

World Travel Literature

Ethnography and the Rise and Fall of Comparative Practices

Walter Erhart

Abstract *This essay looks at world-travel reports in the 18th and 19th century as representations and enforcements of global comparisons. It argues that these comparisons helped to develop a global, albeit colonial frame of knowledge about the world, provided material and systematic accounts for the developing field of comparative sciences, and brought about historical change by coping with the growing, often irritating number of comparative practices and perspectives. The possibility of comparing the world's peoples, customs and morals established ethnography and anthropology as academic disciplines. As ethnographic comparisons multiplied and became manifold, and even contradictory and misleading, however, comparisons were ordered and reduced either by romantic projections or by classifying human beings and societies within narrow frames of prehistoric stages and "races". As the history of world-travel accounts demonstrates, these reductionist reworkings of comparative practices produced a modernity and an ethnology that tended to forget their ambiguous comparative origins*

For almost one hundred years, roughly between 1750 and 1850, world-travel reports were marked as a literary genre of their own. "It is always worthwhile to listen to every man who tells us about his journey around the world."¹ The German poet Christoph Martin Wieland opens his review of Georg Forster's famous report on James Cook's second journey around the world with this remark while adding that he "knows of no poem," no literary work given by "an epic or dramatic poet" that is able to give us "as much pleasure and affection" as such a travel report. Given that a world-travel report, in Wieland's view, unites all the qualities of fine literature—"the new and the magic, wonder and terror, the beautiful and the graceful"²—this genre, indeed, was a rising star on the book market. There were numerous—at least fifty and probably more—volumes of accounts of "journeys" and "voyages around the world" published from the 18th to the middle of the 19th century, written in English,

1 Christoph M. Wieland, Auszüge aus Jacob Forsters Reise um die Welt, in: *Sämtliche Werke* (1794–1811), Bd. VIX, Supplemente. Fünfter Band, Reprint Hamburg 1984, 175–246, see 179.

2 Wieland, Auszüge aus Jacob Forsters Reise um die Welt, 180–181.

French, German and Russian, with immediate translations and often several books and reports coming out of one journey.

Only a few famous examples, though, are still known today; for instance, several reports—Forster's included—on James Cook's three world travels, and Bougainville's classic early French account *Voyage autour du monde* (1771). Other works were produced by naturalists like the German poet and botanist Adelbert von Chamisso (*Reise um die Welt*, 1836) who were following Alexander von Humboldt's legacy of natural history recorded around the globe, and Charles Darwin, who sailed on board the *Beagle* in the 1830s, created his own scientific travel report in 1839 (*Narrative of the surveying voyages of His Majesty's Ships Adventure and Beagle between the years 1826 and 1836*), later popularized under the title *A Naturalist's Voyage round the World* (1860).

World travels were colonial enterprises undertaken by British, French and Russian expeditions. Their assignments and their claims consisted in enlarging empires, founding colonies and establishing trading zones, but the travels were also proposed as scientific endeavors. Many of these books were written by naturalists and, in fact, each expedition was accompanied by at least one naturalist who was commissioned to do research, gathering facts and all kinds of knowledge about the world, describing geography, plants, animals and "indigenous" people.³

Also—and most of all—journeys around the world were about comparisons. In botany as well as in viewing the world from economic or ethnographic perspectives, comparisons became the main practice when traveling and writing world-travel reports. James Cook's travels in the 1760s and 1770s had already witnessed a rise in comparative practices in an unprecedented way as authors moved constantly from recording local details to describing global measures:

Comparisons became more and more important to Cook's voyages [...]. More than just organizing data, the collection creates the possibility for a new discourse, not of discovery or identification, but of comparisons, and the scale of these comparisons is global.⁴

In the following, I will show how the comparative practices of world travels and world-travel literature underwent significant change in the course of the 19th century, in quantitative measures as well as in their qualitative dimensions. Moreover, since comparisons in these genres of traveling and writing played a decisive role in

3 Cf. Glyn Williams, *Naturalists at Sea. Scientific Travellers from Dompier to Darwin*, New Haven/London 2013.

4 Brian W. Richardson, *Longitude and Empire. How Captain Cook's Voyages Changed the World*, Vancouver/Toronto 2005, 152.

the development of anthropology and ethnology as subfields, practices of naturalists, and academic disciplines, comparisons not only changed but brought about historical change—through the emergence of sciences but also in the way Europe dealt with the growing knowledge on the world, its inhabitants, cultures, societies and manners beyond European frontiers. The growing body of different comparisons that will be studied in the first part of this paper became a problem and an engine of historical and epistemological change because the need to reduce and categorize comparisons—here and probably in other cases as well—led to new hierarchies, classes and points of comparisons (*tertia comparationis*) that could be productive and restrictive at the same time. European notions of anthropology, of humanity and universality, but also of racism and white superiority might all have their roots—albeit differently—in these processes of world-travel practices.

In the early 19th-century travels around the world practiced comparison on a large and global scale. Journeys around the world were established as an exclusive experimental field for the so-called comparative sciences that were founded and were flourishing in the same period.⁵ The travel reports combined descriptions of various phenomena treated in comparative anatomy, geography, natural history, botany and anthropology. Their form created a literary fusion of travel narrative and nature writing, providing empirical evidence and data for geography and natural history as well as anthropology.⁶

Charles Darwin was one of the last world travelers in relation to the scientific outcome of such journeys around the world, which were soon superseded by steam boats and tourism on the one hand, and by much more detailed scientific and specialized local research in different regions of the world on the other. At the end of his report, Darwin highlights comparison as the overall standard method:

In conclusion it appears to me that nothing can be more improving to a young naturalist, than a journey in distant countries. [...] The excitement from the novelty of objects, and the chance of success, stimulate him to increased activity. Moreover, as a number of isolated facts soon become uninteresting, the habit of comparison leads to generalization.⁷

5 Cf. Michael Eggert, *Vergleichendes Erkennen. Zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte und Epistemologie des Vergleichs und zur Genealogie der Komparatistik*, Heidelberg 2016.

6 Cf. Walter Erhart, "When comparing, and seeing others compare". Irritationen des Vergleichens in der Weltreiseliteratur von Humboldt bis Darwin, in: *Euphorion* 114 (2020), 427–458.

7 Charles Darwin, Narrative of the surveying voyages of His Majesty's Ships Adventure and Beagle between the years 1826 and 1836, describing their examination of the southern shores of South America, and the Beagle's circumnavigation of the globe. Journal and remarks. 1832–1836, London 1839, 607–608.

With the term “comparison” Darwin summed up the work of his scientific forefathers and fellow travelers. With “generalization” and his travel’s outcome, though, he followed a different path. Darwin, in many respects, was the last and the first of his kind: still being a “gentleman traveler” and an all-compassing naturalist on the one hand, an ongoing scientist and biologist on the other. Whereas his report is clearly modeled after the established genre, tracing the same route around the world, gathering observations and adventures of all kinds, and even mixing literary styles, the outcome was quite different. He drew his revolutionary scientific conclusions—much later—on the basis of a few pieces of evidence on his global travel route and he practiced the “habit of comparison” in a very specialized field. By comparing and studying animals, he observed that the old zoological order of classifications—species, genus—was not sufficient to explain varieties. In retrospect, in his work on *The Origin of Species*, he described comparisons as the early key to his theory of evolution.

