reasons for the mistrustful nature of the Tannese: “Ein Volk, oder eine Familie, [...] die oft den Anfällen und Beeinträchtigungen andrer ausgesetzt ist, wird dadurch ganz natürlicherweise zu Haß und Unversöhnlichkeit gegen ihre Beleidiger gereizt, und auf solche Art zur Rachgier verleitet, die endlich in Grausamkeit ausbricht. Hat die eine Parthey noch überdem List und verrätherische Kunstgriffe bey ihren Feindseligkeiten angewandt; so erweckt dies bey der andern Mistrauen, und auf solche Art entsteht denn nach und nach eine feindselige, boshafte Gemüthsbeschaffenheit, in welcher man sich zuletzt die größten Niederträchtigkeiten gegen seinen Feind erlaubt. [...] Ein anderes Volk hingegen, das nie boshafte Feinde, oder anhaltende Streitigkeiten gehabt, oder sie lange vergessen hat, das durch den Ackerbau schon zu einem gewissen Wohlstand, Überfluß und Sittlichkeit, mithin auch zu Begriffen von Geselligkeit und Menschenliebe gelangt ist, solch ein Volk weiß nichts von Jähzorn, sondern muß schon überaus sehr gereizt werden, wenn es auf Rache denken soll. Noch zur Zeit gehören die Einwohner von Tanna zu der ersteren von diesen beyden Classen.” Ibid., 773.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 812.

menschenfreundlichem Wesen keineswegs absprechen."<sup>61</sup> Already in the scene of the landing, Forster criticizes Cook's strident behavior in a foreign country:

Als wir ohngefähr noch zwanzig Schritte weit vom Ufer waren, rief Capitain Cook den Einwohnern zu, und gab ihnen durch Zeichen zu verstehen, daß sie die Waffen niederlegen, und sich vom Strande zurückziehen sollten. Auf diese Forderung achteten sie nicht; und vielleicht kam es ihnen gar *unbillig und lächerlich* vor, daß eine *Handvoll Fremde sich's beygehen ließ, ihnen, in ihrem eigenen Lande, Gesetze vorzuschreiben*.<sup>62</sup>

In other words, Forster adopts the perspective of the Tannese and legitimizes their protection of land and freedom.<sup>63</sup>

In particular, the homicide of a Tannese by a marine demarcated the turning point of Forster's idea of the superiority of European civilization and induced him to recognize and confirm the good nature of the Tannese – not only in theory but also in bloody practice. Forster's narrative copiously evinces his solidarity with the Tannese and reflects his passionate indictment of European injustice:

Einer von den Indianern, der vielleicht seit unserm Hierseyn noch nie am Strande gewesen seyn mochte, hatte sich zwischen seinen Landsleuten vorgedrängt und wollte über den freyen Platz gehen. Weil aber unsere Leute diesen für sich allein zu haben

---

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 775-76.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 734.

<sup>63</sup> We can ascribe Forster's understanding of freedom to his reading of Rousseau. Yet the concrete experience of the aggressive collision between the travelers and the islanders plays the deciding role of Forster's recognition and confirmation of Rousseau's doctrine. The rhetoric of Rousseau serves as the best comment on Forster's view: "Even as an unbroken horse erects its mane, paws the ground with its hoof, and rears impetuously at the very approach of the bit, while a trained horse suffers patiently even the whip and spur, savage man will not bend his neck to the yoke which civilized man wears without a murmur; he prefers the most turbulent freedom to the most tranquil subjection. We must not, therefore, look to the degradation of enslaved peoples as a basis for judging man's natural disposition for or against servitude, but look rather to the prodigious achievements of all free peoples who have striven to protect themselves from oppression." Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *A Discourse on Inequality*, trans. Maurice Cranston (London, New York et al. : Penguin Books, 1984), 125.

meynten; so nahm die Schildwache den Indianer beym Arm, und stieß ihn zurück. Dieser hingegen glaubte mit Recht, daß ihm, auf seiner eigenen Insel, ein Fremder nichts vorzuschreiben habe, und versuchte es daher von neuem, über den Platz wegzugehen, vielleicht blos um zu zeigen, daß er gehen könne, wo es ihm beliebte. Allein, die Schildwache sties ihn zum zweytenmal, und zwar mit solchem Ungestüm zurück, daß wohl ein minder jähzorniger Mann, als ein Wilder, dadurch hätte aufgebracht werden müssen. Kein Wunder also, daß er, *um seine gekränkte Freyheit zu vertheidigen*, einen Pfeil auf den Bogen legte, und damit nach dem, der ihn angegriffen, zielte. Dies ward der Soldat nicht sobald gewahr, als er sein Gewehr anschlug, und den Indianer auf der Stelle todt schoß. In dem Augenblick da dieser fiel, trat der Capitain ans Land, und sahe, wie die übrigen davon liefen, um den *grausamen, verrätherischen* Leuten zu entkommen, die auf fremdem Boden sich solche *Ungerechtigkeiten* erlaubten.<sup>64</sup>

Although Cook intended to punish the soldier for his imprudence, the officer in charge admitted that he did not impart the captain's order not to shoot at the islanders; instead he exhorted his soldiers to fire at the slightest opportunity. The soldier thus was not punished; however, nor was the officer. An ironic footnote only in the German version of Forster's travel account informs us that the reason for Cook's tolerance may lie in the fact that this officer had important relatives in the British government.<sup>65</sup>

Strongly disquieted by the fear and the sorrowful mourning of the locals, Forster reflects on the virtuous nature of the Tannese, who did not take revenge on him while he was highly vulnerable during a botanizing trip:

Wahrlich, ein rührender Beweis, von der angebohrnen Güte des menschlichen Herzens! Eine eben so seltnen Mäßigung war es, daß die Wilden, Dr. Sparrmann und mir nicht das geringste Leid zufügten, da sie doch den Mord ihres Landmannes an uns beyden aufs nachdrücklichste hätten rächen können. <sup>66</sup>

---

<sup>64</sup> Forster, *Reise um die Welt*, 800-01. My italics.

<sup>65</sup> See *Ibid.*, 802.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 801.

The Europeans, Forster comments, had ruined all the refined and civilized impressions they made through this brutal murder. They arrived under the veil of friendship but departed after a murder.<sup>67</sup>

The violence deployed by the European travelers on Tanna was not the first encounter of this kind. Even at peaceful and friendly Tahiti, a soldier killed a Tahitian on Cook's first voyage. Again, Forster empathizes with the Tahitians and assumes that the Europeans must have unintentionally given them a reason for their attack. Even if this were not the case, Forster argues, the Tahitians are still justified for their deeds according to the law of self-preservation and their right of freedom, an argument similar to the violent encounter on Tanna.<sup>68</sup>

After all, as the Tahitians exemplified, Forster considers generous tolerance and the love of peace the best way to avoid violence, because the Europeans are also bound by self-preservation:

Für ein empfindsames Gemüthe ist aber das wahrlich ein tröstlicher Gedanke, [...], daß nemlich Völker, welche nicht ganz bis zur Barbarey herabgesunken, der Liebe zum Frieden, diesem allgemeinen Grundtriebe des Menschen, [nicht] zuwider gehandelt haben sollten.[...] Als sie endlich die traurigen Wirkungen der europäischen Obermacht

---

<sup>67</sup> Forster complains: "Was mußten die Wilden von uns denken? Waren wir jetzt noch besser, als andere Fremdlinge? oder verdienten wir nicht weit mehr Abscheu, weil wir uns, unter dem Schein der Freundschaft eingeschlichen hatten, um sie hernach als Meuchelmörder zu tödten?" Ibid., 802.

<sup>68</sup> Es dünkt mir nemlich höchstwahrscheinlich, daß unsere Leute, wenn sie sich dessen gleich nicht bewußt seyn mögen, durch irgend eine Beleidigung Gelegenheit dazu gegeben haben müssen. Gesetzt aber auch, das wäre nicht; so ist doch Selbsterhaltung das erste Gesetz der Natur, und der Anschein berechtigte die Einwohner allerdings unsre Leute für ungebetne Gäste und für den angreifenden Theil zu halten, ja was mehr als das alles ist, sie hatten Ursach für ihre Freiheit besorgt zu seyn. Ibid., 296.

empfunden und man ihnen zu verstehen gegeben hatte, daß das Schiff nur einige Erfrischungen einnehmen, auch nur eine kurze Zeit hier bleiben wolle, kurz, so bald sie selbst einsahen, daß die Fremden nicht ganz unmenschlich und unbillig, und daß Britten wenigstens nicht wilder und barbarischer wären als sie selbst, so waren sie auch gleich bereit, die Fremdlinge mit offenen Armen zu empfangen, das vorgefallne Misverständnis zu vergessen, und sie freygebig an den Naturgütern der Insel Theil nehmen zu lassen.<sup>69</sup>

This is not only Forster's passionate plea to the Tannese to become more hospitable and open-minded, but also a vision of a peaceful communication and commerce of goods and knowledge between Europeans and the South Pacific islanders.

Jonathan Lamb contends that the law of self-preservation acts as the fundamental guideline for both the travelers and the islanders during the scientific circumnavigations. Therefore this desire for the survival and security of the self actually hinders a real communication between the two parties and merely redoubles ignorance and misunderstanding.<sup>70</sup> On Tanna, however, the law of self-preservation plays the decisive role for Forster's justification of and sympathy for both the travelers and the islanders. Furthermore, the law of self-preservation necessarily brings both parties into mis/communication and provides Forster the opportunity to go beyond the limits of his culture and take sides with the Tannese through universal emotional bonds.

---

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 295-96.

<sup>70</sup> See Lamb, *Preserving the Self in the South Seas, 1680-1840*.

## 2.5 Desertion on Tahiti

Upon Cook's departure from *Matavai-Bay* in Tahiti, the chief O-Tuh came on board and full-heartedly embraced all the travelers in a farewell gesture. He requested that Cook fire some cannons and demonstrated his friendship by being the last Tahitian to leave the ship. Under cover from the noise of the cannons, a British sailor deserted the ship for the island. Despite the help of the islanders, the desertion was unsuccessful and the sailor was captured and brought back to his ship.<sup>71</sup>

Forster spent pages in his travelogue pondering the advantages and disadvantages of the sailor's decision and of life on Tahiti. His reflections on this anecdote document the ambiguity of his perception of the earthly paradise Tahiti, and the South Seas more generally. For Forster, Tahiti is on one hand is a Rousseauian state of nature with exuberant landscape and unstained human goodness.<sup>72</sup> On the other hand,

---

<sup>71</sup> Forster, *Reise um die Welt*, 595. Einer unserer Seeleute suchte sich diese unruhigen Augenblicke zu Nutze zu machen, um unbemerkt nach der Insel zu entwischen. Man ward ihn aber gewahr, als er darnach hinschwamm und sahe zugleich einige Canots herbeyrudern, die ihn vermuthlich aufnehmen wollten; der Capitain ließ ihm also gleich durch eins von unsern Booten nachsetzen, ihn mit Gewalt zurückbringen und zur Strafe für diesen Versuch vierzehn Tage lang in Ketten legen. Allem Anschein nach, war die Szene zwischen ihm und den Insulanern förmlich verabredet; denn sie hätten vielleicht eben so viel Nutzen davon gehabt, einen Europäer unter sich zu behalten, als dieser gefunden haben würde, unter ihnen zu bleiben.

— — —, *A Voyage Round the World*, 379. [B]ut it was a favourable opportunity for one of our seamen to make his escape to the island. He was observed swimming towards the shore, and some canoes were seen paddling to his assistance, when we dispatched a boat which brought him back, much against his inclinations. His frolic cost him a fortnight's confinement in irons. There is great reason to suppose that a plan was concerted between him and the natives, who perhaps had promised themselves as great advantages from retaining an European, as that European might expect by dwelling with them.

<sup>72</sup> See Ulrich Kronauer, "Rousseaus Kulturkritik aus der Sicht Georg Forsters," in *Georg Forster in interdisziplinärer Perspektive*, ed. Claus-Volker Klenke (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1994).

Tahiti represents a lower stage in the development of human society in comparison to the blossoming of European civilization and science. According to Hugh West, this recurring paradox in Forster's perception of Tahiti registers an inconsistent deviation or "declension" in Forster's thinking.<sup>73</sup> I, however, argue that Forster's contradictory perception of Tahiti demonstrates a process in which Forster negotiates between his pre-established European cultural values and the uncertainties, differences, and changes Tahiti inflicts upon his sentiments and his intellect.<sup>74</sup>

### 2.5.1 Forster's Agreement: Bread, Sex, and the Human Heart

Forster first sympathizes with the deserting sailor. He comments that, for the sake of sensual joys, the sailor definitely made the correct decision. Forster contrasts the hard and risky life of a European sailor to the easy-going lifestyle on Tahiti:

Wenn man erwägt, wie groß der Unterschied ist, der zwischen der Lebensart eines gemeinen Matrosen am Bord unsers Schiffes, und dem Zustande eines Bewohners dieser Insel statt findet; so läßt sich leicht einsehen, daß es jenem nicht zu verdenken war, wenn er einen Versuch wagte, den unzählbaren Mühseligkeiten einer Reise um die Welt zu entgehen, und wenn er, statt der mancherley Unglücksfälle die ihm zur See droheten, ein gemächliches, sorgenfreyes Leben in dem herrlichsten Clima von der Welt, zu ergreifen wünschte. Das höchste Glück, welches er vielleicht in Engelland hätte erreichen können,

---

<sup>73</sup> Hugh West, "The Limits of Enlightenment Anthropology: Georg Forster and the Tahitians," *History of European Ideas* 10, no. 2 (1989). West argues that the contradiction in Forster's Tahiti perception shows that Forster does not know how to come up with better ideas, such as cultural relativism, to fix the fundamental flaw of the eighteenth-century European concept of cultural otherness. The fact, however, that Forster admits at least twice that happiness is a relative notion does testify to his relativism. For more details see the section on Forster's relativism.

<sup>74</sup> Forster confirms Bougainville's Tahiti perception: "Wir fanden bald, daß diese Gegenden in der Nähe nichts von ihren Reizen verlören, und daß Herr von Bougainville nicht zu weit gegangen sey, wenn er dies Land als ein Paradies beschrieben." Forster, *Reise um die Welt*, 254.

versprach ihm lange nicht so viel Annehmlichkeiten, als er, bey der bescheidenen Hoffnung, nur so glücklich als ein ganz gemeiner Tahitier zu leben, vor sich sahe.<sup>75</sup>

Forster's positive description of Tahiti holds sway over the Tahiti fashion in Germany and other European countries. Tahiti and the South Pacific was the "New World" for Europeans in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.<sup>76</sup> It represented "a golden mean between European over-refinement and South Seas savagery."<sup>77</sup> The fertile nature and the friendly culture, especially the (female) nudity and sexual "freedom," fueled much intellectual and artistic imagining.<sup>78</sup> In the European fantasy of utopia, Tahiti epitomized the island garden outside the topography of the quotidian and represented "the most influential imperial landscapes of the eighteenth century."<sup>79</sup> The philosopher Christian Cay Lorenz Hirschfeld criticized the predilection for *chinoiserie* in eighteenth-century garden design but praised the natural garden Tahiti, in which no artificial planning disturbs the harmonious union of humans and nature.<sup>80</sup> The poet and essayist Heinrich Wilhelm von Gerstenberg fantasized about establishing an Arcadian colony of

---

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 596.

<sup>76</sup> See Harry Liebersohn, *The Travelers' World: Europe to the Pacific* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 5; Gascoigne, "The German Enlightenment and the Pacific," 141.

<sup>77</sup> Edmond, "The Pacific/Tahiti: Queen of the South Sea Isles," 143.

<sup>78</sup> For a detailed source of the German reception of Tahiti and the South Seas see Sangmeister, "Das Feenland der Phantasie: Die Südsee in der deutschen Literatur zwischen 1780 und 1820."

<sup>79</sup> Jill Casid, "Inhuming Empire: Islands as Colonial Nurseries and Graves," in *The Global Eighteenth Century*, ed. Felicity A. Nussbaum (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 280.

<sup>80</sup> Christian Cajus Lorenz Hirschfeld, *Theory of Garden Art*, trans. Linda B. Parshall (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 101-13.

German writers in Tahiti under the guidance of Forster.<sup>81</sup> A secret society was founded in Stuttgart in 1806 to collect sixty to a hundred young people to emigrate to the paradise-like South Seas.<sup>82</sup>

This fervent admiration for Tahiti is articulated in Forster's text through three main aspects: the bread fruit tree, masculine sexuality, and human virtuousness. Among the natural resources in Tahiti, Forster is particularly amazed by the bread fruit tree, which provides basic subsistence for the Tahitians. He compares the Europeans' arduous work to earn their daily bread to the easy access to bread fruits in Tahiti:

Der Kaufmann, der Handwerksmann, der Künstler, müssen alle eben so arbeitsam seyn, um dem Landmanne das Korn und Brod wieder abzuverdienen. Wie ist hingegen beym Tahitier das alles so ganz anders! wie glücklich, wie ruhig lebt nicht der! Zwey oder drey Brodfrucht bäume, die bey nahe ohne alle Handanlegung fortkommen, und fast eben so lange tragen, als der, welcher sie gepflanzt hat, leben kann; drey solche Bäume sind hinreichend, ihm drey Viertheile des Jahres hindurch, Brod und Unterhalt zu geben! Was er davon nicht frisch weg essen kann, wird gesäuert, und als ein gesundes, wohlschmeckendes Nahrungsmittel, für die übrigen Monathe aufbewahret.<sup>83</sup>

The cultivation of the bread fruit tree in the Tahitian culture inspires Forster's natural-historical treatise *Vom Brotbaum* (1783, *On the Bread Fruit Tree*), which understands this plant as deeply situated within its climatic environment and sketches the concept of a biogeography marked by an innumerable diversity, manifold connections, and a

---

<sup>81</sup> See Sangmeister, "Das Feenland der Phantasie: Die Südsee in der deutschen Literatur zwischen 1780 und 1820," 136. The members of the colony contain prominent figures of German literature in the eighteenth century: Mathias Claudius, Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock, Johann Martin Miller, Friedrich von Stolberg, Johann Heinrich Voß.

<sup>82</sup> Dirk Sangmeister points out the seriousness of this secret society by demonstrating that three officers and sixty soldiers were commissioned to arrest the only six members. See *Ibid.*: 137.

<sup>83</sup> Forster, *Reise um die Welt*, 597.

universal coherence of the natural world. This idea inspires Humboldt to his study on plant geography and supposedly helps Charles Darwin to develop his theory of descent.<sup>84</sup> The most in/famous venture connected with this plant in Europacific history is perhaps the transplantation of the bread fruit tree to the Caribbean in order to provide black slaves with nutritious but cheap food.<sup>85</sup>

The ostensible sexual “freedom” is the epitome of Tahitian culture for eighteenth-century Europeans. Bougainville’s account, that a Tahitian girl casually threw off her garment on deck and revealed a bodily beauty resembling the goddess Venus, inaugurated a long tradition of European ethnographic and aesthetic perception of the South Pacific as a place of boundless heterosexual indulgence.<sup>86</sup> The Prussian King Friedrich Wilhelm II had a chamber furnished in Tahitian fashion (*otaheitisches Zimmer*) in which to experience “Tahitian” sexual pleasure. Diderot’s *Supplément au voyage de Bougainville* (1772) observes excessive heterosexual commerce, including incest, in

---

<sup>84</sup> Uhlig, Georg Forster: *Lebensabenteuer eines gelehrten Weltbürgers*, 156-57.

<sup>85</sup> The naturalist Joseph Banks on-board Cook’s first circumnavigation proposed this idea. King George III thus commissioned Captain William Bligh to travel to the South Pacific in 1787 with this task. This project, however, could not be fulfilled because a mutiny broke out in April, 1789. Half of the crew on board *Bounty* sailed back to Tahiti and tried to survive in the South Pacific.

<sup>86</sup> Bougainville describes: “It was very difficult, amidst such a sight, to keep at their work four hundred young French sailors, who had seen no women for six months. In spite of all our precautions, a young girl came on board, and placed herself upon the quarter-deck, near one of the hatchways [...]. The girl carelessly dropt a cloth, which covered her, and appeared to the eyes of all beholders, such as Venus shewed herself to the Phrygian shepherd, having, indeed, the celestial form of that goddess.” Bougainville, *A Voyage Round the World*, 218-19.

Tahitian culture through a utilitarianist perspective and understands it as a means to achieve the highest fecundity and to enhance the prosperity of society.<sup>87</sup>

In Forster's narrative, however, sexual indulgence between Tahitian women and the travelers is documented with an emphasis on objectivity and moral disdain.<sup>88</sup> If we understand this disinterested and dismissive manner as the result of Forster's pursuit of his objective observations and moral judgments, then his depiction of Tahitian male bodies betrays enthusiastic and emotional approbation:

Ein solches Clima und die gesunden Früchte verschaffen den Einwohnern Stärke und Schönheit des Körpers. Sie sind alle wohlgestaltet und von so schönem Wuchs, daß *Phidias* und *Praxiteles* manchen zum Modell männlicher Schönheit würden gewählt haben. Ihre Gesichtsbildungen sind angenehm und heiter, frey von allem Eindruck irgend einer heftigen Leidenschaft. Große Augen, gewölbte Augenbraunen und eine hervorstehende Stirn geben ihnen ein edles Ansehen, welches durch einen starken Bart und Haarwuchs noch mehr erhöht wird. Alles das, und die Schönheit ihrer Zähne, sind redende Kennzeichen ihrer Gesundheit und Stärke. Das andere Geschlecht ist nicht minder wohl gebildet. Man kann zwar die hiesigen Weiber nicht regelmäßige

---

<sup>87</sup> Following a similar functionalist logic, Forster also considers that procreation is indeed easier in Tahiti than in Europe: "Da nun alle Lebensmittel leicht zu haben, und die Bedürfnisse dieses Volks eingeschränkt sind, so ist, natürlicherweise, auch der große Endzweck unseres körperlichen Daseyns, die Hervorbringung vernünftiger Creaturen, hier nicht mit so vielen drückenden Lasten überhäuft und beschweret, als in civilisierteren Ländern, wo Noth und Kummer den Ehestand oft so mühselig und sauer machen." Forster, *Reise um die Welt*, 329.

<sup>88</sup> Forster's description seems to portray himself as a pure observer of the sexual encounters between Tahitian women and the travelers: "Hingegen ist das zu verwundern, daß die hiesigen Weiber, ihrer frühen Mannbarkeit ohnerachtet, gleichwohl zwanzig und mehr Jahre hinter einander fruchtbar bleiben? Diesen Vorzug haben sie indessen, allem Anschein nach, der glücklichen Einfalt zu verdanken, in welcher sie ihr Leben mit Sorgen und Mangel unbekannt zubringen, und eben dies ist ohne Zweifel auch die nächste Ursach de hiesigen starken Bevölkerung." *Ibid.*, 310. Other examples can be found on page 250, 284, 307. In fact, Forster also expresses his moral disapproval of the sexual indulgence of the Tahitian women. Yet he excuses them because of their precivilized innocence. He writes: "Wenn man aber bedenkt, daß ein großer Theil dessen, was nach unsern Gebräuchen tadelnswerth zu nennen wäre, hier, wegen der Einfalt der Erziehung und Tracht, wirklich für unschuldig gelten kann; so sind die Tahitischen Buhlerinnen im Grunde minder frech und ausschweifend als die *gesittetern* Huren in Europa." — — —, *Reise um die Welt*, 307.

Schönheiten nennen, sie wissen aber doch das Herz der Männer zu gewinnen, und erwerben sich durch ungezwungne, natürliche Freundlichkeit, und durch ihr stetes Bestreben zu gefallen, die Zuneigung und Liebe unseres Geschlechts.<sup>89</sup>

This detailed documentation of the Tahitian male body not only demonstrates that Forster follows Buffon's dictum in *Histoire naturelle* to describe an object from the outside physiognomy to its inner characteristics. At the same time, it discloses a fervent admiration, which tempts Forster and his (male) readers to identify with the Tahitian male.<sup>90</sup> The last phrase "our sex" (*unseres Geschlechts*) indubitably demonstrates his desire for identification. The comment on Tahitian femininity, in fact, tells us less about the women themselves than their ability to please the male sex. Tahitian femininity is thus defined in relation to masculinity. The narrator indirectly suggests that the deserting sailor and other European men may transform into these beautiful and healthy Tahitian male bodies, who are also accompanied by an agreeable and devoted female sex. Clearly, Forster's masculine subject is not primarily interested in observing and controlling the foreign female body as a colonial object. Rather it seeks to identify with Tahitian men as idealized human beings.<sup>91</sup> Male corporeality transgresses the boundaries between European and Tahitian men and conjures up a new Pacific masculinity.

---

<sup>89</sup> Forster, *Reise um die Welt*, 598.

<sup>90</sup> See Jörn Garber, "Reise nach Arkadien - Bougainville und Georg Forster auf Tahiti," *Georg-Forster-Studien* I(1997): 28.

<sup>91</sup> Lee Wallace's powerful study of the (European) male body as the central locus for the Europacific discourse inspires this interpretation. See Wallace, *Sexual Encounters: Pacific Texts, Modern Sexualities*.

The third important aspect of Forster's positive reception of Tahiti is articulated in his praise of the islanders' generous hospitality and genuine sentiments, which contrast with European mistrust, hypocrisy, and immorality. As Cook arrived at Matavai-Bay, an old woman emotionally embraced Cook as the friend of her lost son. Forster was deeply moved by this scene and comments: "Eine so zärtliche Empfindlichkeit zeugt offenbar von der ursprünglichen Güte des menschlichen Herzens [...]." <sup>92</sup> On one of his botanizing tours, an elderly Tahitian couple so generously treated the travelers that Forster compared them with Philemon and Baucis in Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, who represent the prototypes of pious hospitality and guest-friendship in the European tradition. <sup>93</sup> Forster's portrayal of the Tahitians as representing the ideal of human virtue and innocence is widely taken over into German literature, for example in Wieland's novel *Geschichte der Abderiten* (1774-1780) or in August von Kotzebue's *La Peyrouse* (1797). <sup>94</sup>

When Forster heard that a deserted Spanish sailor on Tahiti probably persuaded the chief not to give Cook the important provision – pigs, he vehemently criticized Europeans' moral corruptness and its negative influence on the islanders:

---

<sup>92</sup> Forster, *Reise um die Welt*, 306.

<sup>93</sup> Forster writes: "Bey diesem alten ehrwürdigen Paare, das uns bey Tisch bediente, hätten wir auf eine poetische Weise vergessen mögen, daß wir Menschen wären und auf den Gedanken kommen können, daß wir als Götter von Philemon und Baucis bewirtheet würden." *Ibid.*, 278.

<sup>94</sup> Christoph Martin Wieland, *Geschichte der Abderiten* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2003), 204.

Es ist wirklich im Ernste zu wünschen, daß der Umgang der Europäer mit den Einwohnern der Süd-See-Inseln in Zeiten abgebrochen werden möge, ehe die verderbten Sitten der civilisirtern Völker diese unschuldigen Leute anstecken können, die hier in ihrer Unwissenheit und Einfalt so glücklich leben. Aber es ist eine traurige Wahrheit, daß Menschenliebe und die politischen Systeme von Europa nicht mit einander harmoniren!<sup>95</sup>

As the phrase "*die verderbten Sitten der civilisirtern Völker*" tellingly reveals, Forster's critique of European debauchery is simultaneously accompanied by his judgment that Europe is still more civilized than Tahiti. In other words, the notion of the noble savage finds its anthropomorphic realization in Tahiti. The word "civilization" first came into use in French in the 1750s to describe the increase of commerce and wealth. The term rapidly came to be associated with the refinement of manners and, as Forster's usage shows, gained "an extraordinary ideological weight as the standard for measuring and comparing societies and cultures around the globe."<sup>96</sup> Larry Wolff points out that it is the European Enlightenment that coined the term in a singular mode, which designates as its opposite a huge amount of cultural phenomena as "uncivilized" or "precivilized."<sup>97</sup> Clearly, Forster's judgment of Tahiti's less civilized status is determined by the European Enlightenment definition of civilization.

On the other hand, Forster's critical attitude toward European civilization betrays traces of the dominant influence of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who famously

---

<sup>95</sup> Forster, *Reise um die Welt*, 281.

<sup>96</sup> Wolff, "Discovering Cultural Perspective: The Intellectual History of Anthropological Thought in the Age of Enlightenment," 10.

<sup>97</sup> See *Ibid.*

claimed that civilization is accompanied by human inequality and moral corruption.<sup>98</sup>

Rousseau compares the state of nature and the state of civilization in his *Discours sur*

*l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes* (1755):

The savage man breathes only peace and freedom; he desires only to live and stay idle, and even the ataraxia of the Stoic does not approach his profound indifference towards every other object. Civil man, on the contrary, being always active, sweating and restless, torments himself endlessly in search of ever more laborious occupations; he works himself to death, he even runs towards the grave to put himself into shape to live, or renounces life in order to acquire immortality. [...] Such is, in fact, the true cause of all these differences: the savage lives within himself; social man lives always outside himself; he knows how to live only in the opinion of others, it is, so to speak, from their judgement alone that he derives the sense of his own existence.<sup>99</sup>

Clearly, Forster's critique of the legendary Spanish sailor's ignoble behavior corresponds to Rousseau's critique of civilization and his idealization of the state of nature. While Forster does instead project the Rousseauvian perspective of human nature onto the Tahitians, Tahitian hospitality and friendliness also have a strong impact on Forster's positive perception of Tahiti and his critique of European civilization. In other words, Rousseau's theory only makes Forster more sensitive to Tahitian kindness; it does not completely determine his perception of Tahiti. At the same time, Forster's belief in historical teleology, according to which he attributes Tahiti to a less civilized stage, induces him to disagree with the deserting sailor and to consciously decide not to stay in Tahiti himself.

---

<sup>98</sup> See *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>99</sup> Rousseau, *A Discourse on Inequality*, 136.

## 2.5.2 Forster's Disagreement: Inequality, Revolution, and Enlightenment Progress

Congruent with Rousseau, Forster believes in a historical teleology which determines a social revolution in Tahiti due to the development of inequality. Yet unlike Rousseau, who observes the historical progress with skepticism and scorn, Forster optimistically affirms it and is committed to the project of natural history. Forster's positive attitude toward the Enlightenment idea of historical progression, represented by Adam Smith, illustrates his differences from both Rousseau and the deserting sailor.<sup>100</sup>

Although Forster first praises the fluid boundaries of hierarchy in Tahiti, he predicts that this equilibrium will not endure. In the future, Forster contends, the ruling class will become lazier and larger and indulge themselves more in voluptuousness, whereas the ordinary people will have to work and suffer more. The consequence then will be:

Endlich wird das gemeine Volk diesen Druck empfinden, und die Ursachen desselben gewahr worden, alsdenn aber wird auch das Gefühl der gekränkten Rechte der

---

<sup>100</sup> Forster is strongly influenced by Adam Smith's theory of historical development from the stage of hunter and collector to the advanced stage of commerce and trade. For more details see Christian Marouby, "Adam Smith and the Anthropology of the Enlightenment: The "Ethnographic" Sources of Economic Progress," in *The Anthropology of the Enlightenment*, ed. Larry Wolff and Marco Cipolloni (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007); Kronauer, "Rousseaus Kulturkritik aus der Sicht Georg Forsters," 151-56; Annette Meyer, "Von der >Science of Man< zur >Naturgeschichte der Menschheit<. Einflüsse angelsächsischer Wissenschaft im Werk Georg Forsters," in *Natur - Mensch - Kultur: Georg Forster im Wissenschaftsfeld seiner Zeit*, ed. Jörn Garber and Tanja van Hoorn (Hannover-Laatzten: Wehrhahn Verlag, 2006).

Menschheit in ihnen erwachen, und eine Revolution veranlassen. Dies ist der gewöhnliche Cirkel aller Staaten.<sup>101</sup>

The “circle” (*Cirkel*) in Forster’s account resonates with Rousseau’s conception of a historical teleology: the first state of nature, in which no inequality exists, and the three successive stages of societal development, in which inequality gradually emerges and culminates in revolutions.<sup>102</sup>

This teleology also persuades Forster to recognize what he deems the “inadequacy” of the Tahitian life style for modern Europeans. He reflects that all the aspects of natural and cultural attractiveness of Tahiti are merely voluptuous sensual pleasures (*Vergnügen der Sinnlichkeit*), which are only essential for people who are purely concerned with the happiness in the current moment (*Freuden des Augenblicks*). People with more power of judgment (*Beurtheilungskraft*) like Forster himself have to admit:

daß ein Mensch [...], der zu einem thätigen Leben gebohren, mit tausend Gegenständen bekannt, wovon die Tahitier nichts wissen, und gewohnt ist, an das Vergangne und Zukünftige zu denken, daß der, einer so ununterbrochenen Ruhe und eines beständigen Einerley, bald überdrüssig werden müsse, und daß eine solche Lage nur einem Volk erträglich seyn könne, dessen Begriffe so einfach und eingeschränkt sind, als wir sie bey den Tahitiern fanden.<sup>103</sup>

---

<sup>101</sup> Forster, *Reise um die Welt*, 332.

<sup>102</sup> Rousseau writes: “If we follow the progress of inequality in these different revolutions, we shall find that the establishment of law and the right of property was the first stage, the institution of magistrates the second, and the transformation of legitimate into arbitrary power the third and last stage. Thus, the status of rich and poor was authorized by the first epoch, that of strong and weak by the second, and by the third that of master and slave, which is the last degree of inequality, and the stage to which all the others finally lead until new revolutions dissolve the government altogether or bring it back to legitimacy.” Rousseau, *A Discourse on Inequality*, 131.

<sup>103</sup> Forster, *Reise um die Welt*, 599.

Tahiti's naïveté is attractive to the sentimentalist Forster but not to the naturalist Forster. The scientific curiosity or the rational thirst for knowledge and novelty holds sway over both Forster's writing and other European travel narratives on Asia, Africa, or the Americas in the eighteenth century.<sup>104</sup> The longing for the state of paradisaical happiness is thus quickly abandoned for the sake of exploring novel objects, enriching the archive of natural history, and enhancing rational, philosophical reflections on ethnographic and natural findings. In other words, Forster's Enlightenment optimism and teleology here denigrate the Tahitian life style as an alternative locus which exists simultaneously with European social realities.<sup>105</sup> This aspect of Forster's thinking later culminates in his essay *Cook, der Entdecker* (1789, *Cook, the Discoverer*), which apotheosizes Cook's achievements for the sciences and the general progress of human society.

At the same time, Forster also feels uncertain about the positive belief in science and progress. He warns that encounters with the Europeans may speed up the arrival of the unhappy stage (*unglückliche Periode*) of revolution and inequality in Tahiti:

---

<sup>104</sup> Leask, *Curiosity and the Aesthetics of Travel Writing, 1770-1840: 'from an antique land'*, 1-53. Although Leask's study focuses on travel writings published on British market, they are produced by authors from different European countries such as Alexander von Humboldt. Therefore his discussion of curiosity represents a pan-European phenomenon of travel narratives.

<sup>105</sup> Uwe Japp calls this aspect of Forster's thinking his critique of the South Seas in terms of the alleged underdevelopment in comparison to Europe. See Uwe Japp, "Aufgeklärtes Europa und natürliche Südsee. Georg Forsters >Reise um die Welt<," in *Reise und Utopie. Zur Literatur der Spätaufklärung*, ed. Hans Joachim Piechotta (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1976).

Warlich! wenn die Wissenschaft und Gelehrsamkeit einzelner Menschen auf Kosten der Glückseligkeit ganzer Nationen erkaufte werden muß; so wär' es, für die Entdecker und Entdeckten, besser, daß die Südsee den unruhigen Europäern ewig unbekannt geblieben wäre!<sup>106</sup>

While this Rousseauian nostalgia for an invented state of nature surely discloses Forster's projection of a European idea onto Tahiti, it also suggests that the Tahitian alternate reality effectively unsettles Forster's well-established conviction regarding the Enlightenment and historical progress.

### 2.5.3 Forster's Cultural Relativism

According to Uwe Japp, Forster's praise and belittlement of Tahiti articulate a double critique: a critique of the imperfect Europe, which has not yet reached the stage of Enlightenment; and a critique of the South Seas, which lack refinements in culture and commerce.<sup>107</sup> Forster's travel narrative, Japp claims, represents an intra-European conjunction of Rousseauian pessimism and Enlightenment optimism. Japp's reading shows us how Forster projects certain strands in European intellectual discourse onto a foreign society. I argue instead that Forster's experiences at Tahiti play an irreplaceable role in his sympathy with the sailor's decision to desert and his critique of European moral corruption. That is to say, while Forster's belief in the advantages of European sciences and civilization demonstrates the strong influence of Rousseau and others, it

---

<sup>106</sup> Forster, *Reise um die Welt*, 332.

<sup>107</sup> See Japp, "Aufgeklärtes Europa und natürliche Südsee. Georg Forsters >Reise um die Welt<."

also negotiates external challenges from Tahitian nature and culture. Tahiti does not only represent an imaginary place of utopia, or an object of colonial fantasies; it also bears its own real-world significance as an alternative counterbalance to European culture in the eighteenth century.

Hence Forster's final reflection on the desertion at Tahiti articulates less a double critique than a Pacific relativism. His relativism, at some points, overcomes the idea of Enlightenment utopia and makes outdated the anticipation of human perfection. Forster contends:

Indessen sind die Vorstellungen, die man sich von Glückseligkeit macht, bey unterschiednen Völkern eben so sehr verschieden, als die Grundsätze, Cultur und Sitten derselben; und da die Natur, in den verschiednen Gegenden der Welt, ihre Güter bald freygebig, bald sparsam ausgetheilt hat; so ist jene Verschiedenheit in den Begriffen vom Glück ein überzeugender Beweis von der erhabenen Weisheit und Vaterliebe des Schöpfers, der in dem Entwurf des Ganzen, zugleich auf das Glück aller einzelnen Geschöpfe, sowohl in den heißen als kalten Himmelsstrichen, Rücksicht nahm.<sup>108</sup>

More radically, Forster's reflection on different cultural attitudes toward female virginity completely eliminates the traces of historical teleology and demonstrates the impact of cultural differences:

Doch es ist umsonst, für die willkührlichen Grillen der Menschen vernünftige Gründe aufsuchen zu wollen, vornemlich in Betracht des andern Geschlechts, wegen dessen man zu allen Zeiten und in allen Ländern so sehr verschiedner Meynung gewesen ist! In einigen Gegenden von Indien wird kein Mann von Stande eine *Jungfer* heirathen; in Europa hingegen ist eine *verunglückte Jungfer* fast ohne Hoffnung, je wieder zu Ehren zu kommen. Türken, Araber, Tartaren treiben ihre Eifersucht sogar bis auf eingebildete

---

<sup>108</sup> Forster, *Reise um die Welt*, 599-600.

Zeichen der Jungfernschaft, aus welcher sich der Malabar so wenig macht, daß er sie seinem Götzen opfert.<sup>109</sup>

After deciding that he will not adopt the sailor's idea and stay in Tahiti for good, Forster concludes by recognizing the insurmountable attraction Tahiti bears for human senses and sentiments, at the same time, he legitimates his rational practice as a naturalist and a traveling philosopher. Forster's endeavor to grant value to the differences of happiness, culture, and morals in different cultures, obscures the teleological abyss between Europe and Tahiti and evinces the degree to which Forster internalizes the impact of Tahiti in his thinking.

## **2.6 Conclusion**

Instead of offering a systematic documentation of the South Seas, the cannibalism at New Zealand, the violence on Tanna, and the desertion on Tahiti offer a grammar of the transactions between South Pacific impact and European ideology. Harry Liebersohn rightly observes: "At times an enthusiast for European civilization and at times its critic, Forster in some passages left his shifting moods side by side, unreconciled."<sup>110</sup> As a matter of fact, this seeming contradiction is inextricably entangled with the penetration of the epistemic alterity of the South Seas into the European discourse of anthropology and natural history in the eighteenth century. In other words,

---

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 401.

<sup>110</sup> Liebersohn, *The Travelers' World: Europe to the Pacific*, 41-42.

Forster's empathy, provoked by various encounters with the South Pacific islanders, complicates the unidirectional application of Enlightenment ideology of civilization and historical teleology.<sup>111</sup> Hence Pratt's notion of the contact zone is both controlled by the imperial gaze of the scientific observers and deeply entrenched in the real-world significance of non-European cultures.<sup>112</sup> Forster's account is less a distortion of Pacific history than a pivotal documentation of cultural transgression around 1800.

Let me conclude with Forster's comment on the first night at Tahiti: "Es gieng also heute Abend zwischen den Verdeckten vollkommen so ausschweifend lustig zu, als ob wir nicht zu Tahiti, sondern zu Spithead [in England] vor Anker gelegen hätten."<sup>113</sup> In the end, the South Pacific is inscribed so profoundly into Forster's cultural identity and intellect that it even confounds his idea of home.

---

<sup>111</sup> Later in his career, this impact of the South Seas also gives rise to Forster's methodology of empirical observation and comparison, which insists on the acknowledgment of differences in the representation of reality instead of being dictated by theoretical necessity or following apriori principles to guarantee logical uniformity. Manuela Ribeiro Sanches points out Forster's differences from the Kantian method of theoretical and methodological dogmatism. She legitimates Forster: "Wahrheit gründet sich nicht nur auf Identität, sondern muß auch die Differenz berücksichtigen. Der Dialog bildet in diesem Prozeß eine entscheidende Rolle." Manuela Ribeiro Sanches, ">Diese zarten, fast unsichtbaren Fäden der Arachne<. Das wahrnehmende Subject und die Konstituierung von Wahrheit bei Forster," in *Georg Forster in interdisziplinärer Perspektive*, ed. Claus-Volker Klenke (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1994), 143.

<sup>112</sup> See Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*.

<sup>113</sup> Forster, *Reise um die Welt*, 307.

### 3. August von Kotzebue's Exotic Melodramas: Sentimentalism, Sexuality and Refusal of Tragedy

#### 3.1 Introduction

##### 3.1.1 Kotzebue and Colonialism

In the preface to his play *Die Negerklaven* (1796, *The Negro Slaves*), August von Kotzebue (1761-1819) harshly criticizes colonial slavery:

Der Verfasser ersucht seine Leser, Zuschauer und Recensenten, dieses Stück nicht bloß als Schauspiel zu betrachten. Es ist bestimmt, alle die fürchterlichen Grausamkeiten, welche man sich gegen unsere schwarzen Brüder erlaubt, in einer einzigen Gruppe darzustellen. Der Dichter hat bloß eingekleidet, aber nicht erfunden. Raynals *histoire philosophique*, Selles *Geschichte des Negerhandels*, Sprengel vom *Negerhandel*, Iserts *Reise nach Guinea*, der famöse *Code noir*, und einige in periodischen Schriften zerstreute Aufsätze, haben ihm den Stoff geliefert. Er muss mit einem lauten Seufzer bekennen, daß leider keine einzige Thatsache in diesem Stücke vorkömmt, die nicht buchstäblich wahr wäre.<sup>1</sup>

Clearly, Kotzebue is well informed about eighteenth-century literature on European colonialism and the triangular slave trade between Western Europe, Africa, and the Americas.<sup>2</sup> In the subtitle, Kotzebue calls this play a historical portrait (*historisches Gemälde*) and intentionally uses the medium of theater to condemn real-world colonial cruelty and provoke sympathy for the misery of black slaves. He dedicated this play to

---

<sup>1</sup> August von Kotzebue, "Die Negerklaven. Ein historisch-dramatisches Gemälde," in *Theater von August von Kotzebue* (Vienna and Leipzig: Verlag von Ignaz Klang in Wien and Eduard Kummer in Leipzig, 1840), 157.

<sup>2</sup> See Christian Degn, *Die Schimmelmans im atlantischen Dreieckshandel: Gewinn und Gewissen* (Neumünster: Karl Wachholtz Verlag, 1974); Catharina Lüden, *Sklavenfahrt mit Seeleuten aus Schleswig-Holstein, Hamburg und Lübeck im 18. Jahrhundert* (Heide: Westholsteinische Verlagsanstalt Boyens & Co., 1983).

the counselor of justice in Denmark, the country which first abolished slavery in its Caribbean colonies.

Kotzebue's antislavery position, however, is not only related to European overseas colonialism, but is also determined by his experience with slavery in the Baltic region. Kotzebue was forced to leave Germany twice in his life. He gained his fortune in Russia as a jurist and spent a long time of his life in Reval, present-day Tallinn, Estonia. As a matter of fact, the German immigrants made up one third of the whole population in Estonia and were the ruling class in this Russian province. The Estonian peasants were almost all in a bondage relationship (*Leibeigenschaft*) to the German aristocrats. Kotzebue was strongly influenced by anti-slavery criticism in the Baltic region. The pastor Heinrich Johann von Jannau described the miserable situation of the Estonian and Latvian peasants in German enslavement in his book *Geschichte der Sklaverey, und Charakter der Bauern in Lief- und Esthland, ein Beitrag zur Leibeigenschaft* (1785, *History of Slavery, and Characteristics of the Peasants in Livonia and Estonia, a Contribution to Serfdom*). Unlike the pastor, who strongly disapproved of theater and saw it as a useless entertainment, Kotzebue claimed that theater was the place where human sympathy and fine feelings can be educated and influenced. Garlieb Merkel, Kotzebue's collaborator and co-editor of the journal *Der Freimüthige* (*The Frank One*), also called for an improvement of slavery conditions in Latvia according to Enlightenment standards in

his highly controversial book: *Die Letten, vorzüglich in Livland am Ende des philosophischen Jahrhunderts* (1796, *The Latvians, Who Primarily Lived in Livonia at the End of the Philosophical Century*). The German aristocrats in Latvia saw Merkel as a traitor and forced him into exile.<sup>3</sup>

Against this backdrop, Kotzebue's polemic *Negersklaven* is not only determined by European overseas colonial enterprises in the eighteenth century, but also has its roots in the reality of his everyday life. Therefore this drama is an ideological support for contemporary abolitionist discourse as well as an indirect critique of the German colonization in the Baltic region due to strict censorship at that time.

In addition to *Die Negersklaven*, Kotzebue also wrote many other plays which deal with intercultural and interracial conflicts as well as love stories between Peruvians, Indians, Spaniards, or Britons. European slave trade and colonialism in the so-called West Indies, the discourse of the paradise-like South Seas, and emergent Orientalism all leave their traces in these plays. They are actually the most successful dramas in the early years when Kotzebue became famous.<sup>4</sup> These themes are also related to Kotzebue's

---

<sup>3</sup> Garlieb Merkel, "Die Letten, vorzüglich in Liefland, am Ende des philosophischen Jahrhunderts," in *Freimütiges aus den Schriften Garlieb Merckels*, ed. Horst Adameck (Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1959). Merkel's polemic (1796), which made him well-known among German-speaking intellectuals, describes in details the living hell of the Latvian peasants and calls for an improvement of the bondage system in Latvia according to Enlightenment standards. The German aristocracy in Latvia sees Merkel as a traitor and forces him into exile.

<sup>4</sup> Except probably the most famous play *Menschenhaß und Reue* (1789) and *Das Kind der Liebe* (1790), other plays such as *Der Eremit auf Formentera* (1787), *Die Indianer in England* (1789), *Die Sonnenjungfrau* (1789),

predilection for Robinsonades, the imitations and adaptations of Daniel Defoe's novel *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), the prototypical work on intercultural encounters in the eighteenth century. Kotzebue admits in his autobiography that Defoe's novel and the famous German Robinsonade *Insel Felsenburg* (1731, *Island Felsenburg*) by Johann Gottfried Schnabel were his favorite books as a boy.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, in addition to British and French scientific expeditions, Russian Empire's maritime explorations were deeply intertwined with Kotzebue's personal life: Kotzebue's second son Otto von Kotzebue, with the German poet Adelbert von Chamisso on board as naturalist, commanded an exploration to Bering Street and the South Seas. Today's Kotzebue Sound near Alaska is named after him. Kotzebue's second wife was the sister of Russia's first world traveler: Adam Johann Ritter von Krusenstern, another Baltic German in Russian service.

Hence, although the literary works are composed in German, the vantage point from which Kotzebue conceives his dramas was not exclusively confined to the central

---

*Bruder Moritz, der Sonderling, oder die Colonie für die Pelew-Insel* (1791), *Der Papagey* (1792), *Sultan Wampum* (1791), *Graf Benjowsky* (1794), *Die Spanier in Peru* (1795), *La Peyrouse* (1797) all have major non-European characters or rare set in non-European locations.

<sup>5</sup> See August von Kotzebue, *Selbstbiographie* (Vienna: Im Verlag bey Catharina Gräffer und Comp., 1811), 3-4. Kotzebue describes his predilection for Defoe's novel and the Robinsonades: "Halt! ehrlicher Don Quixotte, du führst mich zu weit. Empfange meinen Dank, und theile ihn mit Sancho Pansa. Ihr seyd ein Paar gute Gesellschafter, [...] bis Robinson Crusoe mir aufstieß, dieser Wundermann, der mich, wie jeden Knaben, mit unwiderstehlicher Gewalt an sich riß, den ich geiziger verwahrte, als mein bestes Spielzeug; mit dem ich oft den sogenannten rothen Gang, auf die Schwelle des Pferdestalles floh, um fern von der Trommel meiner Gespielen, ungestört mit ihm auf die Ziegenjagd zu gehen. [...] Ich fing an, Jagd auf alle die abentheuerlichen Robinsons zu machen, welche die Nachahmungssucht in meinem lieben Vaterlande hervorbrachte; aber wo war einer, der dem Original an Kraft, Natur und Interesse gleich kam? – Die Insel Felsenburg galt freylich viel bey mir [...]. Insel, und besonders wüste Insel, war damahls ein Zauberwort für mich, an welches sich eine Reihe lieblicher Bilder knüpfte."

European German speaking regions. The interpretive framework of national literature has some limits in Kotzebue's case. His dramas not only reflect intellectual debates and literary fashions in Germany, France, and England, as we will see in his Peru dramas and *Indianer in England* (1789, *Indians in England*), they are also products of Kotzebue's experience in Eastern Europe. Reval in Estonia, not Weimar or Göttingen, was the center where this most popular playwright of the German language from 1790 to 1870 unfolded his career. (We will deal with his popularity in greater length later in this chapter.)

Against this backdrop, Kotzebue's predilection for Robinsonades, his erudition in literature on colonialism, and his biographical background all testify that the global context of capitalist and colonial exploitation in the eighteenth century is indispensable for interpreting Kotzebue's plays. We should not only be satisfied with the insight that his dramas merely disguise everyday-life essence under exotic costumes, but also recognize the significance of the so-called exotic cultures in European quotidian reality. Susanne Zantop's study offers the first step into this terrain and interprets Kotzebue's Peru dramas *Die Sonnenjungfrau* (1789, *The Virgin of the Sun*) and *Die Spanier in Peru* (1795, *The Spaniards in Peru*) as expressions of colonial fantasies and master-narratives that

prepare Germany's colonial enterprise in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>6</sup> This is true to some extent because, like in *Die Negersklaven*, the slaves do not envision an abolition of colonial slavery but only hope for a benevolent European ruler. Yet what should we do with the critical attitude towards European colonialism and cultural prejudices in *Die Negersklaven* and other plays? Could we see both colonial fantasies and the critique of slavery, or call for human dignity, as Kotzebue's reactions to the challenges posed by the non-European world? In other words, could we see Kotzebue's plays as cultural products reflecting intercultural conflicts? In order to explore these questions, we need to know more about the significance of his plays in their literary and social historical contexts.

### **3.1.2 Kotzebue's Popularity and His Critics**

As the most successful and productive playwright of his day, Kotzebue's whole life was haunted by a wild popularity on stages as well as repeated charges of immorality, shallowness, and excessive sentimentality by the most significant of his educated contemporaries.<sup>7</sup> In addition to more than 230 plays, Kotzebue also wrote several novels, history books, travelogues, and innumerable journal articles. Between

---

<sup>6</sup> Susanne Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies: Conquest, Family, and Nation in Precolonial Germany, 1770-1870* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1997), 126-40.

<sup>7</sup> See Peter Kaeding, *August von Kotzebue: auch ein deutsches Dichterleben* (Berlin: Union Verlag, 1985). The biography offers an elegantly written account of Kotzebue's turbulent life in literature and politics.

1779 and 1870 the *Hof- und Nationaltheater* in Mannheim performed 1,870 plays by

Kotzebue, a number much higher than 486 by Schiller and 181 by Goethe. (See Figure 1)

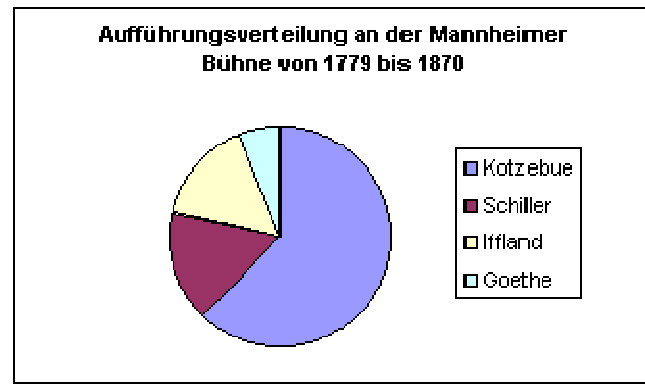


Figure 2: Percentage of Performances at Mannheim Theater from 1779-1870, copied from [www.augustvonkotzebue.de](http://www.augustvonkotzebue.de)

Approximately one seventh of the dramas performed at the theater in Weimar under Goethe's direction were written by Kotzebue.<sup>8</sup> Beyond German-speaking stages, Kotzebue's works were translated into English, French, Danish, Dutch, Italian, Russian, Swedish, and Spanish etc. and represented German taste outside Germany, whereas canonical literary figures such as Goethe and Schiller remained largely unknown outside Germany for a long time.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> See Jörg F. Meyer, *Verehrt. Verdammt. Vergessen. August von Kotzebue, Werk und Wirkung* (Frankfurt am Main, New York et al.: Peter Lang, 2005), 9-10.

<sup>9</sup> See L. F. Thompson, *Kotzebue: a Survey of His Progress in France, and England, Preceded by a Consideration of the Critical Attitude to Him in Germany* (Paris: Librairie Ancienne Honoré Champion, 1928); Jenny Broekman de Vries, "Kotzebue on the American Stage 1798-1840," (Unpublished dissertation of University of Virginia, 1972); Arthur Eloesser, *Das bürgerliche Drama: seine Geschichte im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: Verlag von Wilhelm Hertz, 1898).

Despite his success, Kotzebue himself felt depressed about the rejection by the high circle in his profession and complained:

Ich lasse zuweilen schwangere oder verführte Mädchen in meinen Schauspielen auftreten, darüber schreyt denn die ganze Welt, warum? weiß ich nicht; denn über die schwangere Lotte in Gemmingens Hausvater, über die schwangere Eugenie von Beaumarchais et caetera, et caetera, schrie niemand. Ich muß also endlich glauben, nicht der Gegenstand, sondern das Bißchen Ruhm des Verfassers sey den Herren unleidlich.<sup>10</sup>

Recognizing the legitimacy of Kotzebue's own defense, we are compelled to raise the following questions: Why was Kotzebue accused of being immoral if other playwrights also used similar motifs? Is it then rather a matter of theatrical form than of content? Why, as Kotzebue himself suggested, should his critics be jealous of his popularity and fame? To what extent are non-European cultures in his plays related to his "immorality"? In other words, why is Kotzebue concerned with cultural differences, be they real differences or digestible clichés? In the first eleven years (1787-1798) of his career when Kotzebue founded his fame and popularity, 9 out of 28 plays had major non-European characters or took place in non-European settings. In the end, given the enormous popularity of Kotzebue's works, do Kotzebue's "exotic" plays reflect the voices of a growing bourgeois culture in Germany around 1800? Or do they also represent collective European reactions to the challenges posed by cultural differences against the bigger world-historical backdrop of thriving global capitalism and European colonialism?

---

<sup>10</sup> August von Kotzebue, "Vorbericht zu Das Kind der Liebe," in *Theater* (Vienna and Leipzig: Verlag von Ignaz Klang in Wien and Eduard Kummer in Leipzig, 1840), 125.

Kotzebue criticism today exhibits two different tendencies. One group of critics assign him an inferior position to canonical writers, although they do not directly take up the disparaging voices of immorality by Kotzebue's contemporaries. Kotzebue only sustains a shadowy existence under the giants of Goethe or Schiller. His works are not seen as high-quality literature with psychological and philosophical depth and aesthetic value; they are only interesting from a sociological perspective and are thus labeled as *Trivialliteratur*, *Unterhaltungsliteratur*, *Rührstück*, or are called the degenerate version of the highly canonical bourgeois tragedy (*bürgerliches Trauerspiel*).<sup>11</sup>

This tendency reflects a binary construction set up by the literary elites around 1800: a conflict between a highbrow and a lowbrow literature and culture induced by the further development of the market and the commodity character of literature.<sup>12</sup> Since there was no freedom of assembly around 1800, theater as an institution played a central role in forming a literary public sphere and bore a critical function towards the political

---

<sup>11</sup> See Frithjof Stock, *Kotzebue im literarischen Leben der Goethezeit: Polemik, Kritik, Publikum* (Düsseldorf: Bertelsmann Universitätsverlag, 1971), 9-14; Peter Nusser, *Trivialliteratur* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1991), 88-91; Karl S. Guthke, *Das deutsche bürgerliche Trauerspiel*, 6 ed. (Stuttgart and Weimar: J. B. Metzler, 2006), 120-21; Markus Krause, "Trivialdramatik," in *Zwischen Revolution und Restauration: Klassik, Romantik, 1786-1815*, ed. Horst Albert Glaser (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 1980), 313-26; Lothar Fietz, "Zur Genese des englischen Melodramas aus der Tradition der bürgerlichen Tragödie und des Rührstücks: Lillo-Schröder-Kotzebue-Sheridan-Thompson-Jerrold," *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 65(1991).

<sup>12</sup> Goethe sets up the binary between elite and masses in a conversation with Eckermann: "Hätte ich als Schriftsteller die Wünsche des großen Haufens mir zum Ziel machen und diese zu befriedigen trachten wollen, so hätte ich ihnen Histörchen erzählen und sie zum Besten haben müssen, wie der selige Kotzebue getan." Johann Peter Eckermann, *Gespräche mit Goethe in den letzten Jahren seines Lebens* (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1986), 678.

state. Theater provoked transformations in the political public sphere and the emergence of civil society.<sup>13</sup> Yet the so-called lowbrow and entertainment literature, as literary critics such as Christa Bürger argue, has lost this critical function and merely seeks to please audiences and achieve market success.<sup>14</sup> Following this logic, we can only condemn Kotzebue as a representative of the market, as a danger to the fulfillment of the project of Enlightenment and the education (*Bildung*) program of the literary elites, “[weil] er durch das Versprechen von Profit und Geltung die moralische Integrität der Autoren zerstört und diese zu Herstellern von inhaltlich wertloser, aber gut verkäuflicher ‘Fabrikware’ erniedrigt.”<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> See Eloesser, *Das bürgerliche Drama: seine Geschichte im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert*, 180; Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1962), 90-121; Thomas Koebner, "Zum Streit für und wider die Schaubühne im 18. Jahrhundert," in *Festschrift für Rainer Gruenter*, ed. Bernhard Fabian (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1978); Rudi Graf, *Das Theater im Literaturstaat: Literarisches Theater auf dem Weg zur Bildungsmacht* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1992).

