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ABSTRACT (English)

Since several decades the use of an ethno-anthropological approach has met with considerable success among classical scholars. The comparative analysis of ancient and 'primitive' cultures and the application of anthropological models to the interpretation of classical texts have stood out as a powerful alternative to traditional philology. This paper reassesses the complex relationship between cultural anthropology and classical studies, highlighting the relevance of historicity and diachronic factors as basic dimensions of both fields. Indeed, classicists referring to ethno-anthropology and its methods have sometimes inclined to see Graeco-Roman antiquity as a stereotypically homogeneous and isochronic world. They have created the illusory and uniform image of an *ancient culture* ranging from Homer and Cicero to Boethius and Nonnus of Panopolis – an image which ultimately confirmed the clichés of the nineteenth century *Altertumswissenschaft*. After pointing out the origins and enduring influence of traditional classicistic approaches (from Renaissance Humanism to Positivist idealism), the present paper recalls some of the most significant steps in the history of the dialogue between classics and anthropology. It argues that the intellectually stimulating contribution of social sciences to the renewal of classical scholarship should always be supported by the use of a comprehensive historical perspective, including a self-critical consideration of one's own situated standpoint and aims.

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ABSTRACT (Italian)

Da diversi decenni a questa parte, l'uso di un approccio improntato all'orizzonte disciplinare dell'etno-antropologia riscuote notevole successo fra gli studiosi di antichità classica. L'analisi comparativa di culture antiche e 'primitive', e l'applicazione di modelli antropologici all'interpretazione dei testi antichi, hanno finito per configurarsi come una potente alternativa alla filologia tradizionale. Questo articolo intende riprendere in esame il complesso rapporto fra studi classici e antropologia culturale con l'obiettivo di mettere in luce la rilevanza della dimensione storica e dei fattori diacronici nella prospettiva di entrambi gli ambiti disciplinari. In alcuni casi, infatti, gli antichisti più vicini ai metodi dell'etno-antropologia hanno teso a proiettare un'immagine stereotipicamente omogenea ed isocronica del mondo greco-romano. E' stata fornita la rappresentazione illusoria e uniforme di una *cultura antica* in grado di abbracciare tanto Omero e Cicerone quanto Boezio e Nonno di Panopoli – una rappresentazione, questa, che ha in definitiva corroborato i *clichés* dell'*Altertumswissenschaft* ottocentesca. Dopo aver evidenziato le origini e la perdurante influenza degli approcci classicistici tradizionali (dall'umanesimo rinascimentale all'idealismo positivista), il presente contributo riporta l'attenzione su alcuni dei passaggi più significativi del dialogo fra studi classici ed antropologia. Si sostiene così l'idea che il contributo intellettualmente stimolante delle scienze sociali al rinnovamento dell'antichistica debba essere costantemente supportato da una coscienza storica ad ampio spettro, tale da includere anche una considerazione critica del proprio punto di vista e dei propri obiettivi d'indagine.

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Between Time and Culture: Anthropology and Historicity in the Study of Ancient Literature

Fabio Tutrone (Palermo)

1. Narcissus, or the Myth of Roots

In the third book of his *Metamorphoses*, Ovid provides one of the most famous versions of Narcissus' myth.[1] The handsome boy, who had rejected several suitors, dies because of his impossible solipsistic love, after he has looked at himself in the mirror of water. Apparently, an excessive passion for the contemplation of personal identity can annihilate and kill. Since the attitude of modern classical scholars towards their object of study (i.e. Greek and Latin literature, ambitiously defined as *ancient* literature in our totalizing jargon) has often stood out for its *identitarian* enthusiasm, the difficulties currently experienced by traditional philology[2] might be compared to Narcissus' disenchantment: after several centuries of delightful observation, in which we used antiquity as a mirror reflecting our own identity, we have discovered the unattainableness of our image. The present-day cosmopolis does not descend directly from the Greek and Roman worlds, neither is antiquity a convenient and comforting map to find the tracks of our roots.

In this paper I will try to reconsider some of the most relevant features of Western classicism, with special regard to the Renaissance construction of a paradigmatic pre-medieval antiquity and the progressive transformation of such an influential model between the 18th and the 20th centuries. Secondly, I will focus on the controversial application of an ethno-anthropological method to the field of classical scholarship. As is well-known, this type of transdisciplinary approach has often been contrasted with the heritage of

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1   Cf. Ov. Met. 3,339–509. For other versions see Conon, Narrat. 24 (Phot. bibl. 186,134b28–135a4), Paus. 9,31,7–8, and *POxy* LXIX 4711 (a fragment probably deriving from Parthenius' *Metamorphoses*: cf. Hutchinson [2006]). On the profound cultural significance of Narcissus' myth see Bettini/Pellizer (2003).

2   It may be worth recalling the remarks of William M. Calder III on the "decline of classics as a required discipline shared by the educated elite of Europe and its colonies". Cf. Calder/Smith (2000) 8: "More and more classics like alchemy becomes an aspect of intellectual history used to elucidate and explain the thought of the time and treated by intellectual historians themselves, not classical scholars. Or indeed *Rezeptionsgeschichte*."

traditional philology on the basis of its appeal to the notion of *otherness*. I will discuss the relationship between anthropology-influenced analyses and the concept of historicity, as in the hermeneutical background of such analyses the idea of *culture*, in an ethnographic sense, is frequently seen in static and synchronic terms. I will suggest going beyond a fruitless opposition between historical contextualization and socio-anthropological inquiry by pointing to the prominent role of diachrony and historicity in contemporary ethno-anthropological reflections. It will be clear that any sound consideration of ancient civilizations should carefully avoid the stereotype of a teleological and metahistorical antiquity – a stereotype potentially emerging even from some cultural-anthropological interpretations.