Many years ago, when comparing, and seeing others compare, the birds from the separate islands of the Galapagos Archipelago, both with one another, and with those from the American mainland, I was much struck how entirely vague and arbitrary is the distinction between species and varieties.⁸

As a scientist in the making, Darwin was the first and probably the only world traveler who later became a specialized world-famous biologist and theoretician. Traveling to the South American coastline and to the Galapagos islands, however, would have been enough for that. With Darwin, and during the course of the 19th century, world traveling as a scientific enterprise completely disappeared—partly due to the emergence of new sciences that superseded the all-compassing role of the “naturalist”: specialized disciplines such as geography, biology, philology, and ethnology. Speaking with Darwin, “generalization” led the way to scientific specialization and to an academic discipline by turning comparison into a clear-cut method for discerning similarities and differences among species and specimens.

While comparisons may have gained their reputation as neutral scientific tools and methods, comparative practices have always been far from innocent instruments. They are not only one-sided and highly normative,⁹ but also situated within

8 Charles Darwin, *On the origin of species by means of natural selection, or the preservation of favoured races in the struggle for life*, London 1859, 48.

9 Cf. Hartmut von Sass, *Vergleiche(n)*. Ein hermeneutischer Rund- und Sinkflug, in: Andreas Mauz/Hartmut von Sass (eds.): *Hermeneutik des Vergleichs. Strukturen, Anwendungen und Grenzen komparativer Verfahren*, Würzburg 2011, 25–47; Angelika Epple/Walter Erhart (eds.), *Die Welt beobachten. Praktiken des Vergleichens*, Frankfurt am Main 2015; Bettina Heintz, “Wir leben im Zeitalter der Vergleichung.” Perspektiven einer Soziologie des Vergleichs, in: *Zeitschrift für Soziologie* 45 (2016), 305–323.

socially and historically changing situations.¹⁰ Instead of forming the scientific basis of world travel's naturalists—by bolstering the success story of scientific progress through refined methods of discoveries and research, for example—comparisons have always been part of colonial enterprises and power relations. They disclose hierarchies, tensions and failures by coming to terms with the known and the unknown, especially with regard to those phenomena that constituted the fame and popularity of world travel reports: the encounters with “indigenous” people. Early comparative anthropology, therefore, might be a case in point: it reveals the changing features of comparisons and the role of supposedly innocent and neutral practices while dealing with alterity and otherness.

When the American author Tony Horwitz set out to repeat James Cook's travels and followed his path around the modern world, he observed Cook's double image and legacy in accordance with the once heroic age of discovery on the one side, and the postcolonial critique of Western imperialism on the other. Horwitz felt at unease vis-à-vis “the pendulum swing of historical memory” and reminded the reader of the ambivalence of the historical encounter itself: “Cook [...] wasn't the wicked imperialist [...]. Nor was he the godlike figure [...]. In remembering the man, the world has lost the balance and nuance I so admired in Cook's own writing about those he encountered.”¹¹

Research on ethnographical world-travel literature in the last century almost followed the two steps observed by Horwitz¹². A once much-praised “age of discovery” was replaced by a harsh postcolonial critique of the “fatal impact”¹³ of Western imperialism and colonialism all around the world, thus tracing the way the “new world”, its nature and its inhabitants were made historyless and permanently overwritten and created by Europeans' “imperial eyes.”¹⁴ After this “pendulum swing of historical memory” (Horwitz) had occurred, soon glimpses of a “mutual discovery”¹⁵ between European and “indigenous” people came into view: multiple

10 Cf. Renaud Gagné/Simon Goldhill/Geoffrey E. R. Lloyd (eds.), *Regimes of Comparatism. Frameworks of Comparison in History, Religion and Anthropology*, Leiden/Boston 2018.

11 Tony Horwitz, *Into the Blue. Boldly Going Where Captain Cook Has Gone Before*, London 2002, 296.

12 Cf. Walter Erhart, *Weltreisen, Weltwissen, Weltvergleich – Perspektiven der Forschung*, in: *Internationales Archiv für Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur* 42 (2017), 292–321.

13 Alan Moorhead, *The Fatal Impact. An Account of the Invasion of the South Pacific 1767–1840*, New York 1966.

14 Cf. Paul Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay. An Exploration of Landscape and History*, Minnesota 1987; Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes. Travel Writing and Transculturation*, London/New York 1992; For a broad history of the historical process cf. Wolfgang Reinhard, *Die Unterwerfung der Welt. Globalgeschichte der europäischen Expansion 1415–2015*, München 2016.

15 Lynne Withey, *Voyages of Discovery. Captain Cook and the Exploration of the Pacific*, New York 1987, 11.

entanglements and negotiations,¹⁶ a “science in action”¹⁷ that circulated between peoples and cultures differently in different regions of the world. While looking closely at the actions, situations and practices taking place in different ethnographical accounts and encounters, densely intertwined relations, unexpected counteractions, various Western failures, and indigenous strategies came into view, thus “breaking up us/them oppositions”¹⁸—an approach that has continued to guide ethnographic studies for a long time. Even a single journey cannot be put into clear-cut categories of colonial appropriation and neatly-placed dichotomies and oppositions. Diverse sources and different perspectives within the multitude of log books, field notes, diaries and travel reports reveal contradictions and setbacks in the interior space of colonial enterprises, for example “indigenous” codes and practices that were bound to irritate and disturb the European travelers.¹⁹ Europeans’ views and attitudes, and even their subjectivities and identities, were both strengthened and weakened at the same. While some officers and naturalists may have been eager to establish rule and order on the appropriated territories, other members of the expedition may have suddenly felt closeness to and solidarity with their non-European alien companions—as plainly discovered and studied, for example, on behalf of the Russian world travel expedition led by Adam von Krusenstern from 1803 to 1806.²⁰

A post-postcolonial view of world-travel literature may follow a path that shatters certainties and routines on both sides of affirmation and critique, provincializing Europe²¹ and dissolving the monolithic forces of the universal European impact at the same time.²² Interesting enough, the views regarding comparisons have developed in a similar vein. After the undoubted preference for comparison as an “objective” scientific Western method its practice was challenged by a postcolonial

16 Cf. Nicholas Thomas, *Entangled Objects. Exchange, Material Culture, and Colonialism in the Pacific*, Cambridge/London 1991.

17 Bruno Latour, *Science in action. How to follow scientists and engineers through society*, Cambridge 1987, esp. 215–257.

18 Thomas, *Entangled Objects. Exchange, Material Culture, and Colonialism in the Pacific*, 5.

19 Cf. Neil Hegarty, *Unruly Subjects. Sexuality, Science and Discipline in Eighteenth-Century Pacific Explorations*, in: Margrett Lincoln (ed.), *Science and Exploration in the Pacific. European Voyages to the Southern Oceans in the Eighteenth century*, Woodbridge 1998, 183–197; For the importance of different written accounts cf. Philippe Despoix, *Die Welt vermessen. Dispositive der Entdeckungsreise im Zeitalter der Aufklärung*, Göttingen 2007.

20 Cf. the fascinating close account by Elena Govor, *Twelve Days at Nuku Hiva. Russian Encounters and Mutiny in the South Pacific*, Honolulu 2010.

21 Cf. Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe. Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, Princeton/Oxford 2000.

