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Author(s): Erich Auerbach, Maire Said and Edward Said

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PHILOLOGY AND *WELTLITERATUR*

by Erich Auerbach*

Translated by Maire and Edward Said

TOGETHER WITH THE INTRODUCTION (itself a reworking of an earlier article, "Vico and Literary Criticism") to his last work, *Literary Language and Its Public in Late Latin Antiquity and in the Middle Ages*, this essay by Erich Auerbach is a major theoretical statement on his work and mission as a *Philolog* of the old tradition. It appeared in 1952 as one of a series of essays dedicated, on his seventieth birthday, to Fritz Strich, the widely-published author of *Goethe und die Weltliteratur*. The birthday offering was aptly entitled *Weltliteratur*, and most of the articles in it were written by distinguished literary scholars of Auerbach's generation, men such as Karl Vietor and Emil Staiger. In our translation of Auerbach's article we have chosen not to put *Weltliteratur* into English. An expedient such as "world literature" betrays the rather unique traditions behind the German word. It is, of course, Goethe's own word (which he used increasingly after 1827 for universal literature, or literature which expresses *Humanität*, humanity, and this expression is literature's ultimate purpose. *Weltliteratur* is therefore a visionary concept, for it transcends national literatures without, at the same time, destroying their individualities. Moreover, *Weltliteratur* is not to be understood as a selective collection of world classics or great books—although Goethe seemed often to be implying this—but rather as a concert among all the literature produced by man about man. Into this complex of meanings flows another stream, this one deriving from Herder, Grimm, the Schlegels and, especially in Auerbach's case, Giambattista Vico. This is the general tradition of German philology which has had a particular influence on German Romance philology. It inaugurated the practice of historicism as well as vastly expanding the role of philology to include a study of all, or most, of human verbal activity.

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Philology, in this role, dominated all the historical disciplines because, unlike philosophy, which deals with eternal truths, philology treats contingent, historical truths at their basic level: it conceives of man dialectically, not statically. In this article Auerbach concerns himself with strictly literary philology, but one is always to keep in mind that philology's "material" need not only be literature but can also be social, legal or philosophical writing. Lastly, Auerbach's connection with the German idealist tradition of historiography is implicit in the article. His interest in intuition and synthesis reflects the metaphysical influence of Dilthey and Troeltsch, among others, who view history as part of a spiritual problem affecting and informing present culture.

Nonnulla pars inventionis est nosse quid quaeras.

Augustine, *Quest. in Hept., Prooem.*

I

IT IS TIME TO ASK what meaning the word *Weltliteratur* can still have if we relate it, as Goethe did, both to the past and to the future. Our earth, the domain of *Weltliteratur*, is growing smaller and losing its diversity. Yet *Weltliteratur* does not merely refer to what is generically common and human; rather it considers humanity to be the product of fruitful intercourse between its members. The presupposition of *Weltliteratur* is a *felix culpa*: mankind's division into many cultures. Today, however, human life is becoming standardized. The process of imposed uniformity, which originally derived from Europe, continues its work, and hence serves to undermine all individual traditions. To be sure, national wills are stronger and louder than ever, yet in every case they promote the same standards and forms for modern life; and it is clear to the impartial observer that the inner bases of national existence are decaying. The European cultures, which have long enjoyed their fruitful interrelation, and which have always been supported by the consciousness of their worth, these cultures still retain their individualities. Nevertheless, even among them the process of levelling proceeds with a greater rapidity than ever before. Standardization, in short, dominates everywhere. All human

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activity is being concentrated either into European-American or into Russian-Bolshevist patterns; no matter how great they seem to us, the differences between the two patterns are comparatively minimal when they are both contrasted with the basic patterns underlying the Islamic, Indian or Chinese traditions. Should mankind succeed in withstanding the shock of so mighty and rapid a process of concentration—for which the spiritual preparation has been poor—then man will have to accustom himself to existence in a standardized world, to a single literary culture, only a few literary languages, and perhaps even a single literary language. And herewith the notion of *Weltliteratur* would be at once realized and destroyed.