Let us start with a quick focus on the modern age development of classical philology, since a general reconstruction of this phenomenon may work as a basis for the discussion of relevant *classicistic* patterns. As many studies have pointed out, the highly successful view of ancient culture as a mirror, a collection of roots, or a gallery of ancestors results from different intellectual undertakings which have been influencing the history of Europe since the Renaissance. In a brilliant essay, Elisa Romano discusses the main features of three forms of classicism which reshaped the Western perception of antiquity.[3] The first foundational act can of course be seen in the 15th-century Humanism, whose 'rediscovery' of ancient texts – starting in post-medieval Italy and quickly spreading over Europe – originated a wide-ranging transformation of cultural models. At the end of this process, the new identity of *modern* intellectuals was intimately connected to the portrait of their Greek and Latin ancestors.[4]

Most importantly, the Renaissance writers and artists deliberately *chose* their ancestors. They created a teleological paradigm of antiquity, based on biological concepts such as rise, culmination and decline. Clearly, they derived a similar pattern from ancient sources, since it has been widely recognized that several forms of classicism had already been developed in the

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3   Romano (1997).
4   Cf. Romano (1997) 14–15: «La rinascita dell'antichità si inquadrava in una mutata percezione dello svolgimento storico, che segnava la messa fra parentesi di un tempo intermedio e poneva al di là della prima parentesi l'età antica, al di qua l'età che cominciava a percepire se stessa come nuova. E' stato più volte sottolineato il paradosso per cui il senso di rottura con il passato coincidente con la coscienza di un'epoca nuova significò, nel periodo dell'Umanesimo, recupero di un passato ancor più remoto, per cui essere fautori degli *antiqui* significò rappresentare la cultura moderna.»

Greek and Roman worlds.[5] As a consequence, some aspects of ancient culture were emphasized and idealized, while other ones were refused or neglected. After the birth of this *new* antiquity – largely different from that of Bede and Dante – an original idea of culture and intellectual life emerged: an idea mostly founded on the principles of identity and imitation which nonetheless entailed an *exotic* taste we shall later be considering.[6]

A finalistic and, so to speak, paraboliform conception of antiquity was also typical of the 18th-century Neoclassicism, the second kind of classicism we should focus on. Johann Joachim Winckelmann's *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums*, published in Dresden in 1763, can be certainly regarded as the manifesto of this successful trend. Winckelmann shared the Renaissance categories of *ascent* and *fall*, but in his view the legacy of ancient culture was a gallery of inspiring anticipations rather than a past to be restored as a whole.[7] He did not conceive of himself as a reviving *antiquus* - whereas, for instance, Petrarch had written several letters to classical authors[8] and Niccolò Machiavelli had described his evening readings as interactive conversations with the Ancients.[9] Indeed, in Winckelmann's day the Graeco-Roman world was frequently presented as a sublime collection of roots, which modern admirers had to bring to completion. Antiquity was said to be rich of precursory elements, teleologically oriented towards posterity. This is actual-

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5   It may be sufficient to recall Cicero's idealization of archaic Roman poetry as well as the typically Augustan classicism of Horace's *Epistulae* and *Ars poetica*. Similarly, Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* (especially its tenth book) echoes the Flavian construction of a 'classical' canon. See Flashar (1979) and Citroni (1998).

6   On the prominence of the so-called 'principle of imitation' in Renaissance aesthetics see e.g. McLaughlin (1995), Sabbatino (1997), and Di Stefano (2004).

7   Cf. Romano (1997) 22–37.

8   See the final book of Petrarch's *Familiares* (24,3–12). Addressees include Cicero, Seneca, Varro, Quintilian, Livy, Asinius Pollio, Horace, Virgil and Homer.

9   See Niccolò Machiavelli, *XI Letter to Francesco Vettori (10 December 1513)*. It is worth citing the translation of Atkinson/Sices [1996] 262–265: "When evening comes, I return home and enter my study; on the threshold I take off my workday clothes, covered with mud and dirt, and put on the garments of court and palace. Fitted out appropriately, I step inside the venerable courts of the ancients, where, solicitously received by them, I nourish myself on that food that alone is mine and for which I was born; where I am unashamed to converse with them and to question them about the motives for their actions, and they, out of their human kindness, answer me. And for four hours at a time I feel no boredom, I forget all my troubles, I do not dread poverty, and I am not terrified by death. I absorb myself into them completely.").

ly one of the most relevant moments for the creation of what Moses Finley called the 'teleological fallacy'.[10]

Winckelmann's view of ancient art was explicitly *Hellenocentric*. His admiration for the 'noble simplicity and quiet grandeur' of Greek art (,edle Einfalt und stille Grösse')[11] involved a denigration of Roman culture, seen as a stage of decay. Such a basically ethnocentric attitude – significantly diverging from the Renaissance appreciation of Latin literature and Near Eastern civilizations – had a deep impact on the history of the Western humanities.[12] It is no accident that in 1807 (about forty years after Winckelmann's *Geschichte*) another German scholar, Friedrich August Wolf, founded the radically Hellenocentric paradigm of *Altertumswissenschaft*. In his *Darstellung der Alterthums- Wissenschaft nach Begriff, Umfang, Zweck und Werth* (collecting several lectures of the years 1785–1790), Wolf envisaged the constitution of an encyclopaedic 'science of antiquity' whose scope of inquiry included every aspect of the study of the ancient world, from archaeology to metrics, from grammar to

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10   Cf. Finley (1998) 85: "It (*scil.* the teleological fallacy) consists in assuming the existence from the beginning of time, so to speak, of the writer's values […] and in then examining all earlier thought and practice as if they were, or ought to have been, on the road of this realization; as if men in other periods were asking the same questions and facing the same problems as those of the historian and *his* world."