22 With regard to the German example: Russell A. Berman, *Enlightenment or Empire. Colonial Discourse in German Culture*, Lincoln/London 1998; Glenn H. Penny, *Im Schatten Humboldts. Eine tragische Geschichte der deutschen Ethnologie*, München 2019.

critique of its normative implications especially within ethnographic and geopolitical contexts. The question “why compare?” unsettled the belief in a procedure that promised to gain simple knowledge about two objects by discerning their similarities and differences. The “neutral” practice of comparison was dismantled as a practice in which the comparing actors not only choose and evaluate the *comparata* but also determine the point of comparison, the *tertium comparationis* while failing to realize that those who compare always determine the start, the direction and the purpose of the comparative practice. By starting and directing the line of questioning they always draw the “other” and the “unknown” into the sphere of the “known,” thus reaffirming the power and the judgments of those who compare.²³

The unease with comparison, however, did not end with its denial. The question “why not compare?”²⁴ drew its evidence and importance not only out of the fact that comparing is unavoidable but that comparing itself needs an elucidation of why and how it is deployed and put to work in the first place. A “reflexive comparison”²⁵ might be one that is cautious and suspicious: dealing with different *tertia comparationis*, always reconceiving the known in terms of the unknown, suspending pre-established categories, turning from the objects of observations to the actors and means of comparison.²⁶

Studying comparative practices in world-travel literature gives an important insight into the way Europe dealt with global encounters at an early stage of transnational and intercultural exchanges. Instead of being a neutral instrument, comparison reveals how Europe came into being as a global reference and a global power structure; a look at comparative practices in relation to groups, cultures, nations and civilizations may also show how comparison itself is enacted and transformed, how comparative practices are desired and feared, supported and denied—up to the current digital age when metric comparison has reached unprecedented and unimagined heights.²⁷ Reports of imperial and scientific travels around the world in the 19th century not only proliferated global comparisons, they also illuminated the changes and risks in comparing: how it has been turned into a universal practice that was discovered, imitated and multiplied by Europeans, but also how it became an instrument whose power spread out and was called into question at the same time.

23 Rajagopalan Radhakrishnan, ‘Why Compare’, in: Rita Felski/Susan Stanford Friedman (eds.), *Comparison. Theories, Approaches, Uses*, Baltimore 2013, 15–33.

24 Susan Stanford Friedman, ‘Why not Compare?’, in: Rita Felski/Susan Stanford Friedman (eds.), *Comparison. Theories, Approaches, Uses*, Baltimore 2013, 34–45.

25 Haun Saussy, *Are We Comparing Yet? On Standards, Justice, and Incomparability*, Bielefeld 2019, 22–23.

26 Cf. Angelika Eppler/Walter Erhart/Johannes Grave (eds.), *Practices of Comparing. A New Research Agenda between typological and historical Approaches*, Bielefeld 2020.

27 Cf. for example the argument in Shoshana Zuboff, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism. The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power*, London 2019, 461–465.

For Wilhelm von Humboldt, comparison clearly marked the key to anthropology in all its aspects. In his essay “Plan for a Comparative Anthropology” (1797) he relates “the species-specific character of human beings” to “humans’ individual differences” in a programmatic way. It is comparative anthropology where “the characteristics of the moral character of the various human categories can be placed next to one another and evaluated comparatively,” and besides historians and biographers, mostly “travel writers, poets, and authors of all kinds [...] collect data pertinent to this science.”²⁸ World travels not only provided the global frame for this kind of practice (as von Humboldt’s brother Alexander never tires of asserting and demonstrating in his own reports on his almost world-wide travels²⁹); they also constituted laboratories for comparative sciences, including with regard to anthropology and its encompassing studies on civilizations, the course of history and the rules of social and moral behavior. The English translator of a French report on a journey round the world led by Jean d’Entrecasteaux in the years from 1791 to 1794 saw the genre of travel reports as a constitutive part of moral philosophy and social theory:

The Moral Philosopher, [...] who loves to trace the advances of his species through its various gradations from savage to civilized life, draws from voyages and travels, the facts from which he is to deduce his conclusions respecting the social, intellectual, and moral progress of Man.³⁰

Over the course of world-travel history, from the early expeditions of Louis-Antoine de Bougainville and James Cook up to the almost routinized travels in the 19th century, there were several stages of comparing while “discovering”, encountering and describing “indigenous” people, mostly of the southern seas, Polynesia and Australia, and including the Inuit in the North. First, the new foreign worlds were compared almost exclusively with regard to European examples, norms and standards; Georg Forster’s *Travel around the World* is the classic example. In morals, manners and aesthetics, Europe was almost always the *comparatum* and the *tertium comparationis* at the same time. Already in François Lafitau’s *Mœurs des sauvages américains, comparées aux mœurs des premiers temps* (1724) the people of the American “New World” were compared with figures and constellations of Greek and Roman antiquity. Louis-Antoine de Bougainville, in his *Voyage autour du monde*

28 Wilhelm von Humboldt, Plan einer vergleichenden Anthropologie, in: *Werke in fünf Bänden. Bd. 1. Schriften zur Anthropologie und Geschichte*, Darmstadt 1960, 337–375, see 337.

29 Christine Peters, *Die Weltreiseberichte von Humboldt, Krusenstern und Langsdorff. Praktiken des Vergleichens und Formen von Weltwissen*, Berlin/New York 2022.

30 [Anonymus], Translator’s Preface, in: Jacques Julien Houtou de la Billardièrre, *Voyage in Search of La Pérouse [...] during the Years 1791, 1792, 1793, and 1794*, London 1800, vol. I, v–xii, v.

(1771), called Tahiti the “Nouvelle-Cythère,”³¹ Georg Forster praised it as “*Calypso's* magic island.”³² Forster compared Tahitian women to “nymphs”³³ and “*Amphibia*”³⁴ while putting the strength and diligence of Polynesian sailors in relation to ancient mythological heroes.³⁵ In the early 1790s, George Vancouver mentioned the apparition and the character of landscapes mostly when they could be compared with their European counterparts: “On landing on the west end of the supposed island [...], our attention was immediately called to a landscape, almost as enchantingly beautiful as the most elegantly finished pleasure grounds in Europe.”³⁶ Likewise, the peculiarity of “indigenous” people on the American Pacific coast in Vancouver's report is almost exclusively seen with regard to European standards: “A pleasing and courteous deportment distinguished these people. Their countenances indicated nothing ferocious, their feature partook rather of the general European character; their color a light olive [...].”³⁷

The second stage of comparing included the comparison of different travel reports prior to the journey that actually took place. After 1800, the growing number of travel reports slowly became the reference of the traveler's own experiences. Heinrich Langsdorff, a naturalist on board the first Russian journey around the world led by Captain Adam von Krusenstern, reassures his readers that there was no boredom among the crew although they traveled the seas for months between landfalls. Indeed, there was an “exquisite copious library” on board; while heading for Teneriffa, for example, “comparisons between the different travelogues” were made.³⁸

The third stage of comparing involved comparisons among the objects found in the New World. Whereas in the natural sciences, botany being an exemplary case, there was an established classification system that registered and organized the empirical diversity,³⁹ in anthropology, the ethnographic observations were empirical

31 Louis-Antoine de Bougainville, *Voyage autour du monde par la frégate la boudeuse et la flute l'Etoile* [1771], Paris 1981, 146.

32 Georg Forster, *Reise um die Welt*, Frankfurt am Main 1983, 548.

33 Forster, *Reise um die Welt*, 251.

34 Forster, *Reise um die Welt*, 400.

35 Forster, *Reise um die Welt*, 593–596; Cf. Robert Leucht, Griechische Wilde. Vergleiche zwischen Antike und Neuer Welt, 1752–1821 (Lafitau, Böttiger, Winckelmann, Bougainville, Forster, Chamisso), in: *Euphorion* 109 (2015), 375–399.