If I assess it correctly, in its compulsion and in its dependence on mass movements, this contemporary situation is not what Goethe had in mind. For he gladly avoided thoughts about what later history has made inevitable. He occasionally acknowledged the depressing tendencies of our world, yet no one could then suspect how radically, how unexpectedly, an unpleasant potential could be realized. His epoch was brief indeed; and yet those of us who are members of an older generation actually experienced its passing away. It is approximately five hundred years since the national European literatures won their self-consciousness from and their superiority over Latin civilization; scarcely two hundred years have passed since the awakening of our sense of historicism, a sense that permitted the formation of the concept of *Weltliteratur*. By the example and the stimulation of his work Goethe himself, who died one hundred and twenty years ago, contributed decisively to the development of historicism and to the philological research that was generated out of it. And already in our own time a world is emerging for which this sense no longer has much practical significance.

Although the period of Goethean humanism was brief indeed, it not only had important contemporary effects but it also initiated a great deal that continues, and is ramifying

today. The world literatures that were available to Goethe at the end of his life were more numerous than those which were known at the time of his birth; compared to what is available to us today, however, the number was small. Our knowledge of world literatures is indebted to the impulse given that epoch by historicist humanism; the concern of that humanism was not only the overt discovery of materials and the development of methods of research, but beyond that their penetration and evaluation so that an inner history of mankind—which thereby created a conception of man unified in his multiplicity—could be written. Ever since Vico and Herder this humanism has been the true purpose of philology: because of this purpose philology became the dominant branch of the humanities. It drew the history of the other arts, the history of religion, law, and politics after itself, and wove itself variously with them into certain fixed aims and commonly achieved concepts of order. What was thereby gained, in terms of scholarship and synthesis, need not be recalled for the present reader.

Can such an activity be continued with meaning in wholly changed circumstances and prospects? The simple fact that it is continued, that it continues to be widespread, should not be overstressed. What has once become a habit or an institution continues for a long time, especially if those who are aware of a radical change in the circumstances of life are often neither ready nor able to make their awareness practically operative. There is hope to be gained from the passionate commitment to philological and historicist activity of a small number of young people who are distinguished for their talent and originality. It is encouraging to hope that their instinct for this work of theirs does not betray them, and that this activity still has relevance for the present and the future.

A scientifically ordered and conducted research of reality fills and rules our life; it is, if one wishes to name one, our Myth: we do not possess another that has such general validity. History is the science of reality that affects us most

immediately, stirs us most deeply and compels us most forcibly to a consciousness of ourselves. It is the only science in which human beings step before us in their totality. Under the rubric of history one is to understand not only the past, but the progression of events in general; history therefore includes the present. The inner history of the last thousand years is the history of mankind achieving self-expression: this is what philology, a historicist discipline, treats. This history contains the records of man's mighty, adventurous advance to a consciousness of his human condition and to the realization of his given potential; and this advance, whose final goal (even in its wholly fragmentary present form) was barely imaginable for a long time, still seems to have proceeded as if according to a plan, in spite of its twisted course. All the rich tensions of which our being is capable are contained within this course. An inner dream unfolds whose scope and depth entirely animate the spectator, enabling him at the same time to find peace in his given potential by the enrichment he gains from having witnessed the drama. The loss of such a spectacle—whose appearance is thoroughly dependent on presentation and interpretation—would be an impoverishment for which there can be no possible compensation. To be sure, only those who have not totally sustained this loss would be aware of privation. Even so, we must do everything within our power to prevent so grievous a loss. If my reflections on the future, with which I began this essay, have any validity, then the duty of collecting material and forming it into a whole that will continue to have effect is an urgent one. For we are still basically capable of fulfilling this duty, not only because we have a great deal of material at our disposal, but above all because we also have inherited the sense of historic perspectivism which is so necessary for the job. The reason we still possess this sense is that we live the experience of historical multiplicity, and without this experience, I fear, the sense would quickly lose its living concreteness. It also appears to me that we live at a time (*Kairos*) when the fullest potential

of reflective historiography is capable of being realized; whether many succeeding generations will still be part of such a time is questionable. We are already threatened with the impoverishment that results from an ahistorical system of education; not only does that threat exist but it also lays claim to dominating us. Whatever we are, we became in history, and only in history can we remain the way we are and develop therefrom: it is the task of philologists, whose province is the world of human history, to demonstrate this so that it penetrates our lives unforgettably. At the end of the chapter called "The Approach" in Adalbert Stifter's *Nachsommer* one of the characters says: "The highest of wishes is to imagine that after human life had concluded its period on earth, a spirit might survey and summarize all of the human arts from their inception to their disappearance." Stifter, however, only refers to the fine arts. Moreover, I do not believe it possible now to speak of the conclusion of human life. But it is correct to speak of our time as a period of conclusive change in which a hitherto unique survey appears to have become possible.