11   Cf. Winckelmann (1756) 21: „Das allgemeine vorzügliche Kennzeichen der griechischen Meisterstücke ist endlich eine edle Einfalt, und eine stille Größe, sowohl in der Stellung als im Ausdrucke. So wie die Tiefe des Meers allezeit ruhig bleibt, die Oberfläche mag noch so wüten, ebenso zeiget der Ausdruck in den Figuren der Griechen bei allen Leidenschaften eine große und gesetzte Seele."

12   See Bianchi Bandinelli (1976) 18–20: «Per lungo tempo ha avuto valore la suddivisione winckelmanniana dell'arte antica in periodi collegati tra loro da una linea parabolica di svolgimento. A questo schema si oppose l'affiorante coscienza storicistica; ma esso non è ancora del tutto cancellato nelle concezioni della cultura media e nemmeno di taluni studiosi. […] Le conseguenze culturali di questa formula che il Winckelmann aveva teorizzato per l'arte greca – 'bellezza formale assoluta, mancanza di *pathos*, prevalere della forma scultorea su quella pittorica' - furono molto tipiche. E' istruttivo il fatto che quando Lord Elgin staccò i marmi dal massimo tempio di Atene, il Partenone dove, come si sapeva dalle fonti, la decorazione scultorea era stata eseguita sotto la direzione di Fidia, considerato il sommo degli artisti classici, gli archeologi negarono che i marmi portati da Lord Elgin potessero essere quelli fidiaci; anzi addirittura dubitarono che fossero opera d'arte greca e pensarono a rifacimenti di età romana, il che significa attribuirle al periodo ritenuto da Winckelmann della peggiore decadenza.»

numismatics.[13] However, the epistemological foundation of such an ambitious construction was textual philology. In the 19th century, philology was emphatically depicted as a kind of 'hard science', a revealing technical method in the hands of 'sacerdotal' academics. For instance, August Böckh, a pupil of Wolf, considered the study of ancient texts a historical science *par excellence*. In Böckh's idealistic perspective, Greek and Latin philology was to become *Erkenntnis des Erkannten*, systematic knowledge of what the human spirit had produced during its history.[14]

The powerful cultural movement raised by Wolf, Böckh and other scholars is generally known as *Second Humanism*. Its successful development continued without substantial interruption until the intellectual flourishing of the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century – a controversial season including the so-called *Third Humanism* of Werner Jaeger.[15] Admittedly, even if relevant methodological shifts affected classical philology between the age of Wolf and the years of Jaeger – between Romanticism, Positivism and post-Hegelian mysticism – the Second and the Third Humanism can be associated on the basis of their shared distance from Renaissance classicism. As mentioned earlier, after Winckelmann's work the Western idea of antiquity was more and more selective and Greek-centred. Giovanni Pico della Mirandola could still combine Platonic beliefs and cabalistic speculations,[16] in the same way as Giordano Bruno exalted Egyptian religion while embracing Lucretius' cosmology.[17] By contrast, in Wolf's *Darstellung* Near Eastern populations such as Egyptians, Jews and Persians were said to have remained at the basic stage of 'civilization' (*bürgerliche Policirung oder Civilisation*): they would have never attained the real 'culture of spirit' (*eigentliche Geistescultur*).[18] Likewise, even if the Romans were generally associated with the supe-

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13 Cf. Romano (1997) 37–45. Cozzo (2011) perceptively highlights the long-lasting influence of Wolf's approach on present-day scholarship.

14 See the discussion of Böckh's *Encyklopädie und Methodologie der philologischen Wissenschaften* (Böckh [1877]) in Bravo (1986).

15 When calling for a 'decolonization' of classical philology, Momigliano (1967) 43 referred to «una situazione determinata negli ultimi centocinquant'anni dall'assoluto predominio della scienza tedesca dell'antichità classica». A careful discussion of several research patterns characterizing the 20th-century *Altertumswissenschaft* can be found in Flashar (1995).

16 See e.g. Zambelli (1995).

17 On Bruno's use of Egyptian and Oriental wisdom see Del Giudice (2005); on his relationship with Lucretius see Haskell (1998) and Salvatore (2003a), (2003b).

18 Cf. Wolf (1839) 11–12: „Um zuerst den Stoff zu bestimmen, den unsere Wissenschaft zu behandeln habe, thun wir rückwärts von den grossen *Völker - Wanderungen*, mit denen

rior Eden of classical culture, they were depicted as second-rate imitators of the Hellenic genius.[19] On the whole, these 19th- and 20th-century forms of Humanism had a strong *conservative* character: they aimed at resuming, clarifying and finally contemplating ancient thought as a self-sufficient corpus,[20] whereas the Renaissance humanists tended to use classical antiquity as a means of direct regeneration. However, the *identitarian* approach of the 19th-century, idealism-influenced philology undoubtedly derived from the early modern reinvention of antiquity, and a kind of *rhetoric of roots* can be said to permeate the entire history of modern Europe.

Remarkably, after the historicism of German *Altertumswissenschaft* - enthusiastically imported by other countries - raised ancient culture to the rank of a separate cosmos, the sublime (and significantly restricted) mirror of antiquity looked even more unattainable. As in a sort of intellectual paradox, Western identity was reputed to depend on its Greek and Roman models, but no immediate appropriation and re-use of these models was allowed. The new 'science of antiquity' disapproved of retrospective assimilations such as those carried out by the French Jacobins, who had openly connected their revolutionary idea of *liberty* to ancient paradigms.[21] In particular, classi-

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die Umgestaltung der uns näher liegenden Welt zum Mittel-Alter, gleichsam eine Kluft zwischen älterer und neuerer Cultur, ihren Anfang nimmt, einen Blick auf den Gang der vorhergehenden Jahrhunderte. Dort sehen wir in den schönsten Gegenden der alten Welt nach und neben einander eine Reihe von Völkern handelnd auftreten, die noch heute ihr vormaliges Leben und Wirken in mehrern oder wenigern Ueberresten ankündigen. Man möchte gern alle solche Völker zusammen zu einer Kunde umfassen; doch vielerlei Ursachen machen hier eine Trennung notwendig, und erlauben uns nicht, *Aegyptier*, *Hebräer*, *Perser* und andere Nationen des Orients auf einer Linie mit den *Griechen* und *Römern* aufzustellen. Eine der wichtigen Verschiedenheiten unter jenen und diesen Nationen ist die, dass die erstern gar nicht oder nur wenige Stufen sich über die Art von Bildung erhoben, welche man *bürgerliche Policirung* oder *Civilisation*, im Gegensatze *höherer eigentlicher Geistescultur*, nennen sollte."

