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26. Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s philosophy—albeit created prior to posthumanist theory—is an example that does not privilege human beings over other living organisms but regards them as codependent on their natural environment. I am only briefly summarizing the main points of his phenomenological approach in view of its posthumanist characteristics. For Merleau-Ponty “there is no essence, no idea, that does not adhere to a domain of history and of geography” (Merleau-Ponty, *Visible* 114–15). Attempting “to define a middle ground between the dualistic extremes of intellectualism (idealism) and empiricism (realism),” Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology “wants to emphasize the particularities of the relations to the world of different kinds of organisms, their specific kinds of embodiment, and their different environments” (Westling 17; see also Moran 417). What makes phenomenology attractive is its consideration of a human perspective that predetermines seemingly objective scientific approaches. Whereas empiricist and positivist methodologies focus on factual details and tend to neglect the ethical, ecological, and spiritual implications of scientific discoveries that affect human well-being, the integrative powers of humanism and the humanities address these questions of meaning. For a more extensive discussion of his philosophy’s development and its deviations from Husserl’s and Heidegger’s phenomenological approaches, see Louise Westling, *The Logos of the Living World: Merleau-Ponty, Animals, and Language* (New York: Fordham UP, 2014).
  27. One could even argue that posthumanism takes the Enlightenment/neo-humanist assumption of an unfinished process of enlightenment as the destiny of humanity more seriously than the Enlightenment itself, by declaring human nature subject to perfection as well.
  28. See Wilhelm von Humboldt, “Über den Geschlechtsunterschied und dessen Einfluss auf die organische Natur” (“On the Difference of the Sexes and Its Influence on Human Nature”), in “*Ob die Weiber Menschen sind . . .*,” ed. Sigrid Lange, 284–308; Johann Gottlieb Fichte, “Grundriss des Familienrechts” (“Outline of Family Law”) (excerpt), in Lange 362–410; Immanuel Kant, “Der Charakter des Geschlechts” (“The Character of the Sexes”), in Kant, *Schriften zur Anthropologie, Geschichtsphilosophie, Politik und Pädagogik: Werkausgabe*, 12:648–58.
  29. Barbara Becker-Cantarino asserts, “Patriarchy is deeply ingrained in German Enlightenment discourse. . . .” Becker-Cantarino, “Patriarchy and German Enlightenment Discourse: From Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meister* to Horkheimer and Adorno’s *Dialectic of Enlightenment*,” in Wilson and Holub, *Impure Reason*, 48.
  30. See, for instance, Manfred Kluge und Rudolf Radler, eds., *Hauptwerke der deutschen Literatur: Einzeldarstellungen und Interpretationen* (Munich: Kindler, 1995); see also the required readings in German literature of the high school exit exams for 2019–20, <http://www.deutsch-unterrichtsmaterialien.de/Deutsch-Landesabitur-Inhaltliche-Schwerpunkte.html> (accessed 25 October 2018); see also the book list of the German weekly *Die Zeit*, <https://www.fabelhafte-buecher.de/buecher/die-wichtigsten-buecher-der-weltliteratur-aus-westlicher-sicht/die-100-besten-buecher-nur-die-liste/> (accessed 25 October 2018); as an example of required texts for the master’s exam in German, see the Literary History Reading List at Washington University in Saint Louis of 2005, <https://germanics.washington.edu/sites/germanics/files/documents/grad/lithistmalist.pdf> (accessed 25 October 2018).



31. Johann Gottlieb Fichte's (1762–1814) *Die Bestimmung des Menschen* (1800) and Johann Joachim Spalding's (1714–1804) *Betrachtungen über die Bestimmung des Menschen* (*Reflections on the Vocation of Man*) (1748) are the most renowned publications with this title. *Bestimmung* has also been translated as “determination.”
32. For instance, women authors like Betty Gleim were influenced by neo-humanist reformers and also advocated the importance of education, yet they “opposed their full integration into the workforce, claiming that to open the public sphere to women would turn the world upside down” (Fiero 364).
33. *Ob die Weiber Menschen sind . . . : Geschlechterdebatten um 1800* is also the title of Sigrid Lange's collection of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century philosophical and anthropological texts that illustrate the most pertinent gender debates at the time.