This conception of *Weltliteratur* and its philology seems less active, less practical and less political than its predecessor. There is no more talk now—as there had been—of a spiritual exchange between peoples, of the refinement of customs and of a reconciliation of races. In part these goals have failed of attainment, in part they have been superseded by historical developments. Certain distinguished individuals, small groups of highly cultivated men always have enjoyed, under the auspices of these goals, an organized cultural exchange: they will continue to do so. Yet this sort of activity has little effect on culture or on the reconciliation of peoples: it cannot withstand the storm of opposed vested interests—from which an intensified propaganda emerges—and so its results are immediately dissipated. An exchange that is effective is the kind that takes place between partners already brought together into a rapport based on political developments: such a cultural dialogue has an internally cohesive

effect, hastens mutual understanding and serves a common purpose. But for those cultures not bound together thus there has been a disturbing (to a humanist with Goethean ideals) general rapport in which the antitheses that persist nonetheless [as those, for example, between differing national identities] are not being resolved except, paradoxically, through ordeals of sheer strength. The conception of *Weltliteratur* advocated in this essay—a conception of the diverse background of a common fate—does not seek to affect or alter that which has already begun to occur, albeit contrary to expectation; the present conception accepts as an inevitable fact that world-culture is being standardized. Yet this conception wishes to render precisely and, so that it may be retained, consciously to articulate the fateful coalescence of cultures for those people who are in the midst of the terminal phase of fruitful multiplicity: thus this coalescence, so rendered and articulated, will become their myth. In this manner, the full range of the spiritual movements of the last thousand years will not atrophy within them. One cannot speculate with much result about the future effects of such an effort. It is our task to create the possibility for such an effect; and only this much *can* be said, that for an age of transition such as ours the effect *could* be very significant. It may well be that this effect might also help to make us accept our fate with more equanimity so that we will not hate whoever opposes us—even when we are forced into a posture of antagonism. By token of this, our conception of *Weltliteratur* is no less human, no less humanistic, than its antecedent; the implicit comprehension of history—which underlies this conception of *Weltliteratur*—is not the same as the former one, yet it is a development of it and unthinkable without it.

II

It was noted above that we are fundamentally capable of performing the task of a philology of *Weltliteratur* because we command unlimited, steadily growing material, and be-

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cause of our historic perspectivist sense, which is our heritage from the historicism of Goethe's time. Yet no matter how hopeful the outlook seems for such a task, the practical difficulties are truly great. In order for someone to penetrate and then construct an adequate presentation of the material of *Weltliteratur* he must command that material—or at least a major part of it—himself. Because, however, of the superabundance of materials, of methods and of points of view, a mastery of that sort has become virtually impossible. We possess literatures ranging over six thousand years, from all parts of the world, in perhaps fifty literary languages. Many cultures known to us today were unknown a hundred years ago; many of the ones already known to us in the past were known only partially. As for those cultural epochs most familiar to scholars for hundreds of years, so much that is new has been found out about them that our conception of these epochs has been radically altered—and entirely new problems have arisen. In addition to all of these difficulties, there is the consideration that one cannot concern himself solely with the literature of a given period; one must study the conditions under which this literature developed; one must take into account religion, philosophy, politics, economics, fine arts and music; in every one of these disciplines there must be sustained, active and individual research. Hence more and more exact specialization follows; special methods evolve, so that in each of the individual fields—even within each special point of view on a given field—a kind of esoteric language is generated. This is not all. Foreign, nonphilological or scientific methods and concepts begin to be felt in philology: sociology, psychology, certain kinds of philosophy, and contemporary literary criticism figure prominently among these influences from the outside. Thus all these elements must be assimilated and ordered even if only to be able to demonstrate, in good conscience, the uselessness of one of them for philology. The scholar who does not consistently limit himself to a narrow field of specialization and to a world of concepts held in common

with a small circle of likeminded colleagues, lives in the midst of a tumult of impressions and claims on him: for the scholar to do justice to these is almost impossible. Still, it is becoming increasingly unsatisfactory to limit oneself to only one field of specialization. To be a Provençal specialist in our day and age, for example, and to command only the immediately relevant linguistic, paleological and historical facts, is hardly enough to be a good specialist. On the other hand, there are fields of specialization that have become so widely various that their mastery has become the task of a lifetime. Such fields are, for instance, the study of Dante (who can scarcely be called a "field of specialization" since doing him justice takes one practically everywhere), or the courtly romance, with its three related (and problematic) subtopics, courtly love, Celtic matter and Grail literature. How many scholars have really made one of these fields entirely their own? How can anyone go on to speak of a scholarly and synthesizing philology of *Weltliteratur*?