19 Cf. Wolf (1839) 16: „Die Römer waren zwar nicht ein Volk von originalen Talenten, ausser in der Kunst zu erobern und zu herrschen; sie gingen sogleich in ihrer frühesten Policirung, nacher in den mehresten Künsten, von den Mustern ihrer Nachbarn, meistens griechischer Stämme, aus; sie ahmten späterhin, als sie eine Litteratur gleich einer ausländischen Waare bei sich aufnahmen, die Griecher mit Eifer nach […]."

20 Especially emblematic are Böckh's introductory notes to his *Encyklopädie und Methodologie der philologischen Wissenschaften* (cf. above n. 14) or Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff's famous *Geschichte der Philologie* (von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff [1921]).

21 On the political use of classical models between the 18th and the 19th centuries see Avlami (2001) 1311–1350.

cal Greece, seen as an apogee of moral perfection, experienced a process of historical crystallization which ultimately transformed it into a metahistorical – if not metaphysical – object.[22]

The fact that still in our day Roman texts and artefacts are often used as *sources* to reconstruct Greek originals (Seneca is as source for earlier Stoic philosophy in the same way as Pompeian frescoes imperfectly reproduce Greek paintings) is clearly related to our philological past. Of course, the cultural season of *Altertumswissenschaft* left sufficient room for conspicuous infractions of the prevailing patterns and prepared the ground for future revisions. A reappraisal of late Roman art, for instance, resulted from the studies of Franz Wickhoff, Alois Riegl and the so-called *Wiener Schule*.[23] And Eduard Fraenkel's *Plautinisches im Plautus*[24] made an important contribution to the study of Roman comedy as an original dramatic genre.

Nevertheless, the limits and sins of traditional identitarian philology are evident. The ominous identification of Greece with Germany, frequently based on racial and genealogical arguments, or the early 20th-century Italian rhetoric on Roman supremacy are meaningful examples of ideological deformation.[25] In several respects, classical philology is not an innocent field of scholarship: if carefully observed, Narcissus' face could also reveal disturbing Gorgonian features.

2. From Classical Philology to Cultural Anthropology, and back

As is well-known, the idea of a philological approach based on *identity* and *idealization* has been variously challenged by contemporary scholars. Particularly relevant criticisms have been raised by researchers appealing to an *ethnoanthropological* method. Indeed, in the last sixty years the work of classicists has been characterized by an increasingly conspicuous interest for the use of

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22   The representation of Greece in Werner Jaeger's *Paideia* (Jaeger [1933–1947]) can be probably regarded as the most eloquent example.

23   On the so-called *Wiener Schule der Kunstgeschichte* and its methodological innovations see Theisen (2004).

24   Fraenkel (1922).

25   In recent times, the connection between Wolf's influential ideas and 20th-century racism has been recalled by Stok (2012) 207: above all, Wolf's reference to the Jews as the main evidence for the inferiority of Oriental peoples «prelude alle posizioni antisemite e razziste che si diffusero in Europa fra il XIX e il XX secolo, come evidenzia anche la simpatia che egli mostra per le forme di esclusione presenti nel mondo antico».

cultural and social anthropology. Although, as we shall see, classics and anthropology started their cooperation at a much earlier date than the 1950s, two chronological references can be regarded as especially significant: 1951 and 1954.

In 1951 Eric Robertson Dodds published his famous monograph *The Greeks and the Irrational*, where the Jaegerian myth of a paradigmatic rational Greece was substantially revised. By employing typically ethnographic categories such as Ruth Benedict's distinction between *shame culture* and *guilt culture*,[26] Dodds pointed out the role of unconscious and folk beliefs in Greek patterns of behaviour.

1954 is the publication date of Moses Finley's *The World of Odysseus*, a seminal work on Homeric society which drew a fundamental distinction between ancient economy and modern trade practices. In Finley's view, archaic Greek society was largely based on gift-exchange relationships radically different from market economy transactions. Such a wide-ranging interpretation was strongly indebted to the models of social anthropology, especially to Marcel Mauss's studies on *potlatch* and gift-exchange in primitive societies.[27] In more general terms, both Dodds and Finley associated central aspects of Greek imagery with the status of *primitive* cultures – the kind of cultures currently investigated by ethnographers. As a consequence, after many centuries of idealization (and mystification) the Edenic world of classical civilizations seemed to lose its familiar Eurocentric connotations. Little by little, it began to appear as an imperfect and multi-faceted *otherness*.

In our day, the view that ancient culture is notably different from *our* culture – the description of antiquity as a *chronological* otherness, comparable to the *geographical* otherness of primitive and exotic contexts – has grown into a foundational scholarly concept. In this respect, a pivotal role has been played by the so-called *Paris School* of Jean-Pierre Vernant, Pierre Vidal-Naquet and Marcel Detienne.[28] The attention devoted by such scholars to

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26   Cf. Ruth Benedict's much-discussed essay *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (Benedict [1946]).