<sup>14</sup> See Christa Bürger, "Literarischer Markt und Öffentlichkeit am Ausgang des 18. Jahrhunderts in Deutschland," in *Aufklärung und literarische Öffentlichkeit*, ed. Peter Bürger, Christa Bürger, and Jochen Schulte-Sasse (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1980).

Indeed, the problem with the audience, the effects of theater and literature at large in the newly established bourgeois public sphere in eighteenth-century Europe, proves to be one of the core concerns in the intellectual debate of that time. Simply speaking, there are two parties: one party, in which Jean-Jacques Rousseau, e.g. in his *Lettre à M. d'Alembert sur les spectacles* (1758), and the Church Fathers raise the most powerful voices, considers theater a dangerous institution which leads to moral corruptions and social unrests; the other party, represented by e.g. Gottsched, Diderot and Lessing, defends theater as a special realm which is able to present a model of civil society, to criticize the corrupted morals, and to educate the public. Theater, and works of art at large, is conceptualized as an instrument and evaluated by its effects on the audience. *Wirkungsästhetik* is the key word to summarize this trend. The two parties claim authority either from Plato's anti-theatricalism or from Aristotle's promotion of theater with its effect of *catharsis*, the cleansing of the soul.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 178.

The second group of critics, including Leif Ludwig Albertsen and Rolf Haubl, stresses Kotzebue's impact on the public sphere and considers him the real representative of the German bourgeoisie. They argue that the literary elites of that time had an overvalued self-assessment and were in fact isolated from and incomprehensible to most literary consumers. Thus the elites did not represent the public sphere. Their self-ascribed duty of aesthetic education (*ästhetische Bildung*), particularly theorized by Schiller, reflected their condescending attitude towards the large body of readers and audiences.<sup>16</sup> As a matter of fact, Kotzebue's audiences did not merely consist of uneducated masses but also spread from the high aristocracy such as the courts in Berlin and Vienna to the bourgeoisie and the lower classes.<sup>17</sup>

Albertsen sees Kotzebue as a powerful challenge to the domination of Goethe and Schiller in literary history because

Es scheint sinnvoll, den Fall Kotzebue für eine Weile ernst zu nehmen, nicht um Kotzebue für den literarischen Kanon zu retten, was egal sein kann, sondern um an einem verhältnismäßig komplizierten Kasus sich klarzumachen, was an der Literatur gut

---

<sup>16</sup> See Leif Ludwig Albertsen, "Internationaler Zeitfaktor Kotzebue: Trivialisierung oder sinnvolle Entliterarisierung und Entmoralisierung des strebenden Bürgers im Frühliberalismus," *Sprachkunst* 9(1978); Rolf Haubl, "Trivialität Kotzebues: Psychohistorische Anmerkungen," *Sprachkunst* 13(1982). Martha Woodmansee demonstrates that the literary elites', particularly Schiller's, economic unsuccessfulness on the literary market is a major cause for the Schillerian exclusive "art of the ideal." Kotzebue's and other writers' orientation towards the people is rewarded with material wealth. Therefore the high ideal of the literary elites proves to be a self-justifying reaction to the mass orientation and financial success of popular writers as Kotzebue, August Wilhelm Iffland, or Gottfried August Bürger. See Martha Woodmansee, *The Author, Art, and the Market: Rereading the History of Aesthetics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 57-86.

<sup>17</sup> Stock, *Kotzebue im literarischen Leben der Goethezeit: Polemik, Kritik, Publikum*, 133-70.

ist, progressiv ist, ein Genuß mit einer Perspektive ist, in der über die an sich keineswegs unbedingt zu vermeidende Abendunterhaltung hinaus die Welt auch verändert wird.<sup>18</sup>

Due to theater's predominant public effects in the eighteenth century, Kotzebue's popularity thus had an even deeper meaning than nowadays. Haubl and Gert Ueding both point out that Kotzebue's plays verbalize the limits of the straitjacket of bourgeois morals and offer temporary, illusory but loosening and relieving solutions.<sup>19</sup> Ueding connects the so-called exoticism with this aspect as a general distinguishing trait in Kotzebue's plays:

Kotzebue hat das populäre Motiv eines exotisch-arkadischen Freiraumes jenseits der Grenzen der alten Zivilisation mehrfach aufgegriffen, in mehr kritischer Absicht (›La Peyrouse‹ [...] oder ›Die Sonnen-Jungfrau‹ [...]) oder wie hier als Entlastungs-Raum und Rahmen für die Lösung gesellschaftlicher Konflikte, die unter den herrschenden Konventionen sonst nicht vorstellbar schienen.<sup>20</sup>

Indeed, contemporary critique of Enlightenment points out that the project of Enlightenment and aesthetic education do not only mean critique, freedom, and emancipation, but also has a strong focus on control, punishment, exclusion, subjugation, patriarchy, and colonialism.<sup>21</sup> Decolonial theorists in particular argue that European

---

<sup>18</sup> Albertsen, "Internationaler Zeitfaktor Kotzebue: Trivialisierung oder sinnvolle Entliterarisierung und Entmoralisierung des strebenden Bürgers im Frühliberalismus," 221.

<sup>19</sup> Gert Ueding, *Klassik und Romantik: Deutsche Literatur im Zeitalter der französischen Revolution 1789-1815* (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1987), 313-16. Haubl also argues that the condescending attitude of the literary elites towards the masses is later called into question and criticized by the generation of *Junges Deutschland*.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 317.

<sup>21</sup> See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977); Said, *Culture and Imperialism*; Robert S. Leventhal, ed. *Reading After Foucault: Institutions, Disciplines, and Technologies of the Self in Germany, 1750-1830* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1993); Robert Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture, and Race* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995).

intellectuals in the eighteenth century at large helped global capitalism and the economic power of colonialism to formulate supporting ideologies and form the appropriate mode of knowledge-production: Eurocentrism.<sup>22</sup>

Kotzebue's plays, to some extent, do ridicule the moralizing and even punishing tendencies in highbrow literature and endeavor to imagine different (sexual) morals, family ideals, and human conditions. The non-European and non-Christian elements in the fictional contexts of his dramas play a central role in actualizing the "abnormal" and "aberrant" imaginations. In other words, the exoticism of foreign settings and subjects avoids direct references to real-life conflicts in Europe and thus performs visions of a different sexual and social order. We also have to admit that Kotzebue's exoticism, typical for his time, is actually a meta-narrative, which uses various sources on different cultures, predominantly in travel literature, to compose literary works. Therefore it is helpful for us to keep in mind that there are twisted cultural images and made-up clichés in his plays.

The purpose of the above discussion is meant to liberate Kotzebue from the conventional straitjacket of a trivial and purely commercial connotation. We should

---

<sup>22</sup> Quijano argues: "Since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and above all with the Enlightenment, the mythological idea that Europe predated this model of power has been continuously affirmed – i.e. that it was already the global center of capitalism, and that it colonized the rest of the world and elaborated modernity and rationality on its own initiative and from within. Hence, Europe and the Europeans represented the highest level and the most advanced moment of the linear, unidirectional, and continuous progress of the species." Aníbal Quijano, "The Coloniality of Power and Social Classification," *Journal of World-Systems Research* 2(2000): 343.

grant him legitimacy and recognize the significance of his popularity from the perspective of the decolonial critique of Eurocentrism and coloniality, which has not been paid enough attention to in Kotzebue criticism. The adaptation of so-called exotic cultures enables him to refuse the “noble” form of tragedy, loosen the tight moralizing tendencies in literature, and enormously entertain his audience with sentimentalism, Rousseauian noble savages, and grandiose theatrical spectacles. At the same time, cultural otherness is also highly stereotyped by Kotzebue, namely, they are tailored to become acceptable but still kept somehow foreign for their reception in Germany and beyond. While they are portrayed as morally noble people, they often play male servants or female lovers who willingly acknowledge the benevolent mastery and male authority of white and Christian Europeans. This aspect reminds us of the character Friday in *Robinson Crusoe*. Thus a condescending attitude toward non-European cultural otherness cannot be ignored.

This seeming paradox in the representation of non-European cultures in Kotzebue’s dramas demonstrates that the interpretive tendencies of bourgeois emancipation and of colonial fantasies of control and oppression are both valid. Yet if we only focus on the European oppression and exploitation of the colonial world, then we only recognize the agency of the oppressor and dismiss the oppressed as passive. Rather we should conceive the relationship between these two parties as an interactive

dynamic, in which each is changed and challenged by the other. By adopting an interpretive perspective from the colonial world, the two aspects of emancipation and colonial fantasies in Kotzebue's plays are reactions to the challenges of the non-European and non-Christian values and knowledge. This is not an attempt to harmonize the paradox, but rather to balance the nation- or Europe-centered interpretation and give the rarely mentioned parts of the world a possibility of enunciation.

Before I investigate his plays, it is necessary to unearth several salient aspects of Kotzebue's dramaturgy in order to situate the cultural differences in his plays in the fundamental structures of his compositional conceptualization of dramas. I compare Schiller's theory of theater and tragedy with Kotzebue's polemic *Fragmente über Recensenten-Unfug* (1797, *Fragments on the Nonsense of Reviewers*), in which Kotzebue rejects the major accusations of his plays by the literary elites. Peter Brooks's notion of the melodramatic mode proves an insightful paradigm of describing and appreciating the distinguishing feature of Kotzebue's plays from Schiller's idealist theater.

After clarifying the structural importance of Kotzebue's "exotic" dramas, I focus on five plays: *La Peyrouse* (1797), *Bruder Moritz* (1791), *Die Indianer in England* (1789), *Die Sonnenjungfrau* (1789), and *Die Spanier in Peru* (1795). I contrast *La Peyrouse* to Goethe's *Stella* (1776/1806) in order to demonstrate that cultural differences in Kotzebue's play help to avoid a tragic ending and enable a different imagination of love, sexuality, and

family. *Bruder Moritz* and *Die Indianer in England*, set in German and English cities, deal with love and marriage between Arabs, Indians, Britons, and Germans. *Bruder Moritz* exerts critique of European society and morals by depicting a strange person Moritz, his close friendship with the Arab Omar, his love to a lower-class fallen woman, and his plan to immigrate to the paradise-like Pelew Islands. Moritz, the invented ideal German, is constructed by Kotzebue to be an integrated outsider, whose identity is strongly determined by the non-European culture and space. Instead of leaving Europe for good, *Indianer in England* uses the Indian girl Gurli to criticize European moral debauchery and imagines a successful marriage between Gurli and an honest Briton in England. Both plays celebrate the myth of noble savage and imagine a different order of sexuality and family. After analyzing these two dramas in European settings, we turn to *Die Sonnenjungfrau* and *Die Spanier in Peru*, which are set in Peru and take as their subject matter the Spanish conquest of the Inca Empire. While Kotzebue's contemporary Jean-François Marmontel portrays a superior and good Spaniard Alonzo, Kotzebue's Alonzo is melancholic and lacks confidence and action. Condemning Spanish conquest, these two dramas portray the Peruvian woman Cora and the Peruvian man Rolla as the ideal human beings. All five dramas representatively demonstrate the challenge of non-European cultures to European moral and social norms and reveal how Kotzebue imagines the still unstable intercultural relationships.

### 3.1.3 Kotzebue and Schiller: Happy Sentimentalism and the Mode of Melodrama

A sentimentalism without tragic endings, or *happy sentimentalism*, marks Kotzebue's dramaturgy. In Kotzebue criticism, happy endings, a hallmark of his plays, are usually used to testify to his aesthetic superficiality, personal unreflectiveness, blind obedience to the market, and thus his inferiority to the playwrights of the "noble" genre of bourgeois tragedy, e.g. Lessing, Schiller, and Goethe.<sup>23</sup> Kotzebue, however, consciously reflects on the dramatic form of tragedy in his *Fragmente über Recensenten-Unfug* and decides that he would rather pursue strongly emotive expressions, less catastrophic plots, and splendid performances. Non-European characters and motifs aid him to achieve these theatrical and dramatic goals. Comparing Kotzebue to Schiller, the traditionally acknowledged master critic of theater at that time, sheds more light on the disagreements between the highbrow and lowbrow literature and culture and unearths the role of cultural differences within this conflict.

Kotzebue does not philosophize the dagger driven into the heart of Emilia Galotti, the poison drunk by Miß Sara Sampson, and the bullet shot by Werther into his

---

<sup>23</sup> See Horst Albert Glaser, *Das bürgerliche Rührstück. Analekten zum Zusammenhang von Sentimentalität mit Autorität in der trivialen Dramatik Schröders, Ifflands, Kotzebues und anderer Autoren am Ende des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 1969); Fietz, "Zur Genese des englischen Melodramas aus der Tradition der bürgerlichen Tragödie und des Rührstücks: Lillo-Schröder-Kotzebue-Sheridan-Thompson-Jerrold."

own head; rather, Kotzebue depends on his experience as a practitioner of theater and states that tragedy is not the best dramatic form to gain audiences:

Trauerspiele, die einen höheren Grad hervorbringen, wie es deren wohl Einige giebt, werden nur von Wenigen besucht, zum Beweis, daß der Dichter nicht den besten Weg wählt, der unsere Herzen durch Sturm erobern will.<sup>24</sup>

Tragedy, Kotzebue argues, contains too many pains, horrors, and desperations, but no moving moments. Tragedy writers do not care about the sentiments of real audiences and are only concerned with the standards and preferences of their own circle. Kotzebue thus proposes a common education for everyone rather than an education program only for elites:

Millionen Afrikaner, oder warum soll ich nicht sagen Deutsche, mußten vielleicht gänzlich auf ihren Antheil an allgemeiner Bildung Verzicht thun, damit wir Einen Kant besitzen könnten; wäre es dann aber nicht ungerecht, diesen Millionen vorzuwerfen, daß sie kein gebildetes Publikum ausmachen?<sup>25</sup>

If the playwrights and the reviewers keep thinking in this direction, Kotzebue concludes, they will not have any effect on the stage anymore. The constant and peculiar taste of the ordinary people is to experience something new.

This view is verified by Dalberg, director of the theater in Mannheim, where Schiller's famous *Die Räuber* (*The Robbers*) was premiered in 1782. In a letter to Kotzebue in 1793, Dalberg asks for new pieces and admits that tragedy seems to have reached its end:

---

<sup>24</sup> August von Kotzebue, *Fragmente über Recensenten-Unfug* (Leipzig: Paul Gotthelf Kummer, 1797), 128.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.

Es ist hohe Zeit, dass die deutsche Bühne wieder ein neues Geschenk aus den Händen der dramatischen Muse empfangt, denn die Quelle der brauchbaren Schauspiele, *besonders der Trauerspiele*, fängt an ganz zu versiechen, und die Theater-Direktionen sind darum sehr in Verlegenheit. Ihr neuestes Produkt wird wieder aufhelfen, lassen Sie mich also nicht länger darauf warten, verehrungswürdiger Mann!<sup>26</sup>

Instead of horrible catastrophes, Kotzebue's dramaturgy is hallmarked by non-tragic sentiments:

Ein Schauspiel würkt entweder auf die Sinne, durch äußern Prunk, Feereyen, Turniere, Gespenster, Soldaten, Decorationen, Gesang und Musik; oder auf den Verstand, durch Lebensphilosophie, Sentenzen und Reflexionen; oder auf das Herz, durch Schilderung edler Züge, rührender Situationen, häuslichen Glücks, unterdrückter Rechtschaffenheit u. s. w. Eine vierte Art der Würkung kenne ich nicht. [...] Erfahre ich hingegen: das Stück wird gespielt ohne Sang und Klang; es kommen weder Ritter noch Geister darin vor; so schließe ich daraus, und nie mit Unrecht, es müsse auf den Verstand, mehr aber noch auf das Herz würken. (Denn den bloß verständigen oder geistreichen Stücken geht es wie Goethes Iphigenie, Hubers heimlichen Gericht u. s. w., man erkennt ihren Werth, aber man sieht sie nicht oft, weil die Genüsse der Vernunft weniger reizend sind, als die des Gefühls, und weil Bewunderung immer kalt bleibt.) In solchen Fällen also ist mir der Enthusiasmus des Publikums ehrwürdig [...].<sup>27</sup>

Without using a satirical tone toward Goethe and Huber here, Kotzebue consciously detaches himself from their dramas of reason and celebrates sentimentalism and the eventfulness of theatrical performance. Strong emotions (*Rührung*), Kotzebue explains, differentiate themselves from tragic sorrows: "*Rührung* ist auch Schmerz, nur ein milder Grad desselben."<sup>28</sup> To please the audience is the prime goal of the dramatist Kotzebue.

The aspect of spectacle, i.e. theatricality, shows a strong consciousness of attracting and

---

<sup>26</sup> Wilhelm von Kotzebue, *August von Kotzebue: Urtheile der Zeitgenossen und der Gegenwart* (Dresden: Wilhelm Baensch Verlagshandlung, 1881), 90-91. (my italics).

<sup>27</sup> Kotzebue, *Fragmente über Recensenten-Unfug*, 53-54.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 128.

entertaining spectators by achieving effects on the optical and auditory senses instead of implementing philosophical dialogues with linguistic complexities and metaphorical grandeur to elevate the intellect.<sup>29</sup>

In order to better illustrate the historical significance of Kotzebue's celebration of *Rührung*, I draw on Peter Brooks's theory of the melodramatic mode, which essentially shapes modern imagination and desires.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, as Lothar Fietz argues, Kotzebue's plays prefigure crucial traits of British melodrama in the nineteenth century.<sup>31</sup> The explicit excess of emotion and the effective *coup de théâtre* achieve great popularity and

---

<sup>29</sup> The notion of theatricality suits here for an appropriate description of the splendid performance of Kotzebue's plays. Theatricality, a denotation of a conscious beholding and displaying, i.e. a beholder's "dislocation and estrangement," rather than "absorption, sympathy, self-transcendence," is heavily charged with reproaches and disapproval by Kotzebue's contemporaries such as Diderot, Lessing, and Goethe. Absorption, according to Michael Fried's study on Diderot's critiques of paintings, is the counter-power of this distractive theatricality and conceptualizes a state of natural performance, as if the spectators were not there. It denotes concentration, a natural expression of the self, and a modest and ordinary humanity. Michael Fried, *Absorption and Theatricality: Painting and Beholder in the Age of Diderot* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 104.

If *Menschenhaß und Reue* is the most popular play by Kotzebue in Europe, then *Pizarro, or the Spaniards in Peru*, the English translation of *Die Spanier in Peru, oder Rollas Tod* by Sheridan, gains the loudest ovation from North American audiences from 1798-1840. One of the reasons for this popularity should be attributed to the splendid performance in a time before the invention of color films and TV dramas. It is a spectacle with grandiose costumes, decorations, colorful sceneries, and elaborate settings. A friend of Kotzebue reports from Vienna that three new decorations and fifty-seven costumes are made for the performance of his play *Die Sonnenjungfrau*. These two plays are both strongly loaded with non-European and non-Christian characters and settings: they are both played in Peru; the majority of the characters are Peruvians. It is thus not difficult to imagine that the "exotic" elements display spectacular attractions for the eyes. See Vries, "Kotzebue on the American Stage 1798-1840," 70-72; Kotzebue, *August von Kotzebue: Urtheile der Zeitgenossen und der Gegenwart*, 91.

<sup>30</sup> See Michael Hays and Anastasia Nikolopoulou, eds., *Melodrama: the Cultural Emergence of a Genre* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996); Frank Kelleter, Barbara Krahn, and Ruth Mayer, eds., *Melodrama! the Mode of Excess from Early America to Hollywood* (Heidelberg: Winter, 2007).

<sup>31</sup> See Fietz, "Zur Genese des englischen Melodramas aus der Tradition der bürgerlichen Tragödie und des Rührstücks: Lillo-Schröder-Kotzebue-Sheridan-Thompson-Jerrold."

connect Kotzebue's dramaturgy with the melodramatic imagination which Brooks unearths. Brooks claims:

It [melodrama] comes into being in a world where the traditional imperatives of truth and ethics have been violently thrown into question, yet where the promulgation of truth and ethics, their instauration as a way of life, is of immediate, daily, political concern. [...] We may legitimately claim that melodrama becomes the principle mode for uncovering, demonstrating, and making operative the essential moral universe in a post-sacred era.<sup>32</sup>

This passage could also serve as an appropriate description of the impetus behind Kotzebue's plays. The following statement by Brooks also serves as a great summary of Kotzebue's characters or an "excuse" for Kotzebue's superficiality:

The characters have no interior depth, there is no psychological conflict. It is delusive to seek an interior conflict, the "psychology of melodrama," because melodrama exteriorizes conflict and psychic structure, producing instead what we might call the "melodrama of psychology." What we have is a drama of pure psychic signs – called Father, Daughter, Protector, Persecutor, Judge, Duty, Obedience, Justice – that interest us through their clash, by the dramatic space created through their interplay, providing the means for their resolution.<sup>33</sup>

I am certainly not suggesting that Kotzebue's dramas are modern melodramas. The melodramatic mode of representation as a model of interpretation, however, offers illuminating insights into Kotzebue's works. Brooks himself also argues that melodrama should not be understood as a distinct theatrical form or a genre, but rather as "a mode of conception and expression, as a certain fictional system for making sense of

---

<sup>32</sup> Peter Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama, and the Mode of Excess* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 15.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 35-36.

experience, as a semantic field of force."<sup>34</sup> In this context, Kotzebue's plays are not only excused from their superficiality but also add a salient aspect to the formation and transformation of modern drama and cinema.

Kotzebue's predilection for the overindulgence of emotions is reminiscent of sentimental literature in England, France, and Germany flourishing around the 1750s.<sup>35</sup> The celebration of excessive inner feelings, however, was soon criticized for its unpractical melancholy and illusory exaggerations. Women's addiction to reading (*Lesesucht*) is seen as a disproportionate inclination to sentimental illusions and soft melancholy. As the division between high-brow and low-brow literature becomes wider, sentimentalism without tragic endings loses its positive connotation in the so-called bourgeois tragedy among the literary elites and only represents a "feminized," vulgar passion.<sup>36</sup>

In Schiller's aesthetics of drama, the criticism of soft sentiments is accompanied by his promotion of tragedy and theater as a moral institution. The unpopular tragedy is

---

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., xvii.

<sup>35</sup> For a detailed account of sentimentalism see Gerhard Sauder, *Empfindsamkeit* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1974).

<sup>36</sup> Catherine J. Minter points out that the criticism of *Empfindsamkeit* is immediately connected to mental illness: the emotional excess is seen as a symptom of nervous sickness. E. T. A. Hoffmann's *Der Sandmann* (1817, *The Sandman*) can be read in this context as a destructing critique of the subjective self-indulgence of emotions towards a cold and manipulated robot through the optical, i.e. cheating, attraction. See Catherine J. Minter, "Literary 'Empfindsamkeit' and Nervous Sensibility in Eighteenth-Century Germany," *The Modern Language Review* 96(2001); George Williamson, "What Killed August von Kotzebue? The Temptations of Virtue and the Political Theology of German Nationalism 1789-1819," *The Journal of Modern History* 72, no. December (2000): 902-03.

eulogized by Schiller and those following in his wake as the noblest form of drama which bears the function of moral education. Tragedy impresses the human heart with the most powerful images and effects. Schiller defines tragedy as a form of dramatic art, which imitates a plot with dreadful endings and bears the purpose of bringing about the effect of sympathy.<sup>37</sup> Tragedy should promote reason and moral senses (*Sittlichkeit*) in order to transcend vulgar motives such as theft and “soft and feminized” sentiments, abundant in Kotzebue’s plays, into the realm of the dreadful (*dem Schrecklichen*) and the sublime (*dem Erhabenen*).<sup>38</sup> The demands on the audiences are fairly clear: only those who can endure the tragic catastrophes, or according to Kant, those who already have reason and moral senses, have the chance to be aesthetically uplifted and morally educated.<sup>39</sup> Schiller also admits that the majority of theater spectators of his day are not

---

<sup>37</sup> See Friedrich Schiller, “Über die tragische Kunst,” in *Friedrich Schiller: theoretische Schriften*, ed. Rolf-Peter Janz (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1992). Sympathy, a concept Schiller takes over from Lessing, represents the result of the fulfillment of moral laws.

<sup>38</sup> See — — —, “Gedanken über den Gebrauch des Gemeinen und Niedrigen in der Kunst,” in *Friedrich Schiller: theoretische Schriften*, ed. Rolf-Peter Janz (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1992). In Lessing’s *Emilia Galotti* (1772), the seduced heroine has her father drive a dagger through her heart in order to die with honor and pure reputation. The act of killing transcends the “morally low” seduction; the strength of a powerful will conquers the weakness of the human heart. Kant also confirms in his *Lectures on Ethics* that death is better than living with disgrace after a discreditable action. See Toril Moi, *Henrik Ibsen and the Birth of Modernism: Art, Theater, Philosophy* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 77-81.

<sup>39</sup> Schiller’s concept of tragedy draws on Kant’s concept of the sublime in his *Kritik der Urtheilskraft* (1790, Critique of Judgment). According to Kant, it is possible to call something beautiful but not sublime because sublimity is not a quality of an object but a subjective feeling (*Gemüt*) filled with ideas of reason (*Ideen der Vernunft*), which is immediately situated within the perceiver her/himself. In other words, sublimity is produced in a terrible situation by the subject following the moral laws instructed by Reason: “So kann der weite, durch Stürme empörte Ozean nicht erhaben genannt werden. Sein Anblick ist gräßlich; und man muß das Gemüt schon mit mancherlei Ideen angefüllt haben, wenn es durch eine solche Anschauung zu einem

able to fulfill this requirement: "Die Genügsamkeit des Publikums ist nur ermunternd für die Mittelmäßigkeit, aber beschimpfend und abschreckend für das Genie."<sup>40</sup>

Therefore the institution of theater should take on the responsibility to educate the audience.

In the essay *Was kann eine gute stehende Schaubühne eigentlich wirken?* (1784/1802, *What Effects Can a Good, Established Stage Actually Achieve*), Schiller emphatically stresses drama's peculiar position among other art forms because of its prime function in individual and collective education (*Bildung*). For him, theater is the channel of Enlightenment through which the light flows down from "dem denkenden bessern Teile des Volks."<sup>41</sup> The condescending attitude of Schiller and his fellow intellectuals toward the audience is clearly perceptible at this point. Kotzebue observes that this posture

---

Gefühl gestimmt werden soll, *welches selbst erhaben ist*, indem das Gemüt die Sinnlichkeit zu verlassen und sich mit Ideen, die höhere Zweckmäßigkeit enthalten, zu beschäftigen angereizt wird." So is true of tragedy. Schiller stresses the function of imagination (*Einbildungskraft*) in arousing the sublime feeling. He explains that a real disaster is actually beyond aesthetic pleasure (*ästhetischem Genuß*). Only if we know that the catastrophe is fictional or illusory, the tragic is then able to ignite the imagination and arouse the feeling of the sublime. Schiller calls it the pathological sublimity.

See Immanuel Kant, "Kritik der Urteilskraft," in *Immanuel Kant, Schriften zur Ästhetik und Naturphilosophie*, ed. Manfred Frank and Véronique Zanetti (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1996), 577.(my italics); Friedrich Schiller, "Vom Erhabenen," in *Friedrich Schiller: theoretische Schriften*, ed. Rolf-Peter Janz (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1992).

<sup>40</sup> Friedrich Schiller, "Was kann eine gute stehende Schaubühne wirken," in *Friedrich Schiller: theoretische Schriften*, ed. Rolf-Peter Janz (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1992), 275.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 197.

resembles that of parents to their children: if something does not taste good, they will say: "das ist gesund, [...] das müßt ihr essen."<sup>42</sup>

Schiller considers theater an amplification of religion and law and claims that theater will reach into the realms of human sentiments where religion and law do not have access. Therefore theater's effects are more subtle and more stable.<sup>43</sup> Although theater does not have the apparatus of real physical punishments, its effectiveness, transmitted through a mechanism of psychological prevention and control, has greater impact.<sup>44</sup> Even if theater cannot eliminate or mitigate crimes and troubles, Schiller claims, it prepares our psyche to become aware of them in fictions and make possible to avoid them in real life. This theory corresponds with Michel Foucault's idea of the shift from physical punishment to psychic control since the eighteenth century: "since it is no longer the body, it must be the soul. The expiation that once rained down upon the body must be replaced by a punishment that acts in depth on the heart, the thoughts, the will, the inclinations."<sup>45</sup>

---

<sup>42</sup> Kotzebue, *Fragmente über Recensenten-Unfug*, 17.

<sup>43</sup> He claims: "Wenn die Gerechtigkeit für Gold verblindet, und im Solde der Laster schwelgt, wenn die Frevel der Mächtigen ihrer Ohnmacht spotten, und Menschenfurcht den Arm der Obrigkeit bindet, übernimmt die Schaubühne Schwert und Waage, und reißt die Laster vor einen schrecklichen Richterstuhl." Schiller, "Was kann eine gute stehende Schaubühne wirken," 190.

<sup>44</sup> He explains: "Ich kenne nur ein Geheimnis, den Menschen vor Verschlimmerung zu bewahren, und dieses ist – sein *Herz* gegen Schwächen zu schützen. Einen großen Teil dieser Wirkung können wir von der Schaubühne erwarten. Sie ist es, die der großen Klasse von Toren den Spiegel vorhält, und die tausendfachen Formen derselben mit heilsamem Spott beschämt." *Ibid.*, 193. (my italics)

<sup>45</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*, 16.

The fundamental difference between Kotzebue and Schiller in drama theory is immediately correlated with the practice of writing and staging plays. A comparison between Kotzebue's *La Peyrouse* and Schiller's comrade Goethe's *Stella* illustrates how non-European cultures play a decisive role in turning an inevitable tragedy into happy sentimentalism.

### **3.1.4 Kotzebue and Goethe: Love in a Trio Constellation**

This comparison between *La Peyrouse* and *Stella* is directly connected to the comparison between Kotzebue and Schiller's dramaturgy. These two plays share the same theme of one man loving two women. Yet the endings are quite different. The play by Kotzebue on an Oceanic islet ends with the three happily living together, whereas Goethe's play takes an abrupt turn toward tragic deaths. The non-European geography of the South Seas, as an earthly paradise, provides Kotzebue's imagination of a different model of heterosexual relationship a real-world location. Moreover, the South Seas also enables Kotzebue to refuse the inevitable fate of tragedy. From this perspective, cultural otherness proves a radical provocation to the ideals of love, sexuality, and family in German civil society around the turn of the century.

Kotzebue's *La Peyrouse* (1797) draws on the life of the French explorer Jean François de Galaup de la Pérouse, whose world travel in 1785 ended with the disappearance of his whole crew and himself after three years. A new expedition was

sent out in 1791 with his wife on board to search for him but came back without success. Kotzebue was fascinated by the message he found in a newspaper: "Meine Einbildungskraft ging mit ihr zur See, schuf interessante Situationen, und verlor sich in das Gebiet der Möglichkeiten."<sup>46</sup> The birth of the play *La Peyrouse* is also motivated by the contemporary fashion of the South Seas as an earthly paradise, in particular as the icon of sexual liberation. The popular legend of *Graf Gleichen*, which tells the story of one man and two women living harmoniously together, provides the raw material for Kotzebue's conception. Goethe's play *Stella* draws on this legend as well but does not combine it with non-European location and culture.

Kotzebue imagines that *la Peyrouse* is rescued by a female islander named Malvina on an Oceanic islet after a shipwreck. They fall in love and live happily with their son until the expedition arrives and searches for him with his wife Adelaide and their son from France. When Malvina "naively" suggests that they should all go to Europe and live there together as one family, *la Peyrouse* rejects: "Dich täuschen wäre Niederträchtigkeit, du kannst in Europa mein Weib nicht sein."<sup>47</sup> Our law, he continues, forbids polygamy. Adelaide, contrary to Malvina, demands that *la Peyrouse* should behave like a man and choose between herself and Malvina. As *la Peyrouse* cannot

---

<sup>46</sup> August von Kotzebue, "Vorbericht zu Der Graf von Burgund," in *Theater* (Vienna and Leipzig: Verlag von Ignaz Klang in Wien and Eduard Kummer in Leipzig, 1840), 138.

<sup>47</sup> — — —, "La Peyrouse," in *Schauspiele*, ed. Jürg Mathes (Frankfurt am Main: Athenäum Verlag, 1972), 311.

decide whom he loves more, the brother of Adelaide, the ship's captain, Clairville, suggests that they should together build a colony in the South Seas and abandon the idea of returning to Europe. France, he reports, has had a revolution and now anarchy and chaos dominate everyday life. Since the rich people are now made into beggars in France, la Peyrouse and his family, once rich as well, should not go back and live in poverty. Europe, Clairville also contends, sends out the small thieves (*kleine Diebe*) to remote colonies and keeps the big thieves (*die großen*) at home. Therefore he predicts a better future for them in Oceania: "Gesundheit, Kraft, Lust zu arbeiten, und ein Stück Land, das die Sonne bescheint und der Regen netzt – ich denke, wir sind noch immer reich."<sup>48</sup> Upon the suggestion by Malvina that they should become sisters, Adelaide finally changes her mind and maps out an acceptable blueprint of a new life.<sup>49</sup>

---

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 322.

<sup>49</sup> Adelaide: [...] Ja! Schwestern laß uns sein, wenn dieser Mann unser Bruder sein will. Teilen können wir ihn nicht, keine darf ihn besitzen. *Schwärmerisch*. Wir, die Schwestern, bewohnen eine eigne Hütte, er, der Bruder, die andere; wir erziehen unsre Knaben, er hilft dir und mir – am Tage machen wir eine frohe Familie, der Abend trennt uns – die Mütter bleiben bei ihren Kindern, der Vater in seiner Hütte – willst du das? wollt ihr das?

Malvina: Gern, wenn ich ihn nur sehen darf.

La Peyrouse: Gern, wenn es dich beruhigt.

Clairville: Glück zu Bruder! nicht jeder, der wie du, eine nordwestliche Durchfahrt suchte, fand wie du, das Land der Ruhe! – Wohlan Kinder! der Traktat ist geschlossen. Gebt euch die Hände, besiegelt ihn durch eine feurige Umarmung.

Adelaide geht mit ausgebreiteten Armen auf La Peyrouse zu: Eine schwesterliche Umarmung.

Clairville: Wie es dir beliebt, ich streite nicht um Worte.

Malvina: Mein Freund! mein Bruder!

La Peyrouse sie beide in seinen Armen haltend: Meine Schwestern!

[...]

Clairville: Das Paradies der Unschuld!

Ibid., 323-24.

It is clear here that Kotzebue is not in favor of the French Revolution and the dispossession of the rich. Yet his ironic description of the inappropriate punishments of the so-called small thieves and big thieves also reflects his critique of political corruption in Europe. These two aspects not only disclose Kotzebue's discontent with Europe's political situation, but also illustrate that Europe – or in particular France – is not an ideal place for Malvina, la Peyrouse, or Adelaide to live, especially when they have a thorny issue of sexuality. The “naiveté” of Malvina, which portrays her as a child-like and less civilized creature, and the fruitful and peaceful South Seas now represent an ideal alternative to the corrupted and anarchical Europe. The change of Adelaide's attitude is also evoked by the new location where the pressure of European morals does not exist. The location and the living conditions of Oceania enable Adelaide to imagine a new relationship between her, her husband, and Malvina. Although she desexualizes the relationships between them and turns them into a sibling constellation, similar to the relationship between Recha and the *Tempelherrn* in Lessing's *Nathan der Weise*, it is still revolutionary to propose a relationship of three without tragic ending. It is love, the interpersonal affections, that matters here, not a certain type of social conventions.

Nevertheless the reception of this play does take it as a proposal for polygamy and charges it with immorality, which, according to George Williamson, also causes

Kotzebue's assassination by Karl Sand in 1819.<sup>50</sup> A passage in a play written by Ernst August Friedrich Klingemann against Kotzebue sarcastically summarizes Kotzebue's "immoral" sexuality. Here a married man talks about what "absurd" impacts

Kotzebue's plays have on his marriage:

Ueberall enthalten sie [Kotzebue's plays] ein wahres Lebens- und Sittensystem! So lehrte mich anfangs *Benjowski* einem einzigen Weibe treu zu sein; darauf zeigte mir *La Peyrouse*, daß es so böse nicht sey, allenfalls mit zweien sich einzulassen. Meine erste Frau, die die Sache übler aufnahm, als ich dachte, ließ sich durch die *Indianer in England* verführen, ebenfalls mehrere Männer zu heirathen, wurde aber hinterher durch *Menschenhaß und Reue* wieder bekehrt und zu ihrer Pflicht zurückgebracht; und jetzt denke ich zu guter Letzt noch eine *edle Lüge* mit ihrem Kammermädchen zu begehen, um alle Theile zufrieden zu stellen.<sup>51</sup>

Kotzebue is deeply disappointed by the charge of "immorality" predominantly leveling at sexuality. He defends himself by counting the immorality in Goethe's works and the silence of criticism:

Goethe hat in seiner 'Stella' die Ehe mit zwei Frauen, im 'Götz von Berlichingen' eine grelle Buhlschaft aufgestellt; er hat in seinem 'Werther' einen Selbstmörder liebenswürdig geschildert, er lässt in seinen 'Mitschuldigen' eine Frau ihren Liebhaber des Nachts besuchen, er hat in den Hexenscenen seines 'Faust' manches derbe Wort ausgesprochen, und Niemand schilt ihn unsittlich.<sup>52</sup>

As a matter of fact, Goethe's *Stella* resembles the trio constellation of *La Peyrouse*, but the only difference is, in the stage version, he gives the story a sudden, tragic ending.

---

<sup>50</sup> Williamson, "What Killed August von Kotzebue? The Temptations of Virtue and the Political Theology of German Nationalism 1789-1819."

<sup>51</sup> Ernst August Friedrich Klingemann, *Freimüthigkeiten: ein Seitenstück zu den Expektorationen und zugleich ein blöder Mitbewerber um den vom Herrn v. Kotzebue ausgesetzten Preis für das best Lustspiel* (Lüneburg: Abdera, 1803), 16-17. Cited from Stock, *Kotzebue im literarischen Leben der Goethezeit: Polemik, Kritik, Publikum*, 77.

<sup>52</sup> Kotzebue, August von Kotzebue: *Urtheile der Zeitgenossen und der Gegenwart*, 95.

*Stella* was originally written in 1776 but not performed until 1806. In the first version, Goethe plans a happy ending with the three people harmoniously living together. But after consultation with Schiller for its performance in the theater, Goethe changes the ending to a tragic one. He reports on the reason for this change:

[A]llein bei aufmerksamer Betrachtung kam zur Sprache, daß nach unsern Sitten, die ganz eigentlich auf Monogamie gegründet sind, das Verhältnis eines Mannes zu zwei Frauen, besonders wie es hier zur Erscheinung kommt, nicht zu vermitteln sei und sich daher vollkommen zur Tragödie qualifiziere.<sup>53</sup>

The transition to tragedy in *Stella*, however, is not seamless. Many critics notice that the tragic ending appears abruptly: it is less an ending than just the fall of the curtain. The whole plot actually runs smoothly with all three characters loving and admiring each other. It provides a solid basis for the suggestion by Cäcilie, the wife, to live all together. She tells her husband Fernando a story of a harmonious relationship between one man and two women who deeply love each other (the legend of the *Graf Gleichen*). Fernando is moved to exclaim: "Gott im Himmel! Welch ein Strahl von Hoffnung dringt herein!" It seems that he would accept a trio relationship and maybe also persuade Stella, the other woman, to do so. But, instead of tracing the line of hope, the play ends unexpectedly with the death of Stella, who poisons herself. Fernando immediately shoots himself dead. The tragic ending is rather induced by a forcing rule from outside than by the inner

---

<sup>53</sup> Johann Wolfgang Goethe, "Über das deutsche Theater," in *Johann Wolfgang Goethe: Werke*, ed. Dieter Borchmeyer and Peter Huber (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1993), 1207.

motivation of the plot itself. Kotzebue's *La Peyrouse* then, contrary to Goethe's adjustment to a more "realistic" love story, finds its fantastic way out in a non-European society.<sup>54</sup>

The change to the tragic ending reveals that Goethe is strongly inclined to conform to the social norm of monogamy and, unlike Kotzebue, does not care to imagine a new relationship based on mutual love or a desexualized sibling relationship. In other words, a trio constellation is morally and realistically unacceptable and should end in tragedy so that the "ignoble" sentiments can be elevated into a "higher" realm with soul-cleansing effects.<sup>55</sup> Goethe argues: "Das Stück nahm eine tragische Wendung und endigte auf eine Weise, die das Gefühl befriedigt und *die Rührung erhöht*."<sup>56</sup> Therefore tragedy is the most suitable dramatic form to idealize and transcend the "vulgar" sentiments and passions of sexuality.

---

<sup>54</sup> The contrast here between Goethe and Kotzebue can also be treated as the disparity between realism and melodrama. Frank Kelleter and Ruth Mayer point out "the very terms *realism* and *melodrama* have thus been in highly evaluative ways, with *realism* signifying rationality, order, pragmatism, and clear-headedness, while *melodrama* stands for feeling, excess, sentimentality, and grandiose gestures." Frank Kelleter and Ruth Mayer, "The Melodramatic Mode Revisited. An Introduction," in *Melodrama! The Mode of Excess from Early America to Hollywood* ed. Barbara Krah Frank Kelleter, and Ruth Mayer (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2007), 10.

<sup>55</sup> Isabel Hull points out that, toward the end of the eighteenth century, the practitioners of civil society outlawed many sexual behaviors and practices which were already decriminalized by the Enlightened absolutist regimes in the course the eighteenth century. The results prove to be a tighter moral-legal coercion, a reduction in public discussions on sexuality, and more strict moral ethics. See Isabel V. Hull, *Sexuality, State, and Civil Society in Germany, 1700-1815* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1996).

<sup>56</sup> Goethe, "Über das deutsche Theater," 1207. (my italics)

Toril Moi points out the close correlation between the representation of human sexuality and the ideal of a pure woman:

For thinkers like Kant and Schiller, women incarnate human sexuality. In order to lift them above the mere animal stage, poetry and painting need to idealize them far more intensively than they do men; they need in short, to create the figure of the *pure woman*, which will become an icon of idealist aesthetics.<sup>57</sup>

Therefore Goethe's Stella, in order to portray herself as a pure woman devoted to her love to Fernando and the friendship with Cäcilie, needs to kill herself to show her deep remorse and iron resolution. Kotzebue's Malvina, however, takes full advantage of her non-European, non-Christian, and non-White background and can "naively" suggest that they all live together. In other words, Malvina does not need to transcend her love and demonstrate her pureness through death. Adelaide's desexualizing suggestion does conform a bit with the idealizing and transcending demands by Goethe and Schiller. But Malvina, the non-European woman, avoids the radical turn toward tragedy and brings in a rupture in the representation of love, sexuality, and family. Indeed, cultural otherness is the supporting source for this refusal of tragic transcendence. In other words, without the "exotic" characters and settings, it is impossible for Kotzebue to conceptualize a trio constellation. On the other hand, the portrayal of the child-like, naïve quality of Malvina with less intellectual abilities than other Europeans testifies to Kotzebue's Eurocentrism and self-ascribed superiority.

---

<sup>57</sup> Moi, *Henrik Ibsen and the Birth of Modernism: Art, Theater, Philosophy*, 80.

The criticism against Kotzebue's "immorality" thus levels less at the materials or contents of sexuality in his plays *per se*, than at the non-transcending and non-punishing happy endings, which the "exotic" elements make possible. Non-European cultures and the "remote" locations challenge the sexual moral and aesthetic demands of intellectual elites in eighteenth-century Germany.

## **3.2 Social Divergence and Spatial Differences: *Bruder Moritz, der Sonderling, oder die Kolonie für die Pelew-Inseln***

### **3.2.1 Introduction**

As the title *Bruder Moritz, der Sonderling oder die Kolonie für die Pelew-Inseln* (1791, *Brother Moritz, the Strang One, or the Colony for the Pelew Islands*) indicates, the protagonist of the play is "strange."<sup>58</sup> The word *Sonderling* (a strang person) in German merely refers to someone whose behavior is unusual, eccentric, and surprising. It does not imply the meaning that someone is new to a particular place, as the word "foreigner" or "stranger" in English may signify. What makes Moritz distinctive from other people is his repudiation of certain social conventions. Similar to the *Society of Friends* or the Quakers, Moritz refuses to use the formal address *Sie* (you) to talk to unfamiliar people.<sup>59</sup> He

---

<sup>58</sup> Later in this text, the title will be cited as *Bruder Moritz*.

<sup>59</sup> In act 3, scene 5, Moritz addresses Dietrich, whom he has not known yet, with "du:"

MORITZ [...] Wer bist du? Was willst du?

DIETRICH *zurückprallend*. Du: - Bomben! [...] sieht der Herr nicht, daß ich Offizier bin? Meint der Herr, weil mein linkes Bein bei Quebec begraben liegt, ich könne den rechten Arm auch nicht mehr rühren?

MORITZ *gelassen*. Du mußt mir das nicht übel nehmen, guter Freund, ich nenne alle Menschen Du.

claims equality between different human races and cultures, between men and women, and between all social classes, especially between the nobility and the common people.<sup>60</sup>

At the same time, he denies the absoluteness of human nature and emphasizes the differences of time and space.<sup>61</sup> He has an Arab as his best friend, proposes marriage to his sisters, and ends up in marrying a housemaid, a woman who not only is from a lower social class but also has an illegitimate child. He encourages his sister to marry the

---

DIETRICH *beruhigt*. So? Ein Quäker also? Nun in Gottes Namen! ich bin's zufrieden. [...]

The hint given by Dietrich that Moritz is a Quaker explains many of his so-called strange behaviors or opinions because the Quaker movement, or a religious society of friends, believes in equality between sexes, social classes, and fought for abolition of the slaves in America. The center of Quakers in Germany is Bad Pyrmont, a spa in northern Germany with the only Quaker cemetery in Germany. Interestingly enough, Kotzebue spent many of his vacations in Pyrmont. *Bruder Moritz* is also performed in this place. Therefore we can assume that Kotzebue was influenced by the Quaker's doctrines as he was in Pyrmont.

August von Kotzebue, "Bruder Moritz, der Sonderling, oder: Die Colonie für die Pelew-Inseln," in *Theater von August von Kotzebue* (Vienna and Leipzig: Verlag von Ignaz Klang in Wien and Eduard Kummer in Leipzig, 1840), 153.

<sup>60</sup> KARG [...] Der Hauptzug in dem Charakter dieses Sonderlings ist der steife Glaube an Gleichheit aller Stände. Ein Graf mit Ew. Exzellenz Erlaubnis, und ein Handwerker, mit Respekt zu melden, gelten ihm gleich und oft der letztere noch etwas mehr. [...] Ibid. 121

MORITZ Ich weiß was du jetzt bist und was du mir sein wirst. Frägst du mich doch auch nicht, ob ich immer ein sittsamer Jüngling gewesen, ohne alle Liebelei? und in meinen Augen haben beide Geschlechter gleiche Rechte. [...] heute fängt ein neues Leben an! Die Gegenwart ist heiter, die Zukunft lacht, die Vergangenheit liegt hinter uns, wie eine Regenwolke, welche der Wind über uns hin jagte. [...] Kotzebue, "Bruder Moritz, der Sonderling, oder: Die Colonie für die Pelew-Inseln." 169

<sup>61</sup> MORITZ Aber du hast von mir gehört? Moritz, der Sonderling ist das Märchen der Stadt! Wohlan! was hast du von mir gehört? Ein Mann ist selten schlechter als sein Ruf, oft aber besser. Man wird vielleicht mir hin und wieder Lächerlichkeiten aufbürden, doch wer mag einer unedlen Tat mich zeihen? – daß ich in schönen Sommernächten unter dem gestirnten Himmel herumspaziere, wenn andre Leute sich schlafen legen, oder Faro spielen; daß ich zuweilen des Morgens um sechs Uhr zu Mittag esse, und des Abends Kaffee trinke; daß ich immer und immer in meinem grauen Frack erscheine und am Sonntage mein Haar nicht weißer pudern lasse, als am Sonnabend; all' das gehört nicht zum Wesen des Menschen, es ist nur der Rahmen des Gemäldes. Laß den Rahmen immerhin ein wenig in chinesischem Geschmack geformt sein, wenn nur das Gemälde wahr und unverdorben ist, wie es aus der Hand des großen Meisters hervorging. [...]

MARIE [...] ich fange an, mich selbst wieder hochzuachten. Kotzebue, "Bruder Moritz, der Sonderling, oder: Die Colonie für die Pelew-Inseln." 149-150

Arab and, at the end of the play, immigrates with his new family to the Pelew Islands in the Pacific Ocean.

Why does Kotzebue portray such a “strange” person as the protagonist in completely positive terms? Why does Moritz have an Arab as his best friend? In other words, what role does this “exotic” character play in the dramatic dynamics of social conventions and “strange” divergence? How could he propose marriage to his sisters and neglect the incest taboo? What function does emigration to the Pelew Islands have for Moritz’s conflicts with the social conventions in Germany or Europe? I first start with a brief account of the plot and then focus on three main “strange” aspects of Moritz (his friendship with Omar, sexuality, and the emigration plan) to answer the questions posed above.

Kotzebue conceives of Moritz Graf von Eldingen as an impoverished German nobleman. He travels to the Arabian world to seek his fortune. On his way to Mecca, Moritz is captured by a group of Arabs. Through his physical abilities of shooting and his moral strength, he gains respects from these people, especially the friendship of Omar, the son of the head of this group. To fulfill Omar’s wish to get to know European societies, Moritz takes him to the seaport where his aunt and two sisters live in poverty. Moritz’s return and his wealth have dramatically changed his family’s living quality.

Three love stories ensue upon Moritz's return. Omar falls in love with Moritz's sister Nettchen. Moritz proposes marriage to the housemaid Marie who has an illegitimate son. Julchen, Moritz's other sister, loves a young man Wilhelm von Moll. Through the unfolding of these three love stories, various social values in Moritz's society are defended, criticized, and relativized. Moritz tells Nettchen how Omar has selflessly saved his life twice and persuades her to appreciate Omar's moral uprightness and noble behavior and thus to love him. He himself repudiates the common social disapproval of premarital sex and respects Marie's true sentiments and honesty. After Moritz has learned that Wilhelm von Moll does not court Julchen anymore because Wilhelm wants to avoid the suspicion that he is interested in Moritz's wealth, Moritz declares that Julchen will not inherit any money from him and makes the two lovers reconcile. Although all these love stories are fulfilled in the end, Moritz notices that their future is still endangered by the social environment in Germany and Europe. Therefore, similar to the ending in Lessing's *Nathan der Weise*, Moritz suggests that they should found a big family together; however, different than *Nathan*, which imagines a harmonious coexistence of Christians, Jews, and Muslims under the regime of a tolerant Muslim monarch, Moritz chooses to leave the dreadful European civilization (*kultiviertes Unwesen*) and depart for a place of freedom: the Pelew Islands.

Obviously, Moritz's "strange" qualities do not stem from his upbringing – the succession of his life determined by temporality and a relatively homogenous place and community, but are rather acquired through his friendship and experience with the people from "exotic" Arabia. In other words, the geographical dislocation from Europe to Arabia and the relocation back to Europe enable Moritz to experience a different way of life, to learn to appreciate different social values and their legitimacy, to compare the differences between Europe and the so-called Orient, and in the end to notice and respect the differences. It is the Orient that radically changes Moritz and makes him a stranger to his home community. Montesquieu's *Lettres persanes* (1721) or Oliver Goldsmith's *The Citizen of the World* (1762) employed a similar technique of geographical dislocation to reveal and criticize cultural and social problems. In *Bruder Moritz*, however, the person who fulfills the function of irony and criticism is not a person from Persia or China but a German nobleman.

Similar to many other plays by Kotzebue, *Bruder Moritz* experienced great popularity and harsh critique. After being performed in Reval, Estonia and Pymont, Germany, it was shown at the *Berliner Nationaltheater* on the birthday of Frederick William II. on September 25, 1790 and had been repeated twelve times by 1792. It was also performed on other major German-speaking stages, in Mainz, Dresden, Hamburg, Breslau, and even in Goethe's Weimar. A reviewer in the *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek*, a

leading journal of German Enlightenment literary criticism, however, does not consider this play artistically successful and morally appropriate:

Bruder Moritz, oder der Sonderling, ist, als Charakterstück betrachtet, nicht treffend und ausgezeichnet genug; [...] Wozu denn hier nun wieder das Verbot der Geschwisterehe, und die Heirath eines um ihrer Unschuld gebrachten Mädchens als bloßes Vorurtheil aufgestellt? Viel Romanhaftes ist in dem Stück, und daher befremdet denn freylich, am Ende der romanhafte Entschluß der spielenden Personen weniger, Abentheurer zu werden, und nach den Pelewinseln zu schiffen. [...] Auf den Anstand des Ausdrucks ist der Verf. nicht immer aufmerksam genug. Moritz sey noch so sehr Sonderling, so klingt es doch mehr als sonderlich, wenn er über seinen Vorsatz zu heyrathen spricht, von seiner Tante erinnert wird, auf unbescholtne Herkunft und eine untadeliche Familie zu sehen, und ihr darauf die Antwort giebt: „Venus ward aus Meerschäum gebohren. Ein schönes Mädchen ist mir eine Königin, und wenn ich sie auf einem Misthaufen findet.“<sup>62</sup>

Among the so-called immoralities in this play, the reviewer is particularly unhappy with Moritz's decision to marry a "fallen woman" and his disrespect for the class differences between a nobleman and a lower-class housemaid. Along with the criticism of the claim of sibling marriage, this review finds that sexuality and sexual morals the most controversial and disquieting aspects that *Bruder Moritz* arouses and attacks. Another contemporary reviewer, who actually highly praises this play, also perceives the story between Moritz and the "fallen" woman Marie as the main theme.<sup>63</sup> Isabel Hull informs us that in the German lands in the eighteenth century, "extramarital pregnancy

---

<sup>62</sup> Anonymous, "Bruder Moritz, der Sonderling, oder die Colonie für die Pelewinseln; ein Lustspiel," *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* 111(1792): 111.

<sup>63</sup> The first sentence of C. H. Schmid's review of *Bruder Moritz* reads: "Das Hauptsubject dieses Stücks ist ein Kammermädchen von niedriger Abkunft, in das sich Graf Moritz von Eldingen verliebt, und das er heirathet, ohnerachtet sie ihm selbst gesteht, ein Kind ausser der Ehe erzeugt zu haben." C. H. Schmid, "Ueber die Moralität von den Schauspielen des Herrn von Kotzebue," *Journal von und für Deutschland* 8, no. 11 (1791): 930.

challenged the state's self-imposed, but universally recognized, responsibility to uphold public order and seamliness."<sup>64</sup> At that time, marriage is seen as a method to define, distinguish, and consolidate the boundaries between different social groups.<sup>65</sup> Therefore, Moritz's marriage with a fallen woman from a lower class radically breaks social taboos and relativizes questions of social honor, humiliation, and human dignity.

Concurrently, the charge that the utopian and happy ending of departing for a paradise-like place is unrealistic reflects the reviewer's opinion that theater should stage common stories based on "real" socio-cultural circumstances in German or European societies. One of the towering figures of German theater criticism in the Enlightenment era, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, who was still influential even after his death in 1781, demanded in 1767 that everything on the stage should stem from the most natural causes (*aus den natürlichsten Ursachen*) and bear strict moral functions: "Wunder dulden wir da nur in der physikalischen Welt; in der moralischen muß alles seinen ordentlichen Lauf behalten, weil das Theater die Schule der moralischen Welt sein soll."<sup>66</sup>

According to Lessing's view, Moritz's strange behaviors and the almost surrealistic refuge to the Pelew Islands certainly fall out of the category of "natural" causes and fail to fulfill the function of moral education. (As elaborated in the

---

<sup>64</sup> Hull, *Sexuality, State, and Civil Society in Germany, 1700-1815*, 101.

<sup>65</sup> See *Ibid.*, 30-31.

<sup>66</sup> Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, "Hamburgische Dramaturgie," in *Gotthold Ephraim Lessing Werke 1767-1769*, ed. Klaus Bohnen (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1985), 191-92.

introduction, Schiller's endeavor of promoting tragedy and moral education corresponds to Lessing's comment here.) The happy union of Moritz and Marie in this play, perhaps inadvertently, transforms the role of theater as a moral institution and its constitutive nature of reflecting and solving "real" social conflicts. Theater in Kotzebue's understanding, at least as this play shows, should imagine the impossible, sympathize with the victims of social prejudices such as "fallen" women, and celebrate human sentiments.

These two main criticisms of sexual morals and exotic emigration are almost exclusively carried out by the character Moritz. The background, however, which buttresses Moritz's exclusive behaviors and ideas, is his experience in different cultures and societies. In the light of exploring the relationship between Moritz's strangeness and cultural otherness or Moritz's dual identities, I highlight three aspects in *Bruder Moritz*: Moritz's relationship with Omar, Moritz's criticism of sexual morals and his marital proposal to his sisters as the necessary preparation for his marriage to Marie, and the emigration plan as a utopian impulse in Kotzebue's play.

The emigration actually offers an imaginative way out of the conflicts Moritz and his family encounter, as one reviewer wrote in 1791: "Sollte übrigens noch jemand an diesem Sonderling Aergernis nehmen, so läßt ja der Verfasser ihn am Ende sich nach den Pelew-Inseln einschiffen, und giebt dadurch zu erkennen, daß er in unsre

europäische Welt nicht passe."<sup>67</sup> The emigration to the Pelew Islands thus dissolves the conflict through spatial dislocation. In other words, if place is stationary and only the dimension of time is active, the problem Moritz and his family have may result in a tragic ending. The geographical dislocation demonstrates how cultural and geographical differences entail hitherto unimaginable possibilities of human conditions. The moral and social conventions in European societies encounter enormous challenges and transformations through the demonstration of Moritz and his family's emigration. The strang Moritz thus represents a new consciousness and transformed subjectivity which Kotzebue envisions for German and European cultural spheres.

### **3.2.2 Moritz's Ambiguous Alter Ego: the Arab Omar**

Unlike many other relationships in this play, the one between Moritz and Omar is anything but easy to identify. Moritz calls Omar his friend. Yet other people consider Omar his servant. Omar himself neither denies nor confirms either of them. He is shy and goes away when Moritz tries to protect his status as his friend or praises him. Only once he asks Moritz in a half joking way who would be his future lady (*künftige Gebieterin*), i.e., Moritz's wife. Moritz immediately corrects this to "your friend" (*deine Freundin*).<sup>68</sup> The ambiguity in Omar and Moritz's relationship, perceivable throughout the whole play, actually constitutes Moritz's paradoxical self-perception: he feels himself

---

<sup>67</sup> Schmid, "Ueber die Moralität von den Schauspielen des Herrn von Kotzebue," 931.

<sup>68</sup> Kotzebue, "Bruder Moritz, der Sonderling, oder: Die Colonie für die Pelew-Inseln," 144.

superior to Omar because of his more “developed” European culture; on the other hand, he considers Omar equal to him because of Omar’s moral uprightness and selflessness, a result of Moritz’s education. Moritz feels himself so closely affiliated with Omar that he cannot imagine living without Omar anymore.<sup>69</sup> Our question becomes: does this relationship reflect a consciousness of social and intercultural transformation, which strives to find an identity during the time of intensified colonial and cultural contacts?