A few individuals today do have a commanding overview of the European material; so far as I know, however, they all belong to the generation that matured before the two World Wars. These scholars cannot be replaced very easily, for since their generation the academic study of Greek, Latin and the Bible—which was a mainstay of the late period of bourgeois humanistic culture—has collapsed nearly everywhere. If I may draw conclusions from my own experiences in Turkey, then it is easy to note corresponding changes in non-European, but equally ancient, cultures. Formerly, what could be taken for granted in the university (and, in the English-speaking countries, at the post-graduate level) must now be acquired there; most often such acquirements are either made too late or they are inadequate. Moreover, the intellectual center of gravity within the university or graduate school has shifted; there is a greater emphasis on the most modern literature and criticism, and, when earlier periods are favored with scholarly attention, they are usually periods like the baroque, which have been recently rediscovered,

perhaps because they lie within the scope of modern literary prejudices and catchalls. It is obviously from within the situation and mentality of our own time that the whole of history has to be comprehended if it is to have significance for us. But a talented student possesses and is possessed by the spirit of his own time anyway: it seems to me that he should not need academic instruction in order to appropriate the work of Rilke or Gide or Yeats. He does need instruction, however, to understand the verbal conventions and the forms of life of the ancient world, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and also to learn to know the methods and means for exploring earlier periods. The problematics and the ordering categories of contemporary literary criticism are always significant, not only because they often are ingenious and illuminating in themselves, but also because they express the inner will of their period. Nevertheless only a few of them have an immediate use in historicist philology or as substitutes for genuinely transmitted concepts. Most of them are too abstract and ambiguous, and frequently they have too private a slant. They confirm a temptation to which neophytes (and acolytes) are frequently inclined to submit: the desire to master a great mass of material through the introduction of hypostatized, abstract concepts of order; this leads to the effacement of what is being studied, to the discussion of illusory problems and finally to a bare nothing.

Though they appear to be disturbing, such scholarly tendencies do not strike me as being truly dangerous, at least not for the sincere and gifted student of literature. Furthermore, there are talented people who manage to acquire for themselves whatever is indispensable for historical and philological study, and who also manage to adopt the proper attitudes of openmindedness and independence toward modish intellectual currents. In many respects these young people have a distinct advantage over their predecessors. During the past forty years events have enlarged our intellectual perspectives, new outlooks on history and on reality have been revealed, and the view of the structure of inter-

human processes has been enriched and renewed. We have participated—indeed, we are still participating—in a practical seminar on world history; accordingly, our insight and our conceptual powers with regard to historical matters have developed considerably. Thus even many extraordinary works, which had previously seemed to us to be outstanding philological achievements of late bourgeois humanism now appear unrealistic and restricted in their posing of the problems they set themselves. Today we have it somewhat easier than forty years ago.

But how is the problem of synthesis to be solved? A single lifetime seems too short to create even the preliminaries. The organized work of a group is no answer, even if a group has high uses otherwise. The historical synthesis of which I am speaking, although it has significance only when it is based on a scholarly penetration of the material, is a product of personal intuition and hence can only be expected from an individual. Should it succeed perfectly we would be given a scholarly achievement and a work of art at the same time. Even the discovery of a point of departure [*Ansatzpunkt*][—]of which I shall speak later—is a matter of intuition: the performance of the synthesis is a form which must be unified and suggestive if it is to fulfill its potential. Surely the really noteworthy achievement of such a work is due to a coadunatory intuition; in order to achieve its effect historical synthesis must in addition appear to be a work of art. The traditional protestation, that literary art must possess the freedom to be itself—which means that it must not be bound to scientific truth—can scarcely be voiced: for as they present themselves today historical subjects offer the imagination quite enough freedom in the questions of choice, of the problems they seem to generate, of their combination with each other, and of their formulation. One can say in fact that scientific truth is a good restriction on the philologist; scientific truth preserves and guarantees the probable in the “real,” so that the great temptation to withdraw from reality (be it by trival glossing or by shadowy distortion)

is thereby foiled, for reality is the criterion of the probable. Besides, we are concerned with the need for a synthetic history-from-within, with history, that is, as the *genos* of the European tradition of literary art: the historiography of classical antiquity was a literary *genos*, for example, and similarly the philosophic and historicist criticism created by German Classicism and Romanticism strove for its own form of literary art and expression.

