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Zwischen Empirisierung und Konstruktionsleistung.
Anthropologie im 18. Jahrhundert (review)

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Years-War-women. The protagonists presented in subsequent narratives about women in war tend to conform significantly more to female stereotyping than Courage.

Along with coherent reviews of historical and feminist methodologies employed in this study of war and women, the book offers useful plot summaries of the many unfamiliar works. Finally, the book concludes with a useful index of the texts presented and a chronology of the Thirty Years War which includes some of the War's major actors.

The book might have benefited from a careful editorial review. The writing style is frequently imprecise and casual; sentences are often loosely constructed making them unnecessarily ambiguous. Repeated use of conjectures and qualifiers (*ziemlich, allerdings, ausgerechnet, vielleicht, vermutlich*, as in “es war vermutlich niemand geringer als Lessing,” “Die Idee zur Friedensallegorie stammt wohl von Schiller,” etc. etc.) lead to a conversational tone that sometimes detracts from the study's substance. Occasionally, the proofreaders missed a peculiar square behind a number of words, which I assume is part of a programming glitch (92, 247, etc.).

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—Gerhild Scholz Williams

Zwischen Empirisierung und Konstruktionsleistung. Anthropologie im 18. Jahrhundert.

Herausgegeben von Jörn Garber und Heinz Thoma. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2004. x + 366 Seiten. €98,00.

In his contribution to this volume, Jörn Garber, one of its editors, points to the importance of natural history and its interest in the history of mankind for understanding late-eighteenth-century anthropology and related disciplines (260). Indeed, the ‘anthropological turn’ around 1770 with its emphasis on developmental patterns, the body rather than the mind, and empirical knowledge in general is certainly affiliated with developments in philosophy and medicine, but it has its main roots in the empirical science called ‘natural history.’ What emerged as ‘anthropology’ in the late eighteenth century was a new and independent field of thinking, and not just another subdiscipline of philosophy; philosophy in fact started to lose its dominant epistemological position among the arts and sciences around that time, as Garber notes (260). Keeping such considerations in mind, it should be no surprise that most contributions to this volume steer away from philosophy (with the exception of a nevertheless quite informative essay on the Scottish Enlightenment) and focus instead on scientific, historiographic, and literary texts. And yet, the figures representing the ‘canon’ of eighteenth-century natural historical and anthropological thinking—Buffon, Bonnet, Camper, Blumenbach, and especially Herder, to name a few—are mentioned, but not really present as a self-evident frame of reference in this volume. The near absence of Blumenbach in many overviews of eighteenth-century anthropology like this one is particularly regrettable. Herder's role as a major player in German cultural history, not just of the eighteenth century, is increasingly recognized. To understand, however, the complex, contradictory, and sometimes also controversial nature of Herder's works, it is important to look at its roots in texts by men like Blumenbach.

That said, this is a very interesting and in many respects also innovative collection on the emergence of the discipline of anthropology in the late eighteenth

century. Three contributions deal with debates that are directly relevant for the transition from natural history to anthropology. Hans Werner Ingensiep points out that already in the eighteenth century there exists an extensive discussion about anthropoid apes (at the time called “Orang-outangs”) and their possible evolutionary relation to humans. Knowledge about these apes was still sketchy and unreliable, but their similarity to humans was seen as very intriguing. In particular, Rousseau, who asked the question whether the so-called “Orang-outangs” might in fact be primitive humans, plays a key role in this debate (34, 43). Herder is the most outspoken opponent of this idea. In a contribution with a similar focus, Kurt Bayertz examines the debate about the question whether humans’ cognitive abilities could be explained by the fact that they, in contrast to animals, walked upright—a highly controversial matter first put forward in the eighteenth century by the radical materialist Helvétius in his book *De l’Esprit* (even though the issue was already a topic of discussion in antiquity). Johannes Rohbeck discusses Enlightenment historiography. One of the consequences of an increased global historical awareness in the eighteenth century is the introduction in historiography of a new developmental model of which it is assumed that it is valid for all cultures. While this new model makes it possible to conceptualize ‘progress’ within divergent cultural contexts (81), Enlightenment historiography, however, does not commit itself to a teleological model (85). Technological progress does not necessarily lead to moral improvement. Decline is a real possibility for Enlightenment thinkers (92). The fact that humans have an impact on history does not mean that they are able to shape history (95).