At the beginning of the ninth scene in the first act, Moritz first greets Omar and then his sisters when he enters the garden: “MORITZ *auf Omar zugehend und ihm herzlich die Hand schüttelnd*. Guten Morgen Omar! Wir sahen uns im Vorbeigehen.”<sup>70</sup> His sister Nettchen, however, is unhappy with his brother’s behavior with this “servant” and blames him:

NETTCHEN Eine allerliebste Rangordnung, erst den Bedienten, und dann die Schwestern.

MORITZ Ja liebes Schwesterchen, spötteln magst du immerhin, meine Rangtabelle steht in meinem Herzen.

NETTCHEN Immer besser! Der Krauskopf ist dir lieber, als das sanfte Julchen und das muntre Nettchen?

MORITZ Er ist mir lieber.

NETTCHEN *mit komischem Zorn*. Barbar! Du zerreisest alle Bande des Bluts.

[...]

MORITZ [...] Ich bin euch von Herzen gut, denn ich denke mit Entzücken an die frohen Stunden meiner Kindheit und meiner Jünglingsjahre. [...]

---

<sup>69</sup> Zantop is right to point out colonial fantasy of control and possession, but we still need to see the other side of the coin in this case: Omar is not only a subservient servant to Moritz but is also recognized as a friend. Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies: Conquest, Family, and Nation in Precolonial Germany, 1770-1870*.

<sup>70</sup> Kotzebue, "Bruder Moritz, der Sonderling, oder: Die Colonie für die Pelew-Inseln," 90.

NETTCHEN Wohlan, wenn wir das auch gelten lassen, was hat *der schwarze Bube* denn getan, daß wir in deinem Herzen gleichsam seiner Gnade leben?<sup>71</sup>

Nettchen's remark that Omar is a black boy (*der schwarze Bube*) designates skin color or racial difference as the water-shed between her and him. Her hierarchy of social classes also turns out to be a hierarchy of races. After Moritz explains with great emotion that Omar has saved his life twice and therefore all he has now can only be attributed to Omar, Nettchen's attitude changes radically. She is sentimentally moved to tears and even claims that she wants to kiss Omar. Her marriage to Omar, later in this play, tellingly discloses how social and racial prejudices yield to human sentiments and moral uprightness. Apparently, Moritz's enormous respect for Omar not only pushes Nettchen to change her mind but also challenges European/German social norms.

In another scene, as Moritz's aunt treats Omar as a servant by giving him a little money to thank his good deeds, Moritz angrily snatches the money out of her hand, throws it to her feet, and then hugs Omar: "Vergib ihr lieber Omar! Sie ist zu bedauern, sie hat ein enges Herz, aber es ist nicht ihre Schuld. Sie ist ein guter, ehrlicher Schlag von Weibe, deren Empfindungen eine hochbeinige Gouvernante schon in der Kindheit verstümmelt hat [...]."<sup>72</sup> Moritz then declares to his family:

Wenn er's [Omar] verlangt, so bin ich sein Knecht, du seine Köchin, Nettchen seine Wäscherin und Julchen seine Magd. [...] Er ist mein einziger Erbe. Sein ist alles was mein

---

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 90-92.(my italics).

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 97.

war. Auch meine Schwester vermach ich ihm, und will er nach meinem Tode euer Bruder sein, so habt ihr keinen Bruder verloren. [...] Ehrt mich in ihm, er ist mein Bruder, und ich leide kein Vornehmtun auf irgendeiner Nase.<sup>73</sup>

The suggestion by his aunt that Moritz should buy Omar a noble title and Moritz's contempt for this idea demonstrate a critical attitude toward the hubris of the aristocracy's class consciousness. Moritz's emphatic speech demonstrates that he not only sees Omar as his best friend but also strongly identifies with him. Moritz's willingness to serve Omar with his family, his claim that Omar is his sole heir, and the imperative phrase "ehrt mich in ihm" repeatedly reveal a deeply entangled relationship between Moritz and Omar, as if they were the twin brothers of Castor and Pollux in the Greek myth.

Moritz and Omar's entwined relationship expresses itself once again as Omar tells Moritz that he may go back to his homeland. Moritz is shocked merely by this thought:

MORITZ *erschrocken*. Ernst oder Scherz?  
OMAR ich bin nicht glücklich.  
MORITZ *seinen Arm um ihn schlingend*. Was mangelt dir?<sup>74</sup>

It turns out that Omar is unhappy because his love to Nettchen is not accordingly responded. Therefore Moritz is determined to convince his sister to love and marry Omar so that he would stay with him forever.<sup>75</sup>

---

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 97-98.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 104.

Obviously, influenced by the sentimental friendship cult in Germany in the second half of the eighteenth century, Kotzebue celebrates this deeply committed friendship between Moritz and Omar and their noble deeds and thoughts.<sup>76</sup> This friendship, however, defines Moritz's position in his community. The "stranger" Moritz distinguishes himself from his family and his society, as a blood- or race-bound community, by affiliating himself with the foreigner Omar. In other words, Omar's cultural and physical otherness essentially symbolizes the causes which enable the transformation of Moritz's existence from poverty to wealth, from the so-called prejudices to relativized sociocultural values.

From this perspective, Moritz's existence being "a stranger," its justification and further development all depend on Omar's physical and symbolic presence. Without Omar, Moritz cannot be himself anymore. Omar is Moritz's alter ego. If Moritz, or actually Moritz/Omar, represents Kotzebue's conception of a new social and cultural

---

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 115. From Moritz's conversation with Nettchen, we notice once again that Omar's presence is indispensable for Moritz:

MORITZ [...] Sie [die Narrheit von Nettchen] kostet mich einen Freund – ich hatte nur einen, er verläßt mich, sein Platz wird leer in meinem Herzen, und wer vermag ihn auszufüllen.

NETTCHEN Warum leer? Lieb' und Freundschaft werden durch Trennung noch heißer.

MORITZ Ein entfernter Freund ist ein toter Freund.

[...]

NETTCHEN Paperlapap! laß uns von etwas anderm reden. [...]

MORITZ [...] denn geht Omar fort, so geh ich mit ihm.

<sup>76</sup> Barbara Becker-Cantarino, ed. *German Literature of the Eighteenth Century: The Enlightenment and Sensibility* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2005), 21-22.

consciousness in German and European cultures, then it is a hybrid being *par excellence*.<sup>77</sup> Indeed, Omar's marriage to the white woman Nettchen strengthens and perpetuates this familial and intercultural association through heterosexual union and its possible procreation.

The praise of equality and inseparable friendship or twinship, however, are only part of the interesting double life of Moritz/Omar. In the conversation with his sisters, Moritz does not only praise Omar's moral integrity and purity but also emphasizes how he educates and changes Omar and other Arabs:

Des Abends lagerte ich mich in ihrem Kreise, und erzählte Märchen, wovon sie große Liebhaber sind. Gelegentlich streuete ich fassliche Sittenlehren ein, um nach und nach die Wildheit dieser rohen Menschen zu mildern. So wurde ich ihnen unentbehrlich, der alte Cheick nannte mich seinen Sohn, und Omar hing sich täglich fester an mich. Ich hatte meine Freude daran, den Jüngling zu bilden, es gelang mir über alle Erwartung. Der Keim war so gut und schön, ich pflegte sein brüderlich, er trug herrliche Blüten und versprach köstliche Früchte. Nach und nach, so wie es in seinem Kopfe heller ward, regte sich der Wunsch in ihm, gesittete Völkerschaften kennenzulernen, unter ihnen Tugenden auszuüben, für welche seine Landleute noch keinen Sinn hatten. Es hielt schwer den alten Vater zu einer Trennung zu bewegen, er willigte endlich ein, er vertraute ihm meiner Obhut, wir reisten ab.<sup>78</sup>

---

<sup>77</sup> The notion of hybridity in postcolonial scholarship levels at the conception of a stable and pure cultural identity. Homi K. Bhabha argues: "It is only when we understand that all cultural statements and systems are constructed in this contradictory and ambivalent space of enunciation, that we begin to understand why hierarchical claims to the inherent originality or 'purity' of cultures are untenable, even before we resort to empirical historical instances that demonstrate their hybridity. [...] It is that Third Space, though unrepresentable in itself, which constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same sign can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew." Homi K. Bhabha, "The Commitment to Theory," in *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 54-55.

<sup>78</sup> Kotzebue, "Bruder Moritz, der Sonderling, oder: Die Colonie für die Pelew-Inseln," 93-94.

Undoubtedly, Moritz ascribes to himself the role of a teacher, someone who is superior in knowledge and experience. Although he is taken captive by the Arabs, he still judges them as morally and culturally inferior. The wording such as savagery (*Wildheit*), raw human beings (*rohe Menschen*), or moral education (*Sittenlehre*) deliberately suggest a temporal understanding of the differences between Moritz and the Arabs, namely, that these raw people will become more mature and civilized through education by the Europeans. At first glance, the statement that these “raw” people enjoy fairy tales (*Märchen*) reflects a Eurocentric attitude that the Arabs are in a childhood stage in the course of the history of humanity. The huge popularity of *Thousand and One Nights* in eighteenth-century Europe, however, indicates that it is not the Arabs who are “childlike” but the Germans, the Brits, and other Europeans who were hungry for this kind of “Oriental” tales.<sup>79</sup> The statement of the Arabs’ love for fairy tales epitomizes the orientalization of the Orient.

Finally, Omar’s wish to visit European “high” cultures (*gesittete Völkerschaften*) strongly confirms the boundary and hierarchy between Moritz and himself. Although

---

<sup>79</sup> The books of *Arabian Nights’ Entertainments* (or *Thousand and One Nights*) were one of the most popular works in the print culture in eighteenth-century Europe. “The *Nights* was published in 445 installments over three years. As late as 1785, *Novelist Magazine* again serialized *Robinson Crusoe* and the complete Galland translation of the *Nights*. *General Magazine*, *Lady’s Magazine* and *Monthly Extracts* continued to feed the demand by publishing extracts from the *Nights*.” Srinivas Aravamudan sees the *Nights* as the text which enables us to redefine national literature and reconsider the boundaries between different genres because it functions as a socioliterary shifter. Srinivas Aravamudan, “In the Wake of the Novel: The Oriental Tale as National Allegory,” *Novel: A Forum for Fiction* 33, no. 1 (1999): 11.

Moritz strives to unsettle social inequality between different classes, his narrative in the foregoing passage betrays a historical consciousness which sets up this irreversible temporal hierarchy between him and Omar. Omar is recognized as a human being with a good heart, but he still needs to train himself in a European way in order to become Moritz, a man with both civilization and morals. Moritz's praise of Omar's moral integrity thus partially turns out to be a praise of his own pedagogical product and his own culture.

The imitation of European culture by Omar, however, can also be understood as a kind of mimicry which Homi K. Bhabha theorizes as "a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite."<sup>80</sup> Omar's adaptation of Moritz's culture thus reflects both subservience, or resemblance in Bhabha's term, and uncertainty, or menace, to the normalized and disciplinary knowledge and power which Moritz refers to as the European high civilization. Therefore the superiority of Moritz can only be perceived, recognized, and expressed through the inclusion of the cultural and geographical otherness: the Arab Omar. Hegel's dialectic of master and slave is clearly at work here. The existence of the master is only valid when the slave recognizes his authority. Otherwise it is utterly impossible for the master to be a master. Moritz and Omar are related to each other by this ambiguous mutuality.

---

<sup>80</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," in *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 122.

This ambivalence then enables us to conceive of Moritz no longer as Omar's patron, but as his dependent. That is to say, Moritz's existence per se depends upon Omar. Although the Arabian culture in the play is largely made up by Kotzebue and proves to be a clichéd, twisted, and orientalized image of cultural otherness, this purported non-European cultural codification determines and enables Moritz's being different and distanced from his home cultural community. The life of Moritz/Omar demarcates a border zone between two distinctive ways of life. The menace engendered by Omar's mimicry is reflected in Moritz's own "strangeness," which provokes internal uncertainties for the master narrative.

The character Moritz/Omar articulates a new consciousness of cultural entanglement in Kotzebue's time and place, which experiences its own sociocultural transformation and reorientation through the impact of cultural differences. Self-glorification, hierarchical thinking, or admiration for and idealization of the foreign can be seen as strategic moves in this ongoing process and dialogue between the relatively stable collective identities of Europe and its "others."

### **3.2.3 Sex and Morals**

As has been shown in the comparison between Goethe's *Stelle* and Kotzebue's *La Peyrouse*, *Bruder Moritz* is also a play about sex, desire, love, sentiments, marriage, and

seduction with a happy ending. Moritz's "strangeness" finds its full-fledged expression by way of dealing with sexual morals in his society.

In the eighteenth century, a respectable life of a woman is understood as a path from a chaste youth to a successful wife and mother. "Becoming pregnant out of wedlock was the greatest hazard of female youth and many pedagogues, theologians, physicians, and elite women gave advice on how to prevent it."<sup>81</sup> Sexual education thus emerges as a crucial social project by a group of pedagogues such as Christian Gotthilf Salzmann, Joachim Heinrich Campe and Johann Bernhard Basedow.<sup>82</sup> Campe's advice book *Väterlicher Rath für meine Tochter* (1789, *Fatherly Advice for My Daughter*), was the most widely read text on this topic in Germany until the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>83</sup> Against this backdrop, Moritz's happy union with Marie demonstrates a counter project to the male-dominant discourse of female chastity and happiness.

Notably, sexuality is also the lens through which we can see how cultural differences determine and endorse Moritz's disparity. In other words, Moritz would not have the courage to marry Marie if he had not been to Arabia and acknowledged the

---

<sup>81</sup> Irene Hardach-Pinke, "Managing Girl's Sexuality among the German Upper Classes," in *Secret Gardens, Satanic Mills: Placing Girls in European History, 1750-1960*, ed. Birgitte Søland, Mary Jo Maynes, and Christina Benninghaus (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2005), 111.

<sup>82</sup> Lutz D. H. Sauerteig, "Sex Education in Germany from the Eighteenth to the Twentieth Century," in *Sexual Cultures in Europe: Themes in Sexuality*, ed. Lesley Hall Franz X. Eder, and Gert Hekma (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1999).

<sup>83</sup> Hardach-Pinke, "Managing Girl's Sexuality among the German Upper Classes," 107.

legitimacy of different cultural values. Moritz's proposal to marry his sisters discloses his unconventional view toward the incest taboo and prepares his marriage with Marie.

In the thirteenth scene of the first act, Moritz proposes to marry one of his sisters:

MORITZ [...] Ich will Vater werden, und also will ich ein Weib nehmen.  
NETTCHEN Darf man fragen: wem der hochgebietende Sultan sein Schnupftuch zuwerfen wird?  
MORITZ Dir, wenn du willst.  
NETTCHEN Mir? Ha! ha! ha!  
MORITZ zu *Julchen*. Oder dir?  
JULCHEN Mir? Ha! ha! ha!  
TANTE *hustend*. He! he! he!  
MORITZ Warum lacht ihr? Ich spreche im Ernst. [...] Ihr seid hübsch, vergleicht euch untereinander, welche von euch mich haben will. Mir gilt es gleichviel.  
NETTCHEN Bruder es spückt in deinem Gehirn.  
MORITZ Ei das wäre? Und warum?  
TANTE Nefte, Nefte! Du bist auf gutem Wege toll zu werden. Hast du denn gar keine Ehrfurcht vor den heiligen Banden des Blutes?  
MORITZ Da haben wirs! Wieder ein verdammtes Vorurteil! Ich will dir in einem Atem hundert Völker nennen, die ihre Schwestern heiraten und sich wohl dabei befinden.  
TANTE Das sind Heiden! blinde Heiden! aber unter gesitteten, christlichen Völkern, geht das nicht an. [...]  
[...]  
MORITZ Ich meine ihr seid Törrinnen, mit welchen man in Dingen, wo es auf gesunde Vernunft ankömmt nicht streiten muß. Ihr wollt mich nicht? nach Belieben. [...]  
TANTE Sieh nur dabei auf ungescholtene Herkunft, auf eine untadelige Familie.  
MORITZ Venus ward aus Meerschäum geboren. Ein schönes Mädchen ist mir eine Königin, und wenn ich sie auf einem Misthaufen finde.<sup>84</sup>

The severity of breaking the incest taboo here is lessened through the humorous attitudes of the participants of the conversation. The fact that Moritz immediately falls in love with Marie smooths away the unease that the readers may feel toward the possible

---

<sup>84</sup> Kotzebue, "Bruder Moritz, der Sonderling, oder: Die Colonie für die Pelew-Inseln," 101-03.

incest between Moritz and his sisters. Therefore this *coup de théâtre* intends more to poke fun at existing sexual morals than to seriously endorse breaking the incest taboo. The conversation between Moritz and in particular his aunt, however, does ridicule Christian doctrines and class prejudices, which justify heterosexual marriage between “appropriate” parties. In other words, although Moritz, by referring to other cultures, in which incest is normal, cannot successfully persuade his sisters to marry him, an idea he spontaneously takes up and also immediately abandons, this cultural otherness does shake the absoluteness of Christian authority and question the distinction between Christians and pagans.<sup>85</sup> Only buttressed by cultural differences can Moritz call the incest taboo a prejudice. Only because Moritz has experienced different cultures, he can call his aunt a fool when she suggests that he should marry someone from a decent family. His claim that a good girl on a manure heap (*Misthaufen*) is a queen for him clearly paves way for his marriage with Marie, a fallen woman from a lower class, later in this play.

---

<sup>85</sup> Tomoko Masuzawa argues convincingly that the European taxonomy of four basic religious believes in the world, established in the late eighteenth century, actually reflects the partition of cultural spheres. It is a classification of peoples based on the differences of social customs the Europeans define as religions. The various discussions on world religions or what is the true religion from the late eighteenth century to the nineteenth century reflects European intellectuals’ search for their own cultural identity between the legacy of Christianity, the discourse of modernity and rationality, and the existence of cultural or religious otherness.

Tomoko Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions, or, How European Universalism was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005).

As a matter of fact, reshaping and reorganizing sexuality is a central theme in the course of social and political transformations in the eighteenth century.<sup>86</sup> Sexual morals and values from other cultures, especially from the South Seas, have an enormous impact on eighteenth-century thinkers and intellectuals in their efforts to reconsider and reconceptualize the self and the other. Travel narratives about the insular societies, particular the island of Tahiti, by Louis Antoine de Bougainville and Georg Forster aroused euphoric longing for the allegedly “free” sexuality of this culture.<sup>87</sup> One of the most eminent voices in this context, Denis Diderot’s “libertine” *Supplement au Voyage de Bougainville* (written 1771 / published 1796, *Supplement to Bougainville’s Voyage*) envisages a radically new erotic order and a new social order to unsettle the self-ascribed centrality and universal validity of French and, more generally, European social and political customs.<sup>88</sup>

At one point, Diderot also deals with the incest motive in this dialogue-styled text. Orou, a Tahitian man, treats a French chaplain with a great meal and then asks him

---

<sup>86</sup> Isabel V. Hull, *Sexuality, State, and Civil Society in Germany, 1700-1815* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996).

<sup>87</sup> See Ralph Rainer Wuthenow, "Inselglück. Reise und Utopie in der Literatur des XVIII. Jahrhunderts," in *Utopieforschung*, ed. Wilhelm Voßkamp (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1985). I will also discuss this point in more details in the chapter on Georg Forster. Also see the chapter on Forster for more details.

<sup>88</sup> See David Fausett, *Images of the Antipodes in the Eighteenth Century : a Study in Stereotyping* (Amsterdam and Atlanta, GA.: Rodopi, 1995), 136-48; Dena Goodman, *Criticism in action : Enlightenment experiments in political writing* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989); Sankar Muthu, *Enlightenment against Empire* (Princeton and London: Princeton University Press, 2003). Muthu interestingly argues that Diderot’s depiction of Tahiti subverts the basic idea of noble savage forged by Montaigne, Lahontan, and Rousseau and embraces the European and non-European human or cultural beings into one ideal society.

for a favor: to sleep with his daughters and his wife. After doing so, the chaplain, who has failed to stay celibate, asks him about Tahitian sexual morals. Here is the passage how they talk about incest:

THE CHAPLAIN: May a father sleep with his daughter, a mother with her son, a brother with his sister, a husband with someone else's wife?

OROU: Why not?

THE CHAPLAIN: Well! To say nothing of the fornication, what about the incest, the adultery?

OROU: What do you mean by those words, "fornication," "incest," and "adultery"?

THE CHAPLAIN: They are crimes, horrible crimes for which people are burned at the stake in my country.

OROU: Well, whether they burn or don't burn in your country means nothing to me. But you cannot condemn the ways of Europe for not being those of Tahiti, nor our ways for not being those of Europe. You need a more dependable rule of judgment than that. [...]

[...]

THE CHAPLAIN: As for unions between brothers and sisters, I imagine they are very common.

OROU: Yes, and very strongly approved of.

THE CHAPLAIN: According to you, the same passion that gives rise to so many evils and crimes in our countries is completely innocent here.<sup>89</sup>

Orou then reminds the chaplain that there are also strict rules of sexuality in Tahiti, but they are just different from those in Europe. Similar to Moritz's conversation with his family, the contentious issue of incest is employed here to create provocations to eighteenth-century European readers and theater audiences, destabilize their "commonplace" understandings, and force them to recognize the validity of other possible ways of life. While Diderot's narrative conveys a more serious critique of

---

<sup>89</sup> Denis Diderot, "Supplement to Bougainville's Voyage," in *The Libertine Reader: Eroticism and Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century France*, ed. Michel Feher (New York: Zone Books, 1997), 98-99.

European morals than the conversation between Moritz and his family, which only seems to flaunt moral transgressions, both Kotzebue and Diderot intend to unsettle their own social and cultural values by introducing a cultural alterity, represented by Moritz (or Moritz/Omar) and Orou.<sup>90</sup> The fact that Moritz does not insist on marrying one of his sisters and the joking attitudes of his sisters makes clear that it is not incest itself which is taken seriously here, but rather the challenge of social conventions and the demonstration of alterity actually matter.

### **3.2.4 The Refuge to the Pelew Islands: Gesture of a Utopian Wish-Fulfillment**

The unrealistic and incredible qualities of Moritz's personality reach their culmination in the plan of emigration to the Pelew Islands in the Pacific Ocean. The so-called Pelew Islands here refer to the modern-day Republic of Palau, which is approximately 500 miles east of the Philippines. The British ship *Antelope* shipwrecked off its shore in 1783. The popular travelogue by George Keate, *An Account of the Pelew Islands* (1788), based on the diaries of the ship's captain Henry Wilson, was translated

---

<sup>90</sup> While Diderot's text has been celebrated either as one of the seminal works of Enlightenment political legacy or as a prolific critique against colonial exploitations, Kotzebue's play with a similar message and purpose should deserve a bit more scholarly attention. Diderot's *Supplement* is brought into context with works by canonized thinkers such as Rousseau's *Discours sur l'inégalité* or Montesquieu's *Lettres persanes* and very positively received as one of his greatest contribution to the Enlightenment. See — — —, "Political writings," ed. John Hope Mason and Robert Wokler (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), xv-xxi; Muthu, *Enlightenment against Empire*.

into German by the German Pacific traveler Georg Forster only a year after its publication. (Wilson called this place Pelew.)

In the foreword to his translation, Georg Forster praises the high moral standards and selfless hospitality of the islanders:

Bey der einfachsten Lebensweise, bey einer auf etliche geringe Insepunctchen eingeschränkten Erfahrung, und einer gänzlichen Unwissenheit in Absicht auf Wissenschaft und Kunst, muß man erstaunen über die Stärke und Richtigkeit des moralischen Gefühls, und die selbst unter gesitteten Menschen seltene Harmonie im Karakter dieser Insulaner.<sup>91</sup>

Indeed, the simple way of life and the idealized morality make Pelew and many other Pacific islands the extant earthly paradise, a utopian and imaginary projection of human innocence in contrast to “corrupted” but “better developed” European societies conceived by Forster and many other thinkers in Europe.<sup>92</sup>

More than admiring Pelew Islands from the distance, one anecdote in Keate’s travelogue even confirms possible settlement by Europeans among the natives. As Wilson decided to depart from Pelew back to England, a sailor named Madan Blanchard insisted on staying with the natives for good. Blanchard

desired him [the translator] to tell the King, that when his countrymen went away, he intended to stay behind, and remain with him at Pelew; Captain Wilson desired him not to send any such idle message, and to go about his business, and forbad Tome Rose to

---

<sup>91</sup> Georg Forster, "Nachrichten von den Pelew-Inseln: Vorrede," in *Georg Forsters Werke*, ed. Klaus-Georg Popp Horst Fiedler, Annerose Schneider, and Christian Suckow (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1985), 327.

<sup>92</sup> See Helmut J. Schneider, "Utopie und Landschaft im 18. Jahrhundert," in *Utopieforschung*, ed. Wilhelm Voßkamp (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1985); Wuthenow, "Inselglück. Reise und Utopie in der Literatur des XVIII. Jahrhunderts."

deliver it; upon which, Blanchard very seriously desired it might be delivered, assuring the Captain, that it was his settled determination to remain at Pelew, if the King would permit him.<sup>93</sup>

The king of Pelew welcomed his decision and took Blanchard under his protection. Since we do not know the outcome of Blanchard's fate on Pelew, this British seaman's seemingly successful integration into the indigenous people illustrates the hospitality and openness of the population and registers the impact of the insular lifestyle on this European.<sup>94</sup> The scarcely realistic decision of deserting "civilization" and especially its realization and fulfillment irredeemably exert encouraging and enticing effects on the readers of Keate's beautiful prose.<sup>95</sup> In other words, the fabulous story of Robinson Crusoe now has a realistic and intentional imitator; utopia is hence not only a matter of desire but also a matter of will. Thus Moritz's idea of fleeing to Pelew seems surprising but also practical.

In the context of his dissatisfaction with and disappointment by his own society, Moritz first tells Omar in the second act, seventh scene, that the travelogue *Beschreibung der Pelew-Inseln (An account of Pelew Islands)* describes that there are still real and pure

---

<sup>93</sup> George Keate and Henry Wilson, *An account of the Pelew Islands situated in the great South Sea. Composed from the journals of Capt. Henry Wilson, and his officers; who, in August, 1783, were there shipwrecked in the Antelope packet.* (New-York: Printed by Tiebout & O'Brien, for Evert Duyckinck, and Co. booksellers and stationers, no. 110, Pearl-Street, 1796), 67.

<sup>94</sup> Since Madan Blanchard was neither able to write nor to read, as Keate comments, he could not leave us with well-founded reasons for his deeds.

<sup>95</sup> See Wuthenow, "Inselglück. Reise und Utopie in der Literatur des XVIII. Jahrhunderts." Wuthenow has shown the influence of travel literature on literary imagination in the eighteenth century in this article. Holberg's *Nicolai Klims unterirdische Reise* (1741) and Knigge's *Traum des Herrn Brick* are important examples here.

human beings in this world.<sup>96</sup> Towards the end of the play, after everyone is happy and satisfied with her or his love relationship, Moritz imparts his plan to his family:

Wir müssen alle, wie wir da stehen, nur eine Familie ausmachen. Ein Häuflein gute Menschen, die abgesondert von dem kultivierten Unwesen das Feld mit eignen Händen bauen, die Früchte unsers Fleißes ernten, ungeneckt von den Gewaltigen im Lande, von niemanden beneidet, als von den Engeln – eine solche Freistatt bietet uns ein Fleckchen Erde mitten im Ozean, das zu arm ist, um die Habsucht der Menschen zu reizen. Ein Engländer Wilson hat die Pelew-insel entdeckt, dort wohnen gute, unverdorbene Geschöpfe. Ich bin entschlossen, mein ganzes Vermögen in Notwendigkeiten des Lebens zu verwandeln, die will ich auf einige Schiffe laden, und dort mich häuslich niederlassen. Wollt ihr mitziehen?<sup>97</sup>

Although the title of the play refers to this idea as the colony on Pelew Islands, this plan of colonization sounds more like a utopian project rather than an economic enterprise of land appropriation and mass production. Similar to other utopian works in Kotzebue's time such as Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* or Johann Gottfried Schnabel's *Insel Felsenburg* (1731-1743, *Felsenburg Island*), Moritz's suggestion to start a new life on a secluded island reflects the desire for an ideal society far away from the corrupted reality.

As early as Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516), the insular enclave promises both inaccessibility and radical differences, which exclude or negate an existing social order.<sup>98</sup>

Although this play does not primarily map out a utopian social structure as More and

---

<sup>96</sup> Kotzebue, "Bruder Moritz, der Sonderling, oder: Die Colonie für die Pelew-Inseln," 129.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 184.

<sup>98</sup> See Thomas More, *Utopia*, trans. Peter K. Marshall (New York: Pocket Books, 1965). Norbert Elias, "Thomas Morus' Staatskritik. Mit Überlegungen zur Bestimmung des Begriffs Utopie," in *Utopieforschung*, ed. Wilhelm Voßkamp (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1985); Fredric Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future: the Desire called Utopia and Other Science Fictions* (London and New York: Verso, 2005).

other utopian thinkers do, Moritz's enthusiasm for a new life faraway does point out a wish or a gesture of utopian desire.<sup>99</sup> The unrealistic ending of Kotzebue's play, closely related to Moritz's "strangeness," has an implacable aesthetic or symbolic value, which, as Fredric Jameson interprets More's text, "would correspond to something like an activity in daily life, and would constitute a rehearsal of [utopian mechanisms] on the purely symbolic level, offering a kind of supplementary pleasure [...]."<sup>100</sup>

In other words, Moritz's dream of an insular existence with his enlarged family reflects a collective desire of deserting one's social community and its regulations for something completely different and new. The popularity of the play also proves the truism of this idea. More generally, all Moritz's "strange" behaviors point to this desire of abolishing the existing social conventions and establishing a different order.

### **3.2.5 Concluding Remarks: the Ideal Man Moritz and Spatial Rupture**

There is no doubt that Moritz is the leading figure throughout the dramatic unfolding. He breaks the rules, justifies his deeds with human sentiments, and convinces other people to follow him. He represents the ideal man and his family

---

<sup>99</sup> Fredric Jameson argues that More's *Utopia* functions as a wish-fulfillment in everyday life, a deeper unconsciousness saturated among a whole community of people. According to him, utopia does not envision a real social or cultural alternative to the existent one. "*Utopia* thus has a specifically aesthetic level, about which most of the literary critics have been singularly unhelpful, and eager to agree with the stereotypical boredom of the form; but what if there were also a level in the text proves not only to be what Plekhanov called the 'social equivalent', the correlative namely of ideology and of a class standpoint, but also a kind of gestural equivalent." (34) Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future: the Desire called Utopia and Other Science Fictions*.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

epitomizes the ideal community. Again, what enables and demarcates Moritz's exceptionality is the foreigner Omar. Moritz, the invented ideal German, is thus constructed by Kotzebue to be an integrated outsider, whose identity is strongly determined by the non-European culture and space.

If the character Omar and his culture should be counted under the category of an imagined Orient by the European master narrative, as Edward Said points out in *Orientalism*, the Pelew Islands do refer to a real-world place which lies outside the geographical location of Europe.<sup>101</sup> This external geographical location serves as a spatial rupture in the genealogy of Moritz's noble ancestry, which has a great significance for the cultural and political identity of German and European societies in the eighteenth century. Therefore, the real-world location of the Pelew Islands, which offers the "socially unacceptable" wishes and deeds a refuge, directly challenges the authority of the social order in Germany and other western European countries in Kotzebue's time. This spatial paradigm is thus indispensable for the dramatic conception of the ideal German Moritz. His social divergence is determined by the geographical differences which change his mind.

---

<sup>101</sup> Said, *Orientalism*.

### **3.3 Internal Integration and External Challenge: Gurli, or the Female Noble Savage in *Die Indianer in England***

#### **3.3.1 From Yarico to Gurli: Femininity, Morality, and Savagery**

Mr. Thomas Inkle, of London, aged twenty years, embarked in the Downs, on the good ship called the Achilles, bound for the West Indies, on the 16th of June 1647, in order to improve his fortune by trade and merchandize. [...] It happened, in the course of the voyage, that the Achilles, in some distress, put into a creek on the main of America, in search of provision: the youth, who is the hero of my story, among others, went ashore on this occasion. [...] The English unadvisedly marched a great distance from the shore into the country, and were intercepted by the natives, who slew the greatest number of them. Our adventurer escaped among others, by flying into a forest. Upon his coming into a remote and pathless part of the wood, he threw himself, breathless, on a little hillock, when an Indian maid rushed from a thicket behind him: After the first surprise, they appeared mutually agreeable to each other.<sup>102</sup>

This is the beginning of the love story of Inkle and Yarico, an anecdote published on March 13<sup>th</sup>, 1711 in the English daily newspaper *The Spectator* by Richard Steele, one of the newspaper's editors-in-chief. The story between a white man and a Native American woman offers the well-known raw material for a great number of literary adaptations either in verse, in prose, or on stage in English, French, and German in the eighteenth century.<sup>103</sup> Kotzebue's play *Die Indianer in England* is one of the most successful theatrical adaptations of this material. It is, however, not only the intercultural and interracial love

---

<sup>102</sup> Cited from Lawrence Marsden Price, *Inkle and Yarico Album* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1937), 5-6.

<sup>103</sup> Price traces the dissemination and variation of the story of Inkle and Yarico in English, French, and German such as Isaac Story's *Yarico to Inkle, an Epistle*, George Colman the Younger's successful play *Inkle and Yarico* (1787), Sebastian-Roche-Nicolas Chamfort's *La jeune Indienne* (1764), or Elise Bonaparte's novel *La Tribu indienne* (1799). In the German-speaking world, Luise Gottsched's translation of this story from *The Spectator* entailed several literary adaptations such as Christian Fürchtegott Gellert's poem *Inkle und Yariko* (1746), Johann Jakob Bodmer's poem *Inkel und Yariko* (1756), Johann Heinrich Faber's play *Inkle und Yariko* (1768), and Friedrich Ludwig Schröder's play *Inkle und Jariko* (1788). See *Ibid.*

relationship and Yarico's noble deed of saving Inkle's life that ignite the interests and imaginations of northern European writers. Rather, Inkle's sale of Yarico to a slave trader, which betrays her beautiful and devotional love to him, impresses the heart of the reader with incomparable surprise, sorrow, compassion, and moral judgment.<sup>104</sup>

Peter Hulme points out that the story of Inkle and Yarico belongs to the emergent antislavery and anticolonial ideology in the last half of the eighteenth century, a period of Carib resistance resulting in a crisis of British colonialism.<sup>105</sup>

In Kotzebue's adaptation of this material, the tragic Amerindian woman Yarico is transformed into a happy pubescent Indian girl Gurli in exile, who in the end successfully integrates into the fictional English society by marrying an honest Englishman Robert Smith. Kotzebue completely changes the plot, setting, and functions of the heroine and turns the tragic motif into a play with a happy ending. Kotzebue imagines a different relationship between English men and (American) Indian women and, in particular, demonstrates the impact of Gurli's foreignness on Robert's life. I will discuss this point in more details after examining Gurli and Yarico's shared quality of

---

<sup>104</sup> "To be short, Mr. Thomas Inkle, now coming into English Territories, began seriously to reflect upon his loss of time, and to weigh with himself how many days interest of his money he had lost during his stay with Yarico. [...] Upon which considerations, the prudent and frugal young man sold Yarico to a Barbadian merchant; notwithstanding that the poor girl, to incline him to commiserate her condition, told him that she was with child by him: but he only made use of that information, to rise his demands upon the purchaser." Cited from *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>105</sup> See Peter Hulme, *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492-1797* (London and New York: Methuen, 1986), 225-63. Hulme reads the story of Inkle and Yarico against the background of the two Carib Wars of 1772-3 and 1795-6, in which the Caribs fought against the encroachment of British settlements.

being female, morally sound, but “uncivilized.” Only then can we appreciate the venture Kotzebue takes to transform Yarico into Gurli and, at the same time, understand the limits of colonial fantasy Kotzebue shares with his contemporary Europeans.

From a contemporary perspective, the origins of the Native American Yarico and the Indian Gurli are set in completely different geographical places. This difference, however, did not matter much for European writers at the end of the eighteenth century. Felicity Nussbaum observes that places such as Africa or the so-called East and West Indies, where many fictional female noble savages come from, are interchangeable around 1800. The skin color of being dark or black is only a superficial trait which does not necessarily pertain to their moral essence. Their attributive proximity to nature guarantees their pure morality. What intrinsically matters is an inherent “whiteness,” representing a universal humanity and morality. Therefore, on British stages, black women gradually turn white.<sup>106</sup>

Denis Diderot ensures this moral “whiteness” of Yarico in his adaptation of this story in *Histoire des deux indes*, the Enlightenment polemic against the treachery of colonial practices.<sup>107</sup> In Diderot’s narrative, Yarico plays a cosmopolitan role “of bridging

---

<sup>106</sup> See Felicity Nussbaum, *The Limits of the Human: Fictions of Anomaly, Race, and Gender in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 151-88.

<sup>107</sup> See Jenny Mander, “No Woman is an Island: the Female Figure in French Enlightenment Anthropology,” in *Women, Gender and Enlightenment*, ed. Sarah Knott and Barbara Taylor (Houndmills, England and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

nations explicitly through sexual intercourse."<sup>108</sup> Yet, on the other hand, as Jenny Mander argues, Yarico also shares the same features of the female sex, which Diderot sees as excessive and dangerous to bourgeois morality and social order.<sup>109</sup> This seemingly paradoxical portrayal of Yarico is closely tied up with the interrelated discourses on femininity and "savagery" in the eighteenth century.

On the one hand, as Silvia Sebastiani and Toril Moi argue, an idealized femininity or virginity is the locus ascribed to represent pure virtue, refinement, and civility in eighteenth-century European thought.<sup>110</sup> In other words, female bodily chastity symbolically connects to the perfect morality of human nature. A child, in particular a girl, who is still unaware of sexual desires, is often compared to a noble savage who is inherently virtuous due to his or her immediacy with nature.<sup>111</sup> The transformation of the woman Yarico into the pubescent girl Gurli in Kotzebue's play reflects this cultural value, or prejudice, in eighteenth-century Europe.

---

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 109.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Sebastiani argues that Scottish Enlightenment thinkers consider history of process of feminization because the female sex refines the rudeness of men and teaches them sociability and sensibility. Toril Moi also points out that idealist thinkers such as Schiller and Kant need to create the figure of the pure woman in order to uphold the ideal of the perfectibility of human nature. Silvia Sebastiani, "'Race', Women and Progress in the Scottish Enlightenment," in *Women, Gender and Enlightenment*, ed. Sarah Knott and Barbara Taylor (Houndmills, England and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Moi, *Henrik Ibsen and the Birth of Modernism: Art, Theater, Philosophy*.

<sup>111</sup> See Paul Goetsch, "Das Kind als edler Wilder: seine Funktionen in der englischen Literatur," in *Der Alteritätsdiskurs des Edlen Wilden: Exotismus, Anthropologie und Zivilisationskritik am Beispiel eines europäischen Topos*, ed. Peter Haslinger, Monika Fludernik, and Stefan Kaufmann (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2002).

Women, on the other hand, as Sigrid Weigel points out, are also related to “savagery” in eighteenth-century Europe: they both are arbitrary, primitive, child-like, monstrous, and hysteric. Women are compared to unknown geography, for example the Freudian metaphor of the “Dark Continent.”<sup>112</sup> Effeminacy is the dangerous degeneration facing human history if women are not confined within the limits of marriage.<sup>113</sup> Cornelius de Pauw dismissed Native Americans as an “effeminate race” in his infamous treatise *Recherches philosophiques sur les Américains* (1771).<sup>114</sup> Weigel convincingly argues that the analogy between femininity and savagery in eighteenth-century thought reflects the male anxiety of controlling and penetrating both women and colonies. Nussbaum and Robert Young’s analyses of the painting *The Voyage of the Sable Venus from Angola to the West Indies* (1794), modeled after Botticelli’s *Venus*, and the accompanying ode, *The Sable Venus*, both tellingly demonstrate that female savage is seen as a sexual object of the lustful white male colonizers.<sup>115</sup> (See figure 3)

---

<sup>112</sup> See Sigrid Weigel, “Die nahe Fremde - das Territorium des ‘Weiblichen’: Zum Verhältnis von ‘Wilden’ und ‘Frauen’ im Diskurs der Aufklärung ” in *Die Andere Welt: Studien zum Exotismus*, ed. Thomas Koebner and Gerhart Pickerodt (Frankfurt am Main: Athenäum, 1987); Mander, “No Woman is an Island: the Female Figure in French Enlightenment Anthropology.” Diderot’s *Sur les femmes* is seen as a prototypical work against women and femininity in the eighteenth century.

<sup>113</sup> Sebastiani, “‘Race’, Women and Progress in the Scottish Enlightenment,” 75.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>115</sup> Nussbaum, *The Limits of the Human: Fictions of Anomaly, Race, and Gender in the Long Eighteenth Century*, 154-55; Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture, and Race*, 152-58.

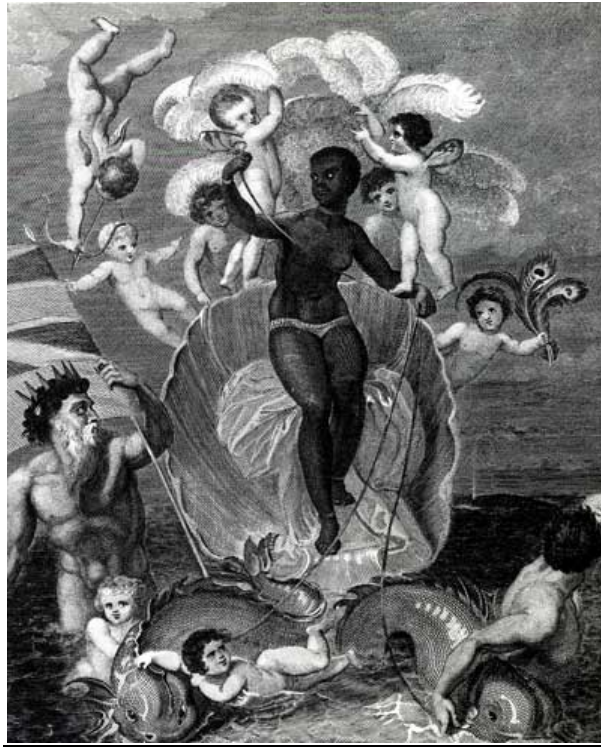


Figure 3: W. Grainger after Thomas Stothard, *The Voyage of the Sable Venus from Angola to the West Indies*, Original in the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University.

Against this backdrop, the following analysis of *Indianer in England* will focus on Gurli, the “female noble savage,” a synthesis consisting of both the embodiment of pure love or virtue and the innate savagery characterized by the lacking of rational thought.

### 3.3.2 Kotzebue’s *Die Indianer in England* and Gurli’s Double Naïveté

*Die Indianer in England* was one of the most popular plays on German stages during and after Kotzebue’s life time. Even an unfriendly critic admitted in 1791: “Mit ungewöhnlichem Beyfall ward dieses Lustspiel auf allen deutschen Theatern

gegeben."<sup>116</sup> The play was performed 68 times in Berlin by 1847 and 90 times in Vienna by 1844. After watching this play, the King of Prussia, Friedrich Wilhelm II, told a friend of Kotzebue: "Der Kotzebue [...] hat viel Genie; er sollte mehr schreiben; sagen Sie ihm das!"<sup>117</sup>

The success of *Die Indianer in England* should doubtlessly be attributed to the character Gurli. In the play, she came to England with her father Kaberdar, the Nabob in exile of Mysore in southern India, after he was overthrown by a court conspiracy. A British ship saved their lives and brought them to a harbor city where they now live with their landlord Sir John Smith. Sir Smith has a daughter and two sons: the virtuous and considerate Liddy, who becomes Gurli's best friend; the honest Robert, a ship's captain, who has gone to the West Indies; and the greedy and pedantic Samuel who intends to marry Gurli in order to get Kaberdar's money. Although Gurli does not like Samuel and has not understood what love and marriage mean, she agrees to marry Samuel because he accepts that Gurli wants to live with her father forever. Gurli's father Kaberdar is deeply disappointed by his own country and determines to stay in England for good. He plans to marry Liddy and founds a new family in England, whose culture

---

<sup>116</sup> Anonymous, "Die Indianer in England. Lustspiel in drey Aufzügen, von August von Kotzebue," *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* 103(1791): 439.

<sup>117</sup> Cited from Jürg Mathes, "Kommentar," in *August von Kotzebue: Schauspiele*, ed. Jürg Mathes (Frankfurt am Main: Athenäum Verlag, 1972), 549. Mathes' commentary offers rich information on the popularity of *Indianer in England*.

he admires. Liddy is moved by Kaberdar's sincere affections and his willingness to nurse her sick father and thus agrees to marry him. Liddy, however, loves another Indian young man Fazir, who is now with Robert in the West Indies. Up to this point, the audience notices that the two intended marriages are not based on mutual love and passion, but rather involve practical considerations, sacrifice of true feelings, childish ignorance, and greed for money. In other words, the two relationships could end tragically: either Gurli would be cheated by the manipulative Samuel, as demonstrated in the story of Inkle and Yarico; or Liddy could commit suicide due to her love toward another person, which she sacrifices for the sake of her father, similar to Luise in Schiller's *Kabale und Liebe*.

Yet Kotzebue resolves the difficult situation by bringing Robert and Fazir back home and, more essentially, giving Gurli the agency to make changes possible. Gurli immediately falls in love with Robert and becomes conscious of her sexuality and emotion. She now strictly refuses to marry Samuel. Fazir turns out to be the son of Kaberdar, who fled to England separately from his family. After Gurli urges her father to recognize the love between Fazir and Liddy, Kaberdar generously withdraws his proposal and enables the union of the young couple. The play ends in a happy union of family and lovers across geographical and cultural boundaries.

The leading journal of German Enlightenment literary criticism, the *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek*, which had been hostile toward Kotzebue and his plays, enthusiastically lauded the masterful portrayal of Gurli, the child of nature. By doing so, it ensured the popularity of this character among the so-called mass audience:

So trüglich nun auch meist der Schluß von dem Beyfall des großen Haufens – dessen Stimme, als die lauteste, hier immer durchdringt – auf den wahren Werth eines Stücks ist, so fällt doch dieser unsichere Richter zuweilen Urtheile, denen der gebildete und prüfende Geschmack beytreten kann. [...] Was nun ist, gefällt immer, und wenn es sich nicht bloß auf Sonderbarkeit, sondern auf Natur und Wahrheit gründet, so hat es auch Ansprüche auf den Beyfall der Kenner. Von dieser Art sind die Hauptcharaktere dieses Stücks außer Streit. An naivseynsollenden Mädchen fehlt es auf unserm Theater freylich nicht; aber wie wenige sind so wahr, so ungekünstelt naiv, wie die Gurli unsers Verf.? Ein echtes Kind der Natur, ohne den Anstand zu beleidigen. *Sie verletzt unsre Sitten und Herkommen, aber nur, weil sie es nicht kennt, und immer um einen edlen Trick, um heftige, aber untadelhafte Gefühle zu befriedigen.* Sie macht lachen, ohne lächerlich zu werden.<sup>118</sup>

Obviously, as this passage reveals, Gurli's naïveté and her foreignness enable her to articulate certain ideas and feelings which cannot be spoken out loud publicly by other English characters in the play. Gurli is thus a border figure, whose cultural otherness and innocent childishness mirror the veiled interiority of English characters, such as Liddy and Robert, and unmask the hypocrisy and insincerity of such characters as Samuel.

The transformation from the woman Yarico to the pubescent girl Gurli tremendously changes the role of the female noble savage in the contact zone of English,

---

<sup>118</sup> Anonymous, "Die Indianer in England. Lustspiel in drey Aufzügen, von August von Kotzebue," 439. My italics.

or European, and non-European cultures. Gurli inherits Yarico's function of connecting nations, but the connections which Gurli makes are not destroyed by betrayal but strengthened by conjugal bonds. Gurli actively makes changes happen whereas Yarico is passively cheated by Inkle. The contact zone has also changed from a non-European locus of heartbreaking treachery to a European society of honest people who willingly accept cultural differences.

Gurli's naïveté, however, has another aspect. Similar to the "dangerous" characters of women, Gurli is also childish or savage in her nature. Christopher Wild argues in his study on virginity and theatricality that sexual innocence symbolizes an epistemic purity, which means certain ignorance and neutrality. The loss of virginity is thus accompanied by the acquisition of knowledge.<sup>119</sup> Therefore Gurli's betrothal to Robert and her friendship with Liddy anticipate that she will grow up and be "educated" and "civilized" in future. In the following parts of this chapter, I first demonstrate how Gurli's instinctive morality and her external position as a foreigner unveil Samuel's unethical intentions, help Liddy and Robert recognize the limits of their moral understanding, and thus avoid tragic endings for the love stories. Then I show the other side of Gurli's naïveté, which is her childishness, her willingness to be "civilized" by

---

<sup>119</sup> Christopher J. Wild, *Theater der Keuschheit -- Keuschheit des Theaters: Zu einer Geschichte der (Anti-)Theatralität von Gryphius bis Kleist* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Rombach Verlag, 2003), 315.

Robert, and the influence of Kaberdar's Anglophilia, which proves to be Kotzebue's colonial fantasy.

### 3.3.3 Gurli's Instinctive Morality and her Challenge to the Internal Frontier

For most of the play, Gurli is depicted as not yet aware of her sexuality. Her mind and behavior, however, are instinctively virtuous and her judgment correct. Just as Robert describes: "Sieh' nur, das Mädel ist gar zu brav! ihre Seele trägt sie im Auge, und in ihrem Auge ist kein Falsch; ihr Herz schwebt auf ihrer Zunge, und ihre Worte sind reiner Firnewein, süß wie der Saft der Kokos-Nuß."<sup>120</sup>

One interesting example of Gurli's instinctive morality is her judgment of Samuel as a fool (*Narr*). As a common motif in literary tradition during and after Kotzebue's time, Samuel is a fortune hunter and intends to solicit Gurli to marry him for the sake of her money.<sup>121</sup> The innocent and happy girl would be mercilessly cheated by a pedantic and greedy man. In the interactions between Samuel and Gurli, however, he is constantly ridiculed by her openness, candor, and childish arbitrariness. Without being aware of Samuel's intention, however, Gurli's instincts help her make the correct

---

<sup>120</sup> August von Kotzebue, "Die Indianer in England," in *Theater von August von Kotzebue* (Vienna and Leipzig: Verlag von Ignaz Klang in Wien und Eduard Kummer in Leipzig, 1840), 284.

<sup>121</sup> Contemporary examples like Trippel in Hagemeister's *Das große Loos*, Baron Renntal in Schröder's *Viktorine*, or later portrayal such as Grünlich in Thomas Mann's *Die Buddenbrooks* are all fortune hunters in German literature during and after Kotzebue's time.

judgment of Samuel: "Da ist der Samuel; der schwatzt und plappert von seiner Liebe; doch seine Liebe gefällt mir nicht."<sup>122</sup>

Gurli's instinctive morality and its free expression is the key element which resolves the conflicts in her and Liddy's marriages, which otherwise may end tragically. Due to her childish ignorance, the other side of her naïveté, she has agreed to marry Samuel. Yet at the moment of signing the marriage contract, Gurli all of a sudden changes her mind because she sees Robert entering the room:

*Gurli läßt sogleich die Hand sinken und begafft Robert*  
ROBERT Potztausend! Große Gesellschaft!  
[...]  
GURLI neugierig zu Liddy. Wer ist der Mensch.  
LIDDY Das ist Bruder Robert.  
GURLI Bruder Robert? Ei! Bruder Robert gefällt mir. [...] Nun Liddy, gilt dir's gleich viel, ob Gurli deinen Bruder Samuel, oder deinen Bruder Robert heiratet?  
LIDDY lachend. Mir wohl, liebe Gurli, aber nicht Samueln.  
GURLI Ach! was! der närrische Mensch! wer wird ihn fragen! Sie geht zu Robert. Lieber Bruder Robert willst du wohl so gut sein, Gurli zu heiraten?<sup>123</sup>

Robert is first hesitant to marry Gurli, not because he dislikes her but because he does not consider it ethical to take away the bride of his brother. Gurli, who now has become aware of her emotions and desires, insists on her decision and strictly refuses to marry Samuel even if Robert would not marry her. Impressed by Gurli's sincerity and fervent love, Robert then gradually changes his mind:

---

<sup>122</sup> Kotzebue, "Die Indianer in England," 221.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 273-74.

GURLI Nimmermehr! nimmermehr wird Gurli den närrischen Samuel heiraten; Gurli kann ihn nun gar nicht mehr leiden.

ROBERT Aber – aber beim Teufel! seinem Bruder ein Bein unterzuschlagen ist doch bübisch! Jack, was meinst du? darf ein ehrlicher Kerl mit gutem Gewissen die Prise da wegkapern?

JACK Ihr müsst am besten wissen, wie tief Eure Fregatte im Wasser geht. Aber was Euren Bruder betrifft, Sir, da würde ich mir nicht so viel draus machen, als aus einem verschimmelten Zwieback. Der strotzt auf dem Oberlof herum, mit schameriertem Wams, und allerhand Trararum, aber ich wollt es keinem braven Mädchen raten, ihn an Bord kommen zu lassen.

ROBERT Das denk' ich auch Jack. Das arme unschuldige Mädchel würd' eine garstige Fahrt haben. – Top Gurli! ich heirate dich.<sup>124</sup>

Although Robert makes this decision in the end by himself, Gurli's instinctive morality, unpretentious affection, and her insistence effectively push him to reconsider the validity of his moral principle and recognize the inappropriateness of Samuel's intention. Without Gurli, true love will not be discovered and rewarded; and mechanical calculation and greed cannot be punished. In other words, the lovable side of Inkle, represented by Robert, is now rewarded whereas the evil side of Inkle, represented by Samuel, is punished.

Therefore Gurli instinctively unveils and questions the limit of Robert's moral understanding, which could condone people such as Samuel to take advantage of others. The moral values which define the quality of Robert being a good man are also transformed or delinked by Gurli's existence. This incident illustrates and predicts that,

---

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 282.

potentially, the Englishman Robert's moral and cultural identity would also change and transform in the course of his marriage with the foreign woman Gurli.

Not only does Gurli rescue her own marriage, but also Liddy's. It is she who publicly encourages Liddy to marry Fazir and speaks out loud the mind of the lovers.<sup>125</sup>

As Fazir confesses to his father that he deeply loves Liddy, Gurli predicts:

GURLI Vater ich will dir sagen, wen von euch beiden Liddy heiraten wird.  
KABERDAR Nun?  
GURLI Meinen Bruder Fazir.  
KABERDAR Woher weißt du das?  
GURLI Er ist hübscher als du.  
KABERDAR Ach liebes Mädchen, Liddy ist nicht ein Kind wie du.  
ROBERT Ich fürchte, was diesen Punkt betrifft, werden die Weiber ewig Kinder  
bleiben.<sup>126</sup>

Gurli is not only supported by Robert but also by the result of this story. As Gurli then directly tells her opinion to Liddy that the son is more handsome than the father, Liddy is highly embarrassed:

GURLI zu *Liddy*. Nimm den Sohn, er ist hübscher als der Vater.  
KABERDAR Ihr Herz muß den Ausspruch tun.

---

<sup>125</sup> Before Gurli understands what marriage exactly means, Liddy, after being engaged with Kaberdar, asks her whether she (Gurli) wants to be her (Liddy's) sister or her daughter. Gurli replies:

GURLI Nun Gurli möchte lieber deine Schwester sein.

LIDDY Warum?

GURLI Weil Gurli schon eine Mutter hatte, eine gute, gute Mutter! Gurli kann sich keine bessere wünschen. Aber eine Schwester habe Gurli noch nicht gehabt.

LIDDY Nun so wollen wir als Schwestern zusammen leben. Gurli ich heirate deinen Vater.

GURLI Nein Liddy, Spaß nicht mit Gurli."

After Liddy confirms the engagement, Gurli is happy because now she can live with Liddy together.

Although there is no explicit rejection by Liddy toward the marriage of Liddy and Kaberdar, her reactions, however, clearly tell the audience that she, the child of nature, is instinctively not in favor of Liddy's sexual and legal liaison with her father. *Ibid.*, 245.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 293-94.

LIDDY *sehr verlegen*. Mein Herz? – Ach! –  
 FAZIR *mit niedergeschlagenen Augen*. Liebe Miß! –  
 ROBERT Nun Schwesterchen wirds bald?  
 LIDDY Wie kann ich – ich habe ja schon mein Wort gegeben.  
 KABERDAR Wenn Sie also Ihr Wort nicht gegeben hätten – so würden Sie? – *Liddy*  
*schweigt*. Ich verstehe. *Er legt ihre Hand in Fazirs Hand*. Gott segne euch Kinder!  
 FAZIR *Liddy umarmend*. Ach liebe Miß!  
 MUSAFFERY *bück sich tief*. Brahma sei gelobt!<sup>127</sup>

Apparently, Liddy struggles with the ethical principle of promise and thus cannot articulate her inner feelings. Without Gurli, Liddy's love to Fazir will not be recognized, let alone end with a happy marriage. As a matter of fact, Gurli's statement that Fazir is more handsome instinctively corresponds to Liddy's inner feelings and powerfully dismantles the ethical bond of Liddy's promise. Gurli's advice to Liddy to choose the son also effectively triggers Kaberdar's question and helps him understand Liddy's silent embarrassment. Gurli instinctively identifies the limit of the moral principle of promising, which does not reflect Liddy's feelings or desires. The adjustment of moral values now better serves human sentiments.

For both Robert and Liddy, the representatives of European or English moral uprightness, Gurli pushes the internal frontiers of Robert and Liddy and helps them make decisions which appeal more to their own desires than conventional moral requirements. By internal frontier, I mean national or cultural essence and moral

---

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 295.

predicates, as Ann Laura Stoler and Etienne Balibar define it.<sup>128</sup> This is the positive function of Gurli's naïveté.

### 3.3.4 Gurli's Childishness and Her Integration

The other side of Gurli's naïveté is her childishness: her behavior is sometimes arbitrary and she is unaware of love and sexuality before she meets Robert. Gurli's childishness is best depicted when she does not understand why she should marry a man:

GURLI [...] Aber warum muß es denn eben eine Mannsperson sein? ich will [...] Liddy heiraten.  
[...]  
KABERDAR Die ist ja ein Frauenzimmer.  
GURLI Nun was schadet das?  
KABERDAR *lächelnd*. Nein Gurli das geht nicht an, das erlaubt Brahma nicht. Du bist ein Mädchen, und mußst einen Mann nehmen. Liddy ist auch ein Mädchen und muß auch einen Mann nehmen.  
GURLI Nun so will ich Musaffery heiraten.  
MUSAFFERY *welcher bisher in tiefen Betrachtungen versenkt gestanden, welcher sich auf sein voriges Gespräch bezogen, kommt zu sich selbst, und antwortet etwas verlegen, aber mit seiner gewöhnlichen Trockenheit*. Mich? – Schöne Gurli! das geht nicht an!  
GURLI *komisch zürnend*. Wieder nicht? Warum denn nicht? du bist ja ein Mann.  
MUSAFFERY Das wohl.  
GURLI Nun?  
MUSAFFERY Ich bin ein alter Mann. [...] Schöne Gurli, ein alter Mann muß kein junges Mädchen heiraten.<sup>129</sup>

---

<sup>128</sup> See Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 80. Etienne Balibar, "The Borders of Europe," in *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling beyond the Nation*, ed. Pheng Cheah and Bruce Robbins (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1998).