27   Marcel Mauss's most important results are collected in his *Essai sur le don. Forme et raison de l'échange dans les sociétés archaïques* (Mauss [1923/24]). Indeed, Finley's focus on Mauss's work as well as on the general patterns of gift-exchange showed the way forward for further research. Still in recent times, the surveys of Griffin (2003), Lentano (2005), and Picone/Beltrami/Ricottilli (2011), have developed this line of interpretation, referring to the present-day debate in social anthropology.

28   A useful introduction to the ideas of the *École de Paris* can be found in Gordon (1981).

the social value of myth, religion and symbolic thought has given rise to an extensive renewal of classical studies. However, the origin itself of French anthropology-influenced philology bears witness to the fact that a fruitful cooperation between classicists and anthropologists has not started in recent times.[29] The founding father of the *École de Paris* is Louis Gernet, a pupil of Émile Durkheim and a friend of Marcel Mauss.[30] Generally speaking, a consistent inclination to *comparativism*, entailing a cross-cultural reconsideration of Greek and Latin texts, can be said to be typical of early 20th-century French culture[31]

Admittedly, in the same years when the positivistic and Hellenocentric paradigm of *Altertumswissenschaft* reigned supreme, new views of ancient culture highlighting the otherness of our 'classical ancestors' began to appear. As regards the English-speaking world, for instance, James Frazer and the so-called Cambridge Ritualists deserve special mention, since in spite of their sometimes naïve generalizations they cleared the way for a closer connection between classical philology, socio-anthropology and psychoanalysis.[32] One should not forget that Frazer was an appreciated classicist – the author of a six-volume commentary on Pausanias – and that his controversial survey *The Golden Bough* (1890) took its title from Virgil's *Aeneid*.[33]

To all appearances, what we forget more easily is the *genetic* dependence of ethno-anthropology on classical philology. In the early modern age, when the study of primitive cultures – at that time called *savage* peoples – was still in its initial stage, the consolidated patterns of the humanities provided a precious epistemological basis for ethnography. In other words, the descriptive interpretation of *different* cultures (suddenly introduced into European discussions after the season of geographical explorations) was supported by their assimilation to Greek and Roman models.[34] The figures of classical an-

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29   A short and lively reconstruction of the exchanges between classics and anthropology is provided by Cartledge (1995). A detailed discussion of specific issues is in Humphreys (1978).

30   A stimulating presentation of Gernet's approach is offered by Di Donato (1982) 984–996. Cf. also Humphreys (1978) 76–106.

31   It may be worth recalling Émile Durkheim's reflections on ancient sacrifice in Durkheim (1912), or Mauss's frequent use of classical sources in Mauss (1923/24).

32   On the Cambridge Ritualists (also known as 'the Myth and Ritual School') see Ackermann (1991).

33   Cf. Verg. Aen. 6,124–155. See Beard (1992) and Cartledge (1995) 17.

34   See Pucci (1994), Bettini (1999), Guastella (1999) 97–101, and Iacono (2001).

cestors seemed to resurface from the newly discovered faces of exotic peoples, but such a *familiarization* attempt could be made for both detractive and eulogistic purposes. Thus, Giovanni da Empoli described American Indians as beasts and 'natural Epicureans' (*picurri naturali*) because of their allegedly voluptuous nature, while Giovanni da Verrazzano recognized in Rhode Island natives 'the expression of ancient statues' (*l'espressione delle statue antiche*).[35] Even more notable, one of the fathers of modern anthropology, Joseph-François Lafitau, who published his *Moeurs des Sauvages Amériquains, compares aux moeurs des premiers temps* in 1724, deliberately connected the study of ancient texts with the observation of *other* cultures: according to Lafitau, the evidence of Greek and Latin sources helped to understand foreign customs in the same way as ethnographic experiences threw light on the interpretation of classical texts.[36] Differently from previous travellers and explorers, this Jesuit ethnographer pointed to the opportunity of *reciprocal* enrichment resulting from the encounter between classics and primitives.[37]

For a long time afterwards such a double-levelled hermeneutic strategy was reduced to one of its sides, namely to the use of philological notions for the sake of anthropological inquiries. In 1871, when Lewis Henry Morgan published his pioneering study on kinship, *Systems of Affinity and Consanguinity of the Human Family*, linguistics and classics were still regarded as methodo-

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35   Cf. Cocchiara (2004) 46–47. See Bettini (1999) 197: «Fa una certa impressione riascoltare oggi quello che Giovanni da Verrazzano dichiarò di vedere quando si trovò di fronte agli indigeni di Rhode Island: ai suoi occhi, le loro facce non presentavano infatti i tratti dell'alterità assoluta, come si potrebbe supporre, ma piuttosto ‹l'espressione delle statue antiche›. Gli ‹altri›, gli abitanti di un mondo nuovo che solo allora si affacciava all'orizzonte dell'occidente, avevano insomma le facce note degli antenati»

36   See Lafitau (1724) I 3–4: «Je ne me suis pas contenté de connoître le caractere des Sauvages, et de m'informer de leurs coûtumes et de leurs pratiques, j'ai cherché dans ces pratiques et dans ces coûtumes des vestiges de l'Antiquité la plus reculée; j'ai lû avec soin ceux des Auteurs les plus anciens qui ont traitté des Moeurs, des Loix, et des Usages des Peuples don ils avoient quelque connoissance; j'ai fait la comparaison de ces Moeurs les unes avec les autres, et j'avouë que si les Auteurs anciens m'ont donné des lumiers pour appuyer quelques conjectures heureuses touchant les Sauvages, les Coûtumes des Sauvages m'ont donné des lumiers pour entendre plus facilment, et pour expliquer plusieurs choses qui sont dans les Auteurs anciens.»