One of this collection’s principal merits is that it pays attention to a number of hitherto neglected voices in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century anthropological discourse. In this volume, Denis Diderot and Christoph Martin Wieland receive two contributions each; Georg Forster and Friedrich August Carus are also discussed. Heinz Thoma shows how Diderot in his texts presents an image of humans that emphasizes the sensual side of their nature, that is practical rather than theoretical, and that is aware of the importance of nature for understanding them (146). Sexuality plays a major role in Diderot’s narrative texts; Diderot seems particularly interested in the question what sexual behavior tells us about ourselves as human beings, in particular our relation to nature. Diderot’s view of human nature is rather dark, but nevertheless accompanied by the belief that human nature will perpetually evolve—for better or for worse. Werner Nell’s essay on Diderot and Forster shows that according to both thinkers knowledge is always dependent on a perspective inextricably bound to a specific time and place, in particular where the perception of other peoples and cultures is concerned; the ‘other’ is not an object, and cannot be made part of a systematic hierarchy. In particular Forster also reflects on the necessary limits placed on our understanding of the ‘other’ (189).

In his admirably ambitious reading of Wieland’s *Agathon*, Manfred Beetz emphasizes, in contrast to some of the existing literature on Wieland, that Wieland’s view of human nature is by no means ahistorical (264) but rather emphasizes development. Wieland’s works communicate the insight that no view of the world can be thought as independent of a subject’s viewpoint, even though individuals may not be aware of the subjective nature of their own view of things. Novel and dialogue can, in Wieland’s conception, contribute to an understanding of the factors underlying a subject’s outlook. On the one hand Wieland is a skeptic and relativist; on the other hand he does

believe in tolerance and intellectual exchange (273) as important tools to come to a more humanitarian, 'better' society. Wieland's *Goldner Spiegel* can be read as a critique of obsolete political and theological authorities (290); instead of their dogmatic ideas about humanity, Wieland emphasizes that human nature's developmental potential is essentially open, but influenced by the circumstances under which one lives. In spite of Wieland's relativism and concern about societal and cultural decline—a topic on which too little has been written in eighteenth-century studies—the author nevertheless thinks that nature can serve as a point of orientation for an alternative society (296).

Jörn Garber shows in his excellent contribution on Carus that the anthropological turn of the late eighteenth century was accompanied by attempts to write not just the history of humanity, but also histories of philosophy and psychology starting with Homer and the Old Testament. Carus's *Ideen zur Geschichte der Menschheit*, first published posthumously in 1809, is important as a comprehensive overview in particular of eighteenth-century anthropological thinking. The book is also interesting as background reading to the history of hermeneutics, and documents the origins of German cultural history and the semantics of the German conceptualization of 'culture' in general. In the early twentieth century, Ernst Cassirer would pick up Carus's ideas on the importance of language (symbols) and myth for human understanding of the world. One could argue that Carus offers an alternative trajectory for the history of German anthropology by de-emphasizing the body-mind connection, introduced into the debate by Platner, often seen as the father of modern German anthropology (259), and focusing instead on developmental patterns and natural history. Carus certainly deserves to be part of the 'anthropological canon.'

A number of contributions in this volume discuss topics that are related, but more indirectly linked to developments in eighteenth-century anthropology. Anthropological theory certainly profited from or built on developments in psychology (Wolfgang Riedel, Carsten Zelle). The same goes for the Scottish Enlightenment; Karl-Heinz Schwabe is right when he claims that it was the empirical and therefore more historically oriented perspective of the Scots that made the 'anthropological turn' possible. In his contribution on eighteenth-century mythology, Ulrich Gaier points to the function of myths to mediate between Empiricism and Reason (200), but also notes that such myths stand in the way of understanding the ideas of other cultures (212). Richard Saage discusses how in eighteenth-century utopian thinking nature and the body were gradually viewed more positively as a result of the 'anthropological turn.' Monika Neugebauer-Wölk shows how the Illuminati worked on practical strategies to carry out their ideas of utopia. Alain Montandon reminds his readers of the changing structure of social interaction during the eighteenth century, looking in particular at 'conversation' and 'hospitality' as examples for such changes.