36 George Vancouver, *A voyage of discovery to the North Pacific Ocean and round the world, 1791–1795. With an introduction and appendices*, ed. by William Kaye, 4 vols., vol. 2, London 1984, 513.

37 Vancouver, *A voyage of discovery to the North Pacific Ocean and round the world*, vol. 2, 412.

38 Georg H. von Langsdorff, *Bemerkungen auf einer Reise um die Welt in den Jahren 1803 bis 1807*, Bd. 1, Frankfurt am Main 1812, 6–7.

39 Patricia Fara, *Sex, Botany, and Empire. The Story of Carl Linnaeus and Joseph Banks*, New York 2004.

and provisional right from the start. The “state of nature” as compared to civilization was a more theoretical and philosophical concept, almost a rigid set of expectations that was to meet reality in the first place. In the course of a few decades, though, the concept of a uniform “state of nature” gave way to a multitude of “indigenous” societies that even made it difficult to hold on to one “mankind” to be classified. The numerous world-travel documents of James Cook, George Vancouver and Charles Darwin, Bougainville and Jean de La Perouse, Joseph-Antoine-Raymond Bruny d’Entrecasteaux and Jules-Sébastien-César Dumont d’Urville, Adam von Krusenstern and Adelbert von Chamisso, Heinrich Langsdorff and Otto von Kotzebue⁴⁰ did not produce a coherent picture of the “natural state” or a natural and cultural history into which every encountered people or culture fit nicely. Instead of the discernible unity of mankind an unexpected multitude of forms of living was to be discovered.⁴¹ These varieties and peculiarities first of all triggered the need to develop studies of “indigenous” peoples and—in the long run—ethnography and anthropology as scientific fields of their own. As early as 1800, the anonymous translator of d’Entrecasteaux’s travel report states in the preface what, for a world traveling naturalist, might be the outcome of empirical ethnographic discoveries:

He sees savage life every where diversified with a variety, which, if he reasons fairly, must lead him to conclude, that what is called the state of nature, is, in truth, the state of a rational being placed in various physical circumstances, which have contracted or expanded his faculties in various degrees [...] ⁴²

While producing a large number of differences, relations, contingent circumstances and influences, the European civilization itself turned out to be a quite relative point of reference. If he had space to elaborate on that in his preface, the translator continued, he would be able to demonstrate, “that the boasted refinement of Europe entirely depends on a few happy discoveries.” If Europe were to lack iron, for example, some nations would soon return to those state of natures they inhabited at their very beginnings: “the privation of iron alone, would soon reduce them nearly

40 For the variety and history of those travels around the world cf. John Dunmore, *French Explorers in the Pacific. I: The Eighteenth Century. II: The Nineteenth Century*, Oxford 1965; Andreas Daum, German Naturalists in the Pacific around 1800. Entanglement, Autonomy, and a transnational Culture, in: Hartmut Berghoff/Frank Bies/Ulrike Strasser (eds.), *Explorations and Entanglements. Germans in Pacific Worlds from the Early Modern Period to World War I*, New York/Oxford 2019, 79–102; Walter Erhart, Weltreisen. Zur Geschichte einer ethnographischen Gattung, in: Jonas Nesselhauf/Urte Stobbe (eds.), *Mensch & Mitwelt. Herausforderungen für die Literatur- und Kulturwissenschaften*, Hannover 2022, 149–170.

41 Cf. Harry Liebersohn, *The Travelers’ World. Europe to the Pacific*, Cambridge 2006, 298–306.

42 [Anonymus], Translator’s Preface, vi.

to the barbarous state, from which, by a train of favorable events, their forefathers emerged some centuries ago."⁴³

In this perspective, peoples on distant continents might still achieve an "advanced" civilization while Europe, someday, could fall back to a post-historical state of culture, where travelers and scholars from Oceania and Australia would go to as tourists and archeologists:

If so, the period may arrive, when New Zealand may produce her Lockes, her Newtons, and her Montesquieus; and when great nations in the immens region of New Holland, may send their navigators, philosophers, and antiquarians, to contemplate the ruins of *ancient* London and Paris, and to trace the languid remains of the arts and sciences in this quarter of the globe.⁴⁴

In his moral and philosophical tone, the English translator clearly built on the enlightened philosophy of Adam Ferguson in "An Essay on the History of Civil Society" (1767). His arguments and imaginations, however, may also have been drawn from the following travel report itself. Its author, the French naturalist La Billardiére, often expresses his surprise while encountering Polynesian and Malaysian citizens. His expectations are disturbed by discovering different and incompatible states of nature. He is irritated, for example, by discrepancies between "indigenous" people living side by side on separate islands: "It was surprising to meet with so great a difference in the manners of savages, so little removed from each other, and who practiced the same arts."⁴⁵

As it turned out, there was no pure "state of nature." In fact, the same development and cultural status ("the same arts") produced different, sometimes opposing effects concerning morals and manners. Therefore, knowledge about "indigenous" people was often not verified in the first place but empirically challenged—by complex situations and sometimes quite contradictory encounters.⁴⁶ Journeys around the world produced the global frames of comparative sciences, but by way of experience and heterogeneity, the established points and aspects of comparison slowly lost their importance and applicability. What seemed to fit globally within the natural sciences, comparing everything with everything in geology and botany (with

43 [Anonymus], Translator's Preface, vii.

44 [Anonymus], Translator's Preface, viiif.

45 De la Billardiére, *Voyage in Search of La Pérouse [...] during the Years 1791, 1792, 1793, and 1794*, vol. 1, 309.

46 Cf. Brownen Douglas, In the Event. Indigenous Countersigns and the Ethnohistory of Voyaging, in: Margaret Jolly/Serge Tcherkézoff/Darrel Tryon (eds.), *Oceanic Encounters. Exchange, Desire, Violence*, Canberra 2009, 175–197.

Alexander von Humboldt as the much-praised forerunner)⁴⁷, proved to be quite dis-torting in ethnography. The more global observations and encounters became, the more diverse, multilayered, almost inscrutable, humankind seemed to present itself as being. While the German poet and botanist Adelbert von Chamisso—writing about his world travels that took place in the years from 1815 to 1818—draws exclusively and professionally on the comparative method in classifying plants and animals, especially in his first “naturalist” and official travel report *Bemerkungen und Ansichten* (1821),⁴⁸ he is quite reluctant in comparing and measuring “indigenous” people. In his reconstructive and much later-written *Reise um die Welt. Ein Tagebuch* (1836), he even warns about the one-sidedness of European judgments.⁴⁹

As a result of the growing literature and the increasing number of foreign-travel experiences around 1800, world-travel literature almost seemed to have been disturbed by the varieties, possibilities and contradictions of ethnographic comparisons. One should not overrate the influence of 18th-century literature about American “indigenous” people as a direct source of Europeans’ unease with their own civilization—as David Graeber and David Wengrow have done recently in their impressive work *The Dawn of Everything. A New history of Humanity*.⁵⁰ Their argument that the philosophy of history and the entire idea of Western progress were born out of the unsettling information about egalitarian “free” societies overseas may rely too heavily and exclusively on just a few sources; their insistence on the power of information and reports about a global variety of different societies and manners, however, clearly marks a point in the dynamic of ethnographic comparative practices on a large scale. As fast as the Western subject may have been called into question by countless confrontations with human beings in the South Pacific,⁵¹ the sheer quantity of divergent ethnographic material was destined to disturb and shatter the mighty *tertia comparationis* that used to be in place to evaluate and categorize

47 Cf. Oliver Lubrich, Alexander von Humboldts globale Komparatistiki, in: *Internationales Archiv für Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur* 45 (2020), 231–245; Christine Peters, Historical Narrative versus Comparative Description? Genre and Knowledge in Alexander von Humboldt’s *Personal Narrative*, in: Martin Carrier/Rebecca Martens/Carsten Reinhardt (eds.), *Narratives and Comparisons. Adversaries or Allies in Understanding Science?*, Bielefeld 2021, 63–84.