<sup>129</sup> Kotzebue, "Die Indianer in England," 221-22.

Apparently, as clear as the play's endorsement of heterosexual marriage, the author intends to demonstrate that Gurli does not yet grasp the meaning of marriage as a form of socially and emotionally approved relationships. In other words, she does not see herself as a sexual being. Her unawareness of sexuality, on the one hand, indicates her bodily and moral purity, but on the other hand also demonstrates her childish and "savage" ignorance which urgently needs to be corrected in the process of socialization and "civilization."

Right after her engagement with Robert, Gurli's arbitrariness is immediately rectified by her future husband:

GURLI Der arme närrische Samuel! er dauert mich doch! was meinst du Robert? ich will ihn auch heiraten.  
ROBERT Zween Männer auf einmal? Nein Gurli das verbitt' ich mir.  
GURLI Nun wie du willst. Gurli macht sich nichts daraus.<sup>130</sup>

Gurli subscribes herself now totally to Robert's judgment. Robert's sister, Liddy, except her passivity, offers an example of female maturity for Gurli's future in the married life with a white man. Gurli herself admits: "Ach ich liebe Liddy wie meine Schwester. Sie ist so gut, so herzensgut – Sie ist viel besser als Gurli."<sup>131</sup>

The driving force behind Gurli's integration is her father, Kaberdar. His portrayal as an honorable and rich man and his willingness to accept British social

---

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 294.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 220.

convention suggest England, not India, is the place where human morality survives and thrives. Thus the play's happy ending testifies to the superiority of the fictional English society, at the same time it confirms Gurli's impact on it.

The detailed description of the court conspiracy and its violent slaughter of Kaberdar's family tell the audience that Kaberdar is deeply disappointed by his own country. The fact that a British ship has saved his life and brought him to England makes him grateful to this European nation. Kaberdar now endeavors to integrate into the new country by marrying Liddy.<sup>132</sup> He tells himself when he tries to court Liddy to marry him:

Besinne dich, Kaberdar! du bist nicht in Indien, wo du dein Weib einsperren darfst, wenn sie dir das Leben vergällt; [...] Du bist *in Europa*, wo man die Weiber nicht zu Puppen herabwürdigt; wo sie selbst einen Willen haben, und sogar selbst denken dürfen – wenn sie können.<sup>133</sup>

---

<sup>132</sup> A conversation between Liddy and Kaberdar demonstrates his willingness to integrate into the British society:

LIDDY schlägt die Augen nieder, nach einer Pause. Sie sind also kein Christ?

KABERDAR *stutzt, nach einer Pause*. Es ist nur ein Weg zum Himmel, der Weg der Tugend.

LIDDY Dieser Weg führt durch die christliche Kirche.

KABERDAR Unsere Brahminen sagen: er führe durch die Pagoden; doch dem sei wie ihm wolle, an Ihrer Hand werde ich mich nie davon entfernen. [...]

LIDDY Wenn Sie einst England verlassen sollten, so werden Sie wieder ein anderes Mädchen heiraten, unter dem Vorwande, daß Ihre Liebe und Treue mir doch nichts mehr nützen würden.

KABERDAR Sie haben recht Miß; aber einen Umstand haben Sie vergessen: Ihnen werde ich Treue schwören, und England werde ich nie wieder verlassen.

LIDDY Wer wird Sie halten?

KABERDAR Die Liebe. *Ibid.*, 231-33.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 225-26.

Clearly, Kaberdar believes that European women have more rights and independence than in India and thus suggests that the social norms in Europe are more “civilized.”

Kaberdar’s or indeed Kotzebue’s Anglophilia reflects a popular phenomenon among German intellectuals in the eighteenth century: Britain was seen as the country of philosophy, political freedom, morality, and literature and thus the model for other European countries such as Germany.<sup>134</sup> Shakespeare is treated as the rejuvenating power for German theater whereas French classicism is dismissed as pretentious and dry. Clearly, Kotzebue lends his admiration for Britain to his character Kaberdar and indicates the superiority of European or English culture over the Indian.<sup>135</sup> It is thus “natural” for Gurli to take Liddy as her example and integrate herself into English society by marrying a decent Englishman. Obviously, the challenge posed by Gurli’s cultural otherness is limited by this colonial fantasy of superiority.

### 3.3.5 Conclusion

Gurli, the mixture of being physically a child, morally a woman, and geographically a savage, is neither completely pure and good nor entirely wild and arbitrary. She is, on the one hand, blanched white and pure in Northern Europe,

---

<sup>134</sup> See Michael Maurer, *Aufklärung und Anglophilie in Deutschland* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987).

<sup>135</sup> The praise of European/British society is also expressed through Samuel’s disagreement with his German mother that the aristocratic *ius sanguinis* does not have much significance in England where bourgeois culture emerges and develops. “SAMUEL Was die Geburt betrifft, gnädige Mama, so wissen Sie wohl, daß man bei uns in England nicht darauf zu sehen pflegt.” Kotzebue, “Die Indianer in England,” 202.

especially through her strong identification with the good and beautiful Liddy. Her naïveté and her virginity symbolize her moral nobility. But, on the other hand, her childishness and arbitrary behaviors reflect the negative connotations of both women and savages. Therefore she marries a white man to bridle her wildness and promote her maturity.

The synthesis of female noble savage gives Gurli tremendous power to demonstrate the impact of the non-European otherness on European culture; at the same time, female noble savage also produces the knowledge for and imagines a model of successful integration of non-European culture into European society. Both Robert/Liddy and Kaberdar/Gurli transform themselves to meet the requirements of the new circumstances in the contact zone. Therefore, we are not entitled to conclude the reading of this drama either by merely criticizing the European self-ascribed superiority, represented by Kaberdar's Anglophilia, or by overvaluing the impact of the non-European culture on European social customs. Rather, the Indian girl Gurli and the popular story of Inkle and Yarico demonstrates that cultural identity in Kotzebue's Europe is, if not completely constructed, at least highly charged with the geocultural interplays of external challenge and internal integration.

### **3.4 Heroic Peruvians and Melancholic Spaniards: Kotzebue's Peru Dramas *Die Sonnenjungfrau* and *Die Spanier in Peru, oder Rollas Tod***

#### **3.4.1 General Background**

Kotzebue's drama *Die Sonnenjungfrau* (1789, *Virgin of the Sun*) and its sequel *Die Spanier in Peru, oder Rollas Tod* (1795, *Spaniards in Peru, or Rolla's Death*) draw on the Spanish colonial conquest of the Inca Empires in Peru in the sixteenth century. These plays reflect the contemporary resurgent intellectual and public interests in the violent and bloody encounters between the Spaniards and the geographically, botanically, and anthropologically New World.<sup>136</sup> Before Kotzebue's dramas, the most influential literary adaptation and imagination of the historical events in the eighteenth century is probably Jean-François Marmontel's romance *Les Incas, ou La Destruction de l'empire du Pérou* (1777, *The Incas: or the Destruction of the Empire of Peru*). This work invents a love story between the Peruvian woman Cora and the Spaniard Alonzo against the historical background of

---

<sup>136</sup> Antonello Gerbi, *The Dispute of the New World: the History of a Polemic 1750-1900* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1973). Along with the rising interests in explaining the natural and anthropological differences between Europe and the other parts of the world, thinkers such as Buffon, Bacon, Hume, Cornelius de Pauw, and others articulated positive or negative opinions on the nature and native peoples in Americas and induced pan-European intellectual debates. De Pauw's *Recherches philosophiques sur les Américains ou Mémoires intéressants pour servir à l'histoire de l'espèce humaine* (1768) influentially justifies the colonial enslavement of the native peoples by categorizing them neither as animal nor "normal" human beings but as degenerated beings. This attribution makes them thus suitable for slavery.

Pizarro's conquest of the Inca Empire Quito. It sets the basic plot and characters for Kotzebue's plays and twelve other German adaptations on stage.<sup>137</sup>

Besides the vogue of Marmontel's romance, Kotzebue's Peru dramas extraordinarily contribute to the dissemination and popularization of this material.<sup>138</sup> *Die Sonnenjungfrau* was translated into French, Dutch, English, Italian, Danish, Czech, and Spanish and was performed in Europe and America season after season.<sup>139</sup> *Die Spanier in Peru* formed the basis for the British playwright Richard Sheridan's extremely popular play *Pizarro* (1799), which was translated back into German and repeatedly performed.

Kotzebue's plays, particularly *Die Spanier in Peru*, harshly critique the brutality of the Spanish conquest.<sup>140</sup> In the preface to *Spanier in Peru*, he reports that his friend and playwright Friedrich Ludwig Schröder suggests changing the anti-colonial tone in this play in order to conform more to his time. Kotzebue rejects this advice because:

---

<sup>137</sup> See Lawrence Marsden Price, *The Vogue of Marmontel on the German Stage*, vol. 27, University of California Publications in Modern Philology (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1944), 87-93. Adaptations include Freiherr von Schilson's *Die Wilden* (1778), Wolfgang Heribert von Dalberg's *Cora* (1780), Franz Joseph Marius von Babo's *Kora und Alonzo* (1781), Johannes Heinrich Keerl's *Ataliba oder der Sturz der Incas* (1788), Joachim Perinet's *Kora die Sonnenjungfrau* (1813) parodies and many other anonymous adaptations of *Singspiel*, ballet, and opera. Price also records that Kotzebue "attended the opera in the company of a certain lady. At the close of the performance she insisted that he should write on the subject, and this led to the composition of his five-act *Schauspiel*, *Die Sonnenjungfrau*." 91.

<sup>138</sup> See John Britton, *Sheridan and Kotzebue* (London: published by J. Fairburn; sold by Hurst, and by West and Hughes; printed by H. L. Galabin, 1799).

<sup>139</sup> See Price, *The Vogue of Marmontel on the German Stage*, 89, 92. Between 1790 and 1814, *Die Sonnenjungfrau* was performed 35 times in Berlin; between 1790 and 1804, 25 times in Mannheim.; between 1791 and 1816, 56 times in Vienna.

<sup>140</sup> The account of Spanish colonial brutality disseminated among other European communities is often referred to as the Black Legend, a product of inner European power dynamics. See Margaret Rich Greer, Walter Mignolo, and Maureen Quilligan, *Rereading the Black Legend: the Discourses of Religious and Racial Difference in the Renaissance Empires* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

Ich sehe zum Beyspiel nicht ein, warum man nicht gerade heraussagen dürfte: daß der Vater Papst den Spaniern Amerika durch eine Bulle geschenkt; daß er durch eine andere Bulle die Indianer für Menschen, und nicht Affen erklärt; daß man zu Ehre Christi und der zwölf Apostel dreyzehn Indianer aufgehangen; und was dergleichen mehr ist. Warum sollte man historische Thatsachen auf der Bühne verschweigen?"<sup>141</sup>

Clearly, Kotzebue uses the institution of theater to denounce colonial cruelty. His

disapproving attitude is inherited from Marmontel and Las Casas. The Dominican priest

Bartolomé de las Casas wrote the most influential critique of Spanish colonial cruelty:

*Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies* (1542), which forcefully reports and rebukes

the Spaniards's colonial atrocities and their enslavement of the native people.<sup>142</sup>

Marmontel follows the example of Las Casas and sees a religious fanaticism, a spirit of

intolerance and persecution, in the Spanish conquest.<sup>143</sup> Thus he claims that his work

---

<sup>141</sup> August von Kotzebue, "Die Spanier in Peru, oder: Rollas Tod," in *Theater von August von Kotzebue* (Vienna and Leipzig: Ignaz Klang and Eduard Kummer, 1840), 208.

<sup>142</sup> On the other hand, Las Casas's critical account also strives to disseminate "true" Christianity and condemn the conquistadors' "non-Christian" deeds. Gonzalo Lamana argues that Las Casas's rebuke actually proves to be a critique which is limited by the assumption of the superiority of Christianity and its symbols. It thus does not "alter the basis of the argument in a fundamental way." Although the Spanish crown approved of Las Casas's rebukes, the justification of slavery and colonialism rebutting Las Casas, e.g. by [Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda](#), was actually followed and put into practice in the Spanish colonies. See "Las Casas, Bartolomé de." *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. 2008. Encyclopaedia Britannica Online.

<http://search.eb.com/eb/article-4057>, Bartolomé de las Casas, *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies* (London and New York: Penguin Books, 1992); Gonzalo Lamana, "Of Books, Popes, and Huacas; Or, the Dilemmas of Being Christian," in *Rereading the Black Legend: The Discourses of Religious and Racial Difference in the Renaissance Empires*, ed. Walter D. Mignolo Margaret R. Greer, and Maureen Quilligan (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), 128.

<sup>143</sup> Marmontel directly refers to Las Casas's book as the resource and inspiration for his romance: "'tis in him [Las Casas] that I have endeavoured to display the fruits of a lively faith, an exalted piety, a pure and tender zeal, in a word, of the true Christian spirit in its genuine simplicity." (xxx) The antagonism of this true Christian spirit is called by Marmontel fanaticism: "a spirit of intolerance and persecution, a spirit of hatred and vengeance, entertained in behalf of a Deity whom men suppose to be incensed, and whose ministers they pretend to make themselves." (xxi) Jean François Marmontel, *The Incas or, the Destruction of the Empire of*

should “contribute [...] to bring this destructive fanaticism into still deeper and deeper detestation.”<sup>144</sup>

At the same time, despite Marmontel’s critique of Spanish brutality, his reprimand does not prevent him from believing in the natural inferiority of the Native Americans.<sup>145</sup> Therefore, in his romance, the Spaniard Alonzo urges the Peruvians to abolish their “barbaric” sun cult, which forbids him from marrying a Peruvian virgin consecrated to the sun god.

In Kotzebue’s play *Die Sonnenjungfrau*, however, it is not Alonzo but Cora, the Peruvian sun virgin, who bravely states her love to Alonzo and persuades the Inca to change the law of virginity in the end. In *Die Spanier in Peru*, it is Rolla, a Peruvian fighter, who is portrayed as a fearless hero. The Spaniards, either good or evil, do not

---

*Peru*, vol. 1 (Dublin: printed for Messrs. Price, Whitestone, W. Watson, R. Cross, Sleater [and 18 others in Dublin], 1777).

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, xxix.

<sup>145</sup> Marmontel himself agrees that: “The Indians, weak by constitution, and temperate by habit, exempt from passions, almost without wants, relaxed by inactivity, looked upon the labours that were enjoined them as intolerable; their patience wore out, and became exhausted with their strength: Flight, their only safeguard, stole them from oppression.” *Ibid.*, xii.

Marmontel’s critical voice is also accompanied by many other influential statements about the inferiority of the Native Americans and thus their enslavement in the eighteenth century. Along with the rising interests in explaining the natural and anthropological differences between Europe and the other parts of the world, thinkers such as Buffon, Bacon, Hume, Cornelius de Pauw, and others have articulated positive or negative opinions on the nature and native peoples in Americas and induced pan-European intellectual debates. De Pauw’s *Recherches philosophiques sur les Américains ou Mémoires intéressants pour servir à l’histoire de l’espèce humaine* (1768) influentially justifies the colonial enslavement of the native peoples by categorizing them neither as animal nor “normal” human beings but as degenerated beings. This attribution makes them thus suitable for slavery. See Gerbi, *The Dispute of the New World: the History of a Polemic 1750-1900*.

embody high-minded human qualities. Alonzo, the Spanish hero in Marmontel's romance, is portrayed by Kotzebue as indecisive and melancholic.

Then our questions become: why does Kotzebue assign the Peruvian characters such powerful positions, but not the Spaniards? What effects does this theatrical portrayal produce in terms of intercultural relationships? Should it propose alternative programs of appropriating, controlling, and feminizing new territories instead of using violence? Or does Kotzebue employ the remoteness and foreignness of the Peruvian culture to project certain idealized human values and morals, i.e. some positive social alternatives?

In the following analysis I demonstrate how Kotzebue deploys the exotic figure of Cora to challenge moral values in eighteenth-century Europe, to project utopian humanity, and to criticize colonial debauchery. In other words, if the Peruvian culture is twisted and altered in Kotzebue's play to serve his imaginative purposes, the German and other European audiences will also be transformed and challenged by the imagined Peruvians on stage.

### **3.4.2 Cora, the Ideal Woman**

*Die Sonnenjungfrau* stages a love story between the virgin Cora, consecrated to the sun cult, and the Spaniard Alonzo Molina. The plot of the play, however, is preceded by a series of background stories. In an expedition to Peru sponsored by the Spanish

crown, Alonzo strongly disagrees with the team leader Pizarro's cruelty and his plan to plunder the Incan Empire. Therefore Alonzo opts for staying in Peru and helping the indigenous people. He states his intention clearly: "Ich will hingehen, [...] der Freund und Lehrer dieses gutmüthigen Volkes zu werden. Ich will ihren Geist bilden, ihnen nützliche Künste mittheilen, ich will ihr Wohlthäter sein."<sup>146</sup>

Both the Inca Ataliba and his people welcome Alonzo. In a battle against another kingdom, Alonzo rescues the life of Ataliba and thus gains the trust and friendship of the Inca. One day at a sun feast, Alonzo meets the sun virgin Cora, who, according to the sun cult, is not allowed to love and have sexual relationships with men. A violation of this law will be punished with death not only for the virgin but also for her lover and her whole family. Cora and Alonzo thus desperately love each other. An unexpected earthquake, however, breaks the wall of the sun temple and makes it possible for them to come together. Aware of the dangers they face and at the same time ashamed of his behavior, Alonzo becomes melancholic and hopeless. At the same time, Rolla, a brave commander in Ataliba's service, has fervently loved Cora for years. Yet before Cora meets Alonzo, she rejects Rolla's love and decides to become a sun virgin. As the play starts, all this has already happened. The breaking news now is that Cora is pregnant, which adumbrates that their relationship faces inevitable disaster. Yet the plot does not

---

<sup>146</sup> August von Kotzebue, "Die Sonnenjungfrau," in *Theater von August von Kotzebue* (Vienna and Leipzig: Ignaz Klang and Eduard Kummer, 1840), 15.

develop into a tragic ending but turns out to produce a miracle-like happy reunion: As Ataliba wants to announce the death sentence to Cora and Alonzo, Rolla and Alonzo's friend Juan Velasquez lead a revolt to the sun temple and demand that the king forgive the lovers. Cora persuades Rolla to surrender and let the king judge. Ataliba, who has already sympathized with Cora, Alonzo, and Rolla but feels compelled by convention, now finally decides to absolve them and abrogate the law: "Vernichtet sei das Gesetz! Cora frei!"<sup>147</sup>

Throughout the play, love, the representative for inner emotions and strong human sentiments, is held higher than any other values such as religion and cultural identities. I first show how this message is carried out by Cora. Within the immanent structure of the play, we can raise the question: can this story remain the same if Alonzo, the Spaniard, is not involved? Why did Kotzebue not simply write a play set entirely within the Peruvian community? In other words, if there had been no Spanish invasion, could the law be changed at all? In order to respond to these questions, I also discuss Alonzo's foreignness in the play. For Kotzebue's audiences, however, the foreignness is not represented by Alonzo but rather by Cora and her culture. What impact, then, do Cora and her culture exert upon German and European theater spectators in the eighteenth century? What is the function of gender with respect to cultural belongings?

---

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 117.

Why is the man a Spaniard and the woman from Peru? Can we imagine a European female and an exotic male person in such relationship? Does this play imagine a relationship controlled by European colonial powers? Does it psychologically prepare and justify a European superiority? Or rather: does it reflect a nearly utopian wish of the playwright and his audiences to change their own society, which is stimulated by the challenges posed by different cultural values and practices? Let us begin with Cora.

#### **3.4.2.1 Cora's Partisanship**

Cora, as the title of the drama suggests, is portrayed as the center of the conflict. Instead of calling her the most impressive character, we should admit the pure simplicity or even partisanship of her characterization. In her eyes, her devotion to the divinity of the sun is not at all in contradiction with her love and sexuality. The social or divine convention of virginity rarely overshadows her love to Alonzo.

As Cora tells Alonzo that she is pregnant, Alonzo feels even more desperate about their future. To his surprise, however, Cora remains happy and quiet. She asks him:

Was fürchtest du? Ist Mutter werden ein Verbrechen? Gewiß nicht! Mein alter Vater hat mich immer gelehrt: wer ein Verbrechen begeht, dem ist nicht wohl zu Muthe! Und mir – mir ist wohl!<sup>148</sup>

---

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 25.

Alonzo reminds her of the strict rules of the temple of the sun and the divine consecration. Yet Cora disagrees and argues: "Wem die Tugend heilig ist, der bedarf keines Gesetzes, er erfüllt ein jedes, ohne es zu wissen. – Mir ist die Tugend heilig."<sup>149</sup> In Cora's statement, the external laws are valid only if the internal conscience approves of them. In other words, the divinity of the sun cult is in her eyes not an institutional authority or an absolute convention agreed upon by a collective community but rather a connection between her own perception, sentiments and an abstract humanity represented by virtue. Her individualistic anthropomorphism transforms the biological restriction of the quality of virgin into a realm of subjective acknowledgement.

### 3.4.2.2 The Overcoming of Religious Differences

Throughout the play, cultural differences are represented as religious differences – between Christianity represented by Alonzo and the sun cult by Cora and other priests. Love is granted the power to overcome the boundaries between the Spaniards and the Peruvians. As Cora asks Alonzo to kneel down with her and pray to the sun, Alonzo hesitates: "Ich anbeten? – liebe Cora, die Sonne ist nicht mein Gott."<sup>150</sup> Yet Cora answers:

O ja! ja! sie ist auch dein Gott! sie scheint über uns alle! Sie gibt uns Nahrung und Licht und Wärme. [...] Undankbarer! wer gab dir Cora? – Soll ich im Angesichte meines Gottes mich deiner schämen? Guter Alonzo, wenn du mich liebst – [...]<sup>151</sup>

---

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 34.

Alonzo then follows her request and prays for the sun. Religious differences between Christianity and the sun cult are portrayed as an unessential exteriority. In other words, the cultural codes which a religion represents and determines are superfluous and dispensable in comparison to an interpersonal relationship defined by intimacy and sexuality. Love, the connection between these two human beings, reflects intrinsic purity and humanity.

### 3.4.2.3 Alonzo's Foreignness

In the course of the play, Alonzo is often referred to as the *Fremdling* (foreigner). This labeling has two dimensions: on the one hand, his foreignness could prevent him from being punished as severely as Cora. His friend Juan persuades him to end this relationship by stressing that Cora is much more endangered than him.<sup>152</sup> In fact, the Inca Ataliba refers to Alonzo's foreignness in order to save his life: "Alonzo! sprich, du seist ein Fremdling – habest nicht gewußt – dir sei Gesetz und Strafe unbekannt gewesen."<sup>153</sup> Yet Alonzo refuses to use his foreignness to save his life and demonstrates his love to Cora in spite of death. His foreignness, indeed, shows his sincerity and the power of their forbidden love, which induces the radical change of the law of virginity.

---

<sup>152</sup> JUAN. Deine Gefahr? Vergib mir, Freund! du kömst hier wenig in Betrachtung. Deine Gefahr gegen die ihrige ist eine Flaumfeder gegen eine Goldstange. Du wagst nur dein Leben – [...] Sie hingegen, sie wagt ihre Ehre, ihre Ruhe, den Segen ihres Vaters, die Liebe ihrer Familie, ihre Aussichten auf Seligkeit! Und endlich! welch ein schrecklicher Tod ist ihr Loos, wenn du vielleicht einem Geschöpfe das Dasein gabst, das an eurer Liebe zum Verräther wird. *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

While his foreignness may protect him from being punished, Alonzo's foreignness also demonstrates his "superiority." As we have noticed above, he intends to teach the Peruvians useful skills (*nützliche Künste*). His intention is recognized with thankfulness by the most powerful people of the empire. A senior priest, Xaira, disagrees with the king who allows Alonzo to attend the sun feast. The head priest, however, argues:

Hast du vergessen, daß unser König ihm sein Leben verdankt? Daß er die Völker von Quito zum Schrecken ihrer Feinde machte, indem er sie in geschlossenen Gliedern fechten lehrte? daß er uns auch in mancher nützlichen Kunst des Friedens unterwiesen hat?<sup>154</sup>

We can interpret Kotzebue's portrayal of the technical superiority of the Spaniard as an enunciation of colonial mentality and a justification of the supremacy of Spanish and European civilization. Yet Alonzo is portrayed as a friendly and practical foreigner rather than a manipulative colonizer with subjective disdain toward the Peruvians. It is definitely true that we should not ignore the enunciation of the alleged Eurocentrism in Kotzebue's play, yet it is also necessary not to exaggerate its significance. We need rather to switch the perspective centered on the European impact on colonial differences and ask the question: what does Cora, the central figure in the play and the representative of cultural differences, mean to audiences in eighteenth-century German-speaking communities and beyond?

---

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., 65.

As has been shown, Alonzo has a privileged position among the Peruvians due to his foreignness. He also demonstrates his true love to Cora, but he remains melancholic and passive throughout the play. Therefore Cora is actually the person who is the driving force behind the abrogation of the law of virginity. A connection between Cora's function and the symbolic meaning of earthquakes in the cultural history of the eighteenth century illustrates the radicalness of changes introduced by Cora's story, the power of happy endings, and also the challenges posed by cultural differences in general.

#### **3.4.2.4 Earthquake and the Revolution of Morals: the Image of an Ideal Woman**

Kotzebue employs an earthquake to break the walls in order to make Alonzo and Cora's love real. Cora tells the female priest about how her love story starts:

Erinnerst du dich jenes fürchterlichen Tages, als vor wenig Monden die Gebirge umher Feuer spien, und das Meer kochte, und die Erde bebte? Mancher Palast wurde zum Schutthaufen, selbst das heilige Gebäude des Sonnentempels borst an zwei Stellen, die Ringmauer drohte den Einsturz. [...] Da erlauschte der kühne Alonzo im dicksten Gebüsch einen Riß in der Mauer, wagte sich hinauf, ein Stein um den andern schoß unter seinen Füßen herab, hier öffnet sich die Erde, und dort mein Arm, ihn zu empfangen.<sup>155</sup>

For a learned man such as Kotzebue in the eighteenth century, an earthquake symbolizes an unexpected catastrophe beyond human imagination. The earthquake which destroyed Lisbon in 1755 provoked enormous intellectual debates and fervent interests in geography and seismology. In Voltaire's novel *Candide* (1759), the

---

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 41-42.

protagonist shouts amidst the earthquake in Lisbon: "The end of the world is here."<sup>156</sup>

Heinrich von Kleist's novella *Das Erdbeben in Chili* (1807, *The Earthquake in Chile*) also registers the devastating power of an earthquake on nature as well on human heart and sentiments. Immanuel Kant reflects on the cathartic impact of earthquakes on human morals in 1756:

Alles, was die Einbildungskraft sich Schreckliches vorstellen kann, muß man zusammen nehmen, um das Entsetzen sich einigermaßen vorzubilden, darin sich die Menschen befinden müssen, wenn die Erde unter ihren Füßen bewegt wird, wenn alles um sie her einstürzt, wenn ein in seinem Grunde bewegtes Wasser das Unglück durch Überströmungen vollkommen macht, wenn die Furcht des Todes, die Verzweiflung wegen des völligen Verlusts aller Güter, endlich der Anblick anderer Elenden den standhaftesten Muth niederschlagen. Eine solche Erzählung würde rührend sein, sie würde, weil sie eine Wirkung auf das Herz hat, vielleicht auch eine auf die Besserung desselben haben können. Allein ich überlasse diese Geschichte geschickteren Händen.<sup>157</sup>

It is not known if Kotzebue had read this passage by Kant and was thus influenced to write such an *Erzählung* (story) involving an earthquake to improve the human heart and morals. Yet clearly, Kotzebue was influenced by the discourse on earthquakes and strived to use the revolutionizing effects of an earthquake to convey the message of this love story: to imagine something unimaginable which radically challenges social customs and norms, to break the boundaries of religious and cultural differences between Cora and Alonzo, and to celebrate human sentiments and love.

---

<sup>156</sup> Voltaire, *Candide, or, Optimism*, trans. Theo Cuffe, Deluxe ed. (New York: Penguin Books, 2005), 14.

<sup>157</sup> Immanuel Kant, "Geschichte und Naturbeschreibung der merkwürdigsten Vorfälle des Erdbebens, welches an dem Ende des 1755sten Jahres einen großen Theil der Erde erschüttert hat " in *Vorkritische Schriften I: 1747-1756* (Berlin: Reimer, 1910), 434.

Although Cora welcomes the earthquake of love and challenges the authority of the law of virginity, she persuades Rolla to put down his arms to accept the sovereignty of the Inca. She says to Rolla: "Ich bin stolz auf deine Liebe. – Und nun zu unsers guten Königs Füßen! komm'! o komm'! das dein Triumph der Tugend nicht halb gefeiert werde."<sup>158</sup> Clearly, Cora does not agree with Rolla who leads a revolt to the sun temple in order to save her life, but she rather recognizes the benevolent rule of the Inca.<sup>159</sup> That is say, what should be changed is not the regime per se but rather the law of virginity. This scene prepares Ataliba's absolution of the lovers and shows once again Cora's steadfast character and her faith in the purity of her love.

Therefore the image of Cora demonstrates an ideal of a woman who is not someone with a pure body, i.e. a virgin, and a pure mind, i.e. devotional; she is not someone from a relatively wealthy household, or a fallen woman who then has the strength to face death, such as Lessing's Emilia Galloti or Goethe's Stella. Rather she is a woman who violates the law of virginity, praises the power of passionate love, and compels authority to change laws and social morals. This new image of an ideal woman, however, is hardly imaginable if she is not from a different culture. In other words, the

---

<sup>158</sup> Kotzebue, "Die Sonnenjungfrau," 115.

<sup>159</sup> This scene reflects Kotzebue's attitude toward the French Revolution. Shortly after the storming of the Bastille, Kotzebue arrived in Paris and disapproved the chaotic situation in France. *Die Sonnenjungfrau* is first performed in Reval on December 8<sup>th</sup>, 1789, only five months later than the Storming of the Bastille on July 14<sup>th</sup>, 1789. Therefore Cora's success in persuading Rolla to obey the Inca clearly demonstrates Kotzebue's position towards political authority.

recognition of this radically different image of woman, the happy ending, is only possible through Cora's cultural otherness.

#### 3.4.2.5 Colonial Desire or the Impact of Cultural Differences

In his insightful study *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*, Robert Young shows with ample evidence that European cultural products in the nineteenth century reflecting heterosexual relationships between different races and cultures usually imagine a relationship of a powerful white man and a woman from non-European cultures. Young explains this kind of collective cultural fantasy as colonial desire, which, by representing the operation of colonialism, functions as an indispensable part of capitalism: a desiring machine.<sup>160</sup>

At first glance, *Die Sonnenjungfrau* seems to fit the model of representation defined by colonial desire – a white man leads and controls an exotic woman, yet the active role of Cora and the melancholic Alonzo actually make this application more complicated. In Marmontel's romance, it is Alonzo who delivers a powerful speech in front of the Inca and persuades him to abrogate the law of virginity.<sup>161</sup> In Kotzebue's conception, however, it is Cora who insists on her love and endeavors to break the

---

<sup>160</sup> See Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*.

<sup>161</sup> Jean François Marmontel, *The Incas or, the Destruction of the Empire of Peru*, vol. 2 (Dublin: printed for Messrs. Price, Whitestone, W. Watson, R. Cross, Sleater [and 18 others in Dublin], 1777), 129-40.

boundaries of cultural differences and lawful punishment, whereas Alonzo never suggests anything to improve their situation.

By giving the active role to Cora, the play demonstrates the imagination of an intercultural order determined by a Peruvian woman rather than an order controlled by a Spanish man. In other words, the male fantasy reflected in colonial desire is displaced by a euphoric vision of an ideal woman from an exotic culture. Therefore, instead of enunciating the will of colonial control, *Die Sonnenjungfrau* performs the power of a Native American culture, which is dismissed to be effeminate and inferior to the Europeans during and after Kotzebue's time.<sup>162</sup> Furthermore, the love story of Cora and Alonzo demonstrates less Alonzo's education of the Peruvians than the impact of Cora's love and Ataliba's benevolence on Alonzo's fate.

Surely, it is Kotzebue who employs the Peruvian woman Cora, not the Spaniard Alonzo, to make the radical change happen, to enable the utopian happy ending, and to fulfill Kotzebue's vision of love, sexuality, and political benevolence. However, the popularity of Cora and Alonzo's story among eighteenth-century writers reveals that the non-European cultures penetrated into the consciousness of European intellectuals to induce them to recodify and reimagine society, sexuality, and authority on a national as well as international scale.

---

<sup>162</sup> See footnote 10.

### 3.4.3 Rolla, the Ideal Man

After the happy union of Alonzo and Cora, *Die Spanier in Peru, oder Rollas Tod* stages the war between Pizarro's Spanish troops and the Inca in Quito. If *Die Sonnenjungfrau* portrays the ideal woman, then this play depicts the ideal man: Rolla. Different from Marmontel's original story and other adaptations, Kotzebue invents this new character who "outrivals Alonzo in heroism."<sup>163</sup> Alonzo, portrayed as a hero in Marmontel's fiction, remains melancholic and lacks resoluteness and deed in *Spanier in Peru* as well as in *Die Sonnenjungfrau*. While the love story of Cora and Alonzo displays the transformation of one relatively stable cultural environment to new human conditions, Rolla's heroism and utopian humanity are shaped in the context of a clash between two different cultures, representing two different sets of moral values. The play articulates a harsh critique of colonial brutality, praises benevolence, tolerance, and even extends an invitation to a peaceful coexistence of the Peruvians and the Spaniards.

As the play sets off, Pizarro plans to attack the Inca's camp because the Peruvians are now busy with the sacrificial ceremony for the sun god. When he discusses his plans with other leaders in his troops, Las Casas reproaches the rapaciousness and cruelty of the Spaniards. Las Casas's humanistic ideals strongly appeal to Elvira, Pizarro's mistress. Although she knows that Pizarro intends to marry the princess of the Inca after the

---

<sup>163</sup> Price, *The Vogue of Marmontel on the German Stage*, 91.

conquest in order to guarantee his control over Peru through generations, she still admires Pizarro's spirit of adventure and courage. She endeavors to persuade Pizarro to give up his plans of violent conquest. Yet she repeatedly receives Pizarro's scornful remark that she is a woman (*Weib*) and does not understand the real essence of the conquest.

In the Peruvian camp, Alonzo and Cora now have a baby. The minute before Alonzo departs for the battle field, he asks Rolla to be his heir and take care of Cora and their son. Rolla promises to do so. Although the Peruvians win the battle due to Rolla's insurmountable courage and fighting abilities, Alonzo is caught by the Spaniards. Pizarro sees Alonzo as a traitor and demands his death. After Elvira fails to convince Pizarro to set Alonzo free, she decides to kill Pizarro and rescues Alonzo for the sake of humanity.

As Cora learns that Alonzo is captured, she irrationally decides to go to the Spanish camp to rescue him. Yet as Rolla tries to soothe her mood and tells her Alonzo's last word, Cora accuses him of not helping Alonzo on the battle ground with the intention to possess her. Rolla therefore decides to sacrifice his life to rescue Alonzo and show Cora his innocence and love. He sneaks into Alonzo's prison disguised under a monk's robe and also enables Alonzo to flee in the same way. Elvira, who aims to let Alonzo kill Pizarro while sleeping, now leads Rolla to Pizarro's bedroom. Rolla, instead

of killing him, tells Pizarro that he, a man with noble virtue, would not kill other people in sleep, but he has saved Alonzo and thus Pizarro should sentence him to death. Rolla also extends an invitation to Pizarro to live with the Peruvians in peace. Pizarro is moved by Rolla's heroism and decides to set him free. At this moment, two soldiers bring Cora's baby, whom she puts under a tree while looking for Alonzo. Pizarro thus wants to use this child to suppress the Inca to surrender. Rolla, however, takes away the child by force and flees to the Peruvian camp. After he hands over the child and claims his innocence to Cora, he dies due to severe injury.

As the plot summary already tells us, Rolla plays the central role in bringing the separated family together. The superman Rolla has at least three major traits: first, his love for Cora is completely selfless and altruistic; second, his braveness and fighting skills are insurmountable; third, his high-mindedness even surpasses that of Las Casas, Alonzo, Cora, and Ataliba because he even invites his enemy Pizarro to live peacefully with the Peruvians. These three aspects construct a utopian humanity, set against the negatively depicted Spanish colonial practices.

Examining the overall configuration of the character Rolla, his Peruvian traits have a decisive function in transmitting the utopian human qualities for Kotzebue's audiences. In other words, the radically different cultural connotation exemplifies the model of the perfect human being in Kotzebue's time and place. Even more explicit than

in *Die Sonnenjungfrau*, we clearly perceive how cultural otherness, even if it is remodified and changed for the purpose of the author, powerfully intervenes in the process of projecting and forging cultural and anthropological norms, values, and ideals for the future.

In order to understand how Rolla represents utopian qualities, it is indispensable to first demonstrate how other characters in this play also criticize Spanish colonial practices. These characters prepare the audience to appreciate Rolla's heroic deeds.

### 3.4.3.1 Las Casas's Colonial Critique and Universal Humanity

Doubtlessly, Las Casas is the spiritual resource for the critique of colonial brutality. In the Spanish camp, Alonzo and Elvira are strongly influenced by Las Casas. Elvira disputes with Pizarro's consultant Valverde about Las Casas's spiritual power:

ELVIRA [...] Geh', geh', im ganzen Lager ist nicht einer, der so redet wie er denkt, den alten Las Casa ausgenommen.

VALVERDE. Nenne diesen Schwärmer nicht. Er träumt von Menschlichkeit und Duldung.

ELVIRA Weißt du, daß es Augenblicke gibt, wo dieses Greises Träumereien mein Herz gewaltig fassen? Daß ich seinen grauen Bart oft küssen möchte, als deine braune Wange? Daß ich Nächte hindurch schwelgen muß, um einen lästigen Eindruck zu verlöschen?<sup>164</sup>

Pizarro's account of Alonzo's change also proves, though negatively, Las Casas's influence:

---

<sup>164</sup> Kotzebue, "Die Spanier in Peru, oder: Rollas Tod," 212.

Las Casas erschien mit seiner glatten Zunge, entrückte ihn in höhere Sphären, berauschte ihn durch Schwärmerei, und von Stund' an müht' ich mich vergebens, ihn aus seinem Wolkenschloß auf die wirkliche Welt herabzuziehen.<sup>165</sup>

The so-called *Schwärmerei* (excessive enthusiasm) by Las Casas are his harsh condemnation of the Spanish colonial bloodiness and his praise of the generosity of the native people:

Ist das Blutmaß eurer Grausamkeit noch nicht voll? Diese Kinder frommer Unschuld, die euch gastfrei aufnahmen, wann haben sie genug gelitten? [...] Werft einen Blick auf die Millionen Schlachtopfer, von eurer Raubsucht nothlos gewürgt. Als Götter wurdet ihr empfangen, als Teufel kamt ihr unter sie! Gern und fröhlich gab man euch Gold und Früchte, ihr schändert zum Dank Weibe und Töchter. Die Menschheit empörte sich, die Unterdrückten murrten; da richtete man Hunde ab, sie zu hetzen. Wen diese höllische Jagd noch übrig ließ, der wurde vor den Pflug gespannt, sein eig'nes Feld für euch zu ackern, oder in die Goldminen begraben, um euren nimmer satten Geiz zu sättigen.<sup>166</sup>

Apparently, Las Casas finds fault with what has been done by the Spaniards in the Americas.

What he advocates, however, is not a complete withdrawal from the colonized lands, but rather, as he proposes:

O sendet mich vorher noch einmal zu den Feinden! läßt mich Worte des Friedens reden, unsere heilige Religion mit Sanftmuth predigen.<sup>167</sup>

His religious gentleness (*Sanftmuth*) intends not only to prevent further ferocious interactions but also to negotiate a form of coexistence of both the Peruvians and the Spaniards. In other words, what Las Casas pursues is not an absolute refusal of

---

<sup>165</sup> Ibid., 215.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., 221-22.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., 223.

colonialism, but a different form or manner to achieve lands, wealth, and Christian conversion. Therefore, in the play as well as in the historical situation, if the religious justification by Pizarro for his violent conquest turns out to be a disguise for his greed for power and money, then Las Casas's critique bears the ontological limits of certain Christian doctrines, which conceive of the world as monocentric and rarely tolerate different values.<sup>168</sup>

Yet in Kotzebue's play, the religious limits separating the Peruvians and the Spanish conquerors develop into a universal fraternity. In the play, after the guard pities Alonzo that he becomes a pagan by marrying Cora and living among the savages, Alonzo reflects:

Armer Mensch! er weiß nicht, was er spricht. Gott! du schufst die Rebe für den Spanier und die Batana für den Peruaner. Deine Wasserströme befeuchten die Fluren am Fuße der Pyrenäen, wie am Fuße der Cordilleras. Du hast das Kreuz auf unsern Altären zum Sinnbild deiner Huld gemacht; doch Du lächelst auch der Sonne auf der Brust der Incas.<sup>169</sup>

Alonzo's reflection on the interrelatedness of different cultures articulates a universalism according to which religious and cultural differences between the Spaniards and the

---

<sup>168</sup> In a conversation between Valverde and a Peruvian, Valverde claims: "Wir bringen euch die einzige wahre Religion." Ibid., 227. Studying the historical conditions and comparing the Spanish and the Peruvian accounts of the conquest, Gonzalo Lamana contends that "Peru's conquerors' way of self-identifying was clearly a choice, not just the natural way of doing it. It did not respond to the Indians they were interacting with but was an attempt to shape the way in which they were perceived back home; their audiences were Spanish and European." (123) Therefore Las Casas's critique based on Christian doctrines proves to be an internal critique which does not go beyond the epistemological framework of Christianity, to which the conquerors also refer. See Lamana, "Of Books, Popes, and Huacas; Or, the Dilemmas of Being Christian."

<sup>169</sup> Kotzebue, "Die Spanier in Peru, oder: Rollas Tod," 275.

Peruvians become indifferent and no longer pertinent. As Alonzo tells Cora that he is unwilling to fight against his brothers, Cora replies: "Wollen sie nicht unsern Untergang? Alle Menschen sind deine Brüder."<sup>170</sup> Similar to Lessing's famous play *Nathan der Weise*, which is seen as the prototypical enunciation of tolerance of religious differences between Christians, Jews and Muslims, Alonzo and Cora's thoughts here not only endeavor to erase the boundaries between the Spaniards and the Peruvians in their transcultural and transreligious marriage but also enhance the consciousness of a human unity despite all kinds of differences. It is "an absorption of an evident natural difference into something that is beyond that difference."<sup>171</sup>

Apart from Alonzo and Cora, the community which represents this universal humanity in the play is the Peruvians, just as Alonzo suggests to Elvira: "du taugst nicht unter diese Menschen. Geh' zu den sogenannten Wilden, dort wirst du deine Heimath finden."<sup>172</sup> The phrasing of "the so-called savages (*die sogenannten Wilden*)" negates the apathetic trait of being savage and transcends the established separation between civilization and barbarism. It refers to a universality of humanity. The hero from this community, representing, practicing, and fighting for the universal humanity, is Rolla.

---

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., 231.

<sup>171</sup> Adam S. Miller Alain Badiou, "An Interview with Alain Badiou: Universal Truths and the Question of Religion," *Journal of Philosophy and Scripture* 3, no. 1 (2005): 38.

<sup>172</sup> Kotzebue, "Die Spanier in Peru, oder: Rollas Tod," 267.

### 3.4.3.2 Rolla's Heroism: Love, Braveness, and Invitation to Pizarro

While the noble savage, denoting the state of being uncivilized and naïve in comparison with the Europeans, is ample in Kotzebue's other plays such as *Bruder Moritz* or *Indianer in England*, Rolla is different in this drama. He is portrayed with all positive and idealized values.

First, he is the ideal man because his love to Cora is selfless and without any interest of possession. In *Die Sonnenjungfrau*, as Rolla learns that Cora is pregnant and loves Alonzo, he suggests that he flee with them to a friend of his in a remote region where they can escape the punishment. He is even willing to live with them and help to raise their children. His only goal is to make Cora happy.<sup>173</sup> As Elvira admires Rolla's deed of rescuing Alonzo as the true friendship, Rolla replies:

ROLLA Ich that es nicht aus Freundschaft. [...]

ELVIRA Hat dein König dich vielleicht nicht nach Verdienst belohnt?

ROLLA Über Verdienst. [...]

ELVIRA So kenne ich nur noch eine Leidenschaft, die dieses Wagestück unternehmen könnte.

ROLLA Nenne sie!

ELVIRA Die Liebe.

---

<sup>173</sup> See — — —, "Die Sonnenjungfrau," 43. Rolla says: "Ich will mit Euch ziehen. Ich habe da in einer wüsten Gegend, noch jenseits der blauen Gebirge, einen Freund, er ist Caziue über ein sanftes, gutes Völkchen, Untertan des Beherrschers von Cuzko, dem er mit seinen streitbaren Männern im letzten Kriege folgte. Damals nahm ich seinen schwer verwundeten Sohn gefangen, einen hoffungsvollen Jüngling. Unter meiner Pflege ward er geheilt, und ich sandt' ihn ohne Lösegeld dem Vater zurück. – Seit jenem Augenblicke wissen die guten Menschen nicht, wie sie mir ihre Dankbarkeit bezeigen sollen. Mit Entzücken wird man uns aufnehmen, und in ihren fernen Wäldern findet Eure Liebe eine sichere Freistatt. Dort will ich unter Euch wohnen, eure Kinder pflegen und erziehen, froh und glücklich sein, weil Cora glücklich ist, und einst von euch, brüderlich und schwesterlich beweint, heiter hinauf zu unserm Vater gehen."

ROLLA Errathen.<sup>174</sup>

At the end of the play, Rolla demonstrates his love and innocence by sacrificing his life:

ROLLA Cora! – dein Kind! –  
CORA Mein Kind! – mit Blut befleckt –  
ROLLA Es ist mein Blut.  
CORA Mein Kind! – Rolla! –  
ROLLA Ich liebte dich – du thatest mir Unrecht – ich kann nicht mehr! –  
ALONZO Rolla! du stirbst!  
ROLLA Für Cora – <sup>175</sup>

Rolla's love is purely subject to the needs and well-being of the person of his affections.

It is even more radical than Cora's love, which defies authority but still needs mutual recognition from Alonzo. Rolla's love does not demand recognition by Cora and thus does not appear as a competition with Alonzo either. His love is self-sacrificing and self-contained. It transcends the dependence in a love relationship, embodies a pure existence of this passion, and nearly represents itself as a utopian impulse.

His love is accompanied by his resoluteness. Thus the second dimension of Rolla's heroism is his predilection for actions and his braveness. The counterexample of this trait is offered by Alonzo. Although Alonzo loves Cora, his indecisiveness and lack of action only bring Cora into desperation and danger. In *Spanier in Peru*, Alonzo's melancholy prevents him from taking action. He asks Rolla to take care of his family before they both depart for the battle field:

---

<sup>174</sup> — — —, "Die Spanier in Peru, oder: Rollas Tod," 288.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid., 318.

ALONZO Falle aber ich allein, Rolla, dann bist du mein Erbe.  
 ROLLA Wie verstehst du das?  
 ALONZO Cora sei dein Weib, mein Kind das deinige.  
 ROLLA Es sei.  
 ALONZO Du reichst mir deine Hand darauf.  
 ROLLA Wenn Cora will.  
 ALONZO Du hinterbringst ihr meinen letzten Wunsch.  
 ROLLA Das werde ich.  
 ALONZO Und meinen Vatersegen dem Säugling an ihrer Brust.  
 ROLLA Genug, Freund! in der Stunde der Schlacht höre ich lieber ein Feldgeschrei, als  
 den letzten Willen eines Gatten und Vaters.  
 ALONZO Ich weiß nicht, welche Ahnung mich preßt. So war mir nie zu Muthe.  
 ROLLA Fort in die Schlacht!<sup>176</sup>

The contrast between Rolla and Alonzo is articulated through their different attitude toward the battle. While Alonzo is extremely concerned with being taken prisoner, Rolla's attention is more concentrated on fighting and winning the battle. Alonzo's indecisiveness prevents him from immediate actions at the urgent moment of enemy's attack.

Doubtlessly, Alonzo is not capable of leading the Peruvian troops to fight against Pizarro. Rolla's significance for the victory of the battle is irreplaceable. This aspect is first depicted through Pizarro's wrong belief that Alonzo is the person who teaches the Peruvians all the arts of war and leads them to defeat the Spaniards.

PIZARRO O Elvira! meine Hoffnung glimmt nur schwach, so lange dieser Alonzo, diese  
 Geisel meines Lebens, an der Spitze der Feinde steht.  
 ELVIRA Ach, das vergaß ich dir zu sagen: Alonzo ist gefangen.  
 PIZARRO Wie?

---

<sup>176</sup> Ibid., 238-39.

ELVIRA So eben hat ein Trupp der Uns'rigen ihn durch das ganze Lager im Triumph geschleppt.

PIZARRO (sie umarmend). Weib! welche Botschaft bringst du mir! – Alonzo gefangen? O, dann bin ich der Sieger! ich habe den Feind geschlagen!<sup>177</sup>

Pizarro's ecstasy, however, does not correspond with the real situation on the battle field.

His false belief negatively strengthens the image of Rolla's braveness and leadership.

In the play, a Peruvian boy sits on a tree observing the combat from a distance and depicts his grandfather Rolla's braveness on the battleground:

GREIS Rede. Knabe! was siehst du?

KNABE Freund und Feind, alles durcheinander.

GREIS Welcher weicht?

KNABE Keiner.

[...]

KNABE Ich erkenne Rolla.

ATALIBA Er steht?

KNABE Sein Schwert flimmert wie ein Blitz hier und dort.

GREIS Er ist der Götter Liebling.

ATALIBA Der Götter und Menschen.

KNABE Sie weichen.

GREIS Wer?

KNABE Die Feinde.<sup>178</sup>

Rolla is depicted as a man with supernatural ability, which distinguishes him from other characters, especially Alonzo, in the play.<sup>179</sup> At the end of the play, it is also Rolla who

---

<sup>177</sup> Ibid., 262-63.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid., 247.

<sup>179</sup> Another soldier reports that the victory can only be subscribed to Rolla at the moment when the Spaniards have nearly won the battle: "Rolla wand den Sieg aus des Siegers Händen. Rolla schien begeistert von einer höhern Macht. Als alles floh, und das Geschoß der Feinde die Fliehenden ereilte, ihr Schwert des Würgens müde war: da warf sich Rolla mitten in den Weg, er bat, er drohte, aus seinen Augen schossen Blitze, von seinen Lippen rollten Donner, dann wieder sanfte Worte wie der Schwanengesang. Bald kehrte er das Schwert gegen die Flüchtlingen, bald gegen eigene Brust. So hielt er auf, rief zurück, sammelte um sich die Verwirrten, ergriff die Fahne der Incas mit der Linken, und stürmte voran. Des Sieges schon gewiß,

rescues Alonzo and brings back Cora's child so that the play has a relatively happy ending. His death justifies at first glance a tragic ending, as Kotzebue himself calls this play "a romantic tragedy" (*ein romantisches Trauerspiel*). Upon closer examination, however, Rolla's death enables the reunion of Cora, Alonzo, and their child and the Inca Ataliba's independent regime. Moreover, the harmonious social order and humanistic morals, represented by the Peruvian community and the "foreigner" Alonzo, prove their validity and sustainability more through Rolla's heroic deeds than his death.

A third dimension which I will explore in Rolla's configuration is his invitation to Pizarro to live with the Peruvians in peace:

ROLLA Lebe friedlich unter uns, diene deinem Gott, wie wir dem uns'rigen, sei der  
Tugend Freund, und du bist der Meinige.  
PIZARRO Wenn ihr das schöne Ziel meiner Thaten, den Thron von Quito mir einräumt.  
ROLLA Nun ist's genug! Leb wohl!<sup>180</sup>

Rolla's invitation contains a belief in the coexistence of the Peruvians and the Spaniards despite their religious and cultural differences. Although other characters in the play also share the tolerant belief in this universal humanity, Rolla is the only one who extends his hands to Pizarro. Rolla's invitation and his emphasis on morals (*Tugend*), apart from criticizing Pizarro's conquest, also serves as the basis of an imagined new

---

plünderten die Spanier die Erschlagenen, ihre dichten Reihen waren getrennt. Rolla und die Götter an unserer Spitze, ein Augenblick entschied den Sieg. Hier stürzten die Feinde ohne Gegenwehr, dort flohen sie mit Angstgeschrei. Das Schlachtfeld war unser. Halt! rief Rolla. Triumph! jauchzte das Heer, und ich elite hieher." *Ibid.*, 248-49.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, 297.

community, for which cultural differences have become indifferent and are transcended into something universal. The representative of this new community is not the Spaniard Alonzo, but rather the Peruvian Rolla. Even Pizarro confesses that "This pagan is a hero."<sup>181</sup>

### 3.4.3.3 Colonial Fantasy or Exotic Utopia

Susanne Zantop's analysis of *Die Spanier in Peru* arrives at the conclusion that this play reflects Kotzebue's proposal of "a more peaceful alternative to the 'rape' of the land by greedy conquistadors."<sup>182</sup> For her, Rolla's death symbolizes the exclusion of the native male from the colonial family of Cora and Alonzo and thus enables Alonzo's perpetual colonial possession of the "Virgin (territory)."<sup>183</sup> One speech by Alonzo is used as evidence for Alonzo's colonial possession:

[S]ieh', wie alles grünt und blüht, wie hier die Pflugschar unbebaute Felder durchwühlt, und dort eine reiche Saat unserer Hoffnung entgegenreift, das ist mein Werk. Sieh', wie Zufriedenheit auf jeder Wange lächelt, weil Gerechtigkeit und Milde barbarische Gesetze tilgten, das ist mein Werk. Sieh', wie schon hier und dort Einer und der Andere Blicke voll hoher Andacht emporhebt nach dem einzigen wahren Gott! das ist mein Werk. Und Las Casas würde mich in seine Arme schließen, und eine Thräne, sanfter Wehmuth voll, würde Segen auf mich herabträufeln. Begreifst du nun, wie man dem Tode lächelnd trotzen kann?<sup>184</sup>

---

<sup>181</sup> "Aber dieser Heide ist ein Held [...]" Ibid., 298.

<sup>182</sup> Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies: Conquest, Family, and Nation in Precolonial Germany, 1770-1870*, 129.

<sup>183</sup> See Ibid., 132-34.

<sup>184</sup> Kotzebue, "Die Spanier in Peru, oder: Rollas Tod," 266.

In Zantop's eyes, this passage betrays the cultural hierarchy and the condescending and patronizing attitudes of the Spanish/European colonizers toward the native people.<sup>185</sup> There is no doubt that, similar to Alonzo's intention of teaching the Peruvians in *Die Sonnenjungfrau*, this passage describes and praises the achievements of the Spaniard Alonzo in Peru. Especially, the abrogation of "barbaric laws (*barbarische Gesetze*)" implies that Alonzo has brought the opposite of barbarism to the Peruvians: civilization. Therefore, if we only observe this passage, Zantop's interpretation of colonial fantasy is definitely insightful. If the singularity of this colonial fantasy in the play and the abundant articulation of the universal humanity through Rolla's ideal characteristics do not suffice to downplay the significance of the colonial fantasy demonstrated by this passage, then we at least need to add the power of Rolla to balance this interpretive attempt. In other words, to see this play as the articulation of a collective German dream of colonial conquest merely recognizes the agency of the wishful conquerors and assign the other party only to a position of receiving sympathy. The "exotic" and his community thus lose the chance to assert their impact.

---

<sup>185</sup> She contends: "The attractiveness of the European benefactor only thinly disguises the cultural hierarchy at the heart of Kotzebue's colonial romance. Despite the play's appeals to the brotherhood of all men, the Europeans' patronizing and condescending discourse reveals the difference between brother and brother, man and woman, and the right of the one over the body and mind of the other." Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies: Conquest, Family, and Nation in Precolonial Germany, 1770-1870*, 131.

As I have shown, the celebration of humanistic ideals, represented by Rolla, is strongly articulated and deeply registered in the architecture and the character setting of the play. Therefore, instead of or at least besides propagating colonial fantasies, Kotzebue's drama employs Rolla's exotic quality to project some ideals of being human. The geographical remoteness of Peru, the distinction of its culture and religion, yet the affinity of morals and heroism between the good Spaniards and the Peruvians in the play make Rolla most desirable for Kotzebue's audiences. In this respect, the idealized Peruvian culture not only presents a critique of the violent Spanish colonization but also poses a challenge to the general morals of being human.

Rolla's death perpetuates the differences between the values Pizarro follows and those the Peruvians, Alonzo, Las Casas, and Elvira represent. (To the contrary, the happy ending in *Die Sonnenjungfrau* abolishes the differences between the law of virginity and Cora and Alonzo's love affair.)<sup>186</sup> Rolla's death makes the exotic ideal man even more desirable than a living one because the death suggests the danger of the disappearance of these values and thus appeals to the audiences to follow Rolla's path. Here again, even if Rolla does not embody the authentic Peruvian culture and rather is

---

<sup>186</sup> See Alain Badiou, "An Interview with Alain Badiou: Universal Truths and the Question of Religion," 39. Badiou's idea of universalism and differences is inspiring for the statements about Kotzebue's plays. Badiou contends that universalism always means to go beyond evident differences and separations. He explains: "Galileo does not say that there is no natural movement or that we can't have an experience of natural movement, but that from the point of view of the new physics, the distinction between natural and artificial movements is no longer pertinent."

an altered and twisted hero to accommodate Kotzebue's purposes, the Peruvian hero represents an utopian humanity which challenges the morality common in Kotzebue's time and place and critiques colonial greed and brutality of Spanish and other European colonizations, as we can see in Kotzebue's *Negersklaven* (1795) or *Indianer in England* (1789), Diderot's *Supplement au voyage de Bougainville* (1771/1796), or Raynal's *L'Histoire philosophique* (1770).

There is no doubt that the impact of the imagined exotic cultures on the process of forging and projecting positive social alternatives, moral values among Kotzebue's audiences is exemplarily registered through the widespread and sustaining popularity of his Peru dramas. Furthermore, the popularity of the material of Spanish colonialism in the Americas among European intellectuals, as shown in the introduction to this chapter, manifests that the Empire is not writing back, as these eighteenth-century texts demonstrate – the Empire is always incorporating and constituting the German and European identities.

### **3.5 Concluding Remarks**

In this chapter, I focus on the function of the non-European characters and settings in five plays by Kotzebue in order to argue that these plays represent the compelling non-European alternative to European cultures in the eighteenth century. Kotzebue creatively draws on widespread colonial materials such as the story of Inkle

and Yarico or the Spanish conquest of Peru and gives them his own original and complex interpretation. Yet we cannot deny that some moments in these stories also express a condescending attitude toward the non-European world and thus help to justify the superiority of Europe and the logic of colonial control and domination. Kotzebue's plays are not merely a passive documentary record of the geopolitical conditions of his time: they actively produce knowledge, question current value systems, and imagine the *still unstable* intercultural and interracial relationships. This is the incommensurable individuality of Kotzebue's literary imagination, whose vast popularity testifies to a collective desire within European cultures.