34. The most striking example is Lessing's *Emilia Galotti* (1772), whose heroine begs her father to kill her because she does not want to violate patriarchal bourgeois ethics.
35. These texts are part of Lange's anthology: Sophie von La Roche, “Über meine Bücher” (“About My Books”), 6–13; Susanne von Bandemer, “Zufällige Gedanken über die Bestimmung des Weibes und einige Vorschläge, dieselbe zu befördern” (“Random Thoughts Concerning the Destiny of Women and Some Suggestions to Promote It”), 14–21; Betty Gleim, “aus: Über die Bildung der Frauen und die Behauptung ihrer Würde in den wichtigsten Verhältnissen des Lebens” (“from: *On the Education of Women and the Defense of their Dignity in the Most Important Relations of Their Lives*”), 86–110. Gleim replicates the male gender discourse by deferring to the presumed natural intellectual superiority of men, warning their female readers not to use their education to contradict their husbands or to show off their erudition in social situations. She also blames women for their husbands' loss of interest in them during marriage (92–93) and for unduly provoking their husbands' anger by contradicting them.
36. A detailed analysis of Cathy Caruth's, Ankhi Mukherjee's, and Ottmar Ette's arguments is not possible within the framework of this investigation. I have chosen to focus only on those points that are relevant for the discussion of my methodology. Their essays are included in *PMLA* 125, no. 4 (2010).
37. In Caruth's opinion, Mukherjee suggests that “the concern with literature's survival in the classic as a thinking humanity . . . at risk of erasing its own traces” engenders literature's subsistence (1090).
38. Fish: “If your criteria are productivity, efficiency and consumer satisfaction, it makes perfect sense to withdraw funds and material support from the humanities—which do not earn their keep and often draw the ire of a public suspicious of what humanities teachers do in the classroom—and leave standing programs that have a more obvious relationship to a state's economic prosperity and produce results the man or woman in the street can recognize and appreciate.” “The Crisis of the Humanities Officially Arrives,” *New York Times*, October 2010.
39. The divide between science and culture, summarized by C. P. Snow in 1959, has, of course, a history of academic disciplinary practice that goes back much further. The study of literature, philology, linguistics, musicology, art history, and philosophical ethics, commonly associated with the humanities, had existed a long time before the terms were created. Scholars have argued that Snow's concept of two distinct cultures, the *Geisteswissenschaften* and the *Naturwissenschaften*, was artificial since the activities and methods of the scholars on both sides overlapped. See, for instance, Jens Bod and

- Julia Kursell, "Introduction: The Humanities and the Sciences," *Isis* 106, no. 2 (2015): 337–40.
40. See also Sarah Colvin, "Leaning In: Why and How Should I Still Study the German," *German Life and Letters* 69, no. 1 (2016): 123–41. Colvin makes a similar argument in favor of reading literature: "In a context where literary studies risks disappearing from some curricula altogether, I make the case for literature as one of our most astonishing resources, not only aesthetically but ethically, because it models the humane and intellectually stimulating practice of 'leaning in' to the lived experience of others."
  41. "Literary scholars should know better than to risk relinquishing the term *life* and allowing it to function in such a limited way" (*PMLA* 125, no. 4: 985).
  42. Thus the "discovery" of the "noble savage" on the American continent, prevalent in the French intellectual tradition "from Montaigne to Rousseau," may have already anticipated a posthumanist Enlightenment critique by inspiring a subjectivist relativism that threatened to dissolve the boundaries of the Western subject (Scaglione 68).
  43. For a more in-depth discussion of these developments, see Buck 376–91.
  44. "Studia humanitatis . . . umfassen alles, wodurch rein menschliche Bildung und Erhöhung aller Geistes- und Gemütskräfte zu einer schönen Harmonie des inneren und äußeren Menschen befördert wird." Friedrich August Wolf, *Darstellung der Altertumswissenschaft nach Begriff, Umfang, Zweck und Wert*, Nachdruck der Ausgabe 1807 (Weinheim: Acta Humaniora, 1986): 45. (Studia humanitatis . . . comprise everything that promotes purely human formation and the elevation of all mental and emotional powers for the purpose of achieving the inner and outer human being's beautiful harmony [translation mine].)