37   Cf. Calame (2007) 260: «En contraste avec les voyageurs et érudits qui ont décrit les coutumes des peoples révélés par les Grandes Découvertes en cherchant de manière unilatérale leur origine dans l'Antiquité, Lafitau se fonde sur son experience de terrain pour definer une approche qui se situe, à l'égarde de l'Antiquité gréco-romaine, dans un rapport de réciprocité comparative.»

logically exemplary fields of scholarship. Indeed, Morgan's systematization of kinship relationships – arising from his surveys on American and Asiatic peoples – was openly founded on the patterns of comparative linguistics as well as on the categories of ancient Roman law. As a skilful American lawyer, Morgan was naturally led to compare the society of the Iroquois to the Roman *gentes*. And in his comprehensive reading the historical grammar of 19th-century philologists served as a paradigm of structural connections.[38]

It seems that many years before the so-called *linguistic turn* and the predominance of structural anthropology in literary studies, ethnography was keen to derive its instruments from the world of classics. An insightful remark by Claude Lévi-Strauss may help us understand the conceptual origin of similar exchanges. In an article of 1956 (later republished in *Anthropologie Structurale Deux*), Lévi-Strauss pointed out the importance of Renaissance Humanism as a basic *ethnographic* experience reinventing the identity of Western culture through the comparison with the Ancients. The 15th-century identitarian appropriation of antiquity demonstrated that "no civilization can define itself if it does not have at its disposal some other civilizations for comparison. The Renaissance rediscovered in ancient literature forgotten notions and methods. But more important still, it realized the means of putting its own culture in perspective – by confronting contemporary concepts with those of other times and places".[39] After all, the development of Western anthropology might be seen as a progressive extension of the Renaissance interest for every form of *humanitas* – an interest emblematized by the

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38   See Trautmann (1987) 6: "Philology is the first word with which Morgan addresses his readers. The design of the book [scil. *Systems of Affinity and Consanguinity of the Human Family*] is a philological one; indeed, Morgan's ethnology is the continuation of philology by other means."

39   Cf. Lévi-Strauss (1956) 16: «Quand les hommes de la fin du Moyen-Âge et de la Renaissance ont redécouvert l'antiquité gréco-romaine, et quand les jésuites ont fait du grec et du latin la base de la formation intellectuelle, n'était-ce pas une première forme d'ethnologie? On reconnaissait qu'aucune civilisation ne peut se penser elle-même, si elle ne dispose pas de quelques autres pour servir de terme de comparaison. La Renaissance a retrouvé, dans la littérature ancienne, des notions et des méthodes oubliées ; mais plus encore, le moyen de mettre sa propre culture en perspective, en confrontant les conceptions contemporaines à celles d'autres temps et d'autres lieux.» The English translation is that of Layton (1976) 272.

famous claim in Terence's *Heautontimorumenos*: *homo sum, humani nihil mihi alienum puto*.[40]

3. Nature, Culture, and Historicity. Towards a Pluralistic Philology

However, even if classical studies are not doomed to reproduce a narcissistic and distorting view of antiquity - since they are intriguingly connected to the understanding of otherness - much depends on our choices and aims. We can adapt the image of ancient cultures to the construction of self-referential views, using the different items of history as *neutral* and *plastic* materials; or we can start from the assumption that Greek and Latin texts contain a fragmentary and diversified representation of past worlds, critically comparable to present-day issues. Probably, the first point we should clear up in order to follow the second way – the way of *historical-cultural comparativism* – concerns the kind of ancient culture, in an anthropological sense, we are willing to analyze.

Curiously enough, some of the most successful surveys of ethno-anthropological interest carried out in the last decades tend to consider antiquity a homogeneous, basically unchangeable system of beliefs. As Gianni Guastella observes, such appreciated studies of the Paris School as Detienne's *Les Maîtres de vérité dans la Grèce archaïque*[41] and *Les Jardins d'Adonis*[42] refer to the manifold corpus of Greek and Latin literature as to a globally cohesive image of *ancient mentality*. In the end, the 19th-century idea of a separate and organic antiquity, ranging from Homer to Nonnus of Panopolis, from Cicero to Boethius, survives through a new, less dogmatic type of approach.[43] Of course, as Guastella himself remarks, this interpretative trend

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40   Cf. Ter. Haut. 77. On the anthropological implications of this Terentian passage see Bettini (1992). Cf. also Bettini (1999) 198–199.
41   Detienne (1967).
42   Detienne (1972).
43   See Guastella (1999) 96: «Spesso non si trattava che di istituire fra i dati (meglio se esotici o stravaganti) collegamenti insoliti, ma con la stessa tecnica di sempre: cioè ricostruendo la ‹cultura› o la ‹mentalità› dei Greci o dei Romani o degli Antichi (quasi si trattasse di un unico, grande sistema) come si era sempre fatto, cioè con la semplice combinazione di informazioni tratte tranquillamente da autori lontanissimi nel tempo e nello spazio: da Omero fino a Nonno di Panopoli e oltre, passando per Platone, Plutarco etc. Se si riusciva a mostrare una continuità fra queste fonti su un determinato punto, voleva

has usefully called attention to original themes, broadening the range of interests of classical scholars. Nonetheless, its focus on the cultural patterns of antiquity – usually *Greek* antiquity – appears to overshadow the *historicity* and *multiplicity* of ancient cultures. The Romans and the Greeks elaborated significantly diverging models of behaviour and belief,[44] and such models differed widely according to places and times – that is to say, they depended on *diatopic* and *diachronic* variations.