48 The report is published as the naturalist’s third volume of the official travel report edited by the captain, Otto von Kotzebue, *Entdeckungs-Reise in die Südsee und der Berings-Straße zur Erforschung einer nördöstlichen Durchfahrt unternommen in den Jahren 1815, 1816, 1817 und 1818, auf Kosten Sr. Erlaucht des Herrn Reichs-Kanzlers Rumanzoff auf dem Schiffe Rurick unter dem Befehle des Lieutenants der Russisch-Kaiserlichen Marine Otto von Koetzebue*, Weimar 1821.

49 Cf. Walter Erhart, “Beobachtung und Erfahrung, Sammeln und Vergleichen” – Adelbert von Chamisso und die Poetik der Weltreise im 18. Und 19. Jahrhundert, in: Angelika Epple/Walter Erhart (eds.), *Die Welt beobachten. Praktiken des Vergleichens*, Frankfurt am Main 2015, 203–233.

50 Cf. David Graeber/David Wengrow, *The Dawn of Everything. A New history of Humanity*, London 2021, 27–77.

51 Jonathan Lamb, *Preserving the Self in the South Seas 1680–1840*, Chicago/London 2001.

ethnographic information. On their travels, in the reports of naturalists, officers and sailors as well as in diaries, logbooks and letters, one can almost sense the efforts involved in coming to terms with the contradiction of pre-established notions on the one hand, and the experiences of real-life encounters on the other.

Adam von Krusenstern, for example, while landing on the Marquesas islands in 1804, did not expect to meet quite “civilized” people and seemed quite astonished by their friendly behavior and their neat settlements. Beforehand, he had read about anthropophagous cultures on exactly these islands where now he encountered no brute or “savage” behavior. More than that, two Europeans who had lived on the island for a few years, a French and an English man, provided more information about the islands – each in his own way, and obviously contradicting themselves. As those “beachcombers”⁵² turned out to be unreliable narrators (the Europeans had to choose whom to believe, and the reports of the captain Krusenstern and the naturalist Langsdorff differ in that respect), as different groups and “classes” of the expedition were offended and attracted by the islanders in quite different ways,⁵³ Krusenstern himself did not trust in what he was seeing, therefore turned—despite all appearances—back to his pre-established European notion and quite bookish information. He tells his readers foremost that he had almost been “tempted” and “misled” (“verleitet”) by the beautiful shape of the islanders’ male bodies (which reminded him of Greek statues) to conclude on the beautiful inner form of their soul.⁵⁴ He concedes at one point that he had to “scare away” his “pleasant emotions” when confronted with the charming villages by reminding himself that he was in the houses of cannibals.⁵⁵ There is almost magic and wonder attached to appearances and experiences, otherwise they could not display their illusionary and treacherous character. Heinrich Langsdorff, the expedition’s naturalist, even speculates that the islanders’ “charming and complacent traits” pointing to their “good nature” (“Gutmüthigkeit”) would have kept the visitors in an almost maniac

52 Regarding the role of these “beachcombers” in the history of ethnographic travels cf. Greg Denning, *Beach Crossings. Voyaging across Times, Cultures, and Self*, Philadelphia 2004.

53 Elena Govor, *Twelve Days at Nuku Hiva. Russian Encounters and Mutiny in the South Pacific*, Honolulu 2010.

54 Adam Johann von Krusenstern, *Reise um die Welt in den Jahren 1803, 1804, 1805 und 1806 auf Befehl seiner Kaiserl. Majestät Alexanders des Ersten auf den Schiffen Nadeshda und Newa unter dem Commando des Capitäns von der Kaiserl. Marine*, Berlin 1810–1812, Bd. 1, 168: “[...] wenn man aber weiß, welcher Abscheulichkeiten diese schönen Menschen fähig sind, so verschwindet das gute Vorurtheil von ihrem Menschenwerthe, zu welchem man so leicht durch die schöne Form des Körpers verleitet wird [...].”

55 Krusenstern, *Reise um die Welt*, 139: “Diese reizenden Anlagen trugen viel dazu bey, jene unangenehmen Empfindungen auf einige Augenblicke zu verscheuchen, die der Gedanke bey uns erregen mußte, daß wir uns in den Wohnungen von Cannibalen befänden, welche an den größten Lastern kleben, und die unnatürlichsten Verbrechen begehen [...]”

“delusion” (“Wahn”) that they were meeting a “friendly, courteous and good people.”⁵⁶ More than Langsdorff, who later took great pains to explain, understand and defend anthropophagous rituals in great length, Krusenstern immediately flew from his own experiences while holding on to his prejudgements. Here, the unease with contradictions and divergent information clearly led to the strengthening of certainties and pre-established beliefs. Exactly those points of comparison became stronger that shielded the comparing actor from being thrown into the multitude of *comparata*. Fixing and returning to a pre-established *tertium comparationis* in turn helped to get things in order. Instead of questioning the “known”, Krusenstern almost closed his eyes and hooked on to theoretical certainties of a European *tertium*, thereby domesticating and reducing the “unknown” that had started to bother the European consciousness.

The same was happening when Adelbert von Chamisso was visiting the Ralik and Ratak chain islands (later called Marshall Islands) in 1817, albeit in an opposite way. Chamisso was overwhelmed by peaceful, friendly, and cooperative islanders, and for him, they were an example of how unfitting the term “savages” in general was, and how their demeanour might be used to critique and shame the so-called civilizations in the West. As strong and experience-driven his notion of the “noble savage” seemed to be, he was unwilling—like Krusenstern—to give it up when he was confronted with other facts with which to compare it. When the European visitors learned about warlike conflicts and violence between different island people, Chamisso was—and remained—tight-lipped and uncomfortable, affected by this inconvenient information. In his original diary he mentions the fact quickly by pointing to his “reluctance” to take back his “premature judgement.”⁵⁷ In his later writings he almost tried to conceal the unpleasant interference.⁵⁸

For Krusenstern and Chamisso, both on quite opposite sides of a “political” ethnographic spectrum, more comparisons did not get closer to the truth. Quite on the contrary: instead of accepting and inviting more *comparata*, the travelers were quick to fix their *tertium comparationis*. Instead of using their own background as

56 Georg H. von Langsdorff, *Bemerkungen auf einer Reise um die Welt in den Jahren 1803 bis 1807*, Bd. 1, Frankfurt am Main 1812, 94: “Die meisten haben so einnehmende und gefällige Züge, daß wir darin und in ihrem Umgang die Gutmüthigkeit mit den lebhaftesten Zügen zu bemerken glaubten, und wir sie, so wie Cook und Forster, mit dem Wahn ein freundschaftliches, zuvorkommendes und gutes Volk gefunden zu haben, verlassen haben würden.”