There is no question that the anthropological turn in eighteenth-century studies since the early 1990s has led to a productive reorientation of the field and can also lead to new questions. Diderot and Wieland were quite influential at the time, and both are quite unusual representatives of Enlightenment thinking; their ideas were far more radical than those of many of their contemporaries, and they also reflect the problems of viewing other cultures in more detail than others. I already mentioned the debate on cultural decline in the eighteenth century that certainly deserves to be examined in further detail, not least because it seems to go against the image many

scholars still have of the Enlightenment. In spite of the now common realization that the origins of nineteenth- and twentieth-century racial thinking are located in the eighteenth century, only one contribution in this volume thematizes the topic directly by discussing the perception of other peoples and their cultures. This is an integral part of eighteenth-century anthropological theory and—whether we like it or not—this aspect should be acknowledged. Much work remains to be done in eighteenth-century studies. Fortunately.

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—Carl Niekerk

Lessings Skandale.

Herausgegeben von Jürgen Stenzel und Roman Lach. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2005.
vii + 230 Seiten. €64,00.

Die Aufsätze dieses Bandes entwickelten sich aus einer Tagung der Lessing-Akademie, die im September 2004 in Wolfenbüttel stattfand und sich dem Problem der Skandale im Leben und Schreiben Lessings widmete. Es gibt Skandale Lessings, die—wie die Herausgeber in einem Vorwort behaupten—“gelegentlich bis an die Grenze des Kriminellen” reichten und assoziiert wurden mit: “Diebstahl (Druckbogen Voltaires), Erpressung (Lange, Jöcher), Bestechlichkeit (Märchen von den Tausend Dukaten), Unzucht mit Abhängigen (angeblicher Inzest mit der Stieftochter),” dazu “oft fluchtartiger Ortswechsel, Kotzsche Handel, Fragmentestreit,” und “Kleinere Zerwürfnisse” (vii). Man mag bei all diesen Andeutungen im Vorwort überrascht und auch neugierig sein, mehr zu erfahren; doch nur einige dieser genannten Vorwürfe gegenüber Lessing werden dann auch im Buch konkret behandelt.

Für diese enttäuschte Neugier wird man teils entschädigt durch ausgewogene und interessante theoretische Überlegungen, wie sie im Umfeld des Themenkomplexes besonders die ersten drei Kapitel des Buches bieten. Beantwortet werden solche grundlegenden Fragen, was eigentlich ein Skandal sei, welche Bedingungen dazu gehören, und wie Leben und Werk eines Autors, insbesondere Lessings, zu differenzieren und dann doch wieder zu korrelieren sind.

Das erste Kapitel von Hugh Barr Nisbet zum Thema “Probleme der Lessing-Biographie,” das zweite von Burckhard Dücker “Der Fragmentestreit als Produktionsform neuen Wissens—Zur kulturellen Funktion und rituellen Struktur von Skandalen” und das dritte Kapitel von Anett Lütteken “Souper aux filles: Oder wie man ein öffentliches Ärgernis wird” bieten wertvolle Aspekte zu diesem allgemeinen Themenkomplex. Dokumentiert werden widersprüchliche Tendenzen der Lessing-Biographik, die positivistische und idealistische, und hinterfragt werden sowohl die totale Abkoppelung als auch die vereinfachende Gleichschaltung von Leben und Werk, wobei einige grundsätzliche Fragen der Literaturtheorie und der sachgerechten Verwendung des Skandalbegriffs in einem weiteren Zusammenhang und insbesondere mit Blick auf *Nathan der Weise* zu Wort kommen. Etwas verspielt und mit Genuß liest sich das Kapitel von Anett Lütteken, die Hugo von Hofmannthals *Rosenkavalier*, Thomas Manns *Rede über Lessing* und Mandevilles *Fable of the Bees* herbeizitiert, um zwischen aktiven und passiven Skandalen zu unterscheiden, die didaktische Wirksamkeit von literarischen Skandalen klar zu machen, und somit Lessings Bereitschaft zur Po-