The main risk of anthropology-oriented analyses probably lies in an extensive and *synchronic* use of the concept of culture. While trying to imitate the fieldwork method of contemporary ethnographers, classicists interested in an anthropological reading of texts may be led to mix up elements pertaining to different contexts and codes. Most importantly, they may be tempted to level out their materials in an attempt to reconstruct a unitary framework – for they are commonly influenced by the traditional totalizing view of antiquity. To be sure, when classical scholars assess an epigram or a comedy, they are *not* confronted with a reactive, multifaceted human group. They are just following a single cultural track, which descends from specific geo-historical conditions. From this point of view, classical scholarship might be compared to the anthropological investigation of lost or obscure societies – a particular but not infrequent ethnological case in which the analysis of written documents takes on great importance.[45]

In more general terms, anthropological insight and historical contextualization should never be separated. And the so-called *anthropology of the ancient world*[46] should be seen as a historical science following the evolution of cultures with special regard to their *different* symbolic constructs.[47] Needless to

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dire che quello era un ‹tratto distintivo› della cultura greca, la cui consistenza era assicurata dal suo stesso permanere nella lunga durata.»

44   On the socio-anthropological peculiarities of Roman culture and their impact on Latin literature see Bettini (1988) and (2000).

45   In his essay on the cultures of Hawaii, Fiji and New Zealand, for instance, Sahlins (1985) remarked on the role of texts as a useful integrative support for anthropological research. Likewise, when discussing the function and future of historical archaeology, Schuyler (1988) 36–42, championed the establishment of a "historic ethnography, based equally on archaeology and written sources".

46   For a stimulating introduction to the themes and methods of the anthropology of the ancient world see Bettini (2009).

47   The overwhelming influence of *temporality* on both human cultures and the interpretative patterns of anthropology has been forcefully pointed out by Affergan (2003) 102–103: «Autant les cultures dans leur ontologie même, que les diverses interprétations an-

say, when Greek and Latin authors composed literary texts, they did not simply reflect a socio-historical milieu according to deterministic mechanisms. Indeed, they rearranged into a personal many-sided *representation* various sources of influence. In order to understand the meaning and value of ancient representations, modern scholars cannot ignore their *chrono-cultural* features – the anthropological framework acting upon the author at the moment of composition. On closer inspection, *historicity* and *anthropology* prove to be two interconnected sides of ideological analysis.

A solid basis for this kind of approach can also be found in the contemporary reflection on the notion of *culture*, since both ethno-anthropology and animal biology have repeatedly pointed to the historical, dynamic character of *nature* and *culture*. As is well-known, the canonical opposition between natural preconditions and cultural development has been radically revisited and deconstructed on the basis of evolutionary theories. According to contemporary biologists and paleoanthropologists, nature does not underlie the creations of human culture in a static way. On the contrary, the genetic make-up of man and other animals appears to change continuously under the influence of environmental and *cultural* conditions – for culture, in a neurocognitive sense, is no longer considered a distinctive feature of human beings.[48]

Generally speaking, there is no clear-cut division between nature and culture, biological traits and intellectual experiences. Rather, it has been widely

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thropologiques que l'histoire de la discipline nous en offre, en construisant, à chaque renouvellement ou à chaque embranchement théorique, un nouveau visage de l'humain, mettent le doigt et oublient simultanéament, que c'est la temporalité - le regimes d'historicité aussi bien que les rythmes socioculturels - qui autorise une telle édification et qu'à l'expulser ou à la passer sous silence, on encourrait le risque de rater l'essentiel de notre histoire.»

48   See e.g. the remarks of Remotti (2003) 45, who sums up the views of prominent theorists such as Edgar Morin and Clifford Geertz: «Cérébralisation, juvénilisation, régression des comportements innés sont autant d'éléments qui se combinent et se rappelent entre eux, tout en étant eux-mêmes rattachés au rôle prépondérant de la culture. Un cerveau qui pour sa plus grand part croît et se développe pendant la vie postnatale, et qui est donc plongé directement dans un environnent culturel; des organismes dont le caractères infantiles et juvéniles sont longtemps conservés (néoténie) de manière à permettre le développement cérébral d'un côté et l'apprentissage linguistique et culturel de l'autre; corollairement, une contraction et une raréfaction des mécanismes innés de comportement, de manière à laisser du champ à l'exploration, à l'innovation, à l'expérimentation culturelle.»

recognized that such a stereotyped dichotomy embodies a core axiom of Western rationalistic culture.[49] As an all-embracing, inescapable dimension, *historicity* lays the foundations of both human and natural life, and shapes the course of their on-going interaction. No doubt, when in the second edition of *Les structures élémentaires de la parenté* (1967) Lévi-Strauss described the border between nature and culture as a "tenuous and tortuous line", he opened up a very promising pathway for humanistic research.[50]

As regards the present paper's main concern – the methods and stereotypes of classical scholarship – one may legitimately hope that the contemporary reassessment of historicity and its anthropological relevance will lead classicists to reconsider their often dogmatic and teleological approach. In doing so, they can take their cue from cultural anthropologists, who are currently revising the traditional patterns of ethnographic description from a more self-conscious and self-critical perspective.[51] However, as we have

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49 Cf. Rivera (1999) 53: «La dichotomie nature/culture est d'habitude mise en relation avec une série d'oppositions binaires telles que inné/acquis, hérédité/environment, instinct/intelligence, spontané/construit, universel/particulier. Dans l'état actuel de nos connaissances des cultures humaines mais aussi du monde animal, ces oppositions sont tout à faire arbitraires. Elles dependent d'une idéologie étroitement liée à cette forme particulière de rationalité qu'est la rationalité occidentale: celle-ci n'est pas encline à s'interroger sur son arbitraire, ni sur sa partialité.» For a larger treatment see Descola (2005).