57 The original diaries were published recently, cf. Adelbert von Chamisso, *Die Tagebücher der Weltreise 1815–1818*, ed. by Monika Sproll/Walter Erhart/Matthias Glaubrecht, 2 Teile, Göttingen 2023, Teil 1: Text, 228f. (Bl. 37v, 38r): “[...] hier herrscht also Krieg und ambitionen Kriege wie Überall, und wir mußten mit Unlust unsern ersten voreiligen Urtheil zurücke nehmen.”

58 Cf. Walter Erhart, Chamisso's Ethnographie, in: Adelbert von Chamisso, *Die Tagebücher der Weltreise 1815–1818*, ed. by Monika Sproll/Walter Erhart/Matthias Glaubrecht. 2 Teile, Göttingen 2023, Teil 2: Kommentar, 41–59, see 52–53.

one of many *comparata*, they were eager to elaborate on their own solid and immovable background from which they decided to see the world. In the midst of their travels, Krusenstern and Chamisso turned away from their irritating experiences by holding on to cultural concepts that even increased their “scientific” power and popularity in the course of the 19th century: on the one hand the conviction of European colonialists, travelers, philosophers and writers that they were the avant-garde and the masters of history and progress, on the other hand the romantic view of a once-prehistoric harmony and unity of mankind before colonialism and modernity. While Krusenstern almost built a wall around the pre-established notion of the advancement of his own culture (“in a word, they are all cannibals”),⁵⁹ Chamisso was seeking glimpses of an unrestrained, single humanity by building bridges between a “primitive” past and a seemingly advanced civilization (“It is everywhere like us”).⁶⁰

While studying these and other, often opposing reports about ethnographic encounters you can almost sense how reassuring it was to view the various “indigenous” human beings in a prehistoric perspective—living either in a “wild” and “savage” preliminary stage or in a lost paradise, an antidote to our over-artificial civilization. Both are the requisites of the evolutionist theories of 19th-century ethnographic research, two sides of the same Eurocentric coin, because the point of comparison clearly remained fixed on a European perspective, either in an imperialist racist or in a romantic manner: a close reading of some of these travel reports reveals how travelers in general almost avoided seeing their encounters as just contemporary experiences. In pushing back the contemporary as such, a new perspective, a new *tertium comparationis*, was enforced and put in place: the prehistoric and the concept of stadial change.⁶¹ Indigenous life was read as a text that had once been written, and in this respect, ethnography became a part, a follow-up, even a branch of philology. That is why a lot of these global-travel reports are interested in languages documented in a variety of comparative studies on oral languages. Ethnography became a way of reading history, thereby turning human beings into historical objects—objects of historical scholarship. By restricting and reducing comparisons, a new regime of comparative practices took shape: *comparata* were put into temporal categories of advancement, latecoming and unescapable backwardness; wavering and unreadable points of comparisons were cut back to strong, undoubted and pre-fixed *tertia comparationis*.

Obviously, ethnographic world-travel reports between 1750 and 1850 multiplied the *comparata* and the possibilities of comparative practices. At the same time, how-

59 Krusenstern, *Reise um die Welt*, 200: “Mit einem Wort, sie sind alle Cannibalen.”

60 Adelbert von Chamisso, *Sämtliche Werke*, Bd. 2, München 1975, 408: “Es ist überall wie bei uns.”

61 Cf. Fritz Kramer, *Schriften zur Ethnologie*, Frankfurt am Main 2005, 27–28.

ever, like in the comparative natural sciences at the same time,⁶² multiple comparisons generated the need for reduction, categorization and generalization. Therefore, while the irritations grew, the idea of world history, of prehistoric history and progress were strengthened and reaffirmed. Another consequence of doing away the irritations of comparing while traveling the world was the desire to categorize the multiplicity of indigenous forms of life. When the French Jules Durmont d'Urville traveled around the world in the 1820s, there was nothing new to discover—geographically but also in terms of unknown “indigenous” people. What he did in the early 1830s—in his essay “Sur les îles du grand ocean”—is seen today as one of the inventions of modern racism.⁶³ Starting from his own travels, he reduced the world's population into three races and situated them on a clear historical scale—as either capable or not capable of progress and development towards an universal future as embodied in Europe.⁶⁴

Of course, comparisons did not stop in ethnographic travels and research. In fact, nobody would speak against what Robert Borofsky said in 1997, in a reply on a discussion following his article “Cook, Lono, Obeyesekere, and Sahlins” summarizing the turns, conflicts and debates in his discipline: “What anthropology is all about, ultimately, is comparison.”⁶⁵ However, the problem with comparisons might be that they did not go on forever but that, in certain areas, the dynamic of comparative practices always created histories of their own, rises and falls, abundance and cut-backs. The history of ethnography and anthropology, therefore, can be seen as a constant struggle over comparative measures, and today may still raise the need for constant awareness of the uses and misuses of comparative frames.⁶⁶ Traveling round the world brought up the problem of comparison in a specific way that might teach us a lesson particularly today: too many comparisons multiplied the *tertia comparationis* until the previously common and confirmed *tertia* lost their grounding assumptions and got out of the way; in turn, too many comparisons gave rise to newly demanded and created *tertia* that put things in order again. World travels never ceased to provide new evidence that could be included in the growing multitude of comparisons but they also dealt with the need and necessity of ordering *comparata*

62 Cf. Martina King, Gesteinsschichten, Tasthaare, Damenmoden. Epistemologie des Vergleichens zwischen Natur und Kultur – um und nach 1800, in: *Internationales Archiv für Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur* 45 (2020), 246–266.

63 Liebersohn, *The Travelers' World*, 225–230.

64 Cf. Jules Durmont d'Urville, Sur les îles du grand ocean, in: *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie* 17 (1832), 1–21.

65 Robert Borowsky, Cook, Lono, Obeyesekere, and Sahlins, Forum on Theory in Anthropology, in: *Current Anthropology* 38 (1997), 255–282, see 279.

66 Cf. Michael Schnegg, Anthropology and Comparison. Methodological Challenges and Tentative Solutions, in: *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 139 (2014), 55–72; Cyril Lemieux, Faut-il en finir avec le comparatisme?, in: *L'Homme. Revue française d'anthropologie* 229 (2019), 169–184.

by creating and stabilizing certain *tertia comparationis* within frames of knowledge that were being reaffirmed, discovered or even invented. In the same process, new and unsettling comparisons lost their power and their legitimation while new *tertia comparationis* put knowledge systems in their place. Pushing back comparisons, for example, implied reducing and restricting the multilayered social realities of the 'Other' to a structure (termed in well-known "universal" terms such as "totem", "taboo", "fetish", "ritual") that made it easy to oppose them to European society *in toto*—a process of ethnocentrism that was not even overcome by social anthropology in the 20th century.⁶⁷

Traveling round the world and comparing cultures changed the world, but reducing and delegitimizing comparisons also brought about change. Historicizing and generalizing form the roots of academic disciplines such as philology, anthropology and ethnology. They did not need world travels anymore. Adolf Bastian, the founder of the Berlin "Völkerkundemuseum," and also one of the founders of ethnology in Germany, wrote a short literary piece on his world travels in a popular journal in 1860,⁶⁸ while a few years later, in 1869, he produced a systematic account of all peoples in the world in his three volumes of *Der Mensch in der Geschichte*.⁶⁹ And one of the last-ever scientific journeys around the world, the Austrian expedition led by Karl von Scherzer in the 1850s, produced eighteen volumes of scientific reports.⁷⁰ The report on ethnography—"Anthropologischer Teil, Dritte Abteilung: Ethnographie"—was written by Friedrich Müller, a professor of oriental linguistics in Vienna, who was not even on board the ship. He worked as a combination of naturalist and linguistic ethnographer, and clustered the populations of the earth into categories: "mankind divided into races and peoples."⁷¹ He actually identified seven "races," and together suggested that they formed, one after another, a record of "continuous progress in the history of development."⁷² Like Bastian, he just uses the material to order and categorize the ethnographic world. This kind of generalization was one of the starting points of ethnology as an academic discipline. It took a long time, however, to overcome the restrictions and the worldviews that originated with the ethnographic desire and the felt necessity to do away with too many irritating comparisons. When anthropologists today reclaim the independence and equality