  45. "Der wahre Zweck des Menschen—,nicht der, welchen die wechselnde Neigung, sondern welche die ewig unveränderliche Vernunft ihm vorschreibt—ist die höchste und proportionirlichste Bildung seiner Kräfte zu einem Ganzen. Zu dieser Bildung ist Freiheit die erste, und unerlässliche Bedingung" (HuGS 1:106). (The true purpose of Man—not the one that is prescribed by changing inclinations but the one that is determined by unchanging reason—is the highest and most proportional formation of his powers to a whole. Freedom is the first and indispensable condition of this formation [translation mine].)
  46. For a discussion of these developments, see Jonathan Israel, *Enlightenment Contested: Philosophy, Modernity, and the Emancipation of Man 1670–1752* (New York: Oxford UP, 2006).
  47. "Aber ein Unterschied unseres Humanismus, den man den dritten nennen könnte gegenüber jenem zweiten, liegt in der Weite des Suchens und des Verstehens, das wir Modernen aufzubringen vermögen" (But one distinction between our humanism, which one could call the third one as opposed to the second one, lies in the breadth of the search and the understanding that we modern ones can muster) (Spranger, *Geisteswissenschaften* 7).
  48. After all, the name of the young Weimar democracy was a reminder of the humanist tradition.
  49. For a detailed investigation of humanism in the GDR, see Horst Groschopp, *Der Ganze Mensch: Die DDR und der Humanismus; Ein Beitrag zur deutschen Kulturgeschichte* (Marburg: Tectum, 2013). Andreas Agocs traces the utilization of the humanist tradition by antifascist circles of émigrés during the 1930s to the GDR's official claims "to represent the antifascist 'other Germany,'" which lasted until German unification

- in 1989: *Antifascist Humanism and the Politics of Cultural Renewal in Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2017).
50. Ernst Robert Curtius's *Europäische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter*, for instance, was such an attempt to link Germany's culture to the Western tradition. For Curtius and other literary scholars of this period, such as Reinhard Buchwald, Goethe was a poet of the highest rank and of universal significance, comparable to Homer, Dante, and Shakespeare, poetic geniuses who succeeded in transcending the limits of time and space (Buchwald 289–91; Brockmann 116). Robert Mandelkow confirms the exaggerated elevation of Goethe in the postwar reception that celebrated him as the representative not just of a humanist Germany but of the entire Christian sphere of influence (Brockmann 134). In analogy to Goethe, humanism could be invoked to point out great literature's imperviousness to political instability because it allegedly dealt with eternally valid questions concerning the essence of human nature (ibid. 119). By emphasizing humanism's apolitical universality as a corrective of Germany's fascist degeneracy, it ironically obtained an exculpatory function that belied its alleged time-transcendent neutrality.
  51. Antifascist and progressive thinkers on the left (Adorno/Horkheimer, Demetz, Durzak, Hermand, Hinderer, Schonauer, Vormweg) inadvertently furthered the skepticism toward humanism by showing how the Nazis glorified the classics and coopted aspects of the humanist tradition to serve their own ends. In view of such misappropriations, many West German postwar intellectuals shunned humanism's reactionary aura. Some attempted to construe a trajectory from German Idealism to fascism (Sloterdijk, Agamben). Additional examples for the utilization of humanist ideals for political purposes include the GDR's attempt to present itself as the true inheritor of the divided nation's classical humanist legacy.
  52. I will refer repeatedly to Rosi Braidotti's *The Posthuman* because her study focuses extensively on posthumanist developments with regard to the German context.
  53. "Der Mathematiker, der Naturforscher, der Künstler, ja selbst der Philosoph beginnen nicht nur jetzt gewöhnlich ihr Geschäft, ohne seine eigentliche Natur zu kennen und es in seiner Vollständigkeit zu übersehen, sondern auch nur wenige erheben sich selbst späterhin zu diesem höheren Standpunkt und dieser allgemeinen Übersicht" (HuW 1:234) (The mathematician, the natural scientist, the artist, even the philosopher generally begin their endeavor just without knowing and comprehending it in its entirety now. Only a few of them rise to this higher point of view and general comprehension even later [translation mine]).