III

Thus we return to the individual. How is he to achieve synthesis? It seems to me that he certainly cannot do it by encyclopedic collecting. A wider perspective than mere fact gathering is an imperative condition, but it should be gained very early in the process, unintentionally, and with an instinctive personal interest for its only guidepost. Yet the experience of recent decades has shown us that the accumulation of material in one field, an accumulation that strives for the exhaustiveness of the great handbooks that treat a national literature, a great epoch or a literary *genos*, can hardly lead to synthesis and formulation. The difficulty lies not only in the copiousness of the material that is scarcely within the grasp of a single individual (so much so that a group project seems to be required), but also in the structure of the material itself. The traditional divisions of the material, chronological, geographical or typological, are no longer suitable and cannot guarantee any sort of energetic, unified advance. The fields covered by such divisions do not coincide with the problematic areas with which the synthesis is coping. It has even become a matter of some doubt to me whether monographs—and there are many excellent ones—on single, significant authors are suited to be points of departure for the kind of synthesis that I have been speaking about. Certainly a single author embodies as complete and concrete a unity of life as any, and this is always better than an invented unity; but at the same time such a unity is finally ungraspable because it has passed into

the ahistorical inviolability into which individuality always flows.

The most impressive recent book in which a synthesizing historical view is accomplished is Ernst Robert Curtius's book on European literature and the Latin Middle Ages. It seems to me that this book owes its success to the fact that despite its comprehensive, general title, it proceeds from a clearly prescribed, almost narrow, single phenomenon: the survival of the scholastic rhetorical tradition. Despite the monstrosity of the materials it mobilizes, in its best parts this book is not a mere agglomeration of many items, but a radiation outwards from a few items. Its general subject is the survival of the ancient world in the Latin Middle Ages, and the effect on the new European literature of the medieval forms taken by classical culture. When one has so general and comprehensive an intention one can at first do nothing. The author, who in the earliest stages of his project intends only the presentation of so broadly stated a theme, stands before an unsurveyable mass of various material that defies order. If it were to be collected mechanistically—for example, according to the survival of a set of individual writers, or according to the survival of the whole ancient world in the succession of one medieval century after another—the mere outlines of such a bulk would make a formulated intention towards this material impossible. Only by the discovery of a phenomenon at once firmly circumscribed, comprehensible and central enough to be a point of departure (in this case, the rhetorical tradition, and especially the *topoi*) was the execution of Curtius's plan made possible. Whether Curtius's choice for a point of departure was satisfactory, or whether it was the best of all possible choices for his intention, is not being debated; precisely because one might contend that Curtius's point of departure was inadequate one ought to admire the resulting achievement all the more. For Curtius's achievement is obligated to the following methodological principle: in order to accomplish a major work of synthesis it is imperative to

locate a point of departure [*Ansatzpunkt*], a handle, as it were, by which the subject can be seized. The point of departure must be the election of a firmly circumscribed, easily comprehensible set of phenomena whose interpretation is a radiation out from them and which orders and interprets a greater region than they themselves occupy.

This method has been known to scholars for a long time. The discipline of stylistics, for example, has long availed itself of the method in order to describe a style's individuality in terms of a few fixed characteristics. Yet it seems to me to be necessary to emphasize the method's general significance, which is that it is the only method that makes it possible for us now to write a history-from-within against a broader background, to write synthetically and suggestively. The method also makes it possible for a younger scholar, even a beginner, to accomplish that end; a comparatively modest general knowledge buttressed by advice can suffice once intuition has found an auspicious point of departure. In the elaboration of this point of departure, the intellectual perspective enlarges itself both sufficiently and naturally, since the choice of material to be drawn is determined by the point of departure. Elaboration therefore is so concrete, its component parts hang together with such necessity, that what is thereby gained cannot easily be lost: the result, in its ordered exposition, possesses unity and universality.

Of course in practice the general intention does not always precede the concrete point of departure. Sometimes one discovers a single point of departure [*Ansatzphänomen*] that releases the recognition and formulation of the general problem. Naturally, this can only occur when a predisposition for the problem already exists. It is essential to remark that a general, synthetic intention or problem does not suffice in and of itself. Rather, what needs to be found is a partially apprehendable phenomenon that is as circumscribed and concrete as possible, and therefore describable in technical, philological terms. Problems will therefore roll forth from it, so that a formulation of one's intention can

become feasible. At other times, a single point of departure will not be sufficient—several will be necessary; if the first one is present, however, others are more easily available, particularly as they must be of the kind that not only links itself to others, but also converges on a central intention. It is therefore a question of specialization—not a specializing of the traditional modes of classifying material—but of the subject at hand, which needs constant rediscovery.