Kotzebue's plays demonstrate plentiful moments of emotional excesses and hyperbolic clashes of ethical values: Cora's violation of the law of virginity and Ataliba's absolution of the lovers, Rolla's self-sacrificing love to Cora and his heroic deeds of saving the lives of Alonzo and his son from Pizarro's evil plans, Moritz's marriage with a fallen lower-class woman, or Gurli's sudden change of mind at the moment of signing the marriage contract. The melodramatic good and evil are vividly personified and most of the *dramatis personae* are intensively characterized.<sup>187</sup> As I have shown, the so-called exotic characters play an indispensable role in transforming almost all moral conflicts to happy unions and reunions of families, lovers, and friends. In other words, with the

---

<sup>187</sup> Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama, and the Mode of Excess*, 16.

“help” of cultural otherness, a disturbed or imperfect social order is purged, and nearly utopian ethical imperatives are made clear.

Walter Benjamin’s concept of *Vergrößerung* (enlargement) is helpful to illustrate how Kotzebue’s dramas produce the melodramatic effects. In *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit*, Benjamin writes:

Und so wenig es bei der Vergrößerung dessen handelt, was man „ohnehin“ undeutlich sieht, sondern vielmehr völlig neue Strukturbildungen der Materie zum Vorschein kommen, so wenig bringt die Zeitlupe nur bekannte Bewegungsmotive zum Vorschein, sondern sie entdeckt in diesen bekannten ganz unbekannte, „die gar nicht als Verlangsamungen schneller Bewegungen, sondern als eigentümlich gleitende, schwebende, überirdische wirken.“ [...] Vom Optisch-Unbewußten erfahren wir erst durch sie [die Kamera], wie von dem Triebhaft-Unbewußten durch die Psychoanalyse.<sup>188</sup>

Similarly, Kotzebue’s colonial melodrama works by enlarging certain moments in everyday life. His plays wrest forth the quotidian motifs from the façade of their longer duration, shorten their process and development, and offer the enlargement of their structures in a lurid and shocking way. Although Kotzebue’s strategy of evoking melodramatic effects is not exactly the Benjaminian enlargement of the miniature, it resembles the intensification of effects and the reinvention of meaning which the cinematic strategy also intends to call forth. Cultural and colonial differences such as the

---

<sup>188</sup> Walter Benjamin, “Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit,” in *Illuminationen*, ed. Siegfried Unseld (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977), 162.

Translation: “With the close-up, space expands; with slow motion, movement is extended. The enlargement of a snapshot does not simply render more precise what in any case was visible, though unclear: it reveals entirely new structural formations of the subject. So, too, slow motion not only presents familiar qualities of movement but reveals in them entirely unknown ones “which, far from looking like retarded rapid movements, give the effect of singularly gliding, floating, supernatural motions.” [...]The camera introduces us to unconscious optics as does psychoanalysis to unconscious impulses.”

Pelew Islands or Gurli's Indian background make operative the exaggerating and thus "enlarging" effects. In other words, enlargement, on the one hand, is an exaggerated, melodramatic representation of reality, but on the other hand, it also demonstrates incredible imaginations of another order of things.<sup>189</sup>

If the melodramatic mode is a central fact of modern sensibility, as Brooks argues, if bourgeois tragedy announces the advent of the bourgeois culture in Europe (Germany, France, and Britain) in the eighteenth century, then Kotzebue's melodramatic plays demonstrate that the modern sensibility and bourgeois consciousness are also determined and constituted by global colonialism and increasing intercultural exchanges around 1800.<sup>190</sup> In other words, cultural and colonial differences are the central locus of the melodramatic clash and exploding enlargement. Kotzebue's colonial melodramas showcase that the formation of cultural and social identity in Europe at the end of the eighteenth century is not only an internal struggle between bourgeoisie and aristocracy, but also proves to be a negotiation between intra-European and intercultural dynamics.

---

<sup>189</sup> Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama, and the Mode of Excess*, 8-23.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, 14-16. Guthke, *Das deutsche bürgerliche Trauerspiel*, 30-37.

## 4. The Universal and the Sentimental: Geohistorical Hierarchy and Anti-Colonial Critique in Johann Gottfried Herder's Philosophy of History

### 4. 1 Introduction: How Relativistic is Herder's Philosophy of History?

The recently published first companion to Johann Gottfried Herder's work in English laments the fact of Herder being "the famous nobody," a phrase accurately reflecting critics' habitual attitude of placing Herder under the shadow of Immanuel Kant and Kant's devastating reviews of Herder's life work on philosophy of history *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (1784-1791, *Ideas of a Philosophy of History of Humankind*).<sup>1</sup> Yet apart from this book's effort of resurrecting Herder as a serious thinker in intellectual history, Herder's name is well acknowledged as a reference for students of German nationalism and the xenophobic pan-German nation under the Nazi regime.<sup>2</sup> In fact, Herder's insistence on the uniqueness of language and literature and their effects on forming a cultural community with an organic tradition, called either *Volk* or *Nation*, shaped a common consciousness of German cultural identity around and after 1800.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Hans Adler and Wulf Koepke, ed. *A Companion to the Works of Johann Gottfried Herder* (Rochester, New York: Camden House, 2009).

<sup>2</sup> See Peter Viereck, *Metapolitics: from Wagner and the German Romantics to Hitler* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2004).

<sup>3</sup> Herder's essays on the origin of language and the impact of literature on cultural identity clearly articulate the ideas, which are later taken to be nationalistic. Herder's philosophy of history synthesizes all these

Outside Germany, Herder's work also supposedly exerted profound influence upon nationalist or decolonial movements in Hungary, the Balkans, Russia, and Argentina, which Pascale Casanova calls an international "Herder effect."<sup>4</sup> Casanova also refers to Herder's philosophy of history in the *Ideen*, which offers the idea of cultural autonomy and fuels the pride of national language and literature in and outside Germany.

Herder's idea of national or cultural uniqueness, developed in the context of German cultural aversion against French court culture in the eighteenth century and within the framework of Herder's philosophy of history, however, reaches beyond nationalist discourse and also inspires present-day discussions on multiculturalism. Ernst Cassirer attributes epoch-making significance to Herder's philosophy of history in his *Philosophie der Aufklärung* (1932, *Philosophy of the Enlightenment*). Cassirer argues that, different from many other Enlightenment thinkers such as Voltaire, Baron de Montesquieu, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, Marquis de Condorcet, David Hume, and William Robertson, Herder refuses to impose a set of absolute standards of human

---

nationalistic ideas within the realm of history. See Johann Gottfried Herder, *Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache*, ed. Ulrich Gaier, *Frühe Schriften 1764-1772* (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1985); — — —, *Über die Wirkung der Dichtkunst auf die Sitten der Völker in alten und neuen Zeiten*, ed. Jürgen Brummack and Martin Bollacher, vol. 4, *Johann Gottfried Herder: Schriften zu Philosophie, Literatur, Kunst und Altertum 1774-1787* (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1994).

<sup>4</sup> See Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004), 77-79.

felicity (*Glückseligkeit*) on other historical epochs.<sup>5</sup> Several critics of the next generation place the notion of cultural uniqueness in a transnational context and read it as Herder's cultural relativism, a thought legitimizing cultural differences and justifying every culture's existence.<sup>6</sup> Particularly in the context of globalization and cultural imperialism today, some recent studies no longer portray Herder as the founding father of a dubious German nationalism, but rather see him as the pioneer of an "offenen und überraschend modernen Kulturbegriffs."<sup>7</sup>

These scholars interpret Herder's universal philosophy of history as one of the most powerful voices against European imperialism in the eighteenth century.<sup>8</sup> As a matter of fact, Herder harshly critiques colonial atrocities, defies applying European standards to non-European cultures, and poignantly claims that "Negroes paint their devil white (*Der Neger malt den Teufel weiß*)."<sup>9</sup> It seems that we have discovered the real strength of Herder's philosophy of history for the current discourse of globalization and

---

<sup>5</sup> See Ernst Cassirer, *Die Philosophie der Aufklärung* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 2007), 206-44.

<sup>6</sup> See Fredrick C. Beiser, *The Fate of Reason: German Philosophy from Kant to Fichte* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 1987), 143. See Isaiah Berlin, *Three Critics of the Enlightenment: Vico, Hamann, Herder* (Princeton and London: Princeton University Press, 2000). See Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Herder und die geschichtliche Welt," in *Gesammelte Werke* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1987), 318-35. Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*, 36-43.

<sup>7</sup> Renate Stauff, "Johann Gottfried Herder: Europäische Kulturtheorie zwischen historischer Eigenart und globaler Perspektive," *Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift* 57(2007): 3.

<sup>8</sup> See Muthu, *Enlightenment against Empire*. See Stauff, "Johann Gottfried Herder: Europäische Kulturtheorie zwischen historischer Eigenart und globaler Perspektive."

<sup>9</sup> See Johann Gottfried Herder, *Briefe zu Beförderung der Humanität*, ed. Hans Dieter Irmscher, vol. 7 (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1991), 674. I will deal with this in greater length in the section on Herder's *Humanitätsbriefe* in this chapter.

the critique of cultural imperialism. A phrase in Herder's *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit* (1774, *Yet Another Philosophy of History Toward the Education of Humankind*) is widely taken as the epitome of his cultural relativism: "[I]m Grunde also wird alle Vergleichung mißlich. [...] jede Nation hat ihren Mittelpunkt der Glückseligkeit in sich, wie jede Kugel ihren Schwerpunkt."<sup>10</sup>

Yet if we place this dictum within the larger context of Herder's philosophy of history, we notice that Herder's so-called relativistic statement is deeply entangled with his concept of historical development, which inevitably implies a logic of ranking different cultures, conceived as historical stages, from low to high. Herder's universal claims of cultural uniqueness and universal humanity are accompanied by dismissive descriptions of local cultures in Africa and China. Herder's portrayal of European culture as the most developed historical stage of his time inevitably testifies to the Europe-centeredness of his universal claims and his confirmation of European superiority.<sup>11</sup>

Then our questions become: how relativistic or nationalistic is Herder's philosophy of history? In other words, what is the relationship between Herder's

---

<sup>10</sup> — — —, *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit*, ed. Hans Dieter Irmscher (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1990), 35. This sentence is cited in: Berlin, *Three Critics of the Enlightenment: Vico, Hamann, Herder*, 189; Beiser, *The Fate of Reason: German Philosophy from Kant to Fichte*, 143; Cassirer, *Die Philosophie der Aufklärung*, 244; Gadamer, "Herder und die geschichtliche Welt," 325; Muthu, *Enlightenment against Empire*, 223.

<sup>11</sup> See Immanuel Wallerstein, *European Universalism: the Rhetoric of Power* (New York: New Press, 2006).

concept of cultural uniqueness and that of historical development, the double consciousness or the two warring ideals in the body of the Herderian historical spectator? What is the difference between Herder and the Enlightenment thinkers who held eighteenth-century Enlightenment civilization higher than all other “barbaric” forms of life on our planet?

I read this seeming contradiction in Herder’s philosophy of history from the perspective of non-European cultures and from Herder’s emphasis on emotion as the fundamental faculty of being human. I situate Herder’s philosophy of history in the historical context of capitalist and colonial expansion in the eighteenth century. I argue that Herder’s theory of emotion and sympathy enables him to recognize non-European cultural difference, which in turn prompts him to formulate the idea of cultural uniqueness. Indeed, when Herder mentions cultural uniqueness, he almost always evokes non-European cultures or the stereotype of noble savage to deny the argument that these cultures should completely adopt European standards. Miseries in slave trade and colonial economy arouse Herder’s empathy, which enables him to develop his notion of the revenge of history.

Herder, however, is also deeply rooted in the intellectual traditions of his time. The ideas of historical development and European superiority are common among

eighteenth-century European thinkers.<sup>12</sup> Yet in Herder's philosophy of history, we see that the impact of non-European cultures, channeled through human sentiment, is reflected in Herder's notion of cultural uniqueness. In other words, non-European cultures prompt Herder to go beyond the predominant framework of historical development and formulate the idea of cultural uniqueness. Hence, instead of pursuing a synthesis of Eurocentric development and cultural uniqueness, I read them as enunciations of both European intellectual tradition and non-European cultural impact. Herder's philosophy of history reflects and negotiates with non-European cultural difference. Hence Herder's thought is less a Eurocentric or a purely relativistic system than a product of global intercultural interactions.

Throughout this chapter, I investigate two works of Herder, the core articulation of his philosophy of history: his early essay *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur*

---

<sup>12</sup> See Boris Barth and Jürgen Osterhammel, ed. *Zivilisierungsmissionen: Imperiale Weltverbesserung seit dem 18. Jahrhundert* (Konstanz: UVK Verlagsgesellschaft, 2005). Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze, "The Color of Reason: The Idea of Race in Kant's Anthropology," in *Anthropology and the German Enlightenment*, ed. Katherine M. Faull (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1995); Denis Diderot, "Encyclopédie," in *The Portable Enlightenment Reader*, ed. Isaac Kramnick (New York: Penguin Books, 1995). Diderot criticizes some "narrow-minded" people, who are not willing to share their superior knowledge and enlightenment with others, admits the superior position of France in the earth, but insists that France ought not only keep itself enlightened but to spread enlightenment all over the whole world. Thus he claims: "What is the good of divulging the knowledge a nation possesses, its private transactions, its inventions, its industrial processes, its resources, its trade secrets, its enlightenment, its arts, and all its wisdom? Are not these the things to which it owes a part of its superiority over the rival nations that surround it? This is what they say; and this is what they might add: would it not be desirable if, instead of enlightening the foreigner, we could spread darkness over him or even plunge all the rest of the world into barbarism so that we could dominate more securely over everyone? These people do not realize that they occupy only a single point *on our globe* and they will endure only a moment in its existence. To this point and to this moment they would sacrifice the happiness of future ages and that of the entire human race."

*Bildung der Menschheit* (1774) and the later magnum opus *Ideen*. I demonstrate that Herder's philosophy of history is tremendously influenced by cultural differences mediated through travel narratives. Furthermore, I also pay attention to Herder's anti-colonial critique in *Briefe zu Beförderung der Humanität* (1793-1797, *Letters toward Advancement of Humanity*), in which the logic of historical development transforms into an ethic, which stresses the revenge of history as the necessary result of colonial atrocities.

In *Auch eine Philosophie*, the text which Hans-Georg Gadamer famously calls the "manifesto of historicism," I read Herder's narrative of historical development as the construction of a hierarchical relationship among different cultures.<sup>13</sup> Since Herder conceives actual cultures in different geographical locations as historical stages, I call his concept of historical development the geohistorical hierarchy. This geohistorical hierarchy, I argue, is the framework in which Herder's concept of cultural uniqueness is imbedded. Therefore this concept is not strictly relativistic but rather retains historicist limits. Then I turn to the subversive power of this concept, which potentially calls the geohistorical hierarchy into question.

While the historical scope discussed in *Auch eine Philosophie* is predominantly confined to ancient civilizations and the so-called European tradition from Greece to the

---

<sup>13</sup> Gadamer, "Herder und die geschichtliche Welt," 318.

eighteenth century, Herder's *Ideen* registers detailed descriptions of and comments on a huge number of real-world cultures in Asia, America, Africa, and Europe, organized historically from lower to higher stages. Although Herder further elaborates his idea of incomparable individuality in the first volume of his *Ideen*, the three remaining volumes are mainly devoted to concrete cultural phenomena. In this context, geohistorical hierarchy plays a more determining role in the actualization of Herder's descriptions. Among the vast number of cultures in Herder's *Ideen*, the Africans and the Asians, in particular China, are cast in a negative light while European cultures represent the most developed stage in history. I will discuss Herder's justification of the Africans' inferiority in the context of eighteenth-century climate theory and the theory of race. I will also connect Herder's construction of northern European historical superiority, especially his praise of the European spirit of trade, to the background of colonial expansion. I deal with Herder's negative depiction of China and Asia in a larger context of eighteenth-century intellectual representations of China in a separate chapter. By placing both European Sinophilia and Sinophobia in the context of the global economic predominance of China in the eighteenth century, I argue that it is not primarily the European imperial attitude that produces Herder's Sinophobia. Rather it is the cry for European alterity and the longing for a European cultural identity that engenders

Herder's negative attitude toward China as a towering figure invented by Enlightenment Sinophilia.

By claiming that "Negroes paint their devil white (*Der Neger malt den Teufel weiß*)," Herder's quasi-relativistic concept of cultural uniqueness transforms into his ethics of history, which emerges from his harsh critique of colonial atrocities in his late work: *Briefe zu Beförderung der Humanität*.<sup>14</sup> Herder consciously reformulates the notion of cultural uniqueness as equal authenticity of all cultures and decries the attitude of European superiority. He proposes a project of perpetual peace based on an anecdote of the Native American tribe, the Iroquois, and stresses *Nemesis* as the natural law of historical revenge on the colonizers. Non-European culture and knowledge sustain determining influence on the configuration of Herder's ethics of history.

Herder's anti-colonial critique is marked by a sentimental empathy. He criticizes that his contemporaries are more inclined to shed tears on a dying butterfly than to sympathize with the massive misery caused by European colonial practice.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, as Ian Baucom comments on Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiment* (1759) in respect to the disasters of slave trade, Herder's sentimental melancholy is also not purely confined

---

<sup>14</sup> Herder, *Briefe zu Beförderung der Humanität*, 674.

<sup>15</sup> Herder decries: "In Romanen beweinen wir den Schmetterling, dem der Regen die Flügel netzt; in Gesprächen kochen wir von großen Gesinnungen über; und für jene moralische Verfallenheit unsres Geschlechts, aus der alles Übel entspringt, haben wir kein Auge. Dem Geiz, dem Stolz, unsrer trägen Langenweile schlachten wir tausend Opfer, die uns keine Träne kosten. [...] man tadelt, was in Peru, Ismail, Warschau geschah, indem man, sobald unser Vorurteil, unsre Habsucht dabei ins Spiel kommt, ein Gleiches und ein Ärgeres, mit verbissenem Zorn wünschet." *Ibid.*, 686.

to disinterested aesthetics; rather it is a way of actively engaging with real-world conflicts and problems – “not as a way of lodging the past within the present but as a way of lodging the present (and ourselves) in the deathly afterlife of past historical situations, not as a way of describing effects but as a way of identifying causes, it manifests itself as a politics – the politics of cosmopolitan interestedness.”<sup>16</sup> Since sentimentalism proves a recurring motif in Herder’s philosophy of history, it is necessary to elaborate Herder’s theory of sensibility in a more concentrated form in this introduction.

Herder defines feeling as the fundamental trait of being human, which is inextricably connected to his concept of cultural uniqueness and his anti-colonial critique. Precisely because Herder recognizes emotive correlation between all human beings as the fundamental basis of forming community, he is able to formulate the idea of equal authenticity. In comparison to Herder’s notion of history, his idea of sentimental linkage, another universal bond between human beings, is marked less by hierarchy than by equality, less by development than by commonality, and less by the faith in European superiority than the call to human dignity.

---

<sup>16</sup> Ian Baucom, *Specters of the Atlantic: Finance Capital, Slavery, and the Philosophy of History* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005), 259.

In Herder's affective anthropology, it is not Europeans but the so-called savages who represent human emotions. In *Auch eine Philosophie*, Herder idealizes the sensual (*empfindsam*) people in the ancient Orient:

Die zarte Empfindlichkeit dieser Gegenden, mit der raschen, fliegenden Einbildung, die so gern alles in göttlichen Glanz kleidet: Ehrfurcht vor allem, was Macht, Ansehn, Weisheit, Kraft, Fußstapfe Gottes ist, und sodann gleich kindliche Ergebung, die sich ihnen natürlich, uns Europäern unbegreiflich, mit dem Gefühl von Ehrfurcht mischet [...].<sup>17</sup>

Herder supports the eighteenth-century myth of noble savage and contends that a "savage," who is closer to the primordial or lower state of human historical development, is closer to her/his feelings than a European: "Der gemeine Mann und Landmann erkennt und empfindet viel gesunder als der Vornehme und Gelehrte: der gesittete Wilde viel gesunder, als der ungesittete Europäer [...]."<sup>18</sup> While we need to be aware that Herder distorts the image of non-Europeans and projects the myth of noble savage onto them, we should also acknowledge this idea as a form of thought which interacts with and integrates non-European knowledge and cultural specificities and criticizes European moral corruption. Hence Herder's affective anthropology is not only confined to European circumstances but also reflects the influence of non-European forms of life on his emotive intelligence.

---

<sup>17</sup> Herder, *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit*, 11.

<sup>18</sup> Johann Gottfried Herder, "Vom Erkennen und Empfinden der menschlichen Seele. Bemerkungen und Träume," in *Johann Gottfried Herder. Schriften zu Philosophie, Literatur, Kunst und Altertum 1774-1787*, ed. Jürgen Brummack and Martin Bollacher (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1994), 374.

In *Auch eine Philosophie*, Herder invites his readers to “feel into” foreign cultures:

[M]an müßte erst der Nation sympathisieren, um eine einzige ihrer Neigungen und Handlungen, alle zusammen zu fühlen, ein Wort finden, in seiner Fülle sich alles denken – oder man lieset – ein Wort. [...] Ganze Natur der Seele, die durch alles herrscht, die alle übrigen Neigungen und Seelenkräfte nach sich modelt, noch auch die gleichgültigsten Handlungen färbet – um diese mitzufühlen, antworte nicht aus dem Worte, sondern gehe in das Zeitalter, in die Himmelsgegend, die ganze Geschichte, fühle dich in alles hinein – nun allein bist du auf dem Wege, das Wort zu verstehen;<sup>19</sup>

Herder uses the analogy between a culture (*Nation*) and a text to illustrate his method of sympathetic ethnography. To understand a culture means to gain access to it through emotive connections, to immerse oneself into geographical and historical circumstances – the texture of a cultural form. For Herder, language is the intrinsic means through which human sensual forces articulate and manifest themselves. Herder relates literature and aesthetic experience directly to human emotive capital.<sup>20</sup>

Herder’s emotive reading strategy of culture has an astounding similarity with the twentieth-century anthropologist Clifford Geertz’s interpretive anthropology. In *Balinese Cockfight*, Geertz reminds us that “attending cockfights and participating in them is, for the Balinese, a kind of sentimental education.”<sup>21</sup> Therefore, for an ethnographer, “the guiding principle is the same: societies, like lives, contain their own

---

<sup>19</sup> Herder, *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit*, 29.

<sup>20</sup> Herder elaborates his theory of language and aesthetics in the essays *Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache*, *Viertes Kritisches Wäldchen*, and *Über die Wirkung der Dichtkunst auf die Sitten der Völker in alten und neuen Zeiten*.

<sup>21</sup> Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 449.

interpretations. One has only to learn how to gain access to them.”<sup>22</sup> Geertz elaborates: “Doing ethnography is like trying to read (in the sense of “constructing a reading of”) a manuscript – foreign, faded, full of ellipses, incoherencies, suspicious emendations, and tendentious commentaries, but written not in conventionalized graphs of sound but in transient examples of shaped behavior.”<sup>23</sup>

My comparison between Herder and Geertz aims to make clear their shared fundamental interest in particularity – the expression of a local microcosm. Geertz contends:

[The] essential task of theory building here is not to codify abstract regularities but to make thick description possible, not to generalize across cases but to generalize within cases. [...] Rather than beginning with a set of observations and attempting to subsume them under a governing law, such inference begins with a set of (presumptive) signifiers and attempts to place them within an intelligible frame.<sup>24</sup>

While Geertz consciously refuses to “uplift” thick descriptions of local cultures into the so-called universal level, Herder’s philosophy of history, a product predominantly confined within the intellectual discourse of his own time and place, manifests an intrinsic indebtedness to the passion of identifying and formulating universal or natural laws of history. Herder’s emphasis on sensibility, however, points beyond the limits of the governing universal and makes the sentimental a category which subverts the

---

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 453.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 26.

necessity of the macrocosm and gives rise to his anti-colonial critique. Herder's concept of incomparable individuality precisely draws our attention to the local microcosm.

Another foundational trait of Herder's theory of sensibility is the empathetic transgression into others. In his essay *Vom Erkennen und Empfinden der menschlichen Seele* (1778, *On the Cognition and Sensation of the Human Soul*), Herder places feeling as the cardinal faculty of the human mind, which enables reason to produce knowledge.

Herder insists: "Wir empfinden nur, was unsre Nerven uns geben; darnach und daraus können wir auch nur denken."<sup>25</sup> Herder argues that the different ways how we feel characterize individual and collective/cultural differences: "Wie einzelne Menschen, so sind noch mehr Familien und Völker von einander verschieden: nach dem Kreise ihrer Empfindungs- richtet sich auch ihre Denkart."<sup>26</sup>

Herder ascribes to feeling the ability to break the boundaries between the self and the other and form a sensual community:

denn es ist und bleibt wahr, daß wir unsern Nächsten nur wie uns selbst lieben. Sind wir uns untreu, wie werden wir andern treu sein? Im Grad der Tiefe unsres Selbstgefühls liegt auch der Grad des Mitgefühls mit andern: denn nur uns selbst können wir in andre gleichsam hinein fühlen.<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>25</sup> Herder, "Vom Erkennen und Empfinden der menschlichen Seele. Bemerkungen und Träume," 351. Herder begründet seine Theorie mit dem Forschungsergebnis des Mediziners Johann Gottlob Krüger in seiner „Naturlehre“, dass „die Empfindungen vermittelt der Nerven geschehen“. Der Körper ist die materielle Basis des Fühlens. Johann Gottlob Krüger, *Naturlehre* (Halle im Magdeburgischen: Carl Hermann Hemmerde, 1740), 781.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 368.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 361.

Herder claims that the love for oneself shares the common source with the empathy for others. Only through love for oneself is one able to build a society on the basis of mutual love and sympathy. If there is a shared human sensation, Herder contends, then there must be a common way of thinking and a shared standard of ethics.<sup>28</sup> Therefore Herder criticizes colonial ruthlessness and calls for a sympathetic solidarity: „Dagegen muß jede Nation allgemach es unangenehm empfinden, wenn eine andere Nation beschimpft und beleidigt wird; es muß allmählich ein gemeines Gefühl erwachen, daß jede sich an die Stelle jeder andern fühle.“<sup>29</sup>

While the sentimentalist Herder sympathizes with the colonized and insists on the legitimacy of their equal authenticity, the philosopher of history Herder dismisses non-European cultures to less developed and less civilized societies according to universal laws. In order to critically cherish the so-called relativist aspect of Herder's philosophy of history, we also need to be aware of the historicist limits of the architecture of his thought. In the ensuing pages, I will first start with *Auch eine Philosophie*.

---

<sup>28</sup> Herder writes: "Wie es eine allgemeine Menschenempfindung gibt, so muß es auch eine allgemeine Menschendenkart (sensus communis) geben;" Ibid., 371.

<sup>29</sup> — — —, Briefe zu Beförderung der Humanität, 723.

## **4. 2 Organic Development and Cultural Uniqueness in Herder's *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit***

### **4.2.1 Herder's Sources: Travel Narratives**

Je weiter hin es sich in Untersuchung der ältesten Weltgeschichte, ihrer Völkerwanderungen, Sprachen, Sitten, Erfindungen und Traditionen aufklärt: desto wahrscheinlicher wird mit jeder neuen Entdeckung auch der Ursprung des ganzen Geschlechts von Einem. Man nähert sich immer mehr dem glücklichen Klima, wo ein Menschenpaar [...] rings um sich her den Faden anspannt, der sich nachher mit solchen Wirrungen weit und lang fortgezogen [...].<sup>30</sup>

With this universal announcement, Herder starts his *Auch eine Philosophie*. Like many other contemporaries rendering the divine message a function of cultural memory, Herder also converts the biblical claim of human genesis into the founding myth of a world history.<sup>31</sup> A footnote to the "Untersuchungen der ältesten Weltgeschichte" tells us that they are the "neueste historische Untersuchungen und Reisen in Asien."<sup>32</sup> An avid reader of travel narratives, Herder knew the scientific expeditions to the Orient by Laurens d'Arvieux, Frederik Hasselquist, Richard Pococke, Thomas Shaw, and Carsten

---

<sup>30</sup> — — —, *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit*, 5.

<sup>31</sup> See Christoph Bultmann, *Die biblische Urgeschichte in der Aufklärung: Johann Gottfried Herders Interpretation der Genesis als Antwort auf die Religionskritik David Humes* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999); Jonathan Sheehan, *The Enlightenment Bible: Translation, Scholarship, Culture* (Princeton and London: Princeton University Press, 2005). Christoph Bultmann points out that Herder's *Vom Geist der Ebräischen Poesie* (On the Spirit of Hebrew Poetry) marked a break in Biblical studies and changed the Bible from a book of revelation to a book of antiquity. Jonathan Sheehan follows the hint given by Bultmann and claims that Herder, along with Moses Mendelssohn, Friedrich Schleiermacher, Novalis, and Friedrich Schlegel, contributes greatly in the process of converting the religious Bible into a book of national cultural heritage, e.g., his endeavor of transposing the Hebrew poetry in the Bible to national literature and to claim it to be part of German national literary canon. The claim of monogenesis by Herder, as we have seen, can be seen as part of the process of forging a cultural Bible. Depicting a historical development following this monogenesis, Herder endeavors in forging a universal theory of cultural development.

<sup>32</sup> Herder, *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit*, 5n.

Niebuhr.<sup>33</sup> He reviewed the German translation of Thomas Shaw's travel narrative as early as 1764.<sup>34</sup> Jonathan Hess points out that the expedition by Niebuhr to Yemen (Arabia Felix) from 1761 to 1767 was especially influential for Near Eastern Studies at the end of the eighteenth century. It was initiated by the Göttingen Orientalist Johann David Michaelis, whose *Mosaic Law* (1770-1775), also reviewed by Herder, is "a standard eighteenth-century work on Jewish law," both shaping and drawing on the results of this expedition.<sup>35</sup> In his *Ideen*, Herder cites Niebuhr five times.<sup>36</sup> Clearly, empirical accounts about the Orient in travel narratives tremendously influenced Herder's conception of the origin of the humankind.

Later in this work, Herder complains about his contemporaries' often inappropriate usage of travel literatures:

Vorarbeiten genug; aber alles in Schlaube und Unordnung! Wir haben unser jetziges Zeitalter fast aller Nationen und so die Geschichte fast aller Vorzeiten durchkrochen und durchwühlt, ohne fast selbst zu wissen, wozu wir sie durchwühlt haben. Historische Fakta und Untersuchungen, *Entdeckungen und Reisebeschreibungen* liegen da: wer ist, der sie sondere und sichte?<sup>37</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup> See Jürgen Brummack and Martin Bollacher, "Kommentar," in Johann Gottfried Herder, "Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit," in *Johann Gottfried Herder: Schriften zu Philosophie, Literatur, Kunst und Altertum 1774-1787*, ed. Jürgen Brummack and Martin Bollacher (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1994), 855.

<sup>34</sup> Bernhard Suphan, ed. *Herders Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 1 (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1877), 81-84.

<sup>35</sup> Jonathan M. Hess, *Germans, Jews and the Claims of Modernity* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 52. Hess points out that "the most remarkable aspect of the expedition [is] its capacity to subsume experience of the Near East into Michaelis's categories, its uncanny ability to sustain the worldview that launched it." 73

<sup>36</sup> See Johann Gottfried Herder, *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, ed. Martin Bollacher (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1989), 50, 71, 82, 225, 452.

<sup>37</sup> Herder, *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit*, 90. My italics.

Herder certainly considers himself the most suitable person to appropriately deploy the facts and information collected in travel narratives. Herder's method is to organize different cultures into a historical development with the very beginning of "one human couple" (*einem Menschenpaar*). Already in 1769, Herder claims this intention: "Hierzu will ich in der Geschichte aller Zeiten Data sammeln: jede soll mir das Bild ihrer eignen Sitten, Gebräuche, Tugenden, Laster und Glückseligkeiten liefern, und so will ich alles bis auf unsre Zeit zurückführen, und diese recht nutzen lernen."<sup>38</sup> In his seminal text on the philosophy of language *Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache* (1771, *Treatise on the Origin of Language*), published three years earlier than *Auch eine Philosophie*, Herder refers five times to the descriptions of native languages in Charles de la Condamine's *Brief Narrative of Travels through the Interior of South America* (1745). Condamine (1701-1774), a French geographer, took part in Europe's first major international scientific expedition in 1735 to determine the exact shape of the Earth.<sup>39</sup> In the *Ideen*, Herder also uses numerous travel narratives describing Greenland, Mongolia, Africa, the South Sea,

---

<sup>38</sup> Johann Gottfried Herder, ed. *Journal meiner Reise im Jahr 1769*, Johann Gottfried Herder: Journal meiner Reise im Jahr 1769, Pädagogische Schriften (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1997), 30.

<sup>39</sup> — — —, "Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache," in *Frühe Schriften 1764-1772*, ed. Ulrich Gaier (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1985), 703, 58, 65, 90, 807. He also mentioned reports on Thailand and North America and their languages in this treatise, see 765.

America, China, Tibet, and India to construct his descriptions of these regions in his universal history.<sup>40</sup>

In the passages cited above, we first notice that Herder considers that cultural differences are represented as something that needs to be explained and systematized, something “new” that has not yet been assigned a proper place. Alluding to biblical monogenesis, Herder tries to integrate these “new” materials into established knowledge system. He thus transforms and adjusts this system in order to construct a new identity not only for this novelty but also for his own time and place. The point of Herder’s rhetoric first suggests a clear direction. The European peninsulas, where the travelers come from, represent the agency of knowing, the subject; in contrast, the rest of the world is the knowable, the object, and the invented. This gesture betrays a Europe-centeredness typical of Herder’s epoch.<sup>41</sup>

On the other hand, the disparate cultural phenomena transmitted through travel narratives also represent a challenging uncertainty for the conventional worldview held

---

<sup>40</sup> Herder, *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, 210, 18, 31, 37, 45, 432-33, 47, 53-55.

<sup>41</sup> Mary Louise Pratt points out: “The eighteenth century has been identified as a period in which Northern Europe asserted itself as the center of civilization, claiming the legacy of the Mediterranean as its own.” Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, 10. Mignolo points out that the concepts of race and racism, as the intrinsic components of capitalism, “entered the vocabulary of the Western world during and after the Enlightenment” and justified the discourse of European superiority and capitalist “land appropriation and exploitation of supposedly lesser human beings.” Walter Mignolo, “Afterword: What does the Black Legend Have to Do with Race?,” in *Rereading the Black Legend: The Discourses of racial and religious Difference in the Renaissance Empires*, ed. Walter Mignolo Margaret Greer, and Maureen Quiligan (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2007), 312, 14.

by the intellectuals from the European colonial powers and their neighbors. As Benedict Anderson contends: "First was the effect of the explorations of the non-European world, which mainly but by no means exclusively in Europe 'abruptly widened the cultural and geographic horizon and hence also men's conception of possible forms of human life'."<sup>42</sup> In other words, cultural difference proves a new knowledge challenging the conceptualization of European cultural identity. Non-European cultures evoke changes and ruptures in knowledge-production and systematization. Following this logic, the so-called non-European episteme is not only the passive and the discovered, but also an active and incentive power.

Herder and other philosophers of history thus construct a historical identity for the other and at the same time also for themselves. Hence Herder's *Auch eine Philosophie*, a product manufactured in the nexus of intercultural, colonial, and capitalist power relations, both fosters a Eurocentric geohistorical hierarchy based on the idea of development and formulates the eruptive notion of cultural uniqueness.

#### **4.2.2 Development or Geohistorical Hierarchy**

The historical process Herder envisions is an organic ongoing one. Herder employs the metaphor of *Lebensalter* to draw an analysis between the historical process and the biological metamorphosis of a human being from a child to an old man (not a

---

<sup>42</sup> Benedict R. O'G Anderson, *Imagined Communities : Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 2006), 16.

woman; it is a masculine subjectivity that Herder reserves for his historiography). Each historical stage has its trajectory of germination, flowering, and decay.<sup>43</sup> The novelty in Herder's philosophy of history lies in the universal interrelatedness of different historical stages, deeply rooted in a vegetative and organic progression of transformation and growth. Each historical stage is thus based on the achievements of the former one and grows out of it in the greater system of a living organism.

This process is ongoing because historical development cannot be held back. It is *necessary* for the historical "embryo" to develop into a full-size adult. Herder's genealogy, however, is not confined to one geographical place and one cultural and linguistic community but rather moves from place to place on a hierarchical scale of historical stages. Herder asks: "wohin [sollte] die Kette zwischen Völkern und Erdstrichen [...] leiten?"<sup>44</sup> His answer is: "zur allgemeinen Bildung der Menschheit."<sup>45</sup> That is to say, a never-ending historical metamorphosis is for Herder the perpetual rule permeating human activities and explaining cultural, or more accurately, historical differences.

---

<sup>43</sup> The human-age theory is not Herder's own invention. Very early, Seneca, Florus, and Augustine described the Roman Empire with the analogy of human ages. In Herder's own time, Giambattista Vico, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Justus Möser, Adam Ferguson, Johann Joachim Winckelmann, Lessing, and Iselin et al. all employed the human-age theory to describe historical development and explain the differences within it. Representative works by these authors are Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes* (1755), Isaak Iselin's *Geschichte der Menschheit* (1764/1768), Justus Möser's *Osnabrückische Geschichte* (1768), Adam Ferguson's *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* (1767), and Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's *Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts* (1780). For more information also see M. C. Lemon, *Philosophy of History: A Guide for Students* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 49-57.

<sup>44</sup> Herder, *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit*, 110.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

After the mythical couple of Genesis, Herder proposes that history of humanity begins with its childhood in the Orient. The patriarchal society in the Orient is seen as the antithesis of enlightened civilization and is judged negatively as despotism by Enlightenment thinkers such as Montesquieu in his influential *De l'esprit des lois* (1748, *The Spirit of the Laws*). Yet Herder does not share this evaluation. He incorporates the Orient into a growing process and sets it as the beginning of a history leading up to the stage of eighteenth-century Northern Europe. Herder contends:

Morgenland, du hiezu recht auserwählter Boden Gottes! Die zarte Empfindlichkeit dieser Gegenden, mit der raschen, fliegenden Einbildung, die so gern alles in göttlichen Glanz kleidet [...], die sich ihnen natürlich, uns Europäern unbegreiflich mit dem Gefühl von Ehrfurcht mischet [...].<sup>46</sup> (*Auch eine Philosophie*, 11).

Although Herder, departing from Montesquieu, ascribes the positive features of feeling (*Gefühl*) and sensibility (*Empfindlichkeit*) to the Orient, this favorable gesture does not change the nature of establishing a pure imagery which has helped to define Herder's own time and place "as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience."<sup>47</sup> The childhood stage of the Orient defines its mental underdevelopment in contrast to Europeans.

After the childhood stage in the Orient, Herder envisions the stage of boyhood in Egypt and Phoenicia. Although Herder places these two societies on the same stage of

---

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>47</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, 1-2.

development, he contrasts one to the other. Herder praises Phoenicia's spirit of trade, its openness to foreign impulses, and its capability of transformation, whereas he characterizes Egyptian culture as stiff, obstinate, and therefore unable to develop into the next higher stage. Egypt and Phoenicia thus exemplify for him two fundamental prototypes of *Bildung* for the first time in the history of humanity: the capability of historical transformation versus historical immobility. Herder argues:

Die Phönizier waren, oder wurden, so verwandt sie den Ägyptern waren, gewissermaßen ihre Gegenseite von Bildung. Jene [die Ägypter], wenigstens in den spätern Zeiten, Hass der Meere und der Fremden, um einheimisch nur »alle Anlagen und Künste ihres Landes zu entwickeln«; diese [die Phönizier] zogen sich hinter Berg und Wüste an eine Küste, um eine neue Welt auf dem Meere zu stiften [...].<sup>48</sup>

The symbols of Egyptian art such as the obelisks are useless in Herder's eyes in comparison to the Phoenician ships of trade. In Herder's logic, on the one hand, Phoenician openness towards other cultures and the ability to achieve historical transformation are based on the economic behavior of trade. This dichotomy between Egypt and Phoenicia is developed into a binary system between immobile Asia, in particular China, and open-minded eighteenth-century northern Europe, especially Germany, in his magnum opus *Ideen* ten years later.<sup>49</sup> Herder's preference for a trade-based "world openness" and its connection with the capability of historical

---

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>49</sup> — — —, *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, 429-64.

transformation unveils a logic, justifying the contemporary mercantilism and sea trades of the colonial and capitalist powers.

The next stage, the age of a young man (*Jüngling*), is ancient Greek culture.

Herder holds it as the most beautiful youth in the history of humanity:

So Mythologie, Poesie, Philosophie, schöne Künste: Entwicklungen uralter Keime, die hier Jahreszeit und Ort fanden, zu blühen und in alle Welt zu duften. Griechenland ward die Wiege der Menschlichkeit, der Völkerliebe, der schönen Gesetzgebung, des Angenehmsten in Religion, Sitten, Schreibart, Dichtung, Gebräuchen und Künsten. – Alles Jugendfreude, Grazie, Spiel und Liebe!<sup>50</sup>

Herder contends that these exceptional achievements of ancient Greece, however, should not be seen as a perpetual phenomenon representing the perfect human society. Opposing contemporaries such as Johann Joachim Winckelmann, Herder asserts that it is merely one historical stage in the long process of development. It is as ephemeral as the former stages of the Orient, Egypt, and Phoenicia, and must give birth to the next stage in the organism of history. At this point, Herder offers his solution for the *Querelle des anciens et des modernes*, a Europe-wide intellectual debate originating in France at the end of the seventeenth century.<sup>51</sup>

---

<sup>50</sup> — — —, Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit, 23.

<sup>51</sup> The central problematic concerns the attitudes toward ancient Greek literature and culture: One party, represented by Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux, vows for the perfectibility of ancient Greek literature and demands its contemporaries only to imitate Greek literature; in contrast, the other party, represented by Charles Perrault, states that the modern period should have its own genius and thus its own modern literature. Herder's method of historical development fundamentally undermines the validity of this debate and introduces the category of history to separate these two competing models. At the same time, however, Herder's method clearly positions the ancient Greek on a stage which not only precedes the eighteenth century, but is also less developed than it on the ranking scale of his historiography. Also see Karl Menges,

In Herder's chronology, the Roman Empire further develops the achievement of the Greek youth into manhood (*Mannesalter*). The Greeks, in a provincial form, prepare everything for Rome's global dominion. The collapse of the Roman Empire is seen as the decline of southern Europe's significance in universal history. Herder states: "Nichts minder, als eine *neue Welt* war nötig, den Riß zu heilen."<sup>52</sup>

This new world, the next stage, is the Middle Ages in northern Europe, represented by the Germanic tribes and the Christian religion. Based on the pan-regional dominion of the Roman Empire, Christianity connects different ethnic groups: [S]ie [die christliche Religion] sollte eigentliche Religion der Menschheit, Trieb der Liebe und Band aller Nationen zu einem Bruderheere werden – ihr Zweck von Anfang zu Ende."<sup>53</sup> Yet Herder does not consider Christianity the perpetual revelation but only a historical phenomenon: "Ich rede von einem historischen Eräugnisse!"<sup>54</sup> Furthermore, Herder considers that the strong, naive, and fresh Germanic tribes from northern Europe, the "barbarians" of northern Europe, need the Christian religion in order to achieve the "wirkliche Ordnung und Sicherheit der Welt."<sup>55</sup>

---

"Herder und die 'Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes'. Eine wirkungsgeschichtliche Replik," in *Ethische contra ästhetische Legitimation von Literatur: Traditionalismus und Modernismus. Kontroversen um den Avantgardismus*, ed. Walter Haug and Wilfried Barner (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1986).

<sup>52</sup> Herder, *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit*, 40.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

In the next historical stage, Herder's own time, the geographical place remains in northern Europe. Here Herder's descriptive narration turns into a sharp polemic. He compares eighteenth-century Northern European culture, especially the movement of Enlightenment represented by French intellectuals, with an old man (*Greis*), who shows "seine wirkliche Todesschwäche und Ermattung unter Unglauben."<sup>56</sup> Herder asks ironically: "wenn ist die Erde so allgemein erleuchtet gewesen als nun? [...] Die Erde leuchtet beinahe schon von Voltaires Klarheit."<sup>57</sup> Herder vehemently criticizes the self-glorification of European Enlightenment, its philosophical abstraction, and the concomitant debasement of other ancient and contemporary cultures. For him, Enlightenment merely represents a transient period in the flux of history: "Wir sind bei dieser Fortrückung freilich auch auf unsrer Stelle, Zweck und Werkzeug des Schicksals."<sup>58</sup> Thus he asks rhetorically: "In Europa soll jetzt mehr Tugend sein, als je in aller Welt gewesen? [...] weil mehr Aufklärung darin ist – ich glaube, daß eben deshalb weniger sein müsse."<sup>59</sup> The metaphor of an old man is double-edged here: it not only denotes high level of experience and abstract thinking but also demonstrates the urgent need of rejuvenation through Oriental feelings because "jeder vernünftelt doch nur nach

---

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 70-71.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 82.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 79.

seiner Empfindung."<sup>60</sup> Therefore Herder demands: "Geh hin, mein Leser, und fühle noch jetzt hinter Jahrtausenden die so lange erhaltne reine morgenländische Natur, belebe sie dir aus der Geschichte der ältesten Zeiten [...]."<sup>61</sup>

Herder's understanding of his own time reflects a consciousness of crisis. His sarcastic tone reveals, on the one hand, his dissatisfaction with the contemporary belief in Enlightenment as the perfect standard for every human society. On the other hand, Herder's description of the historical development from the Orient to eighteenth-century northern Europe also inevitably implies Europe's highest position in the organic hierarchy. Neither of these two aspects should be understated in Herder's philosophy of history. Thus I will first argue that Herder's concept of universal development implies a geohistorical hierarchy endorsing the Eurocentric logic. After clarifying this point, it is then possible to critically appreciate his concept of cultural uniqueness, incomparable individuality, that radically distinguishes him from his contemporaries.

#### **4.2.3 Historicization of Geography and Invention of Tradition**

If we recapitulate the layout of Herder's organic history, we notice that each historical stage in Herder's narrative has a different geographical location. This aspect

---

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 14.

proves a common phenomenon in the eighteenth-century philosophy of history.<sup>62</sup> The historical stages in his history move from one geographical location to another. After one stage grows out of the former one, the geographical location of the former stage also loses the chance of developing further into higher stages. Northern Europe, the last stage in Herder's narrative, represents the ultimate result of this geohistorical transformation. In other words, all other regions on the world map are just museum-like "earlier" stages of northern Europe's development.<sup>63</sup> It is a *historicization* of geography.<sup>64</sup>

Around 1750, there was a wave of scientific interests in geography and geology.

Numerous lectures addressing the description of landscapes and nature worldwide

---

<sup>62</sup> See Peter Hanns Reill, *The German Enlightenment and the Rise of Historicism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975), 38-41. Reill points out that diachronic and synchronic studies of history are the two most common strategies used by Enlightenment historians. World history is the synthesis of the two methods. Rainer Baasner also points out the importance of space and geography in Herder's conception of a philosophy of history. He contends that Herder's notions of culture and nation have deep entanglement with geographical location. See Rainer Baasner, "Geographische Grundlagen von Herders Geschichtsphilosophie – am Beispiel der Begriffe ‚Kultur‘ und ‚Nation‘," in *Nationen und Kulturen. Zum 250. Geburtstag Johann Gottfried Herders*, ed. Regine Otto (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1996).

<sup>63</sup> The popular *Völkerschau* (similar phenomena in English are called "Human Zoo" or "Negro Village") during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and the early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in many major cities of Europe, including Vienna, Berlin, Stuttgart, Hamburg, Paris, Milan, Barcelona, and London, is inherently entangled with this logic.

<sup>64</sup> Jacques Derrida points out that linearity is a privileged model for logocentric and ethnocentric thinking. He contends: "For over a century, this uneasiness has been evident in philosophy, in science, in literature. All the revolutions in these fields can be interpreted as shocks that are gradually destroying the linear model. Which is to say the *epic* model. [...] The access to *pluridimensionality* and to a *delinearized* temporality is not a simple regression toward the 'mythogram;' on the contrary, it makes all the rationality subjected to the linear model appear as another form and another age of mythography." Thus, the separation of the linear model of temporality from the consciousness of space opens a new exterior dimension of perception. Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), 87.

were delivered in universities in Scotland, France, Germany, and Italy.<sup>65</sup> Carl Schmitt points out that “the first attempts in international law to divide the earth as a whole according to the new global concept of geography began immediately after 1492. These were also the first adaptations to the new, planetary image of the world.”<sup>66</sup> Schmitt calls the model of thought behind this behavior “global linear thinking, which represents a chapter in the historical development of spatial consciousness.”<sup>67</sup>

In Herder’s case, obviously, this global linear thinking is immediately fused with time and history. In his *Ideen*, Herder integrates cultural geography as well as geology, botany, and zoology into the whole system of a universal history.<sup>68</sup> Therefore, history itself has a geographical expression. Following this logic, the superiority of 18<sup>th</sup>-century northern Europe is also intrinsically related to its geographical location. In other words, this particular region is historically legitimized as the unique locus where the highest historical stage, at least until Herder’s time, takes place.

---

<sup>65</sup> See Charles W. J. Withers, *Placing the Enlightenment: Thinking Geographically about the Age of Reason* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), 220-26; John Zammito, *Kant, Herder, and the Birth of Anthropology* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 58.

<sup>66</sup> Carl Schmitt, *The Nomos of the Earth in the International Law of the Jus Publicum Europaeum* (New York: Telos Press Publishing, 2003), 87.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> At the beginning of the first book of *Ideen*, Herder claims: “Vom Himmel muß unsre Philosophie der Geschichte des menschlichen Geschlechts anfangen, wenn sie einigermaßen diesen Namen verdienen soll. Denn da unser Wohnplatz, die Erde, nichts durch sich selbst ist, sondern von himmlischen, durch unser ganzes Weltall sich erstreckenden Kräften ihre Beschaffenheit und Gestalt, ihr Vermögen zur Organisation und Erhaltung der Geschöpfe empfängt: so muß man sie zuförderst nicht allein und einsam, sondern im Chor der Welten betrachten, unter die sie gesetzt ist.” Herder, *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, 21.

Herder's development of historical stages establishes an irreversible geohistorical hierarchy, which in turn constructs a European tradition and justifies its present superiority. Eric Hobsbawm's notion of the invention of tradition is helpful in this context to illustrate Herder's endeavor.<sup>69</sup> Hobsbawm argues that "tradition," differentiated from custom, must be understood as a human-made, i.e. invented, category with political and ideological importance.<sup>70</sup> Therefore, history and tradition are not natural sediments along the time line. Rather they are the product of a political act of selection, documentation, popularization, and institutionalization. Hobsbawm also points out that the invention of tradition happens when the old perspective is deliberately discarded and a radical innovation is welcome. It is a human-made void and a need for a new relation with a specific historic past.

Following this logic, Herder's *Auch eine Philosophie* offers a vivid example for the implementation of an invention of tradition. Herder not only forges a tradition of 18<sup>th</sup>-century northern Europe. In criticizing his contemporaries, he also declares a need for a new conception of universal history under the circumstances of a radically changing world map and accumulating travel literature:

---

<sup>69</sup> See Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

<sup>70</sup> Hobsbawm defines: 'Invented tradition' is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past. *Ibid.*, 1.

Unsre Reisebeschreibungen mehren und bessern sich [...] – wir sammeln »Materialien aus aller Welt Ende« und werden in ihnen einst finden, was wir am wenigsten suchten [...]. Unsre Zeit wird bald mehrere Augen öffnen [...]. Wir werden Zeiten schätzen lernen, die wir jetzt verachten – das Gefühl allgemeiner Menschheit und Glückseligkeit wird rege werden: [...] Geschichte der Menschheit im edelsten Verstande [...]!<sup>71</sup>

The epistemic challenge evoked by the “new found” lands demands new conceptual work to situate European culture in the global context. Thus Herder uses new materials, collected in travel narratives, to reconceive the past of his cultural community.<sup>72</sup> It is thus necessary for us today to undo Herder’s geohistorical hierarchy and the historicization of geography and reclaim the independence of geographical and cultural differences from a Eurocentric logic of an all-encompassing universal history. In other words, cultures, as forms of life, cannot and should not be reduced to historical stages forming and conforming to a human-made logic of development.<sup>73</sup>

#### 4.2.4 Cultural Uniqueness’s Historical Limits

With the ironic formulations of the title “Auch eine Philosophie...” (Yet Another Philosophy) and the subtitle “Beitrag zu vielen Beiträgen des Jahrhunderts” (a contribution to many contributions of the century), Herder demonstrates his strong

---

<sup>71</sup> Herder, *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit*, 91.

<sup>72</sup> In *Auch eine Philosophie*, it is not really clear that Herder includes other regions than the ancient cultures into his universal history; but in *Ideen*, he incorporates America, Asia, and Africa into the historical hierarchy exhibited above. See — — —, *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, 425-899.

<sup>73</sup> Walter Mignolo aptly points out that “[e]pistemology [...] cannot be reduced to the linear history from Greek to contemporary North Atlantic knowledge-production. It has to be geographical in its historicity by bringing the colonial difference into the game.” Walter Mignolo, “The Geopolitics of Knowledge and Colonial Difference,” *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 101 Winter(2002): 67.

disagreement with the mainstream of contemporary philosophy of history, one of the favorite topics for philosophical reflection in the eighteenth century.<sup>74</sup> Philosophers of history such as Voltaire, with his influential *Essai sur l'histoire générale et les mœurs et l'esprit des nations* (1756), see the whole past of universal history as the deficient pre-stages of the ideal enlightened conditions based on reason.<sup>75</sup> Kant's advocacy for the public usage of reason also shows a universal impetus and is not merely confined within a German or European context. Indeed, Enlightenment is conceptualized as a universal project from the outset. It is designed as the destination of a natural trajectory for all human societies in the world.<sup>76</sup>

Although Kant in his famous essay "*Was ist Aufklärung?*" (1784, *What is Enlightenment*) declares that his own time and place has not yet reached the state of Enlightenment, he and other Enlightenment philosophers do consider that the Europeans are already much more advanced in approaching Enlightened conditions than non-European peoples.<sup>77</sup> One of the Enlightenment "legacies," as Denis Diderot

---

<sup>74</sup> Gadamer also points out the character of irony in this early work of Herder. See Gadamer, "Herder und die geschichtliche Welt."

<sup>75</sup> See Hans Adler, *Die Prägnanz des Dunklen: Gnoseologie – Ästhetik – Geschichtsphilosophie bei Johann Gottfried Herder* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1990), 168.

<sup>76</sup> See Immanuel Kant, "Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht," in *Was ist Aufklärung? Ausgewählte kleine Schriften*, ed. Horst D. Brandt (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1999).

<sup>77</sup> Kant claims: "Wenn denn nun gefragt wird: Leben wir jetzt in einem aufgeklärten Zeitalter? so ist die Antwort: Nein, aber wohl in einem Zeitalter der *Aufklärung*." But Eze points out that Kant's concept of reason contains a strongly racial connotation besides its universal claim. In other words, the faculty of reason is subtly reserved for European Whites. It is a colored idea of reason than a really universal one. In

declares, rests on the task that the Europeans bear toward “educating” and “elevating” non-European peoples in the world to recognize and pursue enlightened conditions.<sup>78</sup> Herder detests this model of generalization: “Niemand in der Welt fühlt die Schwäche des allgemeinen Charakterisierens mehr als ich.”<sup>79</sup> Hence Herder claims that every historical stage has its own legitimacy of existence and its unique individuality: “sind alle Ratten und Mäuse einander gleich – nein!”<sup>80</sup>

Herder’s concept of cultural uniqueness, however, needs to be situated in the context of the geohistorical hierarchy. In Herder’s logic, a so-called culture is a historical stage, a phase in universal history with a particular geographical location. Hence Herder’s concept of cultural uniqueness does not demonstrate a neutral or relativistic incomparability but has historicist limits. Let me explain this with an example.

Herder criticizes his contemporaries for using Enlightenment standards to judge the Orient:

Wie tausendmal mehr töricht, wenn du [the Enlightenment philosopher] einem *Kinde* deinen philosophischen Deismus, deine ästhetische Tugend und Ehre, deine allgemeine

---

his essay *Beobachtung über das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen* (1764), Kant deteriorates non-European peoples, particularly the Blacks, and holds Germans to be the most qualified human beings in the world. — — —, “Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung,” in *Was ist Aufklärung? Ausgewählte kleine Schriften*, ed. Horst D. Brandt (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1999), 26. — — —, “Beobachtung über das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen,” in *Vorkritische Schriften bis 1768*, ed. Wilhelm Weischedel (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977); Eze, “The Color of Reason: The Idea of Race in Kant’s Anthropology.”

<sup>78</sup> See note 4.

<sup>79</sup> Herder, *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit*, 28.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

Völkerliebe voll toleranter Unterjochung, Ausaugung und Aufklärung nach hohem Geschmack deiner Zeit großmütig gönnen wolltest! Einem *Kinde*?<sup>81</sup>

At first glance, it seems that Herder insists on the historical legitimacy of the Orient and rejects the arrogance of the so-called Enlightenment philosopher. Yet Herder's comparison of the Orient to a child actually undermines the absoluteness of the concept of cultural uniqueness and deprives the Orient of being culturally or historically equal with Europe at the same time. It determines the Orient to be mentally too underdeveloped to understand the Enlightenment's reasoning, although, as we pointed out above, the old man should learn the pure sensibility from the child. In other words, a child can refuse to acknowledge the abstract thinking of the adults, but she/he is still in an inferior stage in terms of intellectual development.

For Herder, the co-existence of different "cultures" is the simultaneity of inconcurrence (*Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen*).<sup>82</sup> Herder refers to this "fact" himself:

[S]iehe um dich! der größte Teil von *Nationen* der Erde ist noch in *Kindheit*, reden alle noch die Sprache, haben die Sitten, geben die Vorbilder des Grads der Bildung – wohin du unter sogenannte Wilde reisest und horchest, tönen Laute zur Erläuterung der Schrift! wehen lebendige Kommentare der Offenbarung!<sup>83</sup>

---

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>82</sup> Wilfried Malsch points out that this belief in *Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen* entails the consciousness of European mission of civilization in the non-European world. See Wilfried Malsch, "Nationen und kulturelle Vielfalt in Herders Geschichtsphilosophie," in *Nationen und Kulturen: Zum 250. Geburtstag Johann Gottfried Herders*, ed. Regine Otto (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1996).

<sup>83</sup> Herder, *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit*, 91. (My italics)

The imperative phrase “[S]iehe um dich!” (Look around!) tells the reader that these “childhood nations” exist right now, not in the past. Yet the second phrase immediately informs the reader that they actually represent the past of Herder’s own time and place.<sup>84</sup> The positive connotation of the human beings in the child phase does not contradict their historical underdevelopment, but rather proves what Europe has “lost.” In his *Briefe zu Beförderung der Humanität* (1793-1797), Herder claims that “intellektuelle Kräfte in meherer Ausbildung der Vorzug der Europäer sind.”<sup>85</sup>

After unearthing the hierarchical background of Herder’s concept of incomparable individuality, we can now turn to its subversive potential, which can call the geohistorical hierarchy into question. This aspect can be developed into a cultural relativism, treating cultures as simultaneous and equal phenomena. In *Auch eine Philosophie*, Herder’s explicit criticism of the ruthlessness of colonial practices by the colonial powers is intrinsically connected to the concept of incomparable individuality, rendering legitimacy to cultural otherness.