67 Cf. Kramer, *Schriften zur Ethnologie*, 65.

68 Adolf Bastian, *Meine Reise um und durch die Welt*, in: *Illustrierte Zeitung* 35 (1860), 219–222.

69 Cf. Adolf Bastian, *Der Mensch in der Geschichte. Zur Begründung einer psychologischen Weltanschauung*, Berlin 1869.

70 Cf. Karl von Scherzer, *Reise der österreichischen Fregatte Novara um die Erde, in den Jahren 1857, 1858, 1859*, Wien 1864.

71 Friedrich Müller, *Reise der österreichischen Fregatte Novara um die Erde, in den Jahren 1857, 1858, 1859. Anthropologischer Theil. Dritte Abtheilung: Ethnographie*, Wien 1868, X.

72 Müller, *Reise der österreichischen Fregatte Novara um die Erde*, XXVII.

of “indigenous” thought, of animism,⁷³ spirits,⁷⁴ mythology and cosmology,⁷⁵ they finally turn to Adam von Krusenstern’s fear of “delusions” and “temptations” as Europe’s own heritage. To take oneself, to take Europe, to take Western modernity as just one small and limited *comparatum* among many others is not just a new idea but a new point of departure—perhaps, even, the promising start of a new rise of comparisons.

Bibliography

- [ANONYMOUS], Translator’s Preface, in: Jacques Julien Houtou de la Billiardière, *Voyage in Search of La Pérouse [...] during the Years 1791, 1792, 1793, and 1794*, London 1800.
- BASTIAN, Adolf, *Der Mensch in der Geschichte. Zur Begründung einer psychologischen Weltanschauung*, Berlin 1869.
- BASTIAN, Adolf, *Meine Reise um und durch die Welt*, in: *Illustrierte Zeitung* 35 (1860), 219–222.
- BERMAN, Russell A., *Enlightenment or Empire. Colonial Discourse in German Culture*, Lincoln/London 1998.
- BOROWSKY, Robert, Cook, Lono, Obeyesekere, and Sahlins. Forum on Theory in Anthropology, in: *Current Anthropology* 38 (1997), 255–282.
- CARTER, Paul, *The Road to Botany Bay. An Exploration of Landscape and History*, Minnesota 1987.
- CASTRO, Eduardo Viveiros de, *The Ends of the World*, Cambridge/Malden 2017.
- CHAKRABARTY, Dipesh, *Provincializing Europe. Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, Princeton/Oxford 2000.
- CHAMISSE, Adelbert von, *Die Tagebücher der Weltreise 1815–1818*, ed. by Monika Sproll/Walter Erhart/Matthias Glaubrecht, 2 Teile, Göttingen 2023.
- CHAMISSE, Adelbert von, *Sämtliche Werke*, 2 Bde., München 1975.
- DARWIN, Charles, *On the origin of species by means of natural selection, or the preservation of favoured races in the struggle for life*, London 1859.
- DARWIN, Charles, *Narrative of the surveying voyages of His Majesty’s Ships Adventure and Beagle between the years 1826 and 1836, describing their examination of the southern shores of South America, and the Beagle’s circumnavigation of the globe. Journal and remarks. 1832–1836*, London 1839.

73 Philippe Descola, *Beyond Nature and Culture*, Chicago 2014.

74 Marshal Sahlins, *The New Science of the Enchanted Universe. An Anthropology of Most of Humanity*, Princeton/Oxford 2022.

75 Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, *The Ends of the World*, Cambridge/Malden 2017. Déborah Dano wski

- DAUM, Andreas, German Naturalists in the Pacific around 1800. Entenglement, Autonomy, and a transnational Culture, in: Hartmut Berghoff/Frank Bies/Ulrike Strasser (eds.), *Explorations and Entenglements. Germans in Pacific Worlds from the Early Modern Period to World War I*, New York/Oxford 2019.
- DE BOUGAINVILLE, Louis-Antoine, *Voyage autour du monde par la frégate la boudeuse et la flute l'Etoile [1771]*, Paris 1981.
- DENING, Greg, *Beach Crossings. Voyaging across Times, Cultures, and Self*, Philadelphia 2004.
- DESCOLA, Philippe, *Beyond Nature and Culture*. Chicago 2014.
- DESPOIX, Philippe, *Die Welt vermessen. Dispositive der Entdeckungsreise im Zeitalter der Aufklärung*, Göttingen 2007.
- DOUGLAS, Brownen, In the Event. Indigenous Countersigns and the Ethnohistory of Voyaging, in: Margaret Jolly/Serge Tchekézo/Darrel Tryon (eds.), *Oceanic Encounters. Exchange, Desire, Violence*, Canberra 2009, 175–197.
- DUNMORE, John, *French Explorers in the Pacific. The Eighteenth Century. II: The Nineteenth Century*, Oxford 1965.
- DURMONT D'URVILLE, Jules, Sur les îles du grand ocean, in: *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie* 17 (1832), 1–21.
- EGGERS, Michael, *Vergleichendes Erkennen. Zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte und Epistemologie des Vergleichs und zur Genealogie der Komparatistik*, Heidelberg 2016.
- EPPEL, Angelika/ERHART, Walter/GRAVE, Johannes (eds.), *Practices of Comparing. A New Research Agenda between typological and historical Approaches*, Bielefeld 2020.
- EPPEL, Angelika/ERHART, Walter (eds.), *Die Welt beobachten. Praktiken des Vergleichens*. Frankfurt am Main 2015.
- ERHART, Walter, Chamisso's Ethnographie, in: Adelbert von Chamisso, *Die Tagebücher der Weltreise 1815–1818*, ed. by Monika Sproll/Walter Erhart/Matthias Glaubrecht, 2 Teile, Göttingen 2023, Teil 2: Kommentar, 41–59.
- ERHART, Walter, Weltreisen. Zur Geschichte einer ethnographischen Gattung, in: Jonas Nesselhauf/Urte Stobbe (eds.), *Mensch & Mitwelt. Herausforderungen für die Literatur- und Kulturwissenschaften*. Hannover 2022, 149–170.
- ERHART, Walter, “when comparing, and seeing others compare”. Irritationen des Vergleichens in der Weltreiseliteratur von Humboldt bis Darwin, in: *Euphorion* 114 (2020), 427–458.
- ERHART, Walter, “Beobachtung und Erfahrung, Sammeln und Vergleichen” – Adelbert von Chamisso und die Poetik der Weltreise im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert, in: Angelika Eppe/Walter Erhart (eds.), *Die Welt beobachten. Praktiken des Vergleichens*, Frankfurt am Main 2015.
- FARA, Patricia, *Sex, Botany, and Empire. The Story of Carl Linnaeus and Joseph Banks*, New York 2004.
- FORSTER, Georg, *Reise um die Welt*, Frankfurt am Main 1983.