Points of departure can be very various; to enumerate all the possibilities here is quite impracticable. The characteristic of a good point of departure is its concreteness and its precision on the one hand, and on the other, its potential for centrifugal radiation. A semantic interpretation, a rhetorical trope, a syntactic sequence, the interpretation of one sentence, or a set of remarks made at a given time and in a given place—any of these can be a point of departure, but once chosen it must have radiating power, so that with it we can deal with world history [*Weltgeschichte*]. If one were to investigate the position of the writer in the nineteenth century—in either one country or in the whole of Europe—the investigation would produce a useful reference book (if it contained all the necessary material for such a study) for which we would be very grateful. Such a book has its uses, but the synthesis of which we have been speaking would more likely be achieved if one were to proceed from a few remarks made by writers about the public. Similarly, such subjects as the enduring reputation (*la fortuna*) of various poets can only be studied if a concrete point of departure is found to coerce the general theme. Existing works on Dante's reputation in various countries are certainly indispensable: a still more interesting work would emerge (and I am indebted to Erwin Panofsky for this suggestion) were one to trace the interpretation of individual portions of the *Commedia* from its earliest commentators to the sixteenth century, and then again since Romanticism. *That* would be an accurate type of spiritual history [*Geistesgeschichte*].

A good point of departure must be exact and objective;

abstract categories of one sort or another will not serve. Thus concepts like "the Baroque" or "the Romantic," "the dramatic" or "the idea of fate," "intensity" or "myth," or "the concept of time" and "perspectivism" are dangerous. They can be used when their meaning is made clear in a specific context, but they are too ambiguous and inexact to be points of departure. For a point of departure should not be a generality imposed on a theme from the outside, but ought rather to be an organic inner part of the theme itself. What is being studied should speak for itself, but that can never happen if the point of departure is neither concrete nor clearly defined. In any event, a great deal of skill is necessary—even if one has the best point of departure possible—in order to keep oneself focused on the object of study. Ready-made, though rarely suitable, concepts whose appeal is deceptive because it is based on their attractive sound and their modishness, lie in wait, ready to spring in on the work of a scholar who has lost contact with the energy of the object of study. Thus the writer of a scholarly work is often tricked into accepting the substitution of a cliché for the true object; surely a great many readers can also be deceived. Since readers are all too prone to this sort of substitution, it is the scholar's job to make such evasions impossible. The phenomena treated by the philologist whose intention is synthesis contain their own objectivity, and this objectivity must not disappear in the synthesis: it is most difficult to achieve this aim. Certainly one ought not to aim at a complacent exultation in the particular, but rather at being moved and stirred by the movement of a whole. Yet the movement can be discovered in its purity only when all the particulars that make it up are grasped as essences.

So far as I know we possess no attempts at a philological synthesis of *Weltliteratur*; only a few preliminary efforts in this direction are to be found within western culture. But the more our earth grows closer together, the more must historicist synthesis balance the contraction by expanding its activity. To make men conscious of themselves in their

own history is a great task, yet the task is small—more like a renunciation—when one considers that man not only lives on earth, but that he is in the world and in the universe. But what earlier epochs dared to do—to designate man's place in the universe—now appears to be a very far-off objective.

In any event, our philological home is the earth: it can no longer be the nation. The most priceless and indispensable part of a philologist's heritage is still his own nation's culture and language. Only when he is first separated from this heritage, however, and then transcends it does it become truly effective. We must return, in admittedly altered circumstances, to the knowledge that prenatal medieval culture already possessed: the knowledge that the spirit [*Geist*] is not national. *Paupertas* and *terra aliena*: this or something to this effect, can be read in Bernard of Chartres, John of Salisbury, Jean de Meun and many others. *Magnum virtutis principium est*, Hugo of St. Victor writes (*Didascalicon* III, 20), *ut discat paulatim exercitatus animus visibilia haec et transitoria primum commutare, ut postmodum possit etiam derelinquere. Delicatus ille est adhuc cui patria dulcis est, fortis autem cui omne solum patria est, perfectus vero cui mundus totus exilium est. . . .* Hugo intended these lines for one whose aim is to free himself from a love of the world. But it is a good way also for one who wishes to earn a proper love for the world.