---

<sup>84</sup> This type of analogy between the exotic societies outside Europe and Europe’s past is not unique in Herder’s thinking. The historian Jean Lafitau also argued in his *Moeurs des sauvages américains comparées aux mœurs des premiers temps* (1727) that the indigenous people in America could be seen as living model of Europe’s past.

<sup>85</sup> Herder, *Briefe zu Beförderung der Humanität*, 740.

#### 4.2.5 Subversion from Within: Herder's Critique of European Colonial Practices

Although *Auch eine Philosophie* is not a systematic treatise about colonialism practiced predominantly by Great Britain and France in the eighteenth century, Herder, in the context of his critique of Enlightenment rational thinking, explicitly demonstrates his antipathy toward the ruthlessness of colonial practices:

Je mehr wir Europäer Mittel und Werkzeuge erfinden, euch andern Weltteile zu unterjochen, zu betrügen und zu plündern – vielleicht ists einst eben an euch, zu triumphieren! Wir schlagen Ketten an, womit ihr uns ziehen werdet [...]! wir nahen uns einem neuen Auftritte, wenn auch freilich bloß durch Verwesung!<sup>86</sup>

The pronouns of “we” and “you” are simultaneously separated and connected through colonial practices. We, the Europeans, the colonizers, are set against the unidentified you, the others, the colonized. Then Herder more precisely defines “we” and “you:”

In Europa ist die Sklaverei abgeschafft [...], nur eins haben wir uns noch erlaubt, drei Weltteile als Sklaven zu brauchen, zu verhandeln, in Silbergruben und Zuckermühlen zu verbannen – *aber das sind nicht Europäer, nicht Christen*, und dafür bekommen wir Silber und Edelmetalle, Gewürze, Zucker und – heimliche Krankheit [...]! Drei Weltteile durch uns verwüstet und poliziert, und wir durch sie entvölkert, entmannet, in Üppigkeit, Schinderei und Tod versenkt [...].<sup>87</sup>

Apparently, “we” are the Christians and Europeans. Yet Herder does not specify if the Christians here are Catholics or Protestants. Neither does he elaborate who exactly the Europeans are, nor on what skin color they have. It is clear though that “you” are the humans who neither believe in Christian religions, nor reside in Europe, nor have the

---

<sup>86</sup> Herder, *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit*, 103.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 74. (My italics)

socalled white skin color. In other words, the humans who are made to be slaves have to fulfill these three criteria: non-white, non-European, and non-Christian.

In these two quotes, Herder clearly shows his humanistic position and critiques the malicious treatments of the colonized by the colonizers. In Herder's narrative, the power relation between these two parties is not stable. Although the alleged Europeans can use mechanical tools and subjective criteria to subjugate their "others," this rational control can be changed one day toward its own destruction. The colonized may even revolt against the colonizers and use the same methods to treat them: "Wir schlagen Ketten an, womit ihr uns ziehen werdet [...]!"

Herder's ironic critique and the consciousness of a potential threat not only demonstrate his humanistic understanding. They also show how cultural and colonial differences, through colonial cruelty, induce Herder to think and argue against the Enlightenment way of thinking and colonial practices. Herder's critique of colonial practices has a subversive power within the structure of the geohistorical hierarchy. In the tenth collection of *Humanitätsbriefe*, this aspect gains more weight and develops into an ethic of history which will seek revenge from the colonizers. At the same time, however, we should not forget that the geohistorical hierarchy functions as the interpretive framework for both Herder's concept of cultural uniqueness and his critique of colonial ruthlessness.

#### 4.2.6 Concluding Remarks: Herder and the Plural Centers of Gravity

Abbé Guillaume-Thomas Raynal registers the impact of colonies on European cultures in book XIX of his influential *Histoire philosophique et politique du commerce et des établissements des Européens dans les deux Indes* (1770, *A Philosophical and Political History of the Settlements and Trade of the Europeans in the East and West Indies*):

In the first part of the work we endeavoured to describe the state of commerce in Europe before the discovery of the East and West-Indies. We then proceeded to trace the slow, difficult and tyrannical progress of the settlements formed in those distant regions. Our design will be concluded, if we can now determine the influence which the intercourse established with the new world has had over the morals, government, arts and opinions of the old.<sup>88</sup>

Being the most widely distributed global history during the half century following its publication, Raynal's magnum opus representatively reveals the contributions of colonial and cultural differences in European societies and the intertwined nature of European cultures and their "otherness."<sup>89</sup> It offers a vivid example for the essential role of cultural differences in the formation of modernity.

In the case of Herder's philosophy of history, however, a statement as explicit as Raynal's proving the challenges of cultural differences cannot be found. The geohistorical hierarchy demonstrates Herder's justification of European superiority, characterized by the Germanic origin and Christianity. Yet Herder's ardent reception of

---

<sup>88</sup> Abbé Guillaum Thomas Raynal, *A Philosophical and Political History of the Settlements and Trade of the Europeans in the East and West Indies* (London: T. Cadell, 1776), 399.

<sup>89</sup> See Srinivas Aravamudan, *Tropicopolitans: Colonialism and Agency, 1688-1804* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1999), 289-300.

non-European cultures through travel writings, his concept of cultural uniqueness, and his harsh critique of colonial practices indirectly reflect the impact of non-European cultures on his thinking.

My reading of Herder's philosophy of history neither means to impose the colonizer-colonized model onto his eighteenth-century German-speaking particularity, nor to admire one specific aspect of a so-called cultural relativism without critical limitation. Rather, I endeavor to pluralize the frameworks of reference in which Herder is situated. Only against these multiple backgrounds can we critique Herder's geohistorical hierarchy and appreciate his instinct of cultural uniqueness, which can be developed to a more comprehensive recognition of the legitimacy of colonial and cultural differences. While *Auch eine Philosophie* is more concerned with the invention of European tradition, a perusal of Herder's *Ideen*, in particular his portrayal of Africa, China, and Europe, will help us grasp how Herder's geohistorical hierarchy functions in respect to non-European cultures.

## **4. 3 Africa and Europe in Herder's *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit***

### **4.3.1 Introduction**

In the preface to the *Ideen*, Herder connects the genesis of this work to *Auch eine Philosophie*:

Als ich vor zehn Jahren die kleine Schrift *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit* herausgab: sollte das *Auch* dieses Titels wohl nichts weniger als [...] eine Note der Bescheidenheit sein [...]. [...] Die Schrift war bald vergriffen und ich ward zu einer neuen Ausgabe derselben ermuntert; unmöglich aber konnte diese neue Ausgabe sich jetzt in ihrer alten Gestalt vors Auge des Publikums wagen. [...] Also mußte viel tiefer angefangen und der Kreis der Ideen viel weiter gezogen werden, wenn die Schrift einigermaßen ihres Titels wert sein sollte. [...] Gelesen habe ich so ziemlich alles, was darüber geschrieben war und von meiner Jugend an war jedes neue Buch, das über die Geschichte der Menschheit erschien und worin ich Beiträge zu meiner großen Aufgabe hoffte, wie ein gefundener Schatz.<sup>90</sup>

At first glance, Herder sees the *Ideen* as the continuation and expansion of his early treatise *Auch eine Philosophie*. Upon greater examination, we notice that, if *Auch eine Philosophie* articulates the young Herder's strong dissatisfaction with and challenge to prevailing intellectual conceptions of history, then the *Ideen* takes pains to convey a harmonious wholeness in accordance with an all-encompassing theodicy.<sup>91</sup> If *Auch eine Philosophie* bluntly ridicules the idea of European Enlightenment as utopia, then the *Ideen* endeavors to construct the idea of northern Europe's historical superiority. In *Auch eine Philosophie*, the revolutionary articulation of cultural uniqueness and the conventional concept of history as an ongoing process, comparable to the organic growth of human ages, irreconcilably exist side by side. The *Ideen*, however, strengthens the synthetic aspect of history in *Auch eine Philosophie* with around 1000 pages, representing a full grasp of Herder's organization of cultural diversity into a universal history or, in

---

<sup>90</sup> Herder, *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, 11-12.

<sup>91</sup> See John Zammito, "Herder and Historical Metanarrative: What's Philosophical about History?," in *A Companion to the Works of Johann Gottfried Herder*, ed. Hans Adler and Wulf Koepke (Rochester: Camden House, 2009), 82-83.

Hobsbawm's words, a grand invention of European and world historic traditions.

Unlike in *Auch eine Philosophie*, Herder abandons the metaphor of human ages in the *Ideen*. Starting from the position of the earth in the universe, Herder elaborates an evolution of natural and human history from geological, botanical, zoological, and anthropological perspectives in the four volumes of *Ideen*.

While the first volume of Herder's "speculative metanarrative," as John Zammito calls it, received rapturous praise from his friend Goethe as the most valuable gospel, this work met with cold censure from Herder's former teacher Immanuel Kant. Kant's review of the first volume of *Ideen*, published in the influential journal *Allgemeine Litteratur-Zeitung* (*General Literature Newspaper*) in Jena in January 1785, publicly affirmed their ever growing intellectual gap.<sup>92</sup> Kant indubitably shows his deep disagreement with Herder's understanding of history:

Daher möchte wohl, was ihm Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit heißt, etwas ganz anderes sein, als was man gewöhnlich unter diesem Namen versteht: nicht etwa eine logische Pünktlichkeit in Bestimmung der Begriffe, oder sorgfältige Unterscheidung und Bewährung der Grundsätze, sondern ein sich nicht lange verweilender viel umfassender Blick, eine in Auffindung von Analogien fertige Sagazität, im Gebrauche derselben aber kühne Einbildungskraft, verbunden mit der Geschicklichkeit, für seinen immer in dunkeler Ferne gehaltenen Gegenstand durch Gefühle und Empfindungen

---

<sup>92</sup> See Ibid. Goethe wrote from Rome to Herder: "Nur ein flüchtig Wort, und zuerst den lebhaftesten Dank für die Ideen! Sie sind mir als das liebenswerteste Evangelium gekommen, und die interessantesten Studien meines Lebens laufen alle da zusammen. Woran man sich so lange geplackt hat, wird einem nun so vollständig vorgeführt. Wie viel Lust zu allem Guten hast du mir durch dieses Buch gegeben und erneut!" Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *Italienische Reise*, ed. Christoph Michel and Hans-Georg Dewitz (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1993), 447.

einzunehmen, die [...] mehr von sich vermuten lassen, als kalte Beurteilung wohl gerade zu in denselben antreffen würde.<sup>93</sup>

This bitter criticism of the work's lack of logical rigor and the ironic description of its speculative imagination culminate at the end of the review in a positive confirmation of the indispensability of the firm ground of reason for philosophizing history.<sup>94</sup>

Two months before this review, around seven months after the publication of the first volume of Herder's *Ideen*, in November, 1784, Kant already published his essay *Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte der Menschheit in weltbürgerlicher Absicht* (*Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim*) in the journal *Berlinische Monatsschrift* (*Berlin Monthly*), which, a month later, would publish Kant's famous treatise *Was ist Aufklärung* (*What is Enlightenment*).

The similarity of the titles between Kant's idea for a universal history and Herder's work is as stunning as the difference Kant's position represents. With his singular *Idee*, in contrast to Herder's plural *Ideen*, Kant claims to expel empirical historiographies through the a priori thread (*Leitfaden a priori*): the cosmopolitan intent of nature. Reason, Kant contends, is an innate determination while Herder sees it as a

---

<sup>93</sup> Immanuel Kant, "Rezension zu Johann Gottfried Herders Ideen," in *Immanuel Kant. Schriften zur Anthropologie, Geschichtsphilosophie, Politik und Pädagogik*, ed. Wilhelm Weischedel (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977), 781.

<sup>94</sup> In the end of the review, Kant writes: "Desto mehr ist aber zu wünschen, daß unser geistvoller Verfasser in der Fortsetzung des Werks, [...] ihn nicht durch Winke, sondern bestimmte Begriffe, nicht durch gemutmaßte, sondern beobachtete Gesetze, nicht vermittelst einer, es sei durch Metaphysik oder durch Gefühle beflügelten Einbildungskraft, sondern durch eine im Entwurfe ausgebreitete, aber in der Ausübung behutsame Vernunft zur Vollendung seines Unternehmens leiten möge." *Ibid.*, 794.

result or ability acquired in the process of human evolution and growth. Herder's concept of the "naturalized" reason is, even if it is not meant to be, at least well taken to be "a direct affront to Kant and to all who held reason to be a transcendent differentiation of man from all the rest of creation, a sign of his divine affinity."<sup>95</sup> Hence, not surprisingly, Kant's review of the second volume of Herder's *Ideen* in 1785 was as devastating as the first one.

In the scholarly criticism of Herder's *Ideen* today, it is imperative to acknowledge and to engage with Kant's and Herder's intellectual dispute because Kant's success as the dominating philosophical voice of the German and European late Enlightenment has consigned Herder's work into oblivion for more than one century.<sup>96</sup> Tilman Borsche wittily comments that what was for Kant a small anecdote has become Herder's doom.<sup>97</sup> Indeed, even the recent renaissance of critics' interest in Herder's *Ideen* is still compelled to justify the legitimacy and independence of Herder's contribution under the shadow of Kant's dismissive reviews. Critics inadvertently confine the critical debate to whether

---

<sup>95</sup> Zammito, "Herder and Historical Metanarrative: What's Philosophical about History?," 79. Zammito also points out that Hamann made clearly to Herder, angry with Kant's review, that many places in Herder's *Ideen* sharply contradict Kant's philosophy, though Herder may not intend to do so.

<sup>96</sup> See Wulf Köpke, "Herders Idee der Geschichte in der Sicht des frühen 20. Jahrhunderts," in *Johann Gottfried Herder: Geschichte und Kultur*, ed. Martin Bollacher (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1994).

<sup>97</sup> Tilman Borsche, "Vorkritisch oder metakritisch? Die philosophische Aktualität Herders," in *Herder im Spiegel der Zeiten. Verwerfungen der Rezeptionsgeschichte und Chancen einer Relektüre*, ed. Tilman Borsche (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2006), 126. Borsche calls for a revision of Herder's position in Enlightenment philosophy in our present-day discourse.

Herder's work is an adequate counterbalance to Kant's vision of cosmopolitanism, a less rigorous philosophy, or a contour-blurring romance.<sup>98</sup>

Since Kant's reviews mainly concentrated on abstract or "universal" questions, we nearly forget that the larger part of Herder's mammoth project focuses on concrete or particular cultural phenomena all over the world. In other words, Herder does not only offer theoretical concepts about history as human continuity and humanity as the cause of history, but he also provides detailed depictions of cultures, which are seen as historical phenomena. Therefore while it is valuable to unearth Herder's contribution to the Enlightenment philosophy of history on an abstract and theoretical level, it is also indispensable to trace the motivations and methods of Herder's textual representations of local cultures in Africa, Asia, America, and Europe. The analysis of the concrete and

---

<sup>98</sup> Ulrich Gaier debunks the critique by Kant and his followers and stresses the profoundness of Herder's epistemological synthesis of historiography, poetry, and philosophy. See Ulrich Gaier, "Poesie oder Geschichtsphilosophie? Herders erkenntnistheoretische Antwort auf Kant," in *Johann Gottfried Herder: Geschichte und Kultur*, ed. Martin Bollacher (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1994). In a later essay, Gaier stresses that Herder develops an alternative system theory (*Systematologie*) to Kant's transcendental philosophy. See — — —, "Hamann und Herder - eine philosophische Alternative zu Kant," in *Herder im Spiegel der Zeiten: Verwerfungen der Rezeptionsgeschichte und Chancen einer Relektüre*, ed. Tilman Borsche (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2006). Also see Hans Adler, "Ästhetische und anästhetische Wissenschaft. Kants Herder-Kritik als Dokument moderner Paradigmenkonkurrenz," *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 68(1994). Hans Dieter Irmscher, "Die geschichtsphilosophische Kontroverse zwischen Kant und Herder," in *Hamann-Kant-Herder*, ed. Bernhard Gajek (Frankfurt am Main and New York: Peter Lang, 1987). Irmscher's essay clearly delineates the similarities and differences between Kant and Herder's philosophy of history on its abstract level.

local is by no means less fundamental than the discussion of the universal because the former will testify to the viability and limits of the latter at a more existential level.<sup>99</sup>

While it is easier to claim Herder's universal and thus non-Eurocentric intentions based on his abstract ideas, studies of Herder's depictions of Africa, China, and Europe disclose a completely different picture. Hansjakob Werlen, Uta Sadji, Susanne Zantop, and Helmut Peitsch all demonstrate that cultural prejudices towards Africans and Asians abound in Herder's *Ideen*. Convinced by postcolonial studies, these authors seek to unearth the Eurocentric logic behind Herder's work as a justification of European colonialism.<sup>100</sup> These studies, however, often ignore the "meta-level" of Herder's *Ideen*, and thus the intellectual dynamics in the late Enlightenment. Our opportunity to

---

<sup>99</sup> See Anne Löchte, *Johann Gottfried Herder. Kulturtheorie und Humanitätsidee der Ideen, Humanitätsbriefe und Adrastea* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2005). Löchte considers it an irretrievable misunderstanding to criticize Herder as an Eurocentric thinker. Also see Daniel Carey and Sven Trakulhun, "Universalism, Diversity, and the Postcolonial Enlightenment," in *The Postcolonial Enlightenment: Eighteenth-Century Colonialism and Postcolonial Theory*, ed. Daniel Carey and Lynn Festa (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). Carey and Trakulhun portray Herder as a thinker advocating cultural relativism and diversity in comparison to Kant. They, however, ignore the teleological aspect in Herder's philosophy of history and Herder's dismissive descriptions of the Africans or the Asians in *Ideen*.

<sup>100</sup> See Susanne Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies: Conquest, Family, and Nation in Precolonial Germany, 1770-1870* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1997); Hansjakob Werlen, "Sprache und (Wirtschafts-)Wissenschaft im >Sina<-Kapitel von Herders *Ideen*," in *Vom Selbstdenken: Aufklärung und Aufklärungskritik in Herders >Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit<*, ed. John Zammito and Regine Otto (Heidelberg: Synchron, 2001); Uta Sadji, *Der Negermythos am Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts in Deutschland. Eine Analyse der Rezeption von Reiseliteratur über Schwarzafrika* (Frankfurt am Main, Bern, and Las Vegas: Peter Lang, 1979); Helmut Peitsch, "Deutsche Peripherie und Europäisches Zentrum? Herders Aneignung der außereuropäischen Forschungs- und Entdeckungsreisen in den *Ideen*," in *Vom Selbstdenken: Aufklärung und Aufklärungskritik in Herders >Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit<*, ed. Regine Otto and John Zammito (Heidelberg: Synchron, 2001).

disclose the impact of cultural otherness in Herder's richly informed text would be lost in the argument of defining Herder as a solely Eurocentric thinker.

Combining the strengths of both abstract and concrete studies of Herder's *Ideen*, I will first show how, in the *Ideen*, non-European cultures influence and, at the same time, are ordered by Herder's two principles of historical development and cultural uniqueness, which find their first articulation in *Auch eine Philosophie*. Then I will turn to concrete examples which are employed to underpin the theoretical architecture of Herder's grand philosophy of history. Among the vast number of cultures Herder's *Ideen* covers, the Africans and the Asians, in particular China, are cast in a negative light while European cultures appear as the last stage of the universal development of history. Birgit Tautz employs the two categories of texture and color to describe the modes of perception chiefly related to China and Africa in eighteenth-century German discourse.<sup>101</sup> In her reading, China is related to reading and scripture while Africa gives rise to the European discourse of race. In the context of Herder's *Ideen*, I argue instead that history and climate are the two defining domains for China and Africa. While the representation of China as historical standstill is contrasted to European dynamics, the image of the Africans testifies to Herder's belief in climate as the defining factor for human diversity. Both China and Africa contribute to the configuration of a European

---

<sup>101</sup> See Birgit Tautz, *Reading and Seeing Ethnic Differences in the Enlightenment: From China To Africa*, 1st ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 4-5.

cultural identity in the *Ideen*. Uta Sadjı aptly comments, “Primitive Neger und häßliche Asiaten bilden einen eindrucksvollen Kontrast zu den hellhäutigen Menschen um den Mittelmeerraum.”<sup>102</sup> I will also show that Herder’s praise of trade as the essential trait of being European is connected to eighteenth-century colonial expansion.

Since I deal with Herder’s dismissive representation of China in the chapter on the intellectual Sinophilia and Sinophobia in the eighteenth century, I will only focus on Africa and Europe in Herder’s *Ideen* in this section. Since we can no longer take seriously Herder’s logic of historical development, in which Africa represents the least developed stage, we are now able to see that Herder needs the “primitive” Africans to configure the identity of the “most developed” northern Europeans. In other words, Herder’s portrayal of Africa is constitutive of the construction of European identity.

### **4.3.2 Situated Felicity and Inevitable Development**

In the *Ideen*, Herder further develops two aspects related to his notion of cultural uniqueness: historical situatedness of felicity (*Glückseligkeit*) and its emotional foundation. Herder poses three questions: What is the felicity of humankind with all its differences of culture, custom, climate, and historical circumstances? Is there a standard for these differences? Is providence (*Vorsehung*) more interested in the welfare of

---

<sup>102</sup> Sadjı, *Der Negermythos am Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts in Deutschland. Eine Analyse der Rezeption von Reiseliteratur über Schwarzafrika*, 194.

different peoples or more in its final purpose (*Hauptendzweck*)? Consistently with his idea of cultural uniqueness in *Auch eine Philosophie*, Herder stands up to an absolute set of values, which determine the felicity of humankind, and claims that felicity is a deeply idiosyncratic phenomenon.

Felicity is entangled with culture, climate, and geography.<sup>103</sup> Herder contends:

Schon der Name Glückseligkeit deutet an, daß der Mensch keiner reinen Seligkeit fähig sei, noch sich dieselbe erschaffen möge; er selbst ist ein Sohn des Glücks, das ihn hie oder dahin setzte und nach dem Lande, der Zeit, der Organisation, den Umständen, in welchen er lebt, auch die Fähigkeit seines Genusses, die Art und das Maß seiner Freuden und Leiden bestimmt hat. Unsinnig-stolz wäre die Anmaßung, daß die Bewohner aller Weltteile Europäer sein müßten, um glücklich zu leben: denn wären wir selbst, was wir sind, außer Europa worden?<sup>104</sup>

Herder supports his claim of situated felicity by comparing a “savage” (*Wilde*) to a European intellectual:

Der Wilde, der sich, der sein Weib und Kind mit ruhiger Freude liebt und für seinen Stamm, wie für sein Leben, mit beschränkter Wirksamkeit glühet, ist, wie mich dünkt, ein wahreres Wesen als jener gebildete Schatte, der für den Schatten seines ganzen Geschlechts d. i. für einen Namen, in Liebe entzückt ist. In seiner armen Hütte hat jener für jeden Fremden Raum, den er mit gleichgültiger Gutmütigkeit als seinen Bruder aufnimmt und ihn nicht einmal, wo er hersei? fraget. Das verschwemmte Herz des müßigen Kosmopoliten ist eine Hütte für Niemand.<sup>105</sup>

In Herder’s narrative, the so-called non-European savage embodies warm friendship and love based on emotion (*Gefühl*) while the European cosmopolitan represents cold and abstract reason. For Herder, felicity is essentially connected to feelings and sentiments

---

<sup>103</sup> Zammito, Kant, Herder, and the Birth of Anthropology, 340.

<sup>104</sup> Herder, Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit, 327.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 333.

rather than to thinking: "Da endlich unser Wohlsein mehr ein stilles Gefühl als ein glänzender Gedanke ist: so sind es allerdings auch weit mehr die Empfindungen des Herzens, als die Wirkungen einer tiefsinnigen Vernunft, die uns mit Liebe und Freude am Leben lohnen."<sup>106</sup> Therefore, Herder claims, the indestructible happiness which European travelers admire on the faces of non-European peoples is not in accordance with the restlessness (*Rastlosigkeit*) of the Europeans.

Herder ironically comments that the Europeans do not understand the ardent passion and imagination of the Africans while the Indians cannot grasp the restless greediness which drives the Europeans from one end of the world to the other. Felicity is thus the inner pleasure and enjoyment of one's existence (*Dasein*). Individual happiness is for Herder the fundament of collective felicity. Otherwise it is merely despotism and tyranny. Therefore Herder rejects the idea and practice to "civilize" or Europeanize the other parts of the world because this intention is against the law of nature:

Ihr Menschen aller Weltteile, die ihr seit Äonen dahinging, ihr hättet also nicht gelebt und etwa nur mit eurer Asche die Erde gedüngt, damit am Ende der Zeit eure Nachkommen durch Europäische Kultur glücklich würden; was fehlet einem stolzen Gedanken dieser Art, daß er nicht Beleidigung der Natur-Majestät heiße?<sup>107</sup>

The non-European "savage" challenges European "high culture" through Herder's notion of situated felicity. Radically speaking, Herder almost suspends the realm of

---

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 330.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 335.

history as a temporal lineage and merely pays attention to the fundamental equality of human sentiments among all cultures separated by space. Geography, which largely orders the differences between cultures in Herder's system, nearly displaces time, the realm to which Herder subscribes his philosophy of history. Herder's concept of development, however, confines the evolving of this idea and explains the non-comparability as historical differences.

In the realm of time, the idiosyncratic felicity of every culture is not a state of equilibrium. It is subject to development. Abandoning the metaphor of human age used in *Auch eine Philosophie*, Herder explains the idea of development from the perspective of the maximum perfection, which not only defies comparison but also denies a culture's further development. In different cultures, Herder contends, organic forces lead to different maximum perfections: "daß alle Vollkommenheit und Schönheit zusammengesetzter, eingeschränkter Dinge oder ihrer Systeme auf einem solchen Maximum ruhe."<sup>108</sup> For example, the Chinese have perfect political morals, the Phoenicians epitomize the spirit of trade and shipping, and the Greeks create the highest sensuous beauty in art and morals. Hence, Herder claims, we cannot compare these ancient peoples to each other because they all have their own maxima of perfection.

---

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 647.

These diverse states of perfection, however, merely prove an ephemeral point in the eternal sequence of history. The vicissitude of history is always subject to change and transience: “Aller Zusammenhang der Kräfte und Formen ist weder Rückgang noch Stillstand, sondern Fortschreitung.”<sup>109</sup> Hence Herder comments that if future generations inherit and imitate the states of perfection of the ancients, then these descendants will sink and degenerate like the senile cultures in China or Greece. Cultural uniqueness does not prevent Herder from treating certain cultures as degenerate or backward. The situated felicity is only valid when the cultures at comparison are at the same stage of development.

The geohistorical hierarchy in *Auch eine Philosophie* is expanded to all kinds of cultures in the world. Herder devotes three volumes of the *Ideen* to meticulous descriptions of the development of human history from “primitive” peoples around the North Pole, in Africa and America, to cultures with long traditions in Asia, Egypt and Greece, and finally to European peoples such as Germans and Slavs. In the *Ideen*, it has become clearer that these different cultures, although they exist at the same time, are not at the same stage of historical development. In other words, if the cultures at the same stage cannot be compared to each other, the cultures of the next stage are apparently more advanced and further developed than the former ones. The Herderian

---

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 175.

development of history is not confined to one region but wanders from one place to another. Now the European Peninsula hosts the most developed historical stage.

Hence it is not situated felicity but historical development that determines the tone of Herder's description of Africa. Yet, as we will also see, Herder's Europe needs a primitive Africa to gain its "higher" status in history.

### **4.3.3 Climate, Race, and the "Pitiful" Africans**

Herder's description of the black Africans in the *Ideen* is embedded in the eighteenth-century discussions about climate and race. Herder is convinced that climate is the intrinsic reason for human diversity and disputes the viability of skin color as the classificatory method. Despite his difference from the theorists of race such as Kant and Blumenbach, Herder believes in the natural inferiority of the black Africans.

In the second volume of the *Ideen*, Herder contrasts "primitive" peoples in six different geographical places such as the North Pole, in Asia, Africa, America, Oceania to the beautifully shaped (*schöngebildet*) people in the Middle East and Greece. While the description of other primitive peoples remains informational and relatively neutral, Herder makes clear that the black Africans are the least blessed creatures. Herder's measurement is based on their "contributions" to European culture:

Die Tungusen und Eskimohs sitzen ewig in ihren Höhlen und habe sich weder in Liebe noch Leid um entfernte Völker bekümmert. Der Neger hat für die Europäer nichts erfunden; er hat sich nie in den Sinn kommen lassen, Europa weder zu beglücken, noch zu bekriegen. Aus den Gegenden schöngebildeter Völker haben wir unsre Religion, Kunst, Wissenschaft, die ganze Gestalt unsrer Kultur und Humanität, so viel oder wenig

wir deren an uns haben. In diesem Erdstrich ist alles erfunden, alles durchdacht und wenigstens in Kinderproben ausgeführt, was die Menschheit verschönern und bilden konnte.<sup>110</sup>

Obviously, European civilization of Herder's time serves as the standard of evaluating and contrasting the Africans and the "beautiful" peoples. Instead of being conscious of the limits of this method of evaluation, Herder makes it the natural genealogy of history.

He explains the insurmountable gap between the Africans and the Europeans by evoking the prevailing climate theory in the eighteenth century. He attributes to climate the decisive role in determining national characters:

Die Wirkung des Klima erstreckt sich zwar auf Körper allerlei Art, vorzüglich aber auf die zärtern, die Fechtigkeiten, die Luft und den Äther. Sie verbreitete sich vielmehr auf die Massen der Dinge, als auf die Individuen; doch auch auf diese durch jene. Sie geht nicht auf Zeitpunkte sondern herrscht in Zeiträumen, wo sie oft spät und sodann vielleicht durch geringe Umstände offenbar wird. Endlich: das Klima zwinget nicht, sondern es neiget: es gibt die unmerkliche Disposition, die man bei eingewurzelten Völkern im ganzen Gemälde der Sitten und Lebensweise zwar bemerken, aber sehr schwer, insonderheit abgetrennt, zeichnen kann. Vielleicht findet sich einmal ein eigner Reisender, der ohne Vorurteile und Übertreibungen für den *Geist des Klima* reiset.<sup>111</sup>

After expressing his expectation for the travelers, Herder sees his task as a philosopher in observing and explaining how the forces of different climatic conditions entail and shape human diversity. Climate theory plays a decisive role not only in the *Ideen* but also in Herder's thinking and writing throughout his whole life.<sup>112</sup>

---

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 227-28.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 270.

<sup>112</sup> Gonthie-Louis Fink, "Von Winckelmann bis Herder. Die deutsche Klimatheorie in europäischer Perspektive," in *Johann Gottfried Herder 1744-1803*, ed. Gerhard Sauder (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1987).

Herder's environmental explanation of human diversity is a product of his time. The first eighteenth-century work to use climate as a matrix for physical and cultural differences was the Frenchman Jean-Baptiste Du Bos's *Réflexions critiques sur la poésie et sur la peinture* (1719, *Critical Reflections on Poetry and Painting*). The most powerful voice of climate theory was raised by Montesquieu in his influential *Esprit des lois* (1748, *Spirit of Laws*). Montesquieu stresses the significance of physical environment and argues that it is important for enlightened government and moral education to recognize climatic impact on human nature and to free human beings from the constraints of their natural environment. Jan Golinski points out that those Scottish Enlightenment thinkers such as David Hume and William Robertson contradict Montesquieu's theory because "it failed to articulate an account of social progress."<sup>113</sup>

This critique also holds true for Herder. Instead of seeing possibility of change within one certain climatic zone, Herder understands the progression of history as a move from hot and torrid regions such as Africa to temperate places such as Europe. Herder's primary interest in the Africans rests on explaining their physiognomic strains through climatic causes, in particular the black skin color. The heat of the sun, Herder contends, has caused all different kinds of black skins. The sun also shows its effects on the skin color of the Portuguese immigrants who have been living in Africa for centuries.

---

<sup>113</sup> Jan Golinski, *British Weather and the Climate of Enlightenment* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), 177.

Herder even claims that a newborn in Africa is white. Only the climate turns her or his skin black. Herder names some examples:

Genau in der Gegend, wo der Ostwind über das ganze feste Land hin die größte Hitze bringt, wohnen die schwärzesten Negestämme, wo die Hitze abnimmt oder wo Seewinde sie kühlen, bleicht sich auch die Schwärze ins Gelbe. Auf kühlen Höhen wohnen weiße oder weißliche Völker;<sup>114</sup>

Therefore we should not see the black skin color as a predetermined feature but should see it as a variable result of nature's ongoing and irresistible powers.

Herder goes on to explain that the heat also induces the protruding mouth, the flat and small nose, and the sloping forehead of the Africans – in one word, the similarity to an ape skull (*die Ähnlichkeit der Konformation zum Affenschädel*). Hence the consequence under these disadvantaged climatic constraints is that the Africans naturally do not have the chance of attaining refined mental capacities. Yet in accordance with his sympathetic fashion, Herder calls his readers to sympathize with the “naturally” disadvantaged Africans:

Lasset uns also den Neger, da ihm in der Organisation seines Klima kein edleres Geschenk werden konnte, bedauern, aber nicht verachten. [...] Was sollte ihm das quälende Gefühl höherer Freuden, für die er nicht gemacht war? Der Stoff dazu war in ihm da; aber die Natur wendete die Hand und erschuf das daraus, was er für sein Land und für die Glückseligkeit seines Lebens nötiger brauchte. Sie hätte kein Afrika schaffen müssen; oder in Afrika mußten auch Neger wohnen.<sup>115</sup>

---

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 233.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 236.

At this point, climate theory has transformed from a neutral key to explaining human diversity to a tool of establishing a hierarchy among peoples and confirming European cultural prejudices. Roxann Wheeler points out that climate theory “was the secular rationale for various skin colors, behaviors, and abilities” in contrast to Christianity in 18<sup>th</sup>-century Europe.<sup>116</sup> Wheeler argues that climate theory “in one form or another, provided the most important rubric for thinking about human differences in the eighteenth century, in regard to both complexion and civil society.”<sup>117</sup>

Herder’s theory of the Africans’ climatic inferiority, however, differs from the emerging theories of race in eighteenth-century Europe. Herder’s teacher Kant is considered today the inventor of the notion and theory of race.<sup>118</sup> As early as 1764, Kant identifies four human races based on skin color in his essay *Beobachtungen über das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen* (*Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime*). Emmanuel Eze points out that the division by skin color in Kant’s essay both serves as a classificatory tool and functions as an indicator of moral and mental capacity: “While the

---

<sup>116</sup> Roxann Wheeler, *The Complexion of Race: Categories of Difference in Eighteenth-Century British Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 21.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 21-22.

<sup>118</sup> See Robert Bernasconi, “Who Invented the Concept of Race? Kant’s Role in the Enlightenment Construction of Race,” in *Race*, ed. Robert Bernasconi (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001).

Americans are completely uneducable because they lack 'affect and passion,' the Africans escape such a malheur, but can only be 'trained' as slaves and servants."<sup>119</sup>

Kant, however, was not the only one who was preoccupied with the concept of race based on skin color. The German anatomist Johann Friedrich Blumenbach complicated Kant's system from four races to five races with numerous varieties in his *De generis humani varietate nativa* (1775, *On the Natural Varieties of Mankind*). Yet the foundational category in Blumenbach's system remains the same: skin color, which is also seen as a result of climatic impact. The physician Samuel Thomas von Sömmering dissected bodies of demised black servants in Kassel and ascertains that the anatomical structure of the blacks shows closer affinities to monkeys than that of the Europeans. He published the results in *Über die körperliche Verschiedenheit des Mohren vom Europäer* (1784, *On the Bodily Differences of the Blackamoor from the European*) and dedicated the book to his best friend Georg Forster. Similar to Herder, Sömmering also states that the blacks are nonetheless human beings as much as the Europeans and should not be treated as animals.<sup>120</sup>

A year after the publication of Sömmering's treatise, Herder published the second volume of his *Ideen*, which contains the section on Africa. In addition to his

---

<sup>119</sup> Eze, "The Color of Reason: The Idea of Race in Kant's Anthropology," 215.

<sup>120</sup> Ludwig Uhlig, *Georg Forster: Lebensabenteuer eines gelehrten Weltbürgers (1754-1794)* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004), 197-98.

climatic explanation of skin colors, Herder disputes the viability of the concept of race in the *Ideen*:

So haben einige z. B. vier oder fünf Abteilungen desselben, die ursprünglich nach Gegenden oder nach Farben gemacht waren, Rassen zu nennen gewaget; ich sehe keine Ursache dieser Benennung. Rasse leitet auf eine Verschiedenheit der Abstammung, die hier entweder gar nicht statt findet, oder in jedem dieser Weltstriche unter jeder dieser Farben die verschiedensten Rassen begreift. Denn jedes Volk ist Volk: es hat seine National-Bildung, wie seine Sprache; zwar hat der Himmelsstrich über alle bald ein Gepräge, bald nur einen linden Schleier gebreitet, der aber das ursprüngliche Stammgebilde der Nation nicht zerstöret. [...] Kurz, weder vier oder fünf Rassen, noch ausschließende Varietäten gibt es auf der Erde. *Die Farben verlieren sich in einander*: die Bildungen dienen dem genetischen Charakter; und im Ganzen wird zuletzt alles nur Schattierung eines und desselben großen Gemäldes, das sich durch alle Räume und Zeiten der Erde verbreitet. Es gehöret also auch nicht sowohl in die systemtische Naturgeschichte, als in die *physisch-geographische* Geschichte der Menschheit.<sup>121</sup>

Kant felt attacked by Herder's statement. Promptly, he published the essay *Bestimmung des Begriffs einer Menschenrasse* (1785, *Definition of the Notion of Human Race*) in the same year to defend and reiterate his concept of race and monogenesis, which entails Georg Forster's disagreement and the assertion of polygenesis.<sup>122</sup> In the quote above, Herder obviously agrees with Kant on monogenesis. But Herder deliberately blurs the categorical boundaries established by the notion of race. In other words, Herder conceives human diversity as climatic and geographical variations of a single original model. This intellectual debate about race, climate, and the purported inferiority of the

---

<sup>121</sup> Herder, *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, 255-56. (my italics)

<sup>122</sup> In *Über den Gebrauch teleologischer Principien in der Philosophie* (1788, *On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy*), Kant is concerned with stating nature's purposiveness in the differences of skin colors. Kant's discussion of the concept of race culminates in his *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (1790, *Critique of Judgment*). See Bernasconi, "Who Invented the Concept of Race? Kant's Role in the Enlightenment Construction of Race."

black Africans in eighteenth-century German discourse holds sway over the formation of the science of race and the empirical research of the biological sciences in later centuries.<sup>123</sup>

Two contemporary critical positions about the German discourse of race deserve our attention. As mentioned above briefly, Eze insists that Kant's racial deduction from skin color to mental capability of enjoying higher pleasures such as the beautiful and the sublime is the foundation of Kant's system of aesthetics, epistemology, and moral philosophy. The seemingly universal reason and the ideal of man in the Kantian philosophy are heavily loaded with the racial preference for white European male. Therefore Eze calls Kant's notion of reason a colored reason – "for anyone who disagreed with Kant's compact would be 'treated as a rebel against *fundamental principles of human nature.*'"<sup>124</sup>

Unlike Eze, Robert Bernasconi endeavors to disconnect the German discussions of race from the German thinkers' attitude toward colonialism and slavery. Bernasconi argues:

The fact that the scientific concept of race was developed initially in Germany rather than in Britain or America suggests that it was not specifically the interests of the slave owners that led to its introduction, but rather, as Kant's essays themselves confirm, an interest in classification and above all the attempt to provide a theoretical defense of monogenesis. The appeal of monogenesis in large measure lay in its conformity to the Biblical account,

---

<sup>123</sup> See *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>124</sup> Eze, "The Color of Reason: The Idea of Race in Kant's Anthropology," 232-33.

but it also lent itself to discussions of “human fraternity,” so that within the context of the late eighteenth century the idea of race was a resource for those who opposed slavery, just as polygenesis lent itself to the upholders of slavery, without there being any necessary connection between one’s position on the monogenesis-polygenesis dispute and one’s position on slavery.<sup>125</sup>

Bernasconi’s logic holds to some extent true for Herder’s polemic against slavery in *Auch eine Philosophie* and his *Humanitätsbriefe*.<sup>126</sup> However, Eze’s critique reminds us that we cannot completely diminish Herder’s statement of the natural inferiority of the black Africans. While Bernasconi’s point reminds us of complicated historical specificities, Eze’s reading rather has its significance in how we should reread present-day canons of the so-called western tradition and its implicated prejudices.

Against this backdrop, the crucial point now is not to dispute whether Herder’s debasement of the Africans intends to justify slavery and colonialism. Rather we are certain that Herder’s idea is a product of his time, which, as a part of German canon, may indirectly support slavery or, more importantly, the ideology of the European cultural and racial superiority. This very specific idea of the Africans’ natural inferiority also testifies to the fact that the radical anthropological difference of the Africans was a

---

<sup>125</sup> Bernasconi, “Who Invented the Concept of Race? Kant’s Role in the Enlightenment Construction of Race,” 21.

<sup>126</sup> Unlike Herder and Kant, the Göttingen historian Christoph Meiners employs the common idea of African inferiority to justify slavery. He expands the physical inferiority of the Blacks to a whole array of mental, moral, and sexual disadvantages to the Europeans in his essay *Ueber die Natur der Afrikanischen Neger, und die davon abhängende Befreyung, oder Einschränkung der Schwarzen* (1790, *On the Nature of the African Negroes and the related Liberation or Limitation of the Blacks*). He concludes that, given all these poor qualities of the black species, it is impossible to grant the enslaved blacks equal rights. It is also necessary to keep them enslaved so that they may learn from the Europeans and gain more distance from their inferior status.

vexing issue for German intellectuals in the eighteenth century. The reiteration of the African inferiority offers a contrasting image for European superiority. In other words, it is necessary to invent the inferiority of the torrid zone Africa in order to praise the temperate climate of northern Europe.

#### **4.3.4 The Idea of Europe and the Spirit of Trade**

Following his belief in the superiority of temperate climate, Herder attributes all the achievements of arts and culture to the so-called beautifully shaped peoples in the Middle East and Greece:

In diesem Erdstrich ist alles erfunden, alles durchdacht und wenigstens in Kinderproben ausgeführt, was die Menschheit verschönern und bilden konnte. [...] Wir nordischen Europäer wären noch Barbaren, wenn nicht ein gütiger Hauch des Schicksals uns wenigstens Blüten vom Geist dieser Völker herüber geweht hätte, um durch Einimpfung des schönen Zweiges in wilde Stämme mit der Zeit den unsern zu veredeln.<sup>127</sup>

While Herder humbly admits that northern Europeans did not achieve a similar standard of civilization until centuries later, his philosophy of history interprets them as the future “northern conquerors”: “Gehabt euch also wohl, ihr milder Gegenden jenseit der Gebürge, Indien und Asien, Griechenland und ihr Italischen Küsten; wenn wir die meisten von euch wiedersehen, ists unter einer andern Gestalt, als nordische Überwinder.”<sup>128</sup> For Herder, northern Europeans form a collective entity and their later cultural achievements surpass all nations in the world. Yet interestingly enough, Herder

---

<sup>127</sup> Herder, *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, 228.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 678.

attributes the roots of European culture to multifarious cultural sources from Greece, Rome, and the Arabian world.

In the fourth volume of the *Ideen*, solely devoted to northern European civilization from the nomadic time to the Middle Ages, Herder meticulously depicts different European peoples and their historical development as a collective European community. The representative group of northern Europeans is for Herder the Germanic people. Three aspects are important for Europe's rise as the most developed stage in world history: first, the climatic and geographical location; second, the inhabitants of this region and the role of the Germanic peoples; and third the European spirit of trade. In the following pages, I will focus on these three aspects, in particular the spirit of trade, an essential trait for European colonialism. In the end, my goal is to show how Herder constructs the idea of Europe against the background of eighteenth-century colonial expansion.

For Herder, Europe is foremost a climatic and geographical entity defined by the mountain chains in the east and in the south. These mountains, according to Herder, sever northern Europe from the southern part and shape the characteristics and fates of northern European peoples:

Schon die Natur hat diesen Strich der Erde durch eine Felsenwand unterschieden, die unter dem Namen des Mustag, Altai, Kitzigtag, Ural, Caucasus, Taurus, Hämus, und fernerhin der Karpathischen, Riesen-Alpengebürge und Pyrenäen bekannt ist. Nordwärts derselben, unter einem so andern Himmel, auf einem so andern Boden, mußten die

Bewohner desselben notwendig auch eine Gestalt und Lebensweise annehmen, die jenen südlichen Völkern fremd war [...].<sup>129</sup>

In Herder's argument, the unique geographical location and its climate "naturally" give rise to the privileged northern European culture. Herder also separates northern Europe from Asiatic influence from the east:

Das ist also unleugbar, daß in der alten Welt das große Asiatische Gebürge mit seinen Fortgängen in Europa das Klima und den Charakter der Nord- und Südwelt wunderbar scheidet, so lasset Nordwärts der Alpen uns über unser Vaterland in Europa wenigstens dadurch trösten, daß wir in Sitten und Verfassungen nur zur verlängerten Europäischen, und nicht gar zur ursprünglichen Asiatischen Tatarei gehören. [...] Europa ist, zumal in Vergleichung mit dem nördlichen Asien, *ein milderes Land voll Ströme, Küsten, Krümmen und Buchten*: schon dadurch entschied sich das Schicksal seiner Völker vor jenen auf eine vorteilhafte Weise.<sup>130</sup>

Herder establishes here a contrast between the old and the new in world history. Unlike in *Auch eine Philosophie*, in which Herder compares European culture of his own time to an old man lacking organic energy, European culture here is portrayed as a fresh newcomer in world history.<sup>131</sup> Asia has become the spatial and historical otherness to

---

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., 677.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 704.

<sup>131</sup> See the chapter on China in this dissertation. Hegel also uses the categories of new and old in his Philosophy of History. For Hegel, Europe is the old world representing a long tradition of civilization whereas peoples in the so-called New World are new comers in world history. Hegel contends: "Die Welt wird in die Alte und Neue geteilt, und zwar ist der Namen der neuen daher gekommen, weil Amerika und Australien uns erst spät bekannt geworden sind. Aber diese Weltteile sind nicht nur relativ neu, sondern überhaupt neu, in Ansehung ihrer ganzen physischen und geistigen Beschaffenheit. Ihr geologisches Altertum geht uns nichts an." See G. W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1986), 107. Also see Stephan Jaeger, "Herders Inszenierung von Europa in den *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*," *Herder Yearbook IX*(2008): 81.

northern Europe in Herder's philosophy of history. Herder divides the inhabitants of northern Europe into natives and foreigners.

Herder differentiates four groups of "natives": the peoples living in the areas of Spain and France, peoples from the coast of the Baltic Sea, the Germanic peoples, and the Slavs. The foreigners to northern Europe are the Arabs, the Turks, the Jews, and the Gypsies. These peoples intermingle with each other and constitute the anthropological diversity of northern Europe. Although Herder did not point out explicitly why these ethnic groups are foreigners to northern Europe, it is obvious that religion assumes a discriminating function. In the seventeenth book of the fourth volume, Herder states the necessity of Christianity for the development of a unified northern European culture. The native northern Europeans later become Christians whereas the foreigners retain their own religions of Islam or Judaism.<sup>132</sup>

Synthetically, Herder stresses the amalgamation of different peoples in Europe and states that the intermingling characterizes European culture in the world:

In keinem Weltteil haben sich die Völker so vermischt, wie in Europa: in keinem haben sie so stark und oft ihre Wohnplätze, und mit denselben ihre Lebensart und Sitten

---

<sup>132</sup> Walter Mignolo points out that religious difference serves as the reference system for the emerging discourse of modern racism. The non-Christians (the Jews, the Moors, and the Turks) transform from people believing in the wrong God and no God to people with wrong culture and without culture. The religious difference between Christians and non-Christians becomes the racial opposition between Europeans and the Jews, the Moors, and the Turks. "Thus, calling the Turk and the Moors barbarians was a way to construct the external imperial difference. [...] On the characterization of the Jews (people without an empire or state), Christian theologians constructed the internal colonial difference." Mignolo, "Afterword: What does the Black Legend Have to Do with Race?," 320.

verändert. In vielen Ländern würde es jetzo den Einwohnern, zumal einzelnen Familien und Menschen schwer sein, zu sagen, welches Geschlechtes und Volkes sie sind? [...]Durch hundert Ursachen hat sich im Verfolg der Jahrhunderte die alte Stammesbildung mehrerer Europäischen Nationen gemildert und verändert; ohne welche Verschmelzung der *Allgemeingeist Europa's* schwerlich hätte erweckt werden mögen.<sup>133</sup>

Herder constructs here a hybrid origin of European people and culture. Herder does not belittle but rather privileges the hybrid origin of European culture. He contends: "Von selbst hat sich kein Volk in Europa zur Kultur erhoben; [...] die ganze Kultur des nord-öst-und westlichen Europa ist ein Gewächs aus Römisch-Griechisch-Arabischem Samen."<sup>134</sup> Arabian culture and science, Herder ascertains, exerts tremendous impact on European language and thinking through the Arabian occupation in southern Europe and the Crusades. Since the southern European regions under Arabian influence now have turned Christian, Arabian culture is now an inseparable part of European culture.<sup>135</sup>

Yet Herder also endeavors to show that northern European culture is able to synthesize human achievements from various sources and produce the next height of history as a non-dividable unity. The phrase "the general spirit of Europe" also tellingly

---

<sup>133</sup> Herder, *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, 705.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 707.

<sup>135</sup> Herder contends: "Ja da viele derselben in den von ihnen bewohnten Ländern zum Christentum übergetreten sind: so sind sie dadurch, in Spanien, Sicilien und sonst, Europa selbst einverleibt worden." *Ibid.*, 701.

informs us that Herder is less interested in stressing the multifaceted composition of the present Europeanness but rather in building the ontogenetic entity of Europe.

Although Herder endeavors to represent northern European culture as an independent entity in its present moment, he does not portray its past as purely European. Indeed, to admit the Arabian component in European tradition demonstrates that Herder stresses the process, in which how Europe has become Europe. In other words, the exclusion of the Arabian world from Europe in turn results in its inclusion in the idea of northern Europe as such. Only through its exclusion is its inclusion possible. While Herder's concepts of the European and the non-European are mutually exclusive, they are also co-constitutive for northern Europe's past.

Among the present Europeans, however, Herder attributes to the Germanic peoples (*Deutsche Völker*) the leading role in the development of European culture. The eighteenth book of the fourth volume studiously describes the northern Germanic conquerors of the Roman Empire. Herder asserts the function of the Germanic peoples in Europe:

Sie [die deutschen Völker] also sinds, die den größten Teil von Europa nicht nur erobert, bepflanzet und nach ihrer Weise eingerichtet, sondern auch beschützt und beschirmt haben; sonst hätten auch das in ihm nicht aufkommen können, was aufgekommen ist. Ihr Stand unter den andern Völkern, ihr Kriegesbund und Stammescharakter sind also die Grundfesten der Kultur, Freiheit und Sicherheit Europa's geworden;<sup>136</sup>

---

<sup>136</sup> Herder, *Ideen*, 696.

Herder argues that, without the Germanic peoples, Europe could not have reached the highest stage of historical development. Herder ascertains the significance of this Germanic contribution in Europe and in the world: "Indessen ist in der Geschichte der Welt die Gemeinverfassung germanischer Völker gleichsam die feste Hülse gewesen, in welcher sich [...] der Gemeingeist Europa's entwickelte und zu einer Wirkung auf alle Weltgegenden unsrer Erde langsam und verborgen reifte."<sup>137</sup> In other words, the Germanic spirit serves as the fundamental ground for the development of collective northern European culture, the most developed cultural form in world history.

The most important trait of the Germanic and European spirit is the predilection for trade. Herder argues that the Crusades, the Roman Empire, and the Arabian influence have played significant roles in European history, but they then prevent Europe from further development. Trade enables northern Europeans to build a large network and promotes the general welfare. Herder contends:

Er [Handel] hat Europa mehr zu einem Gemeinwesen gemacht, als alle Kreuzfahrten und Römische Gebräuche: denn über Religions- und Nationalunterschiede ging er hinaus, und gründete die Verbindung der Staaten auf gegenseitigen Nutz, auf wetteifernden Fleiß, auf Redlichkeit und Ordnung. Städte haben vollführt, was Regenten, Priester und Edle nicht vollführen konnten und mochten: sie schufen ein gemeinschaftlich-wirkendes Europa.<sup>138</sup>

---

<sup>137</sup> Herder, *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, 805.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 892.

After describing the trade in Italian cities during the Renaissance, Herder emphasizes that northern Europe, a unified state of trade (*Handelsstaat*), now takes up the leading role of world trade:

In Italien entstanden Republiken, die durch ihren Handel weiter langten, als Athen und Sparta je gelangt hatten; diesseit der Alpen gingen nicht nur einzelne Städte durch Fleiß und Handel hervor, sondern es knüpften sich auch Bündnisse derselben, ja zuletzt ein Handelsstaat zusammen, der über das schwarze, mittelländische, atlantische Meer, über die Nord- und Ostsee reichte.<sup>139</sup>

While the trades and travels done by the Italians are confined to the Mediterranean, the northern Europeans trade all over the world: "Denn alles was Venedig, Genua, Pisa, Amalfi getan haben, ist innerhalb dem mittelländischen Meer geblieben; den nordischen Seefahrern gehörte der Ozean und mit dem Ozean die Welt."<sup>140</sup> Herder intentionally emphasizes the importance of the trading cities in northern continental countries such as Holland, Prussia, Poland, Russia, and Latvia and attributes to France, Britain, Italy, Spain, and Portugal only secondary meanings in the entire trading system. In particular, Herder names the German city Lübeck as the queen (*Fürstin*) of all the trading ports in Europe.<sup>141</sup> Clearly, Herder intends not only to enhance the significance of the north-eastern continental countries in Europe but also to make them the center of Europe.<sup>142</sup>

Following Herder's logic, if Europe is a community unified by trade, then northern

---

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 857.

<sup>141</sup> See Ibid., 892.

<sup>142</sup> Hegel, however, contends that England, France, and Germany are the center of Europe. See Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, 133.

Europeans are the leaders of this community because the geographical proximity to rivers and oceans enables their trade.

Trade is for Herder the fundamental human activity for the development of arts and sciences.<sup>143</sup> Herder contends that, without the economic success of the cities through world trade, it is impossible for gothic art to reach its peak.<sup>144</sup> Without trade, there cannot emerge modern universities which criticize the church and aristocracy and promote the spirit of scientific investigation: “Nicht als Schulen sondern als politische Körper schwächten sie [Universitäten] den rohen Stolz des Adels, unterstützten die Sache der Regenten gegen die Anmaßungen des Papstes, und öffneten statt des ausschließenden Klerus einem eignen gelehrten Stande zu Staatsverdiensten und Ritterehren den Weg.”<sup>145</sup> It is trade as well that brings Europeans into contact with the Arabs and other cultures, through which Europe gains access to technical inventions such as compass, glass, gun powder, and paper. It is highly ironic if we read Herder’s sarcastic contempt for Chinese inventions in the third volume of the *Ideen*.<sup>146</sup> It is thus

---

<sup>143</sup> Similarly, Immanuel Kant also attributes to trade a function of keeping peace and promoting welfare in his treatise *Zum ewigen Frieden* (*On Perpetual Peace*, 1795): “Es ist der Handelsgeist, der mit dem Kriege nicht zusammen bestehen kann, und der früher oder später sich jedes Volk bemächtigt.” Immanuel Kant, *Zum ewigen Frieden* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1984), 33.

<sup>144</sup> See Herder, *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, 893.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 894.

<sup>146</sup> See *Ibid.*, 441. Das Porzellan und die Seide, Pulver und Blei, vielleicht auch den Kompaß, die Buchdruckerkunst, den Brückenbau und die Schiffskunst, nebst vielen andern feinen Handtierungen und Künsten kannten sie [die Chinesen], ehe Europa solche kannte; nur daß es ihnen fast in allen Künsten am geistigen Fortgange und am Triebe zur Verbesserung fehlet.

not the fact of these inventions but Herder's argument of northern European superiority that matters here. All these achievements of world trade, arts, and sciences contribute to the rise of northern European culture as the most developed historical stage in world history.

Herder's eulogy of northern European spirit of world trade is not the single voice in his time. His contemporary, Adam Smith, stresses the economic importance of European colonial trade in his influential treatise *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776, first German translation 1776-1778). Herder possessed a translation of Smith's work in his private library and pays great homage to this Scottish Enlightenment thinker.<sup>147</sup>

In *Wealth of Nations*, similar to Herder, Smith also considers Europe a unity and points out the importance of the trade with the colonies for entire Europe: "The general advantages which Europe, considered as one great country, has derived from the discovery and colonization of America, consist, first, in the increase of its enjoyments; and secondly, in the augmentation of its industry."<sup>148</sup> Smith observes that not only the countries with colonies, such as England, France, and Spain, but also the countries without actual colonies, such as Germany, Hungary, and Poland, have benefited greatly

---

<sup>147</sup> Herder writes in his *Humanitätsbriefe*: "Und wer wäre es, der die Schotten Ferguson, Smith, Stewart, Millar, Blair nicht ehrte?" — — —, *Briefe zu Beförderung der Humanität*, 656.

<sup>148</sup> Adam Smith, *An Inquiry Into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, ed. Edwin Cannan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 104.

from world trade. Similar to Herder's praise of the role of cities in the network of trade, Smith argues that the economic form of commerce in cities immensely benefits from colonial trade:

In the mean time one of the principle effects of those discoveries has been to raise the mercantile system to a degree of splendour and glory which it could never otherwise have attained to. It is the object of that system to enrich a great nation rather by trade and manufactures than by the improvement and cultivation of land, rather by the industry of the towns than by that of the country.<sup>149</sup>

Smith also underscores that colonial trade elevates Europe from a small corner on the world map to the chief production and commercial center of the globe:

[T]he commercial towns of Europe [...] have now become the manufacturers for the numerous and thriving cultivators of America, and the carriers, and in some respects the manufacturers too, for almost all the different nations of Asia, Africa, and America. Two new worlds have been opened to their industry, each of them much greater and more extensive than the old one, and the market of one of them growing still greater and greater every day.<sup>150</sup>

Although Herder does not explicitly refer to the colonial context as the background of world trade in his account, after reading Smith's account of the importance of European colonial trade, there is little doubt that Herder's narrative is heavily informed and influenced by European commercial colonialism. While the economist Smith observes how European countries benefit from the colonies, the philosopher of history Herder stresses the leading role of northern Europeans in this process. In other words, while Smith points out the colonial process and its material

---

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 142.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

results, Herder focuses on the entrepreneurs and their historical superiority. It is true that Herder criticizes colonial ruthlessness in *Auch eine Philosophie* and *Humanitätsbriefe*. Yet Herder's nearly idealistic praise of the northern Europeans' spirit of trade and their superior culture and nature is intrinsically connected to European colonial enterprise, which appears as a natural advantage and historical necessity.