- FRIEDMAN, Susan Stanford, Why not Compare?, in: Rita Felski/Susan Stanford Friedman (eds.), *Comparison. Theories, Approaches, Uses*, Baltimore 2013, 34–45.
- GAGNÉ, Renaud/GOLDHILL, Simon/LLOYD, Geoffrey E. R. (eds.): *Regimes of Comparatism. Frameworks of Comparison in History, Religion and Anthropology*, Leiden/Boston 2018.
- GOVOR, Elena, *Twelve Days at Nuku Hiva. Russian Encounters and Mutiny in the South Pacific*, Honolulu 2010.
- GRAEBER, David/WENGROW, David, *The Dawn of Everything. A New history of Humanity*, London 2021.
- HEGARTY, Neil, Unruly Subjects. Sexuality, Science and Discipline in Eighteenth-Century Pacific Explorations, in: Margrett Lincoln (ed.), *Science and Exploration in the Pacific. European Voyages to the Southern Oceans in the Eighteenth century*, Woodbridge 1998, 183–197.
- HEINTZ, Bettina, “Wir leben im Zeitalter der Vergleichung.” Perspektiven einer Soziologie des Vergleichs, in: *Zeitschrift für Soziologie* 45 (2016), 305–323.
- HORWITZ, Tony, *Into the Blue. Boldly Going Where Captain Cook Has Gone Before*, London 2002.
- HUMBOLDT, Wilhelm von, Plan einer vergleichenden Anthropologie, in: *Werke in fünf Bänden. Bd. 1. Schriften zur Anthropologie und Geschichte*, Darmstadt 1960, 337–375.
- KING, Martina, Gesteinsschichten, Tasthaare, Damenmoden. Epistemologie des Vergleichens zwischen Natur und Kultur – um und nach 1800, in: *Internationales Archiv für Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur* 45 (2020), 246–266.
- KOTZEBUE, Otto von, *Entdeckungs-Reise in die Südsee und der Berings-Straße zur Erforschung einer nordöstlichen Durchfahrt unternommen in den Jahren 1815, 1816, 1817 und 1818, auf Kosten Sr. Erlaucht des Herrn Reichs-Kanzlers Rumanzoff auf dem Schiffe Rurick unter dem Befehle des Lieutenants der Russisch-Kaiserlichen Marine Otto von Koetzebue*, Weimar 1821.
- KRAMER, Fritz, *Schriften zur Ethnologie*, Frankfurt am Main 2005.
- KRUSENSTERN, Adam Johann von, *Reise um die Welt in den Jahren 1803, 1804, 1805 und 1806 auf Befehl seiner Kaiserl. Majestät Alexanders des Ersten auf den Schiffen Nadeshda und Newa unter dem Commando des Capitäns von der Kaiserl. Marine*, 3 Bde., Berlin 1810–1812.
- LAMB, Jonathan, *Preserving the Self in the South Seas 1680–1840*, Chicago/London 2001.
- LANGSDORFF, Georg H. von, *Bemerkungen auf einer Reise um die Welt in den Jahren 1803 bis 1807*, 2 Bde., Frankfurt am Main 1812.
- LATOUR, Bruno, *Science in action. How to follow scientists and engineers through society*, Cambridge 1987.
- LEMIEUX, Cyril, Faut-il en finir avec le comparatisme?, in: *L'Homme. Revue française d'anthropologie* 229 (2019), 169–184.

- LEUCHT, Robert, Griechische Wilde. Vergleiche zwischen Antike und Neuer Welt, 1752–1821 (Lafitau, Böttiger, Winckelmann, Bougainville, Forster, Chamisso), in: *Euphorion* 109 (2015), 375–399.
- LIEBERSOHN, Harry, *The Travelers' World. Europe to the Pacific*, Cambridge 2006.
- LUBRICH, Oliver, Alexander von Humboldts globale Komparatistik, in: *Internationales Archiv für Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur* 45 (2020), 231–245.
- MOOREHEAD, Alan, *The Fatal Impact. An Account of the Invasion of the South Pacific 1767–1840*, New York 1966.
- MÜLLER, Friedrich, *Reise der österreichischen Fregatte Novara um die Erde, in den Jahren 1857, 1858, 1859. Anthropologischer Theil. Dritte Abtheilung: Ethnographie*, Wien 1868.
- PENNY, Glenn H., *Im Schatten Humboldts. Eine tragische Geschichte der deutschen Ethnologie*, München 2019.
- PETERS, Christine, *Die Weltreiseberichte von Humboldt, Krusenstern und Langsdorff. Praktiken des Vergleichens und Formen von Weltwissen*, Berlin/New York 2022.
- PETERS, Christine, Historical Narrative versus Comparative Description? Genre and Knowledge in Alexander von Humboldt's *Personal Narrative*, in: Martin Carrier/Rebecca Martens/Carsten Reinhardt (eds.), *Narratives and Comparisons. Adversaries or Allies in Understanding Science?*, Bielefeld 2021.
- PRATT, Mary Louise, *Imperial Eyes. Travel Writing and Transculturation*, London/New York 1992.
- RADHAKRISHNAN, Rajagopalan, 'Why Compare', in: Rita Felski/Susan Stanford Friedman (eds.), *Comparison. Theories, Approaches, Uses*, Baltimore 2013, 15–33.
- REINHARD, Wolfgang, *Die Unterwerfung der Welt. Globalgeschichte der europäischen Expansion 1415–2015*, München 2016.
- RICHARDSON, Brian W., *Longitude and Empire. How Captain Cook's Voyages Changed the World*, Vancouver/Toronto 2005.
- SAHLINS, Marshal, *The New Science of the Enchanted Universe. An Anthropology of Most of Humanity*, Princeton/Oxford 2022.
- SASS, Hartmut von, Vergleiche(n). Ein hermeneutischer Rund- und Sinkflug, in: Andreas Mauz/Hartmut von Sass (eds.), *Hermeneutik des Vergleichs. Strukturen, Anwendungen und Grenzen komparativer Verfahren*, Würzburg 2011, 25–47.
- SAUSSY, Haun, *Are We Comparing Yet? On Standards, Justice, and Incomparability*, Bielefeld 2019.
- SCHERZER, Karl von, *Reise der österreichischen Fregatte Novara um die Erde, in den Jahren 1857, 1858, 1859*, Wien 1864.
- SCHNEGG, Michael, Anthropology and Comparison. Methodological Challenges and Tentative Solutions, in: *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 139 (2014), 55–72.
- THOMAS, Nicholas, *Entangled Objects. Exchange, Material Culture, and Colonialism in the Pacific*, Cambridge/London 1991, 169–184.

- VANCOUVER, George, *A voyage of discovery to the North Pacific Ocean and round the world, 1791–1795. With an introduction and appendices*, ed. by William Kaye, 4 vols., London 1984.
- WIELAND, Christoph M., Auszüge aus Jacob Forsters Reise um die Welt. 1778, in: *Sämmtliche Werke (1794–1811)*. Reprint Hamburg 1984, Bd. XIV, Supplemente. Fünfter Band, 175–246.
- WILLIAMS, Glyn, *Naturalists at Sea. Scientific Travellers from Dompier to Darwin*, New Haven/London 2013.
- WITHEY, Lynne, *Voyages of Discovery. Captain Cook and the Exploration of the Pacific*, New York 1987.
- ZUBOFF, Shoshana, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism. The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power*, London 2019.