50 Cf. Lévi-Strauss (2002) XVI: «Divers phénomènes sont apparus qui rendent la ligne de demarcation [*scil.* entre la nature et la culture], sinon moins réelle, en tout cas plus ténue et tortueuse qu'on ne l'imaginait il y a vingt ans. Des procédés de communication complexes, mettant parfois en oeuvre de véritables symboles, ont été découvertes chez les insects, les poisons, les oiseaux et les mammifères. […] On est ainsi conduit à s'interroger sur la portée veritable de l'opposition de la culture et de la nature. Sa simplicité serait illusoire si, dans une large mesure, elle avait été l'oeuvre de cette espèce du genre *Homo* dite par antiphrase *sapiens*, s'employent férocement à éliminer des formes ambiguës, jugées proches de l'animal; inspirée qu'elle aurait déjà été, il y a des centaines de milliers d'années ou davantage, par le même esprit obtus et destructeur qui la pousse aujourd'hui à anéantir d'autres formes vivants, après tant de sociétés humaines faussement rejetées du côté de la nature parce qu'elles-mêmes ne la repudiaient pas (*Naturvölkern*).» Lévi-Strauss's polemical remarks might also be used as an effective response to the ethnocentric humanism of Wolf and old-fashioned philology (cf. above n. 18–19).

51 The problematization of the scholars' own outlook as a historically determined condition is one of the key themes of the contemporary reflection on *anthropopoiesis*: see e.g Affergan et al. (2003), Calame/Kilani (1999), and Allovio/Favole (1996). For a special focus on the the field of Greek literature see Calame (2006) 81–82: «Ce qui est en jeu

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seen, the relinquishment of a paraboliform view of ancient literature and the adoption of an anthropological line of interpretation do not automatically entail a substantial renewal of classical studies. The depiction of the Greek and Roman worlds in terms of *otherness* may well turn into a deceptive – albeit captivating – commonplace. It has even been argued that we are indulging in a *topos of otherness* which mirrors the present-day inclination to multiculturalism.[52] What is more, we are persisting in the teleological presumption that *our* interpretations are, by definition, epistemologically superior: we are still convinced that after many years of hermeneutical error the *true* face of ancient culture will emerge from our works.[53]

An efficacious corrective to similar deformations could stem from the use of a globally historical perspective in accordance with the trends of present-day anthropology. As classical scholars, we should strive to *historicize* both the different aspects of ancient literature and our own standpoint as observers. For this purpose, the fictitiously objective and impartial attitude of philological analysis should be transformed into a more declarative, self-

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désormais ce sont les opérateurs même de la comparaison: d'une part les categories de base de l'anthropologie culturelle et sociale, d'autre parte les procedures rhétoriques de la mise en discourse et de la textualisation des savoirs indigènes rapatriés. […] Il convient d'éclairer, par contraste et en echo avec des regimes analogues occasionnellement trouvés dans d'autres cultures, les aspects qui semblent pertinents pour nos preoccupations du moment - en pleine coscience du caractère transitoire d'explorations soumises aux préconstruits et aux transformations conjoncturels, dans le flux de l'histoire de notre propre espace culturel e de nos propres interest académiques.»

52 Cf. Cozzo (2011) 354: «La topica dell'alterità, che costituisce l'ambiente in cui tutti ormai respiriamo, non mi pare sfuggire essa stessa alla retorica, questa volta implicita, dello specchio. E doppiamente: da una parte perché la visione degli antichi, dei ‹veri› antichi, come diversi e altri da noi (già wolfiana, anche se con contenuti molto diversi) non è, mi pare, se non lo *specchio* del *nostro* nuovo valore dell'alterità e della differenza […]; dall'altra, perché continuiamo a rivendicare che la storia accademica (per ognuno di noi la *propria* descrizione della storia) coglie e rispecchia alla fine il vero.» On the problematic use of social and anthropological sciences in classical scholarship see also Cozzo (2006) 138–149.

53 As is well-known, the 20th-century epistemology of sciences has resolutely demolished such pretentious beliefs. For instance, Thomas Kuhn's work on "the structure of scientific revolutions" has influentially revised the positivistic ideas of "hard science" and objective truth (cf. e.g. Wray [2011]). And a much more 'pliable' epistemological basis should necessarily be assumed for non-experimental disciplines like the humanities. See the wide-ranging discussion in Cozzo (2006), with further references to contemporary epistemology.

conscious stance - a stylistic practice which is already common in the area of *cultural studies*.[54] After all, no researcher in the humanities can confidently claim to be unaffected by his/her social and cultural position. But if critically expressed, every individual outlook can considerably enrich the content of historical and philological investigations. By making explicit their own convictions and putting their milieu into perspective, scholars have a chance to highlight the continuing intellectual prominence of Graeco-Roman antiquity. Furthermore, if the unyielding scholarly ambition to provide definitive answers were replaced with a straightforward, dialogic attitude, this would also prevent the deplorable practice of *odium philologicum* – the frequently overwhelming hostility between supporters of different theses.[55] It is not excluded that after many centuries of covert manipulation, marginalization of differences, and self-idealization the study of ancient literature will become an exercise in dialogue and pluralism.

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54   For an interesting introduction to the methods and contents of cultural studies see Lutter/Reisenleitner (2002).

55   I use the notion of *dialogue* in the explicitly anti-dialectic sense advocated by Panikkar (1999), in his reflections on religious ecumenism. To make his point clearer, Panikkar resorts to the emphatic definition of *dialogical dialogue* (29–30): "The dialectical dialogue is a dialogue about objects that, interestingly enough, the English language calls 'subject matters'. The dialogical dialogue, on the other hand, is a dialogue among subjects aiming at being a dialogue about subjects. They want to dialogue not about something, but about themselves: they dialogue themselves. In short, if all thinking is dialogue, not all dialogue is dialogical. [...] In the dialogical dialogue the partner is not an object or a subject merely putting forth some objective thoughts to be discussed, but a you, a real you and not an it."

Fabio Tutrone

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