#### **4.3.5 Conclusion: Herder's Universalism or European Identity**

In the end of his *Ideen*, Herder stresses the uniqueness of northern European culture and envisions its universal task: "Kein Athen oder Sparta, Europa soll hier gebildet werden; nicht zur Kalokagathie eines griechischen Weisen oder Künstlers, sondern zu einer Humanität und Vernunft, die mit der Zeit den Erdball umfaßte."<sup>151</sup>

Clearly, Herder ascribes the task of reaching the universal goals of humanity and reason to northern Europeans. It is Europe that unifies the abstract domain of the universal and the particular in Herder's *Ideen*. Herder's concept of cultural uniqueness now adopts a undeniable Eurocentric nature. Universal humanity and reason are intrinsically inscribed in the location of northern Europe and its inhabitants. It is thus indispensable for us to recognize the locus of enunciation and the limits of such universal claims. It is not time but geography, in the form of climatic zone, that plays a significant role in Herder's construction of historical development.

---

<sup>151</sup> Herder, *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, 891.

Yet even in the bulwark of such a gigantic project of philosophy of history, non-European cultures and knowledge do challenge the leading logic of European superiority. Herder's concept of situated happiness, his "pity" for the Africans, and his emphasis of the Arabian root of European culture all demonstrate that non-European cultures play a constitutive role in Herder's construction of the northern European identity. While Herder's debasement of the Africans emanates from his sense of cultural superiority, his negative description of Chinese culture reveals his own inferiority complex toward the invented towering figure of the Chinese Empire in the eighteenth century.

## ***4. 4 From Sinophilia to Sinophobia: China, History, and Recognition***

### **4.4.1 The Fashion of China**

In 1697, after engaging with Chinese thought for years, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz published *The Latest News from China (Novissima Sinica)*, a collection of works by European Jesuits, with the intention of promoting mutual exchange of knowledge between Europe and China. He writes in the introduction:

I consider it a singular plan of the fates that human cultivation and refinement should today be concentrated [...] in the two extremes of our continent, in Europe and in Tschina (as they call it) [...]. Perhaps Supreme Providence has ordained such an arrangement, so

that as the most cultivated and distant peoples stretch out their arms to each other, those in between may gradually be brought to a better way of life.<sup>152</sup>

Obviously, Leibniz considers China and Europe to be on the same level of civilization while assigning other cultures to lower levels. If we see Leibniz as an ethnocentric thinker who endorses Europe's superiority while belittling others, then his admiration for China significantly balances his Eurocentrism by conceiving the globe as a, if not polycentric, but at least dual-centric constellation. Leibniz supports those Jesuit missionaries, who were inclined to integrate themselves into Chinese society and to gradually introduce Christianity, known as the method of accommodation. Furthermore, Leibniz also suggests that the Europeans "need missionaries from the Chinese who might teach us the use and practice of natural religion, just as we have sent them teachers of revealed theology"<sup>153</sup>

Clearly, Leibniz interprets classical Chinese philosophy, in particular Confucianism, as a natural religion. This interpretation betrays, on the one hand, that Leibniz shifts Chinese thought into more familiar forms of knowledge, which could even be described in more radical terms as a distortion of the foreign; yet, on the other hand,

---

<sup>152</sup> Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Writings on China*, ed. Daniel J. Cook and Henry Rosemont (Chicago and La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1994), 45.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, 51. For an excellent description of the method of accommodation and the Jesuits' "Rites Controversy" see: Franklin Perkins, *Leibniz and China: A Commerce of Light* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 23-32, 184-94. Leibniz's later treatise *Discourse on the Natural Theology of the Chinese* (1716) indicates his sustained interest in Chinese philosophy as a natural religion which supposedly shares common ground with Christianity.

Leibniz's reading also registers his recognition of China and reveals China's challenges to European Christian discourse.

Among the numerous European admirers of classical Chinese philosophy, Leibniz is one of the most significant representatives of Sinophilia from the sixteenth to the mid-eighteenth century. During this time, China played a central role in European intellectual discourse in religion, ethics, art, and technology. Travel literature and other works on China were reprinted and translated into various European vernacular languages.<sup>154</sup> Enlightenment rationalists such as Christian Wolff, Voltaire, and François Quesnay believed in Confucianism as the perfect political constitution and advocated European rulers emulating the Chinese model in organizing the state, economy, and agriculture.<sup>155</sup> The fashionable style of *chinoiserie*, such as the imitation of Chinese gardens by William Chambers, the architect of the Royal Gardens at Kew, also created an exceedingly positive recognition of this remote culture, which did not seem to have

---

<sup>154</sup> "So erschienen die von P. Gonzàles Mendoza zusammengestellten Reiseberichte verschiedener Missionare von 1585 bis 1663 in 28 Auflagen in 7 Sprachen; Matteo Riccis Tagebücher von 1615 erfuhren in drei Jahrzehnten 12 Auflagen in 6 Sprachen, Alvarez de Samedos Berichte über die China-Mission jesuitischer Missionare wurden in etwa der gleichen Zeit bis 1678 in 9 Auflagen in 5 Sprachen gedruckt, und Martino Martinis Kriegsbericht über die Eroberung Chinas durch die Manchu von 1654 brachte es in einem halben Jahrhundert bis 1706 auf 21 Auflagen in 9 Sprachen." Hans Poser, "Leibnizens *Novissima Sinica* und das europäische Interesse an China," in *Das Neueste über China: G. W. Leibnizens Novissima Sinica von 1697*, ed. Wenchao Li and Hans Poser (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2000), 12.

<sup>155</sup> See David E. Mungello, *The Great Encounter of China and the West, 1500-1800*, 2nd ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005), 116-20. Voltaire claims: "It is true that the constitution of their empire is the best in the world, the only one entirely based on paternal authority." Voltaire, *Philosophical Dictionary*, trans. Theodore Besterman (Harmondsworth and New York et al. : Penguin Books, 1985), 114.

equal interest in Europe at the same time.<sup>156</sup> The first British embassy to China in 1792, led by Lord George Macartney to negotiate better conditions for trade and establish diplomatic relation, made clear that the Qing dynasty showed little interest in conforming to Western norms.

During the second half of the eighteenth century, the dominant course of Sinophilia shifted toward Sinophobia. Equally radical and intensive, the prevailing Sinophobic attitude portrayed China as the prototype of a stagnant and despotic society. The German philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder played the leading role in dismissing the long duration of Chinese history, praised by the Sinophiles, as an “embalmed mummy” lacking life and the capability of transformation.

Herder’s Sinophobia is intrinsically entangled with his philosophy of history, which held a powerful sway over Hegel, Marx, and their followers. Jonathan Spence observes that the Sinophile Voltaire started his philosophy of history with China instead of the Biblical Genesis and thus “gave a new twist to Western historiography.”<sup>157</sup> Then, conversely, it is the European dispute about history that decisively engenders the attribution of historical stagnation to China, in particular in Herder’s work. In other

---

<sup>156</sup> For Chinese interest in European culture see Mungello, *The Great Encounter of China and the West, 1500-1800*, 15-76. Chambers’s main contribution to eighteenth-century chinoiserie is his *Dissertation on Oriental Gardening* (1772).

<sup>157</sup> Jonathan D. Spence, *The Chan’s Great Continent: China in Western Minds* (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1998), 97.

words, the rise of historicism in the latter half of the eighteenth century, inextricably connected to Herder's contribution, played a significant part in the long-lasting negative connotation of China.<sup>158</sup>

There are two main tendencies today to explain the shift from Sinophilia to Sinophobia. First, this radical turn had little to do with Chinese reality and rather reflected inner European intellectual debates.<sup>159</sup> David Mungello rightly points out that Leibniz and his contemporaries seriously studied Chinese language and culture and thus showed a more neutral and objective judgment of China, while the later generation of Enlightenment thinkers and their critics employed either a positive or a negative China to promote their own intellectual programs.<sup>160</sup> Second, this shift is ascribed to the rise of European imperialism and the growing number of negative travel accounts about China. Strongly influenced by postcolonial criticism of imperialism and Orientalism, intellectual Sinophobia is thus seen as the needed justification and ideology for the rising European colonial hegemony in the second half of the eighteenth century.<sup>161</sup>

---

<sup>158</sup> See Tautz, *Reading and Seeing Ethnic Differences in the Enlightenment: From China To Africa*.

<sup>159</sup> Jonathan I. Israel, *Enlightenment Contested: Philosophy, Modernity, and the Emancipation of Man, 1670-1752* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 640. Israel argues: "Western philosophers strove valiantly to grasp the fundamentals of classical Chinese philosophy but ended up, in the main, merely mirroring their own prior obsessions." Also See Joanna Waley-Cohen, *The Sextants of Beijing: Global Currents in Chinese History* (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999), 127.

<sup>160</sup> Mungello, *The Great Encounter of China and the West, 1500-1800*, 122.

<sup>161</sup> See Colin Mackerras, *Western Images of China* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); Willy Richard Berger, *China-Bild und China-Mode im Europa der Aufklärung*, *Literatur und Leben* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1990).

Both explanations, however, should not be taken in absolute terms. Even if the shift from Sinophilia to Sinophobia merely reflected European thinkers' own obsessions, we still have to admit that Leibniz's Sinophilia was supported by his correspondence with Jesuits in China. Moreover, even if the missionaries did not see China in its entirety, they at least transmitted part of the so-called reality. Furthermore, European imperial encroachment on China did not start until the 1840s with the first Opium War. In particular, Germany, in which Leibniz and Herder lived, did not even exist as a unified political entity, let alone have imperial ambitions. In the eighteenth century, European trade with China was almost exclusively conducted on China's terms.<sup>162</sup> Negative descriptions and perceptions of China had existed well before Leibniz's time, but it had never had such a dominant position until the mid-eighteenth century.<sup>163</sup> In other words, the cases of Sinophilia and Sinophobia in eighteenth-century Europe, as seen through the works of Leibniz and Herder, still deserve more comprehensive observation and explanation.

---

<sup>162</sup> See Waley-Cohen, *The Sextants of Beijing: Global Currents in Chinese History*, 96-102; John S. Gregory, *The West and China since 1500* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 29-72.

<sup>163</sup> In the seventeenth century, the anti-accommodationists in the "Rites Controversy" within the Catholic Church clearly state the inferiority of Chinese thought and ritual practices and their need to be Christianized. Montesquieu attributes despotism to China in his famous *The Spirit of Laws*. For more details see Perkins, *Leibniz and China: A Commerce of Light*.

#### 4.4.2 Hegel, Fanon, and Recognition

The concept of recognition, originating from Hegel's dialectic model of master and slave, is helpful for my understanding and analysis because changing representations of China in European discourse can be synthesized and explained through a discussion of the Hegelian notion of recognition and its critique by Frantz Fanon. Hegel employs the interaction between master and slave to illustrate the independence and dependence of self-consciousness in his influential *Phenomenologie des Geistes*. While Hegel states that "the lord achieves his recognition through another consciousness" – the bondsman – and this recognition "is one-sided and unequal," he, at the same time, stresses that the lordship is not "an independent consciousness, but a dependent one."<sup>164</sup> Hegel contends: "the truth of the independent consciousness is accordingly the servile consciousness of the bondsman."<sup>165</sup> In other words, the master only exists through the recognition by the slave. Dialectically, the Hegelian tale of master and slave emphasizes a fundamental reciprocity.

Hegel's notion of recognition meets censure from the Martinican decolonial thinker Frantz Fanon in the 1950s. Fanon argues in *Black Skin, White Masks* that, in social and colonial reality, the white master does not need the recognition from the black slave

---

<sup>164</sup> G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford, New York, Toronto, and Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1977), 116-17.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, 117.

while the slave strives to adopt the values of the master. In other words, master remains master and slave remains slave. Fanon contends: "The Negro wants to be like the master. Therefore he is less independent than the Hegelian slave. In Hegel the slave turns away from the master and turns toward the object. Here the slave turns toward the master and abandons the object."<sup>166</sup>

Therefore Fanon claims that, in order to gain an equal recognition, the colonized black need to maintain their difference or alterity from the white European colonizers and fight for the recognition from the master on this ground.

In our cases of Sinophilia and Sinophobia, the encounter between Europe and China prior to 1800 is marked less by China's effort to gain Europe's recognition than by Europe's reaction to the challenge posed by Chinese thought. Sinophilia, according to Hegel, betrays a one-sided recognition. Sinophobia, following Fanon, is both a refusal to imitate China and a cry for European alterity. The Chinese disinterest, however, compels us to see that the European representations of China in the eighteenth century are less the results of struggle and collision than phenomena produced both by Europe's encounter with the towering figure of the Chinese Empire and inner European intellectual dynamics.

---

<sup>166</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York: Grove Press, 1967), 221.

In the following pages, a more detailed perusal of Leibniz's and Herder's writings and an account of the historical background of European Chinese trade around 1800 will help us reimagine the transition from Sinophilia to Sinophobia through the notion of recognition.

#### **4.4.3 Leibniz and Sinophilia**

Leibniz's admiring interpretation of classical Chinese philosophy, in particular Confucianism, is best articulated in his argument with the party of Jesuits such as Farther Longobardi and Father Sainte-Marie, who consider Confucian doctrines erroneous and claim that the Chinese need to abandon their own philosophy and become completely Christianized. Leibniz disagrees in his *Discourse on the Natural Theology of the Chinese* (1716):

China is a great Empire, no less in area than cultivated Europe, and indeed surpasses it in population and orderly government. Moreover, there is in China a public morality admirable in certain regards, conjoined to a philosophical doctrine, or rather a natural theology, venerable by its antiquity, established and authorized for about 3,000 years, long before the Greeks whose works nevertheless are the earliest which the rest of the world possess, except of course for our Sacred Writings. It would be highly foolish and presumptuous on our part, having newly arrived compared with them, and scarcely out of barbarism, to want to condemn such an ancient doctrine simply because it does not appear to agree at first glance with our ordinary scholastic notions.<sup>167</sup>

Leibniz advocates that more Chinese classics should be accurately translated with greater quantity: "Indeed, it would even be desirable that all the classics be translated

---

<sup>167</sup> Leibniz, *Writings on China*, 78.

together.”<sup>168</sup> Obviously, Leibniz’s recognition of China stresses the antiquity of Chinese thought and its practical effects in society. Leibniz even believes that the ancient Chinese learned part of their thought from the tradition of the Christian Patriarchs such as Abraham and Jacob.

This endeavor of identifying the shared roots of both Chinese and Christian philosophy is reflected throughout Leibniz’s reading of Confucian classics. In fact, Leibniz does not strive to find out the differences but to identify the similarities between Chinese and Christian thoughts. He contends that “Chinese philosophy more closely approaches Christian theology than the philosophy of the ancient Greeks [...]”<sup>169</sup> By bringing Christianity into accordance with Confucianism or vice versa, Leibniz aims to establish universal truths.

For example, Leibniz understands the Confucian notion of *Li* (理) as “reason, or the foundation of all nature, the most universal reason and substance.” *Li* is for Leibniz the “pure, motionless, rarified” universal cause, “without body and shape, and can be comprehended only through the understanding.”<sup>170</sup> Leibniz rejects Father Longobardi’s interpretation of *Li* as the Christian prime matter and contends that this Chinese notion should be equated with the notion of prime form, “as the Soul of the World, of which the

---

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 97.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., 79.

individual souls would only be modifications."<sup>171</sup> Leibniz's central thesis about Chinese philosophy is that it is a natural theology, which contains profound and accurate understanding of moral truths comprehended through human reason or *Li* and exists before the divine revelation by Jesus Christ. For Leibniz, "Jesus adds nothing new to what reason shows, but only converts this knowledge to a surer footing, overcoming the inconstancy of human reason."<sup>172</sup>

Leibniz's interpretation of *Li* as the prime form reminds us of his monadology, according to which each monad is a variation of the same universe and an expression of the same whole. Each monad contains and reflects the whole universe and the temporality of past, present, and future in a different way. The British historian of science Joseph Needham argues in his influential *Science and Civilization in China* (1956) that Leibniz's theory of monads, one of his life achievements, is essentially influenced by Confucian philosophy. In other words, through Leibniz, Chinese thought enters European intellectual history. Although it is debatable if Chinese philosophy is germinal to Leibniz's monadology, as David Mungello doubts, but at least we can be sure today that Confucianism is germane and supportive to Leibniz's own theory.<sup>173</sup>

---

<sup>171</sup> Ibid., 96.

<sup>172</sup> Perkins, *Leibniz and China: A Commerce of Light*, 174.

<sup>173</sup> See David E. Mungello, "How Central to Leibniz's Philosophy was China?," in *Das Neueste über China: G. W. Leibnizens Novissima Sinica von 1697*, ed. Wenchao Li and Hans Poser (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2000).

Leibniz, with the Jesuit Bouvet, also made one of the most remarkable discoveries in Europe's encounter with China: they realized that the binary system of arithmetic, which Leibniz developed, astoundingly corresponds with the central diagram of the *Book of Changes* (易 ䷁), one of the ancient Chinese classics. Leibniz thus comments: "Now this shows also that the ancient Chinese have surpassed the modern ones in the extreme, not only in piety (which is the basis of the most perfect morality) but in science as well."<sup>174</sup>

Furthermore, Leibniz is interested in the Chinese language. He believes that it contains structures of the universal Primitive Language given by God to Adam prior to the confusion of languages in Babel. This attempt at introducing a non-phonetic language into the phonocentric and logocentric system in Europe, as Jacques Derrida comments, "had opened a breach within the logocentric security" of the West.<sup>175</sup>

Now if we go back to our question of recognition, then there does not seem to be a master and a slave in Leibniz's narrative. Rather Leibniz places Chinese culture on a higher or at least an equal level to Europe and shows his willingness to adopt the assumed Chinese perspective to connect or integrate his world with the other.<sup>176</sup> Yet it is

---

<sup>174</sup> Leibniz, *Writings on China*, 134.

<sup>175</sup> Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 98.

<sup>176</sup> Mungello, *The Great Encounter of China and the West, 1500-1800*, 86. David E. Mungello argues, Leibniz's reception of China deserves to be acknowledged to a certain extent as an expression of "an egalitarianism

also inappropriate to completely ignore the aspect of subsuming and encompassing the Chinese philosophy or language into European knowledge system in Leibniz's approach. The Leibnizian search for a universal language, as Derrida points out, is immediately connected with the search for a universal logic, which may in turn confirm European logocentrism.<sup>177</sup> Especially when China becomes the prototypical example of Herder's historical stagnation, the aspect of logocentrism becomes more consolidated and the master-slave model emerges in the European representation of China.

#### 4.4.4 Herder and Sinophobia

Almost a century after the publication of Leibniz's *The Latest News from China*, in 1791, Herder published the fourth part of his *Ideen* and turns the image of China into a hopeless stagnation of history. Herder's Sinophobia emerged through his dispute with Voltaire's extremely influential treatise *Philosophie de l'histoire* (1765), in which Voltaire expresses his high esteem toward China.<sup>178</sup> Voltaire stresses the longevity of Chinese

---

(but not relativism) among cultures that predates the development of ideas about Europeans' cultural superiority."

<sup>177</sup> Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 79. Derrida argues: "In an original and non-'relativist' sense, logocentrism is an ethnocentric metaphysics. It is related to the history of the West. The Chinese model only apparently interrupts it when Leibniz refers to it to teach the Characteristic. Not only does this model remain a domestic representation, but also, it is praised only for the purpose of designating a lack and to define the necessary corrections."

<sup>178</sup> In August 1773, Johann Gottfried Herder wrote to his publisher Hartknoch about his debut work on philosophy of history: "Endlich, mein lieber Hartknoch kann ich Ihnen antworten: denn Eins meiner Bücher ist fertig, dazu ein sehr schönes: heißt „auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit: Beitrag zu vielen Beiträgen des Jahrhunderts 1773.“ hat aber mit Voltaire u. Harder zum Glück nichts als Titel gemein, ist wirklich meine Philosophie der Geschichte [...]. Es ist Feur darinn u. glühende Kolen auf

historiography and, similar to Leibniz, the imperfection and underdevelopment of European culture in comparison to China. Furthermore, under Leibniz's sway, Voltaire also considers that the ancient Chinese have developed social morality to perfection, writing:

Let us constantly remember, that five hundred years ago, scarce any one knew how to write, either in the North, in Germany or France. [...] There are no people in Europe, who have not latterly made more progress within half a century in all the arts, than they had made from the time of the invasions of the Barbarians, till the fourteenth century. I shall not here examine why the Chinese, who were arrived at the knowledge and practice of everything that was useful in society, did not go as far as we do at present in the sciences; they are, I allow, as bad physicians as we were two hundred years ago, and as the Greeks and Romans; but they brought morality to perfection, which is the first of the sciences.<sup>179</sup>

Herder strongly disagrees with Voltaire's approach to history and, in particular, the idea of an absolute perfection in the past because, for him, history is not an imitation of certain ancient models but should rather be conceived as an ongoing process of unique transformations toward the future.

Therefore, motionless, the word Leibniz used to describe the unchangeable law of the notion of *Li*, is now used by Herder to characterize a condition which is forgotten by the flow of history. The universal law for Herder now is not motionless perpetuity, but rather constant regeneration and progression. Therefore the ancient high culture of

---

die Schädel unsres Jahrhunderts [...].“ Herder is Voltaire's German translator. Herder's Ideen are in many ways an expansion and further development of the framework he developed in *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit*. Johann Gottfried Herder, *Briefe: Gesamtausgabe: 1763-1803*, ed. Karl-Heinz Hahn and Goethe- und Schiller-Archiv, vol. 3 (Weimar: Böhlau, 1977), 35.

<sup>179</sup> Voltaire, *Philosophy of History* (Glasgow: Printed for Robert Urie, 1766), 89.

China, along with Egypt, does not deserve awe and respect any longer. It merely resembles museum-like dead objects and curiosities. Herder portrays China as the biggest failure in the course of the history of humanity. He claims: “Wer erstaunt nicht, wenn er in der Sinesischen Geschichte auf den Gang und die Behandlung der Geschäfte merkt, mit wie Vielem ein Nichts getan werde!”<sup>180</sup>

We can summarize Herder’s depiction of China with a metaphor he uses: an embalmed mummy (*eine balsamierte Mumie*). First, China is embalmed because it has achieved a high-quality of refinement in many aspects of its culture such as porcelain, silk, gun powder, the compass, printing, bridge-, and ship-building long before the Europeans could.<sup>181</sup> Second, it is a mummy because the Chinese do not have the organic drive and ability to innovate and improve these arts.<sup>182</sup>

Against Leibniz’s high regard for the Chinese language, Herder holds it as the epitome of the Chinese artificial way of thinking and their lack of scientific spirit, writing:

ein Europäisches Ohr und Europäische Sprach-Organe [gewöhnlich] sich äußerst schwer oder niemals an diese hervorgezwungene Sylbenmusik [...]. Welch ein Mangel von Erfindungskraft im Großen und welche unselige Feinheit in Kleinigkeiten gehörte dazu,

---

<sup>180</sup> Herder, *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, 437.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, 441. Herder claims: “Das Porzellan, die Seide, Pulver und Blei, vielleicht auch Kompaß, die Buchdruckerkunst, den Brückenbau und die Schiffskunst, nebst vielen andern feinen Handtierungen und Künsten kannten sie, ehe Europa solche kannte;”

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.* Herder writes: “nur daß es ihnen fast in allen Künsten am geistigen Fortgange und am Triebe zur Verbesserung fehlet.”

dieser Sprache aus einigen rohen Hieroglyphen die unendliche Menge von achtzigtausend zusammengesetzten Charakteren zu erfinden [...].<sup>183</sup>

For Herder, Chinese people are not talented to develop sciences in their culture according to European standards: “Kann man sich wundern, daß eine Nation dieser Art nach europäischem Maßstabe in Wissenschaften wenig erfunden?”<sup>184</sup>

Herder sees Confucian moral philosophy as the hindrance preventing China from growing into the next historical stage and keeping Chinese civilization in the childhood phase (*Knabenalter*) of the history of humanity. Herder compares Confucianism to a mechanical engine (*mechanisches Triebwerk*) which does not have the ability to produce any new ideas.<sup>185</sup> He comments that there is little taste of true nature and feeling of inner peace, beauty, and dignity in Chinese cultural customs. Echoing the popular climate theory that some climatic environments are better than others for enabling humans to develop their potentials, Herder ascribes the negative features of Chinese culture to China’s national character and its geographical location.<sup>186</sup> Therefore,

---

<sup>183</sup> Ibid., 434-35.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid., 438.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid., 441. Herder argues: “Durch sie [politische Moral] ist dies Volk, wie so manche andere Nation des Erdkreises mitten in seiner Erziehung, gleichsam im Knabenalter stehen geblieben, weil dies mechanische Triebwerk der Sittenlehre den freien Fortgang des Geistes auf immer hemmte und sich im despotischen Reich kein zweiter Confucius fand.”

<sup>186</sup> Ibid., 433. Und diese Hindernisse liegen in seinem Charakter, im Ort seiner Wohnung und in seiner Geschichte uns klar vor Augen. For climate theory and its relationship with race see Wheeler, *The Complexion of Race: Categories of Difference in Eighteenth-Century British Culture*, 21-28.

he argues, the Chinese are doomed to be a degenerated slave culture because, like the Jews, they avoid contacts and exchange with other nations.<sup>187</sup>

It is not only clear so far that Herder is using European standards to judge China but also that he is doing so intentionally. Well informed and erudite as Herder is, he knows the high reputation of the Chinese Empire among Enlightenment thinkers. Herder writes: “ Jedermann kennt die vorteilhaften Gemälde der Sinesischen Staatsverfassung, die insonderheit von den Missionarien nach Europa geschickt und daselbst nicht von spekulativen Philosophen sondern von Staatsmännern sogar, beinah als politische Ideale bewundert wurden.”<sup>188</sup>

Although he claims to find a middle course to deliver a realistic picture of China, his completely negative portrayal betrays that he is not primarily interested in drawing up a balance sheet of Chinese mores and customs, but rather bears other intentions: first, he, a critic of Enlightenment, as Isaiah Berlin calls him, shows his discontent with the Enlightenment philosophy of history represented by Voltaire through destroying the positive image of China; second, which is more far-reaching and influential, Herder constructs an image of China in order to establish and promote an image of European

---

<sup>187</sup> Herder, *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, 436. [...] denn die Sinesen in ihrer Erdecke sich, wie die Juden, von der Vermischung mit andern Völkern frei erhalten haben, zeigt schon ihr eitler Stolz, wenn es sonst nichts zeigte. [...] Wie sie das Einimpfen der Bäume nicht lieben, so stehen auch sie, Trotz mancher Bekanntschaft mit andern Völkern, noch jetzt uneingeimpft da, ein Mongolischer Stamm, in einer Erdecke der Welt, zur Sinesischen Sklavenkultur verartet.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, 432.

dynamism of trade and sciences, which is set against the backdrop of the so-called Chinese stagnation. In other words, Herder's endeavor to find out the logic of universal history bears the task of constituting a new identity and historical missions for Europe and thus he uses China here to produce the binary between the modern and the ancient, east and west, historical stagnation and development.

Herder's account of the historical stagnation of China is later reflected in Hegel and Marx's image of China. For Hegel, China does not have real history or historicity. The spirit of world history, which finds its home in northern Europe, has never been to the other part of the world.<sup>189</sup> Karl Marx also takes on the concept to Chinese changelessness and considers Asiatic mode of production a non-progressive one. Colin Mackerras comments: "It followed for Marx that outside intervention was necessary to *force* change upon a resistant and miserable Asia."<sup>190</sup>

#### **4.4.5 Macartney's Journey and China's Economic Dominance**

If Hegel's and, in particular, Marx's image of China accompanies and also is accompanied by China's subjugation to Western powers in the second half of the nineteenth century, then, in Leibniz and Herder's time, there was little diplomatic relationship between the Chinese Empire and European nations. Two years after the publication of Herder's *Ideen*, 1793, Lord George Macartney, Great Britain's first envoy

---

<sup>189</sup> Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, 11-174.

<sup>190</sup> Colin Mackerras, *Western Images of China* (Hong Kong and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 112.

to China, was commissioned to negotiate better conditions for trade and to establish diplomatic relationships with the Qing dynasty.

At the end of his mission, Macartney was deeply disappointed because his requests to the *Huang Di* (皇帝, emperor) Qianlong were rejected and he was courteously dispatched back to his ships in the South. Qianlong's edict to George III, which appears to have been drafted well before Macartney's arrival, treats Great Britain as one of China's tribute countries:

We, by the Grace of Heaven, Emperor, instruct the King of England to take note of our charge. Although your country, O King, lies in the far oceans, yet inclining your heart towards civilization you have specially sent an envoy respectfully to present a state message, and sailing the seas he has come to our Court to kotow and to present congratulations for the Imperial birthday, and also to present local products, thereby showing your sincerity. [...] As to what you have requested in your message, O King, namely to be allowed to send one of your subjects to reside in the Celestial Empire to look after your country's trade, this does not conform to the Celestial Empire's ceremonial system, and definitely cannot be done.<sup>191</sup>

The edict further shows that the Qing does not want to privilege the British over other European countries and consider the purpose of a long-term ambassador unpractical and illogical:

If it is said that your object, O King, is to take care of trade, men from your country have been trading at Macao for some time, and have always been treated favourably. [...] Why, then, do foreign countries need to send someone to remain at the capital? This is a request for which there is no precedent and it definitely cannot be granted. Moreover, the distance between Macao [...] and the capital is nearly ten thousand li [a Chinese li is equal to 500 meters], and if he were to remain at the capital how could he look after it? If

---

<sup>191</sup> George Macartney, *An Embassy to China*, ed. J. L. Cramer-Byng (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1963), 337-38.

it is said that because you look up with admiration to the Celestial Empire you desire him to study our culture, yet the Celestial Empire has its own codes of ritual which are different from your country's in each case. Even if the person from your country who remained here was able to learn them it would be of no use since your country has its own customs and regulations, and you would certainly not copy Chinese ones.<sup>192</sup>

It is not only clear that the Qing is ignorant of the British and European practice of diplomacy, but this document also tells us that the Qing is not at all interested in expanding trade and maintaining a sustained relationship with Britain – from their perspective a tribute country of no danger and significance. For the British, however, the Macartney embassy is meant to save the British East India Company from bankruptcy, due to the highly restricted trade conducted solely on China's terms, and to further open up the potentially greatest market in the world for British products.

In fact, before and long after Macartney's embassy, European trade with China was restricted to the small area around Macau and Canton in the south. Foreign trade was not seen as a natural right, but rather a gracious concession by the Qing Empire. China exported a great amount of tea to Europe each year, but refused to allow European goods to circulate extensively on their domestic market. "The East India Company had been unable to sell sufficient goods to finance its large purchases of tea, and as a result had been forced to send great quantities of silver dollars to China to pay

---

<sup>192</sup> Ibid., 339-40.

for its yearly purchases."<sup>193</sup> Foreigners were not allowed to buy books on Chinese histories and ordinary Chinese people were not allowed to teach them Chinese. Only merchants with special licenses could do business with the people from the so-called Western Oceans. Recent research has shown that the Gross Domestic Product of China in 1820 was \$199 billion whereas six advanced Western countries (UK, USA, France, Germany, Italy, and Austria) altogether only had \$128 billion.<sup>194</sup>

Hence China played culturally and economically a far more important role for Britain and other European countries than vice versa. The Macartney embassy has been seen as the defining moment in Sino-European history because China was for the first time seen from inside out through the eyes of a shrewd diplomat. The travel writings by Macartney and his companion John Barrow are the first accounts on China from a British colonial and capitalist point of view.<sup>195</sup> This embassy also poses clear challenges to China, demystifies the dominant European perception of China as a country of grand power.

---

<sup>193</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>194</sup> Kaoru Sugihara, "The East Asian Path of Economic Development: A Long-Term Perspective," in *The Resurgence of East Asia: 500, 150 and 50 Year Perspectives*, ed. Takeshi Hamashita and Mark Selden Giovanni Arrighi (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 79.

<sup>195</sup> See John Barrow, *Travels in China*, containing descriptions, observations, and comparisons, made and collected in the course of a short residence at the imperial palace of Yuen-min-yuen, and on a subsequent journey through the country from Peking to Canton (Philadelphia: Printed and sold by W. F. M'Laughlin, 1805).

By the time Herder published his *Ideen*, however, China still remained an enigmatic country in respect of political and economic powers for the European nations. The letter by George III, which Macartney presented to the Chinese Emperor, still reflects a strong Sinophile tendency.

#### **4.4.6 Conclusion**

Against this background, it is difficult to merely see Herder's Sinophobia as the rhetoric of the powerful or the justification of subjugation and exploitation because Europe was still observing and exploring the real strength of the Chinese Empire. In addition to criticizing the arbitrary debasement of China in Herder's work, we can also see that Herder's philosophy of history actually produces the need for recognition which an assumed inferior China should have toward a self-ascribed superior Europe. If Leibniz's willingness to adopt Confucianism shows his one-sided recognition toward China, then Herder's exaggerated negative depiction of China discloses a negative recognition of China and a call for European alterity.

The existence of the Chinese Empire with its economic, cultural, and territorial achievements and the euphoric accounts of the Jesuits throughout the eighteenth century all compel European and German intellectuals to react in such radical manners. This invention of the need of recognition for China, in fact, betrays a desire for Europe's self-assertation and self-acknowledgement. It is to some extent true, if we follow

Edward Said's argument in *Orientalism*, that the West imposes images of the Orient onto it, which has less to do with the reality than the rhetoric of control and subjugation. Yet in the case of the representation of China in the eighteenth century, reality and projection are both at work to produce the Leibnizian Chinese utopia and the Herderian Chinese dystopia. Furthermore, we also perceive the anxiety of defining oneself against an imagined giant. Surely we have to keep in mind that Herder's representation of China as historical stagnation has had disastrous consequences until our time. The need of recognition Herder produces for China becomes reality in the end.

## **4. 5 From History to Ethics: Herder's Anti-Colonial Letters**

### **4.5.1 Herder's Anti-Colonial Critique**

In the 114<sup>th</sup> letter of Herder's yet another magnum opus *Briefe zu Beförderung der Humanität* (1793-1797, *Letters toward Advancement of Humanity*), Herder reflects:

Ein Mensch, sagt das Sprichwort, ist dem andern ein Wolf, ein Gott, ein Engel, ein Teufel; was sind die auf einander wirkende Menschenvölker einander? Der Neger malt den Teufel weiß; und der Lette will nicht in den Himmel, sobald Deutsche da sind. »Warum gießest du mir Wasser auf den Kopf?« sagte jener sterbende Sklave zum Missionar. – »Daß du in den Himmel kommest.« – »Ich mag in keinen Himmel, wo Weiße sind« sprach er, kehrte das Gesicht ab und starb. Traurige Geschichte der Menschheit!<sup>196</sup>

Sympathizing with the dying slave, Herder rejects the legitimacy of European Christian mission and illustrates the irreconcilable hatred engendered by European colonial atrocity. By claiming that the blacks paint their devils white, Herder adopts the

---

<sup>196</sup> Herder, *Briefe zu Beförderung der Humanität*, 674.

perspectives of the colonized and represents colonial reality from their views. The Christian projection of heaven and peace after death, as the example of the Latvians shows, loses its divine promise because of the Germans' "earthly" oppression of the Latvians in the Baltic region. As the last phrase tells us, the historicist Herder understands European colonial ruthlessness as a phenomenon of history. Building on his biting critical remarks on contemporary politics in his *Auch eine Philosophie*, Herder's anti-colonial critique develops into a powerful ethics of history.<sup>197</sup>

As a matter of fact, Herder devotes eleven letters (from the 114<sup>th</sup> to 124<sup>th</sup>), making up the tenth and the last collection of his mammoth *Humanitätsbriefe*, to the issues of European colonial practice and the ethical dimension of universal history. Michael Zaremba, one of Herder's biographers, calls the tenth collection the credo of Herder's political theory. Indeed, European colonialism compels Herder to seriously connect history to ethics and humanistic values. Herder asks in the 121<sup>st</sup> letter: „Wenn in Einem Felde der Wissenschaft *menschliche Gesinnungen* herrschen sollten, so ists im Felde der *Geschichte*: denn erzählt diese nicht menschliche Handlungen? und entscheiden diese nicht über den Wert des Menschen? bauen diese nicht unsres Geschlechts Glück und

---

<sup>197</sup> Although Friedrich Meinecke's resurrection of Herder being the progenitor of German historicism is, as John Zammito calls it, "deeply flawed by a German nationalism," I still consider Meinecke's observation insightful that the *Humanitätsbriefe* pushes Herder's philosophy of history into the discussion of ethical primacy. Although Meinecke does not pay special attention to Herder's anti-colonial critique, the tendency toward ethics of history proves also true in this case. See Zammito, "Herder and Historical Metanarrative: What's Philosophical about History?," 65; Friedrich Meinecke, *Die Entstehung des Historismus* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1936), 387, 474-75.

Unglück?“<sup>198</sup> History is now for Herder an organism in which human beings not only function as critics and commentators but as practitioners of moral laws (*moralisches Naturgesetz*).<sup>199</sup> In short, history is the embodiment of ethics. History is ethics.

The first sentence of the first letter of the tenth collection directly addresses the theme of transcultural encounters, asking: “Aber warum müssen Völker auf Völker wirken, um einander die Ruhe zu stören? Man sagt, der fortgehend-wachsenden Kultur wegen; wie gar etwas anders sagt das Buch der Geschichte!”<sup>200</sup> Rejecting the naïve and abstract idea that intercultural encounters enhance culture and civility, Herder points out the violence and slaughters. Moving swiftly away from the Romans, the Christian crusade, and other ancient examples, Herder embarks on an indictment of contemporary European colonial practice. He writes:

Liwen, Ehsten und Letten im ärmsten Zustande fluchen im Herzen noch jetzt ihren Unterjochern, den Deutschen. Was endlich ist von der Kultur zu sagen, die von Spaniern, Portugiesen, Engländern und Holländern nach Ost- und Westindien, unter die Negern nach Afrika, in die friedlichen Inseln der Südwest gebracht ist? Schreien nicht alle diese Länder, mehr oder weniger, um Rache? Um so mehr um Rache, da sie auf eine unübersehliche Zeit in ein fortgehend-wachsendes Verderben gestürzt sind.<sup>201</sup>

The adjective *fortgehend-wachsend* (constantly growing) is used in the first sentence of the letter to describe the positive estimation of the enhancement of culture and civility.

Ironically, Herder employs the same word in this paragraph to illustrate the ruin which

---

<sup>198</sup> Herder, *Briefe zu Beförderung der Humanität*, 731.

<sup>199</sup> See *Ibid.*, 737.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, 671.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*, 672.

ensues from European colonialism. In other words, the noun described by the same adjective *Kultur* (culture, civility) is stripped off all idealistic connotations and turned into the colonial reality of *Verderben* (ruin). Similar to August von Kotzebue, Herder not only criticizes Spanish, Portuguese, and British colonial practice, but also the German colonialism in the Baltic region.

Travel literature, again, serves Herder as the predominant factual source for his anti-colonial critique. Herder considers reliable travel narratives more attuned to the recognition of human nature than theoretical systems because travelers have the chance to adopt the perspectives of foreigners and understand their life styles from an insider view. Herder contends:

Reisebeschreibungen solcher Art, deren wir (Dank sei es der Menschheit!) viele haben erweitern den Gesichtskreis und vervielfältigen die Empfindung für jede Situation unsrer Brüder. Ohne darüber ein Wort zu verlieren, predigen sie Mitgefühl, Duldung, Entschuldigung, Lob, Bedauern, vielseitige Kultur des Gemüts, Zufriedenheit, Weisheit.<sup>202</sup>

Clearly, Herder sees travel literature as a genre in which, potentially, empathy prevails and mutual understanding succeeds. Sentiment (*Empfindung*) proves the basis of Herder's dictum for travelers and researchers of human nature. Therefore Herder argues that travel narratives should not be classified according to the categories of natural history, for which Carl Linné set the standards in his *Systema Naturae* (1735), but rather

---

<sup>202</sup> Ibid., 701-02.

according to the inherent nature of the travelers, according to the purity of their eyes and the universal understanding of human and nature in their hearts. Herder names Georg Forster, Johann Reinhold Forster, and le Vaillants as his best examples of travel writers.

Travel writings also inform Herder about European slave trade, for him, the greatest misery in the history of humanity.<sup>203</sup> Herder writes:

Alle diese Geschichten liegen in Reisebeschreibungen zu Tage; sie sind bei Gelegenheit des Negerhandels zum Teil auch laut zur Sprache gekommen. Von den Spanischen Grausamkeiten, vom Geiz der Engländer, von der kalten Frechheit der Holländer, von denen man im Taumel des Eroberungswahnes Heldengedichte schrieb, sind in unsrer Zeit Bücher geschrieben, die ihnen so wenig Ehre bringen, daß vielmehr, wenn ein Europäischer Gesamtgeist anderswo als in Büchern lebte, wir uns des Verbrechens beleidigter Menschheit fast vor allen Völkern der Erde schämen müßten. Nenne man das Land, wohin Europäer kamen, und sich nicht durch Beeinträchtigungen, durch ungerechte Kriege, Geiz, Betrug, Unterdrückung, durch Krankheiten und schädliche Gaben an der unbewehrten, zutrauenden Menschheit [...] versündigt haben!<sup>204</sup>

Unlike his praise of European open-mindedness and the spirit of world trade in the *Ideen*, Herder scathingly criticizes European colonial practice. Europe and the rest of the world are juxtaposed through contrasting qualities, such as good and evil, injustice and candor, war and vulnerability, oppression and suffering. In Herder's eyes, slavery, the greatest crime of European colonialism, merely brings disaster and demonstrates immorality.

---

<sup>203</sup> Christian Georg Andreas Oldendorps's book *Historie der caribischen Inseln Sanct Thomas, Sanct Crux und Sanct Jan, insbesondere der dasigen Neger und der Mission* serves as the standard work on Atlantic triangular slave trade for Herder and the German readership. See York-Gothart Mix, ">Der Neger malt den Teufel weiß<. J. G. Herders Neger-Idyllen im Kontext antiker Traditionsgebundenheit und zeitgenössischer Kolonialismuskritik," in *Das Europa der Aufklärung und die außereuropäische koloniale Welt*, ed. Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2006), 203.

<sup>204</sup> Herder, *Briefe zu Beförderung der Humanität*, 672.

Herder strengthens his critique by presenting five upsetting stories of European colonialism in North America in the 114<sup>th</sup> letter. He transforms these stories into the form of idyllic poetry, under the title *Neger-Idyllen*.<sup>205</sup> York Gothart Mix and Gerhard Sauder both accurately point out that Herder intentionally and ironically deploys the genre of lyric idyll, preponderantly associated with peaceful life of shepherd in primal times and beautiful nature, to demonstrate the deep rupture between ideal and reality.<sup>206</sup> In other words, Herder introduces a heavy dose of social and colonial truth into the world of idyllic poetry to change its form and its content. Another reason why Herder chooses idyllic poetry rests on the popular notion of noble savage, which compares numerous non-European cultures to Europe's past and Arcadian peace and innocence. Herder's own philosophy of history also contributes to this invented equation.<sup>207</sup>

*Die Frucht am Baume* powerfully condemns the excess and cruelty of the white masters who take away the bride of one black slave and imprisons him in a cave hanging on a tree. *Die rechte Hand* and *Die Brüder* tragically eulogize the noble

---

<sup>205</sup> The original source of Herder's *Neger-Idyllen* is Saint John de Crèvecoeur's *Letters of an American Farmer*, published in London in 1782. Through Johann Ernst Kolb, the anticolonial poems and stories in Crèvecoeur's book were introduced to German readership in *Erzählungen von den Sitten und Schicksalen der Negerklaven* (1789).

<sup>206</sup> See Mix, ">Der Neger malt den Teufel weiß<". J. G. Herders *Neger-Idyllen* im Kontext antiker Traditionsgebundenheit und zeitgenössischer Kolonialismuskritik."; Gerhard Sauder, "Herder's Poetic Works, Translations, and Views on Poetry," in *A Companion to the Works of Johann Gottfried Herder*, ed. Wulf Koepke and Hans Adler (Rochester: Camden House, 2009).

<sup>207</sup> Mix argues that Herder's *Negeridyllen* represents a new literary model which refers back to a traditional genre and, at the same time, articulates Herder's critique of civilization and his belief in historical development. See Mix, ">Der Neger malt den Teufel weiß<". J. G. Herders *Neger-Idyllen* im Kontext antiker Traditionsgebundenheit und zeitgenössischer Kolonialismuskritik."

characteristics of the black slaves in the New World because they sacrifice their body and their life to follow the principles of their hearts. At the end of *Die Brüder* we read a cry for divine justice: "O wenn Gerechtigkeit vom Himmel sieht; Sie sah den Neger auf dem Weißen ruhn."<sup>208</sup> The last two poems *Zimeo* and *Der Geburtstag* function as consolation for the tragic fates of slaves and praise white masters' benevolence and black slaves' rebellion and appreciation. As a matter of fact, these poems portray nothing truly idyllic, which the overarching title suggests. What the poems evoke is a strong emotional detestation of the white colonizers and a moral indictment of colonial atrocity. Yet it is precisely this detestation that makes the dream about an idyllic state, in which white and black all act according to noble morals, even more desirable.

Indeed, Herder endeavors to elaborate this dream with his concept of equal authenticity and his vision of perpetual peace. While Herder's concept of cultural uniqueness stresses more the aspect of individuality, in the colonial context, the notion of equal authenticity highlights the common or the shared equality among all cultures. The Native American tribe Iroquois's story of peace-making shapes Herder's idea of perpetual peace, which contrasts to Immanuel Kant's vision of the same topic based on a priori principles and pure reason. Herder conceives of *Nemesis*, the goddess of revenge, to call for a global justice and human dignity that defies the protean nature of time.

---

<sup>208</sup> Herder, *Briefe zu Beförderung der Humanität*, 679.

While Herder does not completely abandon the idea of European superiority, his metaphor of comparing Europe to an old man does show his perception of Europe being in the state of crisis and decadence. Through Herder's anti-colonial letters, I am less concerned with showing that Herder is a German philosopher with a good conscience than, more importantly, demonstrating that non-European knowledge and reality significantly challenge Eurocentrism and co-construct the ethical dimension of Herder's philosophy of history.

#### 4.5.2 Equal Authenticity and Refutation of European Standards

Building on his sentimental indictment of slavery in *Neger-Idyllen*, in the 116<sup>th</sup> letter, Herder insists on the notion of equal authenticity of all cultures as the fundamental principle of history.<sup>209</sup> Herder contends that the task of a researcher of human nature (*Naturforscher der Menschheit*) does not lie in establishing hierarchy (*Rangordnung*) among cultures, but rather rests upon observing and cherishing every nation defined by its uniqueness. He writes: "Jede Nation muß also einzig auf ihrer Stelle, mit allem was sie ist und hat, betrachtet werden."<sup>210</sup> Herder's concept of cultural uniqueness,

---

<sup>209</sup> Isaiah Berlin calls this idea of Herder "pluralism." Following Charles Taylor's terminology, I consider the wording of "equal authenticity" more accurate to describe both the singularity of each culture and the relationship between different cultures. Berlin's wording emphasizes more the congenial than the individual feature of Herder's concept. For the sake of my discussion, it is indispensable to stress both the singularity and the commonality of Herder's revolutionary idea. See Berlin, *Three Critics of the Enlightenment: Vico, Hamann, Herder*, 231-39; Charles Taylor and Amy Gutmann, *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

<sup>210</sup> Herder, *Briefe zu Beförderung der Humanität*, 700.

first formulated in *Auch eine Philosophie* in 1774, is now used to debunk Eurocentric ideology and justify cultural diversity. While cultural uniqueness stresses the aspect of individuality, equal authenticity highlights commonality. Herder explains that it is external forces (*Kräfte*) and climates, not innate gifts or seeds (*Keime*), that bring forth the wide array of cultural diversity.

Herder argues that the ideal type of human being should not and cannot be reduced to one particular community in the world such as European culture; rather the prototype of humanity ought to be conceived as a notion abstracted from all examples of human nature on the globe. Herder contends: "Der Cherokeese und Huswana, der Mungal und Gonaqua ist so wohl ein Buchstab im großen Wort unsres Geschlechts, als der gebildetste Engländer und Franzose."<sup>211</sup> Hence Herder refutes that European culture is the measurement of all other cultures in the world, arguing:

Am wenigsten kann also unsre Europäische Kultur das Maß allgemeiner Menschengüte und Menschenwertes sein; sie ist kein oder ein falscher Maßstab. Europäische Kultur ist ein abgezogener Begriff, ein Name. »Wo existiert sie ganz? bei welchem Volk? in welchen Zeiten? Überdem sind mit ihr (wer darf es leugnen?) so viele Mängel und Schwächen, so viel Verzuckungen und Abscheulichkeiten verbunden, daß nur ein ungütiges Wesen diese Veranlassungen höherer Kultur zu einem Gesamt-Zustande unsres ganzen Geschlechts machen könnte.<sup>212</sup>

The concept of Europe is deconstructed as a cultural entity and is represented as a local community as equal and normal as all other cultures. Herder especially stresses the

---

<sup>211</sup> Ibid., 699-700.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid., 700.

impossibility of comparison between cultures and let alone measuring one culture according to another. He asks innocently: "Was soll überhaupt eine Messung aller Völker nach uns Europäern? wo ist das Mittel der Vergleichung?"<sup>213</sup> In other words, Europeans, like other nations, are variations of the general and abstract quality of being human. This quality, the genius of history (*der Genius der Menschen-Naturgeschichte*) in Herder's terminology, serves as the connection between different cultures. Herder contends: "Und doch ist zuletzt Alles an wenige Punkte geknüpft; in der größten Verschiedenheit zeigt sich die einfachste Ordnung."<sup>214</sup> The uniqueness of every culture is therefore incommensurable. This idea entails an absolute difference, an irreconcilable diversity, which functions as the universal commonality among cultures. The ideal of perfection and utopia is replaced by the ideal of uniqueness and the love for oneself.

Herder, however, does see the danger that the principle of equal authenticity is not a standard which is held high by colonial powers. European colonial cruelty is for Herder a current violation of his humanistic ideals. He contends:

Man erstaunt über die Gegenwart des Geistes, die *Vasko di Gama, Albuquerque, Cortes, Pizarro*, und viele unter ihnen, in Umständen der größten Gefahr zeigten; See- und Straßenräuber zeigten oft ein Gleiches. [...] zu hoffen ist, daß auch die Räuber und Mörder der Völker, Trotz aller erwiesenen Heldentaten, bloß und allein den Grundsätzen einer reinen *Menschengeschichte* nach, einst damit bedeckt stehen werden.<sup>215</sup>

---

<sup>213</sup> Ibid., 688.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid., 701.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid., 707.

Facing the danger which ignores the principles of equal authenticity and humanity, Herder considers it necessary that these values be defended and the state of war be suspended in a state of perpetual peace.

### 4.5.3 The Iroquois Perpetual Peace

In the 118<sup>th</sup> and 119<sup>th</sup> letter, Herder illustrates his vision of perpetual peace through a story of the American-Indian tribe Iroquois, documented in the travel narrative *Missionsgeschichte in Nordamerika* (*Missionary Stories in North America*). As many critics indicate, Herder's vision of perpetual peace is situated in the European intellectual project of perpetual peace initiated by Abbé Saint Pierre in 1713 and further discussed by Jean-Jacques Rousseau and others.<sup>216</sup> The most famous treatise is Immanuel Kant's *Zum ewigen Frieden* (1795, *On Perpetual Peace*). Pheng Cheah comments that Kant's cosmopolitanism marks a turning point of political theory from intra-state to inter-state concerns, a point "at which the 'political' becomes, by moral necessity, 'cosmopolitical.'" <sup>217</sup> Cheah, however, also reminds us that Kant's vision was formulated prior the rise of nationalism as a political movement in Europe. Therefore "it is more a

---

<sup>216</sup> See Allen W. Wood, "Kant's Project for Perpetual Peace," in *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling beyond the Nation*, ed. Pheng Cheah and Bruce Robbins (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1998). Also see commentary by Hans Dietrich Irmscher in Herder, *Briefe zu Beförderung der Humanität*, 1121-24.

<sup>217</sup> Pheng Cheah, "Introduction Part II: The Cosmopolitical - Today," in *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling beyond the Nation*, ed. Pheng Cheah and Bruce Robbins (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 23.

philosophical republicanism and federalism designed to reform the absolutist dynastic state than a theory of opposing the modern theory of nationality.”<sup>218</sup>

Unlike Kant’s project, Herder’s discussion of perpetual peace does not prove a merely philosophical project. Herder’s vision is richly informed by colonial realities and discloses the enormous impact of non-European culture and knowledge on his thinking through the Iroquois story. Moreover, Herder’s project of perpetual peace endeavors to reach beyond the geographical borders of Europe and incorporate the whole world; in other words, its primary interest is not only a European peace, as Kant is primarily concerned, but also a peaceful relation between Europe and the non-European world, between the colonizers and the colonized.

Here is the story that inspires Herder’s vision of perpetual peace: As the result of constant conflicts induced by the strong tribe Delaware among other tribes, the weak tribe Iroquois makes a suggestion to the stronger tribes in order to keep peace: one tribe should be the woman, around whom the warring tribes live as men. No one should harm and attack the woman. If one tribe does so, then all other tribes together should punish the lawbreaker. The woman, however, should not get involved in war, but should endeavor to maintain peace. If the men tribes fight against each other, the woman tribe should warn them that their women and children may be killed and in the

---

<sup>218</sup> Ibid., 23-24.

end the whole tribe will be extinguished. The Delaware agrees to be the woman tribe. The Iroquois thus perform a ceremony and hang oil and medicine on the arm of the woman. Oil and medicine symbolize two functions of the woman of peace: she should tell good things to all the tribes, represented by oil, and persuades warring tribes to maintain the peaceful state and thus cure their decease, symbolized by medicine. The Delaware should solely devote themselves to agriculture. Herder laments that European colonizers destroy the peaceful state created through the Iroquois wisdom:

Als die Europäer näher drangen, sollte auf Erfordern der Männer selbst die Frau an der Gegenwehr mit Anteil nehmen. [...] Eine fremde unvorhergesehene Übergewalt störte das schöne Project der Wilden zum Frieden unter einander; und dies wird jedesmal der Fall sein, solange der Baum des Friedens nicht mit festen, unausreißbaren Wurzeln *von Innen heraus* den Nationen blühet.<sup>219</sup>

Inspired by the Iroquois story, Herder maps out his own vision of perpetual peace to maintain peace and curb warfare and colonialism.

On a more abstract level, Herder postulates that his woman of peace is universal equity (*allgemeine Billigkeit*), humanity (*Menschlichkeit*), and practical reason (*tätige Vernunft*). Herder supports these three theorems through seven doctrines (*Gesinnung*) because the woman of peace “ist dazu da, ihrem Namen und ihrer Natur nach *Friedens-Gesinnungen* einzuflößen.”<sup>220</sup> As the first three doctrines, Herder proposes revulsion against war (*Abscheu gegen den Krieg*), reduced respect for heroism (*Verminderte Achtung*

---

<sup>219</sup> Herder, Briefe zu Beförderung der Humanität, 716.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid., 720.

*gegen den Heldentum*), and revulsion against false statecraft (*Abscheu der falschen Staatskunst*). Herder argues that warfare poisons the well of history and human rights. In the 117<sup>th</sup> letter, He contends: "Gewalt und Willkür mögen gebieten, worüber sie Macht haben, nur nicht über Grundsätze des Rechts und Unrechts in der Menschengeschichte."<sup>221</sup>

Herder also employs stories from non-European culture in the form of poems to illustrate his three doctrines against war, heroism, and state power which wages wars. *Der Hunnenfürst*, for example, praises a king of the Huns, who gives away his best horse and his most beautiful woman to keep peace with his enemies while his generals want wars. Yet as the enemies request him to give away land and people, the king, unlike his generals, bravely enters the battle because, he contends, it is necessary to fight for the wellbeing of his people and the territory of his country but not for his own horse and woman. In *Der Betrogne Unterhändler*, the French troops invite the heads of the Iroquois to come over to negotiate peace. A French missionary persuades the Iroquois to go to the French headquarters with positive attitude, but the French insult the Iroquois and send them back in chains. While the whole Iroquois tribe is trembling with rage, the oldest Iroquois tells the missionary to flee because he believes that the missionary has not meant anything evil.

---

<sup>221</sup> Ibid., 708.

*Der Hunnenfürst* evinces how the head of a state, the king of the Huns, should disregard personal predilections for the sake of the safety and welfare of the collective being. This king of the Huns represents Herder's doctrines of revulsion against war, heroism, and false statecraft. For Herder, the head of the state should not be a dictator of his own will but rather should follow the laws of history because a king is also a human being, equally facing the flux of history. In the poem *Der Fürst*, translated from Arabic and put into verse by Herder in the 120<sup>th</sup> letter, we read: "Du bist ein Mensch! Auch Du, o Fürst, bist Staub! / Sei Deines Thrones wert, sei groß und gut. / Sei gut: dann bist du groß."<sup>222</sup> This example from a non-European culture, most likely taken from a travelogue, offers the fundamental evidence for Herder's program of perpetual peace.

If the king of the Huns functions as a fable or a fairy tale, which is aloft from the social and historical reality, then the story of the Iroquois is immediately related to French colonial undertakings. In other words, if the king of the Huns represents Herder's doctrines in a positive manner, then the reality-bound story of the Iroquois and the French in a negative way. The Iroquois story critiques the practice of war, fraud, and falsehood of the French. Indeed, the advice of the old Iroquois transcends hatred and demonstrates the deepest revulsion against war and blood shedding. In other words, the

---

<sup>222</sup> Ibid., 728.

old man's advice for the French missionary not only recognizes the Frenchman's innocence but also avoids further conflicts.

The old Iroquois's power of acknowledging the good will of the foreigner and his strategy of preventing further conflicts compel Herder to formulate the fourth and the fifth doctrine of perpetual peace: purified patriotism (*geläuterter Patriotismus*) and sentiment of justice toward other nations (*Gefühl der Billigkeit gegen andre Nationen*).

Continuing his argument of equal authenticity, Herder stresses here the indispensable outcome of this idea: love for oneself and compassion for others. Herder contends:

Jede Nation muß es fühlen lernen, daß sie nicht im Auge Andrer, nicht im Munde der Nachwelt, sondern nur in sich, in sich selbst groß, schön, edel, reich, wohlgeordnet, tätig und glücklich werde; und daß sodann die fremde wie die späte Achtung ihr wie der Schatte dem Körper folge. Mit diesem Gefühl muß sich notwendig Abscheu und Verachtung gegen jedes leere Auslaufen der Ihrigen in fremde Länder, gegen das Nutzlose Einmischen in ausländische Händel, gegen jede leere Nachäffung und Teilnehmung verbinden, die unser Geschäft, unsre Pflicht, unsre Ruhe und Wohlfahrt stören.<sup>223</sup>

It is ridiculous and despicable, Herder argues, if one people pretentiously interferes with other peoples' affairs which one neither knows nor understands. The insistence on the values of the self in each individual culture gives rise to the compassionate respect for the values of other cultures. In other words, Herder's purified patriotism is a love of oneself which supports the compassion for others.

---

<sup>223</sup> Ibid., 722.