  54. Kant's, Herder's, and Schiller's assumption of a morally and spiritually free subject that can preserve its freedom over and against all physical and worldly constraints is the foundation of their Idealist philosophies.
  55. A more recent collection of essays that deals with the question of what is human in the context of the so-called *Lebenskraft-Debatte* can be found in John A. McCarthy et al., eds., *The Early History of Embodied Cognition, 1740–1920: The Lebenskraft-Debate and Radical Reality in German Science, Music, and Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 2016).
  56. Unlike the phenomenological approaches of Husserl and Merleau-Ponty, which attempt to reduce the infinite expansion of the scientific universe to a system that can be understood on a human scale, the open-endedness of newer postmodernist theories attempt to avoid any kind of anthropocentrist utilitarianism. Some scholars are critical of postmodernist influences and their effect on the humanities, however. Terry Eagle-

ton, John Guillory, Masao Miyoshi, and Robert Scholes, for instance, claim that post-modernist approaches have contributed to the waning importance of the humanities. Scholes attributes this decline to attempts “to bring the humanities in alignment with an increasingly technobureaucratic culture” in order to appear “more useful” and regain their lost value “in the cultural marketplace” (Scholes 726).

57. Examples of poetic representations of scientifically informed observations can be found in Brockes’s *Irdisches Vergnügen in Gott* (1680–1747); Erasmus Darwin’s “The Loves of Plants” (1789); Herder’s “Vom Erkennen und Empfinden der menschlichen Seele” (1778), or all the metaphorical depictions of the evolution of humankind in the various chains of being or genealogies in tree form. The use of anthropomorphisms and anthropocentric metaphors is by no means limited to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century science but is still common in neuroscientific research of today (Metzinger). In fact, one of my main contentions is that scientific concepts in the so-called life sciences are often based on bodily and sensory human experiences. For this very reason, popular scientific research that relies on anthropomorphic imagery is able to convey scientific processes more comprehensibly than purely scientific discourses.
58. The first philosopher who linked idiosyncrasies among different cultures, races, and nationalities to anthropological, geographical, and historical distinctions was Johann Gottfried Herder. Although Herder attempted to reject the superiority of his own culture and time over other cultures and ages, he was still indebted to Eurocentric and racial biases. Schiller’s universal history, on the other hand, still adheres to an Enlightenment trajectory that privileges eighteenth-century Western civilization over previous ages and more primitive cultures, yet it reveals an awareness of the historicity of human characteristics and its genealogy.
59. For a detailed study on the history of “Objectivity,” see Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, *Objectivity* (New York: Zone Books, 2007).
60. Judith Butler argues in a similar vein by bringing to bear the phenomenology of Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908–61) on the French philosopher Nicolas Malebranche (1638–1715). Malebranche’s “notion that self-understanding is grounded in a necessary obscurity” (60) resonates remarkably well with Merleau-Ponty’s inquiry into sentience, which illustrates the chiasmic relationship between touch and being touched. Based on Malebranche’s dictum “I can feel only what touches me,” Butler problematizes the ontology of the emergence of the “I,” which arises from a preconscious state of being touched. This passive sentience of which the “I” is borne through feeling (46) happens “prior to the emergence of the ‘I.’” The experience of the touch can be narrated only from hindsight because the “I” has not emerged at the moment of sentience. In the words of Butler, the “‘I’ can begin to tell its story only after this inauguration has taken place” (ibid.). This is why, for “Merleau-Ponty reading Malebranche, sentience not only preconditions knowing, but gains its certainty of the outside at the very moment that it feels” (47). The postsentient emergence of the “I” also means that the formation of our selves is subject to outside influences. However, such preconscious influences that “pervade the horizon of consciousness” (60) reaffirm Lakoff and Johnson’s supposition that metaphorical concepts, especially those based on physical, bodily experiences, may precondition rational thought processes.