The task of the Delaware, the woman of peace, is defined by this respect and love for others, which, in the end, becomes the passion for collective peace. Herder's doctrine of the sentiment of justice is exactly derived from the Iroquois idea of peace. Herder argues:

Dagegen muß jede Nation allgemach es unangenehm empfinden, wenn eine andre Nation beschimpft und beleidigt wird; es muß allmählich ein *gemeines Gefühl* erwachen, daß jede sich an die Stelle jeder andern fühle. Hassen wird manden frechen Übertreter fremder Rechte, den Zerstörer fremder Wohlfahrt, den kecken Beleidiger fremder Sitten und Meinungen, den prahlenden Aufdringer seiner eignen Vorzüge an Völker, die diese nicht begehren. Unter welchem Vorwande Jemand über die Grenze tritt, dem Nachbar als einem Sklaven das Haar abzuscheren, ihm seine Götter aufzuzwingen, und ihm dafür seine Nationalheiligtümer in Religion, Kunst, Vorstellungsart und Lebensweise zu entwenden.<sup>224</sup>

The deeds Herder criticizes in this passage are typical practices of colonizers: the appropriation of land, cruel treatment of indigenous people, coercive Christianization, and the plundering of treasures. In other words, Herder's endorsement of a certain kind of patriotism, based on the compassion for others, is directly connected to the contemporary colonial context. Empathy or shared sentiment (*gemeines Gefühl*) is for Herder the most powerful tool to grasp the unethical dimension of colonial practices. Herder's call for mutual understanding is based on the love for oneself and thus revulsion against any destruction caused by others. Herder argues: "[I]m Herzen jeder Nation wird er einen Feinden finden, der in seinen eignen Busen blickt und sagt: »wie? wenn das mir geschähe?« -- Wächst dies Gefühl, so wird unvermerkt eine *Allianz aller*

---

<sup>224</sup> Ibid., 723.

*gebildeten Nationen* gegen jede einzelne anmaßende Macht.“<sup>225</sup> Herder’s sentiment of justice aims at building a community of nations based on self-love and compassion.

The Iroquois suggestion and practice of communal peace is reflected in Herder’s advocate for the shared sentiment of justice. It is not commerce, custom, or even language that hold transnational bonds. It is the empathetic sentiment that ties peoples and cultures together and unites them to a firm alliance. This shared sentiment induces Herder’s sixth doctrine of fair trade and peaceful commerce: „Laut empört sich das menschliche Gefühl gegen freche Anmaßungen im Handel, sobald ihm unschuldige frönende Nationen um einen Gewinn, der ihnen nicht einmal zu Teil wird, aufgeopfert werden.“<sup>226</sup>

According to Herder, trade and commerce should unite peoples, not separate them. The ocean is an element which connects different cultures. If one nation, due to greed, dares to declare the ocean for itself and forbids others to trade on equal terms, Herder argues, then all other nations should feel the displeasure and the injustice caused by this subjugator. Therefore all other trading powers should try to curb such ambitions of one particular nation and make a peaceful commerce possible.

In the end, Herder incorporates all the six doctrines under the seventh doctrine of work and activity (*Tätigkeit*). For Herder, the Iroquois suggestion that the woman of

---

<sup>225</sup> Ibid.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid., 724.

peace – the Delaware – should devote herself to agriculture is the most effective weapon against war because peoples will learn that war only causes disaster but work brings harvest and peace.

Herder compares his seven doctrines to the oil and medicine hanging on the arms of the woman of peace. The woman herself is likened to reason. Herder describes his vision:

Unvermerkt wirkt die Arznei, sanft fließt das Öl hinunter. Leise tritt sie zu diesem und jenem Volk und spricht in der Sprache der Indianer: »Bruder, Enkel, Vater, hier bringe ich dir ein Bundeszeichen, und Öl und Arznei. Damit will ich deine Augen reinigen, daß sie scharf sehen; ich will damit deine Ohren säubern, daß sie recht hören; ich will deinen Hals glätten, daß meine Worte geschmeidig hinuntergehen: denn ich komme nicht umsonst; ich bringe Worte des Friedens.«<sup>227</sup>

With these words, the words of peace, Herder projects a vision for the future, an ideal development of history. At the same time, Herder is aware of the difficulties of such a task, such a dream. If Herder's project of perpetual peace may sound somehow silly and unpractical for our modern mind today, his wish at least says "no" to colonial atrocity and says "yes" to love for oneself and compassion for others. As is evident, the Iroquois story of peace-making powerfully influences Herder's vision of perpetual peace. Yet what if the nations are not interested in keeping peace? What if an Iroquois peace treaty is impossible? Herder's answer is *Nemesis*, the revenge of history.

---

<sup>227</sup> Ibid., 725-26.

#### 4.5.4 Nemesis

Also bleibt der Geschichte einzig und ewig nichts, als der Geist ihres ältesten Schreibers, *Herodots*, der unangestrengte milde *Sinn der Menschheit*. [...] Unbefangen erzählt er die Begebenheiten, und bemerkt, wie allenthalben nur *Mäßigung* die Völker glücklich mache und jeder Übermut seine *Nemesis* hinter sich habe. Dies *Maß der Nemesis*, nach feineren oder größeren Verhältnissen angewandt, ist der einzige und ewige Maßstab aller Menschengeschichte.<sup>228</sup>

Building on his ideas of equal authenticity and perpetual peace, Herder endeavors to establish the revenge of history, *Nemesis*, as the last step of his ethics of history. For Herder, *Nemesis*, the goddess of resentment, is a principle of history based on mutuality. If the fifth doctrine of Herder's perpetual peace – sentiment of justice toward other nations – is grounded in mutual respect, then the principle of *Nemesis* is based on mutual revenge. Furthermore, as Herder makes clear in his essay *Nemesis: Ein lehrendes Sinnbild* (1786, *Nemesis: A Moral Symbol*), *Nemesis* does not merely symbolize the inevitability of revenge. It also functions as the protector against excess and the guardian of human values, represented by the seven doctrines of perpetual peace.<sup>229</sup>

Herder argues that European colonial cruelty toward other peoples will receive its revenge because this practice ignores the principles of history, which all peoples in the world should respect.<sup>230</sup> Therefore Herder warns:

---

<sup>228</sup> Ibid., 735.

<sup>229</sup> See Hans Adler, "Herder's Concept of Humanität," in *A Companion to the Works of Johann Gottfried Herder*, ed. Hans Adler and Wulf Koepke (Rochester: Camden House, 2009).

<sup>230</sup> See Herder, *Briefe zu Beförderung der Humanität*, 708.

»Was du nicht willst, das dir geschehe, das tue keinem andern;« die Rache kommt, ja sie ist da, bei jeder Verirrung, bei jedem Frevel. Alle Mißverhältnisse und Unbilligkeiten, jede stolze Anmaßung, jede feindselige Verhetzung, jede Treulosigkeit hat ihre Strafe mit oder hinter sich; je später, desto schrecklicher und ernster. [...] Gott hat den Menschen nicht erlaubt, lasterhaft zu sein als unter dem harten Gesetz der Strafe.<sup>231</sup>

Obviously, Herder's principle of historical revenge demands a universal validity. The encompassing category of universal history is guided and guarded by reciprocal respect and inevitable *Nemesis*. For Herder, human species is essentially a historic being; all cultural differences are variations of a complete wholeness (*ein Ganzes*) called the history of humanity (*Menschengeschichte*). Therefore human existence on the global scale is based on mutual influence, mutual tolerance, and mutual resentment.

Herder calls the ideas of reciprocity and wholeness, which hold all human beings in the world together, the spirit of history (*Geist der Menschengeschichte*). The Herderian spirit of history is an overarching and almost divine omnipresence, through which the concepts of equal authenticity, perpetual peace, self-love, empathetic compassion, and *Nemesis* are represented and guaranteed. In other words, this spirit of history is understood by Herder as the intrinsic embodiment of the ethics of history. European colonialism, the contemporary historical background against which Herder conceived his theory, is judged and condemned according to these ethics of history, which, unlike history itself, defy the protean nature of time.

---

<sup>231</sup> Ibid., 735.

#### 4.5.5 Superior or Decaying Europe

After the discussion of *Nemesis*, Herder, surprisingly, grants his fellow Europeans superiority of intellect and reason over other peoples in the world. This aspect in Herder's philosophy of history is not a novel phenomenon, as we have seen in his *Ideen*. I certainly do not intend to make the 122<sup>nd</sup> letter, in which Herder discloses his Eurocentrism, the central piece of the whole collection and deny the prevailing anti-colonial sentiments in his writings. However, this aspect does demand our attention because it articulates an almost incomprehensible standing, which is not in accordance with Herder's ethics of history.

While in the 116<sup>th</sup> letter Herder claims that the researcher of history does not set up any hierarchy (*Rangordnung*), the 122<sup>nd</sup> letter discloses Herder's belief in a scale of growth, a hierarchy of historical development, among cultures and nations. Herder's concept of equal authenticity is cast into the inevitable logic of historical development and growth. He writes:

Gehen wir in dies Alles ein [...], nehmen wir an, was auch die Geschichte lehret, daß fast alle Völker der Erde einmal in einem roheren Zustande gelebet, und nur von wenigen die Kultur auf andre gebracht sei; was folget daraus? Daß auf unsrer runden Erde noch alle Zeitalter der Menschheit leben und weben. Da gibts Völkerschaften im Kindes- Jünglings- Mannes-Alter, und wird deren wahrscheinlich noch lange geben, ehe es den Seefahrenden Greisen Europa's gelingt, durch gebrannte Wasser, Krankheiten und Sklavenkünste sie zum Greisealter zu befördern. Wie uns nun jede Pflicht der Menschlichkeit gebeut, einem Kinde, einem Jünglinge sein Lebensalter, das System seiner Kräfte und Vergnügen nicht zu stören;<sup>232</sup>

---

<sup>232</sup> Ibid., 738-39.

First, this passage is the best summary of the geohistorical hierarchy in Herder's *Auch eine Philosophie* and *Ideen*. Herder attributes European culture to the higher developed stage. This passage, however, also reflects Herder's ethical concerns about the future of colonized peoples due to European colonizers' misconduct. Furthermore, the metaphor of human ages does not only convey the message that Europe, the old man, is more advanced, but also demonstrates a sense of apocalypse and decay. The 122<sup>nd</sup> letter is wrought with this ambivalence which the metaphor of an old man conveys.

Simply speaking, Europe being an old man has two contrasting features in Herderian terminology. On the one hand, Herder still believes that Europeans are more advanced than others:

Wenn intellektuelle Kräfte in mehrerer Ausbildung der Vorzug der Europäer sind: so können sie diesen Vorzug nicht anders als durch Verstand und Güte [...] beweisen. Handeln sie impotent, in wütenden Leidenschaften, aus kaltem Geiz, in niedrig-vermessenem Stolze; so sind sie die Tieren, die Dämonen gegen ihre Mitmenschen.<sup>233</sup>

If the first sentence tells us European superiority of intellect, then the rest of the passage utterly denies it because of European colonial practice, which reflects more the reality than a possibility. Therefore, on the other hand, the metaphor of an old man is also a sign of decay.

---

<sup>233</sup> Ibid., 740.

While Herder praises the naïveté and kind-heartedness of childhood nations in India and Americas, he warns that colonial ruthlessness may cause ruin and decadence of European culture:

Und wer leistet den Europäern Bürgschaft, daß es ihnen nicht n mehreren Enden der Erde, wie in Abessinien, China, Japan ergehen könne und ergehen werde? Je mehr ihre Kräfte und Staaten in Europa altern, je mehr unglückliche Europäer einst diesen Weltteil verlassen, um dort und hier mit den Unterdrückten gemeinschaftliche Sache zu machen; so können intellektuelle und animalische Kräfte sich in einer Weise verbinden, die wir jetzt kaum vermuten. [...] Kultivierte Staaten können entstehen, wo wir sie kaum möglich glauben; kultivierte Staaten können verdorren, die wir für unsterblich hielten.<sup>234</sup>

While still holding on his idea that China, Japan, and Ethiopia – cultures with ancient traditions – represent the decadent historical stage in his time, Herder attributes animalistic energy and hope to the so-called primitive cultures. The phrase that intellectual and animalistic forces may bring forth something unimaginable testifies both to Herder's estimation that Europeans have intellectual strength and his fear that European colonialism may cause Europe's degeneration. Therefore, following the principle of *Nemesis*, Herder insists that Europe should rectify what it has done wrong through colonialism. In other words, while Herder does not entirely abandon his historical hierarchy, his ethics of history do weaken the legitimacy of his Eurocentrism and give more weight to his anti-colonial critique.

---

<sup>234</sup> Ibid.

## 4. 6 Concluding Remarks

From *Auch eine Philosophie* to *Humanitätsbriefe*, from Africa to China, Herder's construction of Europe in his philosophy of history proves a multilateral project. While Herder's universal claims of geohistorical hierarchy and historical development imply and justify the logic of northern European superiority, his sentimental intelligence allows him to perceive the influence from the non-European world and to formulate the idea of cultural uniqueness. Although Herder portrays both Africa and China in negative terms, the circumstances which give rise to his representation of Africa are different than those for China. Yet both Africa and China as real-world cultures challenge Herder and his contemporaries to construct a European cultural and historical identity. Sankar Muthu points out that Herder's "account of international justice [...] made clear Europe's moral obligations toward the non-European world in light of the history of violent conquest and imperial rule."<sup>235</sup> It is, however, not only Herder's own intellectual and political integrity but also the impact of non-European knowledge, such as the Iroquois story, and the horror of colonial encounters that enable Herder to further develop the concept of cultural uniqueness to equal authenticity and envision his doctrines of perpetual peace and the idea of *Nemesis*.

---

<sup>235</sup> Muthu, *Enlightenment against Empire*, 255.

Hence Herder's philosophy of history is not only a product of intra-European dynamics, but rather proves intellectual reflections engendered by both European and non-European circumstances. Eurocentrism, the Europe-centered knowledge production and formation of subjectivity, turns out to be the least European phenomenon. Rather it is a product of constant and intensive exchanges between cultures on a larger global scale, heavily loaded with power, violence, economic interests, and intellectual engagement.

## 5. Conclusion

By way of conclusion, the 2009 international cinema hit *Avatar* illustrates the deep entanglements between the time around 1800 and our present-day global concerns. The story of this landmark film and its way of story-telling surprisingly combine all three genres, or cultural practices, discussed in my dissertation: philosophy of history as a representation of cultural memory and an invention of condescending ideologies, scientific expeditions, and sentimental melodramas with a happy ending. Moreover, the transformation of Avatar Jake embodies my reading strategy of the views from the other side.

Like Forster in the eighteenth century, the scientist Grace and her team travel to the unknown planet Pandora to explore the unique natural and human resources with a genuine scientific curiosity and a friendly manner. Reminding us of Herder, Kotzebue, and Forster's Eurocentric notion of historical development and the discourse of race and Africa in the eighteenth century, the commercial corporation and military forces inherit the attitude of a self-ascribed superiority and call the Na'vi people "blue monkeys." Gradually, the military presence and the commercial greed, which originally support Grace's research, turn out to be in conflict with her scientific mission.

The artificial body of avatar – a hybrid body constructed by both "human" and Na'vi DNAs – bears the tasks of exploring the Na'vi world for both scientific purposes

and commercial and colonial exploitation. Hence the body of avatar, similar to the texts analyzed in my dissertation, is first a product defined by colonial interests and manufactured by sciences. At the same time, avatar is also a body which enables Jake to change his perspective, to appreciate the Na'vi way of life, and to turn against the predatory spirit of that world which creates the avatar. Therefore, the avatar body offers a blank space, a space which can be occupied, manipulated, and instrumentalized; at the same time, it is also a locus which can be redefined and transformed. I differentiate between the two bodies in which Jake's mind is situated: the Cripple Jake and the Avatar Jake. Jake is a person with two bodies and one changed mind. In other words, Jake's mind is de-linked to a new dimension of life and a new set of possibilities. Jake's avatar body gives him this opportunity.

While Avatar Jake is first commissioned as a spy to fathom the Na'vi world for colonial control, he gradually adopts the views of the Na'vi world by using his affective intelligence and finally fights against the intrusion of the so-called sky people. This aspect reminds us of Kotzebue and Herder's anti-colonial critique and Forster's disagreement with Cook's violent behavior in the South Pacific. In other words, the Na'vi world exerts profound impact on the mind, the sentiment, and the avatar body of Jake so that he is able to transform himself from physically a cripple and mentally a "jarhead" to a new being, with a new body and a new mind living in accordance with

humans and nature. Kotzebue's happy sentimentalism is alive in the melodramatic filmic narration between good and evil, the love story between Avatar Jake and Neytiri, the friendship among Grace and her team, the yearning for a utopian harmonious world without greed and violence, and a happy ending consoling our wishes and envisioning our dreams.

While modernity disables Jake's body and limits his mind, his transformation into the avatar body and his entry into the Na'vi world reconstruct his identity and reorganize his cultural memory. Jake's transformation reflects less colonial desires or the rhetoric of the empire. Rather it is deeply inscribed with the powerful Na'vi way of life. Hence Jake's process of transformation epitomizes my endeavor to unearth the non-European voices in European texts and my reading strategy of switching our critical perspectives.

The goal of my dissertation, resembling Jake's abandonment of his disabled body at the end of film, lies in identifying and delinking the limits imposed on our understandings of empire, knowledge, and identity. The eighteenth-century German texts, discussed in my dissertation, reveal the essential role of non-European cultures in co-constructing transmodern conditions around 1800. By unearthing the border zones of such epistemic collision and amalgamation, we have the opportunity to reread our cultural memory and envision an alternative global future.

In the end, it is not Avatar Jake who kills the military leader of the sky people. It is Neytiri who kills him and protects the Avatar Jake and the Cripple Jake from being destroyed. The happy ending, that the Na'vi people have won the battle and are able to send the sky people back home, is a triumphant cry for global diversity and epistemic alterity.

## Bibliography

- Adler, Hans. "Ästhetische und anästhetische Wissenschaft. Kants Herder-Kritik als Dokument moderner Paradigmenkonkurrenz." *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 68 (1994): 65-76.
- — —. *Die Prägnanz des Dunklen: Gnoseologie – Ästhetik – Geschichtsphilosophie bei Johann Gottfried Herder*. Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1990.
- — —. "Herder's Concept of Humanität." In *A Companion to the Works of Johann Gottfried Herder*, edited by Hans Adler and Wulf Koepke, 93-116. Rochester: Camden House, 2009.
- Albertsen, Leif Ludwig. "Internationaler Zeitfaktor Kotzebue: Trivialisierung oder sinnvolle Entliterarisierung und Entmoralisierung des strebenden Bürgers im Frühliberalismus." *Sprachkunst* 9 (1978): 220-40.
- Anderson, Benedict R. O'G. *Imagined Communities : Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London and New York: Verso, 2006.
- Anonymous. "Bruder Moritz, der Sonderling, oder die Colonie für die Pelewinselfn; ein Lustspiel." *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* 111 (1792): 111-12.
- — —. "Die Indianer in England. Lustspiel in drey Aufzügen, von August von Kotzebue." *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* 103 (1791): 438-40.
- Aravamudan, Srinivas. "In the Wake of the Novel: The Oriental Tale as National Allegory." *Novel: A Forum for Fiction* 33, no. 1 (1999): 5-31.
- — —. *Tropicopolitans: Colonialism and Agency, 1688-1804*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1999.
- Arens, Katherine. "Said's Colonial Fantasies: How *Orientalism* Marginalizes Eighteenth-Century Germans." *Herder Yearbook* VII (2004): 11-29.
- Arrighi, Giovanni, Takeshi Hamashita, and Mark Selden. *The Resurgence of East Asia: 500, 150 and 50 Year Perspectives*. London and New York: Routledge, 2003.
- Avramescu, Cătălin. *An Intellectual History of Cannibalism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009.

- Badiou, Adam S. Miller and Alain. "An Interview with Alain Badiou: Universal Truths and the Question of Religion." *Journal of Philosophy and Scripture* 3, no. 1 (2005): 38-42.
- Baasner, Rainer. "Geographische Grundlagen von Herders Geschichtsphilosophie – am Beispiel der Begriffe ‚Kultur‘ und ‚Nation‘." In *Nationen und Kulturen. Zum 250. Geburtstag Johann Gottfried Herders*, edited by Regine Otto, 111-20. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1996.
- Balibar, Etienne. "The Borders of Europe." In *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling beyond the Nation*, edited by Pheng Cheah and Bruce Robbins, 216-32. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1998.
- Barrow, John. *Travels in China*. Philadelphia: Printed and sold by W. F. M'Laughlin, 1805.
- Baucom, Ian. *Specters of the Atlantic: Finance Capital, Slavery, and the Philosophy of History*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005.
- Becker-Cantarino, Barbara, ed. *German Literature of the Eighteenth Century: The Enlightenment and Sensibility*. Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2005.
- Beiser, Fredrick C. *The Fate of Reason: German Philosophy from Kant to Fichte*. Cambridge, Massachusetts and Londond: Harvard University Press, 1987.
- Benjamin, Walter. "Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit." In *Illuminationen*, edited by Siegfried Unseld, 136-69. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977.
- Berger, Willy Richard. *China-Bild und China-Mode im Europa der Aufklärung, Literatur und Leben*. Cologne: Böhlau, 1990.
- Berlin, Isaiah. *Three Critics of the Enlightenment: Vico, Hamann, Herder*. Princeton and London: Princeton University Press, 2000.
- Berman, Russell A. *Enlightenment or Empire: Colonial Discourse in German Culture*. Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 1998.
- Bernasconi, Robert. "Who Invented the Concept of Race? Kant's Role in the Enlightenment Construction of Race." In *Race*, edited by Robert Bersnasconi, 11-36. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001.

- Bhabha, Homi K. "The Commitment to Theory." In *The Location of Culture*, 28-56. London and New York: Routledge, 1994.
- — —. "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse." In *The Location of Culture*, 121-31. London and New York: Routledge, 1994.
- Borsche, Tilman. "Vorkritisch oder metakritisch? Die philosophische Aktualität Herders." In *Herder im Spiegel der Zeiten. Verwerfungen der Rezeptionsgeschichte und Chancen einer Relektüre*, edited by Tilman Borsche, 126-41. Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2006.
- Bougainville, Louis de. *A Voyage Round the World*. Amsterdam, New York, and London: N. Israel, Da Capo Press, and Frank Cass & Company Ltd, 1967.
- Britton, John. *Sheridan and Kotzebue*. London: published by J. Fairburn; sold by Hurst, and by West and Hughes; printed by H. L. Galabin, 1799.
- Brooks, Peter. *The Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama, and the Mode of Excess*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995.
- Bürger, Christa. "Literarischer Markt und Öffentlichkeit am Ausgang des 18. Jahrhunderts in Deutschland." In *Aufklärung und literarische Öffentlichkeit*, edited by Peter Bürger, Christa Bürger, and Jochen Schulte-Sasse, 162-212. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1980.
- Bultmann, Christoph. *Die biblische Urgeschichte in der Aufklärung: Johann Gottfried Herders Interpretation der Genesis als Antwort auf die Religionskritik David Humes*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999.
- Campbell, Mary Baine. "Travel Writing and its Theory." In *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, edited by Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs, 261-78. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Casanova, Pascale. *The World Republic of Letters*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004.
- Casas, Bartolomé de las. *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*. London and New York: Penguin Books, 1992.

- Casid, Jill. "Inhuming Empire: Islands as Colonial Nurseries and Graves." In *The Global Eighteenth Century*, edited by Felicity A. Nussbaum, 279-95. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003.
- Cassirer, Ernst. *Die Philosophie der Aufklärung*. Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 2007.
- Chakrabarty, Dipesh. *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000.
- Cheah, Pheng. "Introduction Part II: The Cosmopolitical - Today." In *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling beyond the Nation*, edited by Pheng Cheah and Bruce Robbins, 20-44. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1998.
- Cipolloni, Larry Wolff and Marco, ed. *The Anthropology of the Enlightenment*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007.
- Cook, James. "The Voyage of the Resolution and Adventure 1772-1775." In *The Journals of Captain James Cook on His Voyages of Discovery*, edited by J. C. Beaglehole. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961.
- Culler, Jonathan. "Toward a Theory of Non-Genre Literature." In *Theory of the Novel*, edited by Michael McKeon, 51-56. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000.
- Degn, Christian. *Die Schimmelmans im atlantischen Dreieckshandel: Gewinn und Gewissen*. Neumünster: Karl Wachholtz Verlag, 1974.
- Derrida, Jacques. *Of Grammatology*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974.
- Diderot, Denis. "Encyclopédie." In *The Portable Enlightenment Reader*, edited by Isaac Kramnick, 17-21. New York: Penguin Books, 1995.
- — —. "Political Writings." edited by John Hope Mason and Robert Wokler. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- — —. "Supplement to Bougainville's Voyage." In *The Libertine Reader: Eroticism and Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century France*, edited by Michel Feher, 51-112. New York: Zone Books, 1997.
- Dussel, Enrique. "World-System and "Trans"-Modernity." *Nepantla: Views from South* 3, no. 2 (2002): 221-44.

- Eckermann, Johann Peter. *Gespräche mit Goethe in den letzten Jahren seines Lebens*. Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1986.
- Edmond, Rod. "The Pacific/Tahiti: Queen of the South Sea Isles." In *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, edited by Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Elias, Norbert. "Thomas Morus' Staatskritik. Mit Überlegungen zur Bestimmung des Begriffs Utopie." In *Utopieforschung*, edited by Wilhelm Voßkamp, 101-50. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1985.
- Eloesser, Arthur. *Das bürgerliche Drama: seine Geschichte im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert*. Berlin: Verlag von Wilhelm Hertz, 1898.
- Eze, Emmanuel Chukwudi. "The Color of Reason: The Idea of Race in Kant's Anthropology." In *Anthropology and the German Enlightenment*, edited by Katherine M. Faull, 200-41. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1995.
- Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. New York: Grove Press, 1967.
- Fausett, David. *Images of the Antipodes in the Eighteenth Century : a Study in Stereotyping*. Amsterdam and Atlanta, GA.: Rodopi, 1995.
- Fetscher, Justus, ed. *Die Pazifik-Reisen der 1760er und 1770er Jahre in der deutschen Literatur*. Edited by Philippe Despoix and Justus Fetscher, *Cross-Cultural Encounters and Constructions of Knowledge in the 18th and 19th Century: Non-European and European Travel of Exploration in Comparative Perspective*. Kassel: Kassel University Press, 2004.
- Fietz, Lothar. "Zur Genese des englischen Melodramas aus der Tradition der bürgerlichen Tragödie und des Rührstücks: Lillo-Schröder-Kotzebue-Sheridan-Thompson-Jerrold." *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 65 (1991): 99-116.
- Fink, Gonthie-Louis. "Von Winckelmann bis Herder. Die deutsche Klimatheorie in europäischer Perspektive." In *Johann Gottfried Herder 1744-1803*, edited by Gerhard Sauder, 156-76. Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1987.

- Forster, Georg. "Nachrichten von den Pelew-Inseln: Vorrede." In *Georg Forsters Werke*, edited by Klaus-Georg Popp Horst Fiedler, Annerose Schneider, and Christian Suckow, 323-42. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1985.
- — —. *Reise um die Welt*, edited by Gerhard Steiner. Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag, 1983.
- Forster, George. *A Voyage Round the World*, edited by Nicholas Thomas and Oliver Berghof. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000.
- Foucault, Michel. *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1972.
- — —. *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1977.
- — —. *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. London and New York: Routledge, 2002.
- Foucault, Michel. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*. Edited by Colin Gordon. New York: Pantheon Books, 1980.
- Fried, Michael. *Absorption and Theatricality: Painting and Beholder in the Age of Diderot*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988.
- Gadamer, Hans-Georg. "Herder und die geschichtliche Welt." In *Gesammelte Werke*, 318-35. Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1987.
- Gaier, Ulrich. "Hamann und Herder - eine philosophische Alternative zu Kant." In *Herder im Spiegel der Zeiten: Verwerfungen der Rezeptionsgeschichte und Chancen einer Relektüre*, edited by Tilman Borsche, 103-25. Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2006.
- — —. "Poesie oder Geschichtsphilosophie? Herders erkenntnistheoretische Antwort auf Kant." In *Johann Gottfried Herder: Geschichte und Kultur*, edited by Martin Bollacher, 1-17. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1994.
- Garber, Jörn. "Reise nach Arkadien - Bougainville und Georg Forster auf Tahiti." *Georg-Forster-Studien I* (1997): 19-50.
- Gascoigne, John. "The German Enlightenment and the Pacific." In *The Anthropology of the Enlightenment*, edited by Larry Wolff and Marco Cipolloni, 141-71. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007.

- Geertz, Clifford. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books, 1973.
- Gerbi, Antonello. *The Dispute of the New World: the History of a Polemic 1750-1900*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1973.
- Glaser, Horst Albert. *Das bürgerliche Rührstück. Analekten zum Zusammenhang von Sentimentalität mit Autorität in der trivialen Dramatik Schröders, Ifflands, Kotzebues und anderer Autoren am Ende des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts*. Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 1969.
- Goethe, Johann Wolfgang. *Italienische Reise*. Edited by Christoph Michel and Hans-Georg Dewitz. Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1993.
- — —. "Über das deutsche Theater." In *Johann Wolfgang Goethe: Werke*, edited by Dieter Borchmeyer and Peter Huber, 1206-08. Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1993.
- Goetsch, Paul. "Das Kind als edler Wilder: seine Funktionen in der englischen Literatur." In *Der Alteritätsdiskurs des Edlen Wilden: Exotismus, Anthropologie und Zivilisationskritik am Beispiel eines europäischen Topos*, edited by Peter Haslinger, Monika Fludernik, and Stefan Kaufmann, 229-48. Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2002.
- Golinski, Jan. *British Weather and the Climate of Enlightenment*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007.
- Goodman, Dena. *Criticism in Action : Enlightenment Experiments in Political Writing*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989.
- Graf, Rüdi. *Das Theater im Literaturstaat: Literarisches Theater auf dem Weg zur Bildungsmacht*. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1992.
- Greenblatt, Stephen. *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991.
- Greer, Margaret Rich, Walter Mignolo, and Maureen Quilligan. *Rereading the Black Legend: the Discourses of Religious and Racial Difference in the Renaissance Empires*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.
- Gregory, John S. *The West and China since 1500*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

- Guest, Harriet. *Empire, Barbarism, and Civilisation: James Cook, William Hodges, and the Return to the Pacific*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Guthke, Karl S. *Das deutsche bürgerliche Trauerspiel*. 6 ed. Stuttgart and Weimar: J. B. Metzler, 2006.
- Habermas, Jürgen. *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1962.
- Hardach-Pinke, Irene. "Managing Girl's Sexuality among the German Upper Classes." In *Secret Gardens, Satanic Mills: Placing Girls in European History, 1750-1960*, edited by Birgitte Søland, Mary Jo Maynes, and Christina Benninghaus, 101-14. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2005.
- Haubl, Rolf. "Trivialität Kotzebues: Psychohistorische Anmerkungen." *Sprachkunst* 13 (1982): 50-62.
- Hays, Michael, and Anastasia Nikolopoulou, eds. *Melodrama: the Cultural Emergence of a Genre*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996.
- Hegel, G. W. F. *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Translated by A. V. Miller. Oxford, New York, Toronto, and Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1977.
- — —. *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1986.
- Herder, Johann Gottfried. "Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache." In *Frühe Schriften 1764-1772*, edited by Ulrich Gaier, 695-810. Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1985.
- — —. *Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache*. Edited by Ulrich Gaier, *Frühe Schriften 1764-1772*. Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1985.
- — —. *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit*. Edited by Hans Dieter Irmscher. Stuttgart: Reclam, 1990.
- — —. "Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit." In *Johann Gottfried Herder: Schriften zu Philosophie, Literatur, Kunst und Altertum 1774-1787*, edited by Jürgen Brummack and Martin Bollacher, 9-108. Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1994.

- — —. *Briefe zu Beförderung der Humanität*. Edited by Hans Dieter Irmscher. Vol. 7. Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1991.
- — —. *Briefe: Gesamtausgabe: 1763-1803*. Edited by Karl-Heinz Hahn and Goethe- und Schiller-Archiv. Vol. 3. Weimar: Böhlau, 1977.
- — —. *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*. Edited by Martin Bollacher. Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1989.
- — —, ed. *Journal meiner Reise im Jahr 1769*. Edited by Rainer Wisbert, Johann Gottfried Herder: *Journal meiner Reise im Jahr 1769, Pädagogische Schriften*. Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1997.
- — —. *Über die Wirkung der Dichtkunst auf die Sitten der Völker in alten und neuen Zeiten*. Edited by Jürgen Brummack and Martin Bollacher. Vol. 4, Johann Gottfried Herder: *Schriften zu Philosophie, Literatur, Kunst und Altertum 1774-1787*. Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1994.
- — —. "Vom Erkennen und Empfinden der menschlichen Seele. Bemerkungen und Träume." In *Johann Gottfried Herder. Schriften zu Philosophie, Literatur, Kunst und Altertum 1774-1787*, edited by Jürgen Brummack and Martin Bollacher, 327-93. Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1994.
- Hess, Jonathan M. *Germans, Jews and the Claims of Modernity*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002.
- Hirschfeld, Christian Cajus Lorenz. *Theory of Garden Art*. Translated by Linda B. Parshall. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001.
- Hull, Isabel V. *Sexuality, State, and Civil Society in Germany, 1700-1815*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1996.
- Hulme, Peter. *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492-1797*. London and New York: Methuen, 1986.
- Humboldt, Alexander von. *Cosmos: a Sketch of a Physical Description of the Universe*. 5 vols. Vol. 2. London: H. G. Bohn, 1849-1858.
- Irmscher, Hans Dieter. "Die geschichtsphilosophische Kontroverse zwischen Kant und Herder." In *Hamann-Kant-Herder*, edited by Bernhard Gajek, 111-92. Frankfurt am Main and New York: Peter Lang, 1987.

- Israel, Jonathan I. *Enlightenment Contested: Philosophy, Modernity, and the Emancipation of Man, 1670-1752*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Jaeger, Stephan. "Herders Inszenierung von Europa in den *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*." *Herder Yearbook IX* (2008): 73-88.
- Jameson, Fredric. *Archaeologies of the Future: the Desire called Utopia and Other Science Fictions*. London and New York: Verso, 2005.
- — —. *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1981.
- Japp, Uwe. "Aufgeklärtes Europa und natürliche Südsee. Georg Forsters >Reise um die Welt<." In *Reise und Utopie. Zur Literatur der Spätaufklärung*, edited by Hans Joachim Piechotta, 10-56. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1976.
- Kaeding, Peter. *August von Kotzebue: auch ein deutsches Dichterleben*. Berlin: Union Verlag, 1985.
- Kant, Immanuel. "Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung." In *Was ist Aufklärung? Ausgewählte kleine Schriften*, edited by Horst D. Brandt, 20-27. Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1999.
- — —. "Beobachtung über das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen." In *Vorkritische Schriften bis 1768*, edited by Wilhelm Weischedel, 825-84. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977.
- — —. "Geschichte und Naturbeschreibung der merkwürdigsten Vorfälle des Erdbebens, welches an dem Ende des 1755sten Jahres einen großen Theil der Erde erschüttert hat " In *Vorkritische Schriften I: 1747-1756*, 429-62. Berlin: Reimer, 1910.
- — —. "Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht." In *Was ist Aufklärung? Ausgewählte kleine Schriften*, edited by Horst D. Brandt, 3-19. Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1999.
- — —. "Kritik der Urteilskraft." In *Immanuel Kant, Schriften zur Ästhetik und Naturphilosophie*, edited by Manfred Frank and Véronique Zanetti, 479-880. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1996.

- — —. "Rezension zu Johann Gottfried Herders Ideen." In *Immanuel Kant. Schriften zur Anthropologie, Geschichtsphilosophie, Politik und Pädagogik*, edited by Wilhelm Weischedel, 781-94. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977.
- — —. *Zum ewigen Frieden*. Stuttgart: Reclam, 1984.
- Keate, George, and Henry Wilson. *An Account of the Pelew Islands Situated in the Great South Sea*. New-York: Printed by Tiebout & O'Brien, for Evert Duyckinck, and Co. booksellers and stationers, no. 110, Pearl-Street, 1796.
- Kelleter, Frank, Barbara Krah, and Ruth Mayer, eds. *Melodrama! The Mode of Excess from Early America to Hollywood*. Heidelberg: Winter, 2007.
- Koebner, Thomas. "Zum Streit für und wider die Schaubühne im 18. Jahrhundert." In *Festschrift für Rainer Gruenter*, edited by Bernhard Fabian, 26-57. Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1978.
- Koepke, Wulf, and Hans Adler, eds. *A Companion to the Works of Johann Gottfried Herder*. Rochester, New York: Camden House, 2009.
- Köpke, Wulf. "Herders Idee der Geschichte in der Sicht des frühen 20. Jahrhunderts." In *Johann Gottfried Herder: Geschichte und Kultur*, edited by Martin Bollacher, 375-92. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1994.
- Kotzebue, August von. "Bruder Moritz, der Sonderling, oder: Die Colonie für die Pelew-Inseln." In *Theater von August von Kotzebue*, 73-186. Vienna and Leipzig: Verlag von Ignaz Klang in Wien and Eduard Kummer in Leipzig, 1840.
- — —. "Die Indianer in England." In *Theater von August von Kotzebue*, 187-295. Vienna and Leipzig: Verlag von Ignaz Klang in Wien und Eduard Kummer in Leipzig, 1840.
- — —. "Die Negersklaven. Ein historisch-dramatisches Gemälde." In *Theater von August von Kotzebue*. Vienna and Leipzig: Verlag von Ignaz Klang in Wien and Eduard Kummer in Leipzig, 1840.
- — —. "Die Sonnenjungfrau." In *Theater von August von Kotzebue*. Vienna and Leipzig: Ignaz Klang and Eduard Kummer, 1840.
- — —. "Die Spanier in Peru, oder: Rollas Tod." In *Theater von August von Kotzebue*. Vienna and Leipzig: Ignaz Klang and Eduard Kummer, 1840.

- — —. *Fragmente über Recensenten-Unfug*. Leipzig: Paul Gotthelf Kummer, 1797.
- — —. "La Peyrouse." In *Schauspiele*, edited by Jürg Mathes, 291-324. Frankfurt am Main: Athenäum Verlag, 1972.
- — —. *Selbstbiographie*. Vienna: Im Verlag bey Catharina Gräffer und Comp., 1811.
- — —. "Vorbericht zu Das Kind der Liebe." In *Theater*, 121-28. Vienna and Leipzig: Verlag von Ignaz Klang in Wien and Eduard Kummer in Leipzig, 1840.
- — —. "Vorbericht zu Der Graf von Burgund." In *Theater*, 137-38. Vienna and Leipzig: Verlag von Ignaz Klang in Wien and Eduard Kummer in Leipzig, 1840.
- Kotzebue, Wilhelm von. *August von Kotzebue: Urtheile der Zeitgenossen und der Gegenwart*. Dresden: Wilhelm Baensch Verlagshandlung, 1881.
- Kramnick, Isaac, ed. *The Portable Enlightenment Reader*. New York: Penguin Books, 1995.
- Krause, Markus. "Trivialdramatik." In *Zwischen Revolution und Restauration: Klassik, Romantik, 1786-1815*, edited by Horst Albert Glaser. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 1980.
- Kronauer, Ulrich. "Rousseaus Kulturkritik aus der Sicht Georg Forsters." In *Georg Forster in interdisziplinärer Perspektive*, edited by Claus-Volker Klenke, 147-58. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1994.
- Lamana, Gonzalo. "Of Books, Popes, and Huacas; Or, the Dilemmas of Being Christian." In *Rereading the Black Legend: The Discourses of Religious and Racial Difference in the Renaissance Empires*, edited by Walter D. Mignolo, Margaret R. Greer, and Maureen Quilligan, 117-49. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2007.
- Lamb, Jonathan. *Preserving the Self in the South Seas, 1680-1840*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001.
- Leask, Nigel. *Curiosity and the Aesthetics of Travel Writing, 1770-1840: 'from an antique land'*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm. *Writings on China*. Edited by Daniel J. Cook and Henry Rosemont, xvi, 157 p. Chicago and La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1994.

- Lemon, M. C. *Philosophy of History: A Guide for Students*. London and New York: Routledge, 2003.
- Lessing, Gotthold Ephraim. "Hamburgische Dramaturgie." In *Gotthold Ephraim Lessing Werke 1767-1769*, edited by Klaus Bohnen. Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1985.
- Leventhal, Robert S., ed. *Reading After Foucault: Institutions, Disciplines, and Technologies of the Self in Germany, 1750-1830*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1993.
- Liebersohn, Harry. *The Travelers' World: Europe to the Pacific*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006.
- Löchte, Anne. *Johann Gottfried Herder. Kulturtheorie und Humanitätsidee der Ideen, Humanitätsbriefe und Adrastea*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2005.
- Lüden, Catharina. *Sklavenfahrt mit Seeleuten aus Schleswig-Holstein, Hamburg und Lübeck im 18. Jahrhundert*. Heide: Westholsteinische Verlagsanstalt Boyens & Co., 1983.
- Lüsebrink, Hans-Jürgen. "Faszination und Wissensdurst. Zu den Grenzen und Möglichkeiten interkulturellen (Miss-)Verstehens in den Werken Georg Forsters und seiner Zeitgenossen." *Georg-Forster-Studien* XII (2007): 77-97.
- Macartney, George. *An Embassy to China*. Edited by J. L. Cramer-Byng. Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1963.
- Mackerras, Colin. *Western Images of China*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1989.
- — —. *Western Images of China*. Hong Kong and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Malsch, Wilfried. "Nationen und kulturelle Vielfalt in Herders Geschichtsphilosophie." In *Nationen und Kulturen: Zum 250. Geburtstag Johann Gottfried Herders*, edited by Regine Otto, 121-29. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1996.
- Mander, Jenny. "No Woman is an Island: the Female Figure in French Enlightenment Anthropology." In *Women, Gender and Enlightenment*, edited by Sarah Knott and Barbara Taylor, 97-116. Houndmills, England and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

- Marmontel, Jean François. *The Incas or, the Destruction of the Empire of Peru*. Vol. 2. Dublin: printed for Messrs. Price, Whitestone, W. Watson, R. Cross, Sleater [and 18 others in Dublin], 1777.
- Marouby, Christian. "Adam Smith and the Anthropology of the Enlightenment: The "Ethnographic" Sources of Economic Progress." In *The Anthropology of the Enlightenment*, edited by Larry Wolff and Marco Cipolloni, 85-102. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007.
- Marshall, David. *The Frame of Art: Fictions of Aesthetic Experience, 1750-1815*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005.
- Masuzawa, Tomoko. *The Invention of World Religions, or, How European Universalism was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005.
- Mathes, Jürg. "Kommentar." In *August von Kotzebue: Schauspiele*, edited by Jürg Mathes. Frankfurt am Main: Athenäum Verlag, 1972.
- Maurer, Michael. *Aufklärung und Anglophilie in Deutschland*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987.
- May, Yomb. "Kultur im Zeichen des Geschlechts: Eine genderorientierte und postkoloniale Lektüre von Georg Forsters *Reise um die Welt*." *Georg-Forster-Studien* XIII (2008): 175-200.
- Mayer, Frank Kelleter and Ruth. "The Melodramatic Mode Revisited. An Introduction." In *Melodrama! The Mode of Excess from Early America to Hollywood* edited by Barbara Krah Frank Kelleter, and Ruth Mayer, 7-17. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2007.
- Meinecke, Friedrich. *Die Entstehung des Historismus*. Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1936.
- Menges, Karl. "Herder und die 'Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes'. Eine wirkungsgeschichtliche Replik." In *Ethische contra ästhetische Legitimation von Literatur: Traditionalismus und Modernismus. Kontroversen um den Avantgardismus*, edited by Walter Haug and Wilfried Barner. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1986.

- Merkel, Garlieb. "Die Letten, vorzüglich in Liefland, am Ende des philosophischen Jahrhunderts." In *Freimütiges aus den Schriften Garlieb Merkels*, edited by Horst Adameck, 35-168. Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1959.
- Meyer, Annette. "Von der >Science of Man< zur >Naturgeschichte der Menschheit<. Einflüsse angelsächsischer Wissenschaft im Werk Georg Forsters." In *Natur - Mensch - Kultur: Georg Forster im Wissenschaftsfeld seiner Zeit*, edited by Jörn Garber and Tanja van Hoorn, 29-52. Hannover-Laatzten: Wehrhahn Verlag, 2006.
- Meyer, Jörg F. *Verehrt. Verdammt. Vergessen. August von Kotzebue, Werk und Wirkung*. Frankfurt am Main, New York et al.: Peter Lang, 2005.
- Mignolo, Walter. "Afterword: What does the Black Legend Have to Do with Race?" In *Rereading the Black Legend: The Discourses of Racial and Religious Difference in the Renaissance Empires*, edited by Walter Mignolo Margaret Greer, and Maureen Quiligan, 312-24. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2007.
- — —. "The Geopolitics of Knowledge and Colonial Difference." *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 101 Winter (2002): 57-96.
- — —. *The Idea of Latin America*. Malden and Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005.
- Minter, Catherine J. "Literary 'Empfindsamkeit' and Nervous Sensibility in Eighteenth-Century Germany." *The Modern Language Review* 96 (2001): 1016-28.
- Mix, York-Gothart. ">Der Neger malt den Teufel weiß<. J. G. Herders Neger-Idyllen im Kontext antiker Traditionsgebundenheit und zeitgenössischer Kolonialismuskritik." In *Das Europa der Aufklärung und die außereuropäische koloniale Welt*, edited by Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink, 193-207. Göttingen: Wallstein, 2006.
- Moi, Toril. *Henrik Ibsen and the Birth of Modernism: Art, Theater, Philosophy*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- More, Thomas. *Utopia*. Translated by Peter K. Marshall. New York: Pocket Books, 1965.
- Mungello, David E. *The Great Encounter of China and the West, 1500-1800*. 2nd ed. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005.

- — —. "How Central to Leibniz's Philosophy was China?" In *Das Neueste über China: G. W. Leibnizens Novissima Sinica von 1697*, edited by Wenchao Li and Hans Poser, 57-67. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2000.
- Muthu, Sankar. *Enlightenment against Empire*. Princeton and London: Princeton University Press, 2003.
- Nussbaum, Felicity. *The Limits of the Human: Fictions of Anomaly, Race, and Gender in the Long Eighteenth Century*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Nusser, Peter. *Trivialliteratur*. Stuttgart: Metzler, 1991.
- Osterhammel, Jürgen, and Boris Barth, ed. *Zivilisierungsmissionen: Imperiale Weltverbesserung seit dem 18. Jahrhundert*. Konstanz: UVK Verlagsgesellschaft, 2005.
- Peitsch, Helmut. "Deutsche Peripherie und Europäisches Zentrum? Herders Aneignung der außereuropäischen Forschungs- und Entdeckungsreisen in den *Ideen*." In *Vom Selbstdenken: Aufklärung und Aufklärungskritik in Herders >Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit<*, edited by Regine Otto and John Zammito, 73-85. Heidelberg: Synchron, 2001.
- Perkins, Franklin. *Leibniz and China: A Commerce of Light*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Poser, Hans. "Leibnizens *Novissima Sinica* und das europäische Interesse an China." In *Das Neueste über China: G. W. Leibnizens Novissima Sinica von 1697*, edited by Wenchao Li and Hans Poser, 11-28. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2000.
- Pratt, Mary Louise. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. London and New York: Routledge, 1992.
- Price, Lawrence Marsden. *Inkle and Yarico Album*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1937.
- — —. *The Vogue of Marmontel on the German Stage*. Vol. 27, University of California Publications in Modern Philology. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1944.

- Quijano, Aníbal. "The Coloniality of Power and Social Classification." *Journal of World-Systems Research* 2 (2000): 342-86.
- Ranger, Eric Hobsbawm and Terence. *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.
- Raynal, Abbé Guillaum Thomas. *A Philosophical and Political History of the Settlements and Trade of the Europeans in the East and West Indies*. London: T. Cadell, 1776.
- Reill, Peter Hanns. *The German Enlightenment and the Rise of Historicism*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975.
- Rennie, Neil. "The Point Venus "Scene," Tahiti, 14 May 1769." In *The Global Eighteenth Century*, edited by Felicity A. Nussbaum, 239-50. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007.
- Rohbeck, Johannes. "Naturgeschichte und Geschichte der Menschheit. Georg Forsters Geschichtsphilosophie im Kontext der europäischen Aufklärung." In *Natur - Mensch - Kultur: Georg Forster im Wissenschaftsfeld seiner Zeit*, edited by Jörn Garber and Tanja van Hoorn, 13-28. Hannover-Laatzten: Wehrhahn Verlag, 2006.
- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *A Discourse on Inequality*. Translated by Maurice Cranston. London, New York et al. : Penguin Books, 1984.
- Sadji, Uta. *Der Negermythos am Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts in Deutschland. Eine Analyse der Rezeption von Reiseliteratur über Schwarzafrika*. Frankfurt am Main, Bern, and Las Vegas: Peter Lang, 1979.
- Said, Edward W. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1993.
- — —. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1994.
- Sanches, Manuela Ribeiro. ">Diese zarten, fast unsichtbaren Fäden der Arachne<. Das wahrnehmende Subject und die Konstituierung von Wahrheit bei Forster." In *Georg Forster in interdisziplinärer Perspektive*, edited by Claus-Volker Klenke, 133-46. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1994.
- Sangmeister, Dirk. "Das Feenland der Phantasie: Die Südsee in der deutschen Literatur zwischen 1780 und 1820." *Georg-Forster-Studien* II (1998): 135-76.
- Sauder, Gerhard. *Empfindsamkeit*. Stuttgart: Metzler, 1974.

- — —. "Herder's Poetic Works, Translations, and Views on Poetry." In *A Companion to the Works of Johann Gottfried Herder*, edited by Wulf Koepke and Hans Adler, 305-30. Rochester: Camden House, 2009.
- Sauerteig, Lutz D. H. "Sex Education in Germany from the Eighteenth to the Twentieth Century." In *Sexual Cultures in Europe: Themes in Sexuality*, edited by Lesley Hall Franz X. Eder, and Gert Hekma, 9-33. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1999.
- Scherpe, Klaus R. "Die Gewalt des Fremden. Über Representation." In *Der schöne Schein der Kunst und seine Schatten*, edited by Hans Richard Brittnacher and Fabian Stoermer, 366-79. Bielefeld: Aisthesis Verlag, 2000.
- Schiller, Friedrich. "Gedanken über den Gebrauch des Gemeinen und Niedrigen in der Kunst." In *Friedrich Schiller: theoretische Schriften*, edited by Rolf-Peter Janz, 452-59. Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1992.
- — —. "Über die tragische Kunst." In *Friedrich Schiller: theoretische Schriften*, edited by Rolf-Peter Janz, 251-75. Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1992.
- — —. "Vom Erhabenen." In *Friedrich Schiller: theoretische Schriften*, edited by Rolf-Peter Janz, 395-422. Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1992.
- — —. "Was kann eine gute stehende Schaubühne wirken." In *Friedrich Schiller: theoretische Schriften*, edited by Rolf-Peter Janz, 185-200. Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1992.
- Schmid, C. H. "Ueber die Moralität von den Schauspielen des Herrn von Kotzebue." *Journal von und für Deutschland* 8, no. 11 (1791): 920-34.
- Schmitt, Carl. *The Nomos of the Earth in the International Law of the Jus Publicum Europaeum*. New York: Telos Press Publishing, 2003.
- Schneider, Helmut J. "Utopie und Landschaft im 18. Jahrhundert." In *Utopieforschung*, edited by Wilhelm Voßkamp, 172-90. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1985.
- Sebastiani, Silvia. "'Race', Women and Progress in the Scottish Enlightenment." In *Women, Gender and Enlightenment*, edited by Sarah Knott and Barbara Taylor, 75-96. Houndmills, England and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

- Sheehan, Jonathan. *The Enlightenment Bible: Translation, Scholarship, Culture*. Princeton and London: Princeton University Press, 2005.
- Smith, Adam. *An Inquiry Into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. Edited by Edwin Cannan. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976.
- Spence, Jonathan D. *The Chan's Great Continent: China in Western Minds*. New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1998.
- Stauff, Renate. "Johann Gottfried Herder: Europäische Kulturtheorie zwischen historischer Eigenart und globaler Perspektive." *Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift* 57 (2007): 3-4.
- Stock, Frithjof. *Kotzebue im literarischen Leben der Goethezeit: Polemik, Kritik, Publikum*. Düsseldorf: Bertelsmann Universitätsverlag, 1971.
- Stoler, Ann Laura. *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.
- — —. *Race and the Education of Desire : Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995.
- Sugihara, Kaoru. "The East Asian Path of Economic Development: A Long-Term Perspective." In *The Resurgence of East Asia: 500, 150 and 50 Year Perspectives*, edited by Takeshi Hamashita and Mark Selden Giovanni Arrighi, 78-123. London and New York: Routledge, 2003.
- Suphan, Bernhard, ed. *Herders Sämmtliche Werke*. Vol. 1. Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1877.
- Tautz, Birgit. *Reading and Seeing Ethnic Differences in the Enlightenment: From China To Africa*. 1st ed. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.
- Taylor, Charles, and Amy Gutmann. *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994.
- Thompson, L. F. *Kotzebue: a Survey of His Progress in France, and England, Preceded by a Consideration of the Critical Attitude to Him in Germany*. Paris: Librairie Ancienne Honoré Champion, 1928.

Trakulhun, Sven, and Daniel Carey. "Universalism, Diversity, and the Postcolonial Enlightenment." In *The Postcolonial Enlightenment: Eighteenth-Century Colonialism and Postcolonial Theory*, edited by Daniel Carey and Lynn Festa, 240-80. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Ueding, Gert. *Klassik und Romantik: Deutsche Literatur im Zeitalter der französischen Revolution 1789-1815*. Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1987.

Uerlings, Herbert. "Geschlecht und Fortschritt. Zu Georg Forsters Reise um die Welt und dem Diskurs der 'Universalgeschichten des weiblichen Geschlechts'." In *Beschreiben und Erfinden. Figuren des Fremden vom 18. bis zum 20. Jahrhundert*, edited by Viktoria Schmidt-Linsenhoff and Karl Hölz, 13-44. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2000.

Uhlig, Ludwig. *Georg Forster: Lebensabenteuer eines gelehrten Weltbürgers*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004.

Viereck, Peter. *Metapolitics: from Wagner and the German Romantics to Hitler*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2004.

Voltaire. *Candide, or, Optimism*. Translated by Theo Cuffe. Deluxe ed. New York: Penguin Books, 2005.

— — —. *Philosophical Dictionary*. Translated by Theodore Besterman. Harmondsworth and New York et al. : Penguin Books, 1985.

— — —. *Philosophy of History*. Glasgow: Printed for Robert Urie, 1766.

Vries, Jenny Broekman de. "Kotzebue on the American Stage 1798-1840." Unpublished dissertation of University of Virginia, 1972.

Waley-Cohen, Joanna. *The Sextants of Beijing: Global Currents in Chinese History*. New York and London: W . W. Norton & Company, 1999.

Wallace, Lee. *Sexual Encounters: Pacific Texts, Modern Sexualities*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003.

Wallerstein, Immanuel. *European Universalism: the Rhetoric of Power*. New York: New Press, 2006.

- — —. *Historical Capitalism with Capitalist Civilization*. London and New York: Verso, 1983.
- — —. *The Modern World System III: The Second Era of Great Expansion of the Capitalist World-Economy, 1730-1840s*. San Diego: Academic Press, 1989.
- Weigel, Sigrid. "Die nahe Fremde - das Territorium des 'Weiblichen': Zum Verhältnis von 'Wilden' und 'Frauen' im Diskurs der Aufklärung " In *Die Andere Welt: Studien zum Exotismus*, edited by Thomas Koebner and Gerhart Pickerodt, 171-99. Frankfurt am Main: Athenäum, 1987.
- Werlen, Hansjakob. "Sprache und (Wirtschafts-)Wissenschaft im >Sina<-Kapitel von Herders *Ideen*." In *Vom Selbstdenken: Aufklärung und Aufklärungskritik in Herders >Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit<*, edited by John Zammito and Regine Otto, 157-64. Heidelberg: Synchron, 2001.
- West, Hugh. "The Limits of Enlightenment Anthropology: Georg Forster and the Tahitians." *History of European Ideas* 10, no. 2 (1989): 147-60.
- Wheeler, Roxann. *The Complexion of Race: Categories of Difference in Eighteenth-Century British Culture*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000.
- Wieland, Christoph Martin. *Geschichte der Abderiten*. Stuttgart: Reclam, 2003.
- Wild, Christopher J. *Theater der Keuschheit -- Keuschheit des Theaters: Zu einer Geschichte der (Anti-)Theatralität von Gryphius bis Kleist*. Freiburg im Breisgau: Rombach Verlag, 2003.
- Williamson, George. "What Killed August von Kotzebue? The Temptations of Virtue and the Political Theology of German Nationalism 1789-1819." *The Journal of Modern History* 72, no. December (2000): 890-943.
- Wilson, Peter H. "The Empire, Austria, and Prussia." In *A Companion to Eighteenth-Century Europe*, ed Peter H. Wilson, Blackwell Publishing, 2008.
- — —. "Introduction." In *A Companion to Eighteenth-Century Europe*, edited by Peter H. Wilson, Blackwell Publishing, 2008.
- Withers, Charles W. J. *Placing the Enlightenment: Thinking Geographically about the Age of Reason*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2007.

- Wolff, Larry. "Discovering Cultural Perspective: The Intellectual History of Anthropological Thought in the Age of Enlightenment." In *The Anthropology of the Enlightenment*, edited by Larry Wolff and Marco Cipolloni, 3-32. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007.
- Wood, Allen W. "Kant's Project for Perpetual Peace." In *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling beyond the Nation*, edited by Pheng Cheah and Bruce Robbins, 59-76. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1998.
- Woodmansee, Martha. *The Author, Art, and the Market: Rereading the History of Aesthetics*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.
- Wuthenow, Ralph Rainer. "Inselglück. Reise und Utopie in der Literatur des XVIII. Jahrhunderts." In *Utopieforschung*, edited by Wilhelm Voßkamp, 320-35. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1985.
- Young, Robert. *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture, and Race*. London and New York: Routledge, 1995.
- Youngs, Tim. "Africa / The Congo: the Politics of Darkness." In *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, edited by Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs, 156-73. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Zammito, John. "Herder and Historical Metanarrative: What's Philosophical about History?" In *A Companion to the Works of Johann Gottfried Herder*, edited by Hans Adler and Wulf Koepke, 65-91. Rochester: Camden House, 2009.
- — —. *Kant, Herder, and the Birth of Anthropology*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2002.
- — —. *The Genesis of Kant's Critique of Judgment*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992.
- Zantop, Susanne. *Colonial Fantasies: Conquest, Family, and Nation in Precolonial Germany, 1770-1870*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1997.

## **Biography**

Before coming to Duke University to pursue her doctorate, Chunjie Zhang earned her B.A. in German from Peking University, Beijing, China, and her M.A. (Magister Artium) in Comparative Literature and Modern German Literature from Eberhard Karls University Tübingen, Germany. She also studied at University of Bonn, Germany, and Oxford Brookes University, Oxford, UK. She has published on Elias Canetti, Johann Gottfried Herder, August von Kotzebue, and European Enlightenment representations of China.