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Philosophical aesthetics and philosophical anthropology at the turn of the nineteenth century: holism, expressivism, and antipathy to separation

In 1799 Schleiermacher writes a famously scathing review of Kant's *Anthropologie*, published in the previous year, concluding with a verdict of Kant's 'gänzliche[s] Nichtwissen um Kunst und besonders um Poesie'.¹ In a recent essay Chad Wellmon asks a question that is a useful starting point for my concerns here: 'But what is Poesie for Schleiermacher and what does it have to do with anthropology?'² Wellmon's answer is that *Poesie* for Schleiermacher is representative of an aesthetic sense that allows a dialectical interplay that is able to reconcile the tensions between different aspects that make up humankind's nature: for instance our moral and 'natural' aspects, our 'historical particularity and a universal wholeness', the finite nature of individual experiences and our capacity for the infinite (Wellmon, p. 437). Certainly the idea of a dialectic tallies with Schleiermacher's more transparent criticism of Kant's anthropology, according to which Kant fails to explain the interconnection between our natural (physiological) and moral (pragmatic) aspects: 'Der in Kants Denkart gegründete und hier ganz eigentlich aufgestellte Gegensatz zwischen physiologischer und pragmatischer Anthropologie, macht nemlich beide unmöglich' (p. 302). This criticism ties in with the widespread conceptualisation of anthropology in writings in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as an approach to human activity and capacities that treats man as a *whole*. At this stage I will cite only Ernst Platner, whose name became indissociable from the term anthropology in the last decades of the eighteenth century,³ and who wrote one of the most widely read books on anthropology of the period, both inside the university and beyond it, *Anthropologie für Ärzte und Weltweise* (1772).⁴ In that book Platner characterises anthropology as the study of the 'whole person', and makes this the guiding principle of his book. He asserts that '[d]er Mensch ist weder Körper, noch Seele allein; er ist die Harmonie von beyden',⁵ and seeks to explain psychological phenomena in physical terms, and laments the separation of mind and body, for instance the neglect of psychological dimension in physiological anthropology, and the metaphysician's abstractions.

This holism to some extent explains Wellmon's reference to the dialectic, though the two are not exactly the same thing. But it is still hard to understand without further explanation why literature – *Poesie* – should be associated with this idea of dialectical interplay, and Wellmon's essay does not really clarify this. What is the nature of the relationship between these ideas of holism on the one hand and the dialectical interrelation of parts on the other with literature? In the course of this essay I will seek to clarify that connection with reference to an aspect of anthropology's holism, namely what I identify as its *antipathy to separation*, and to the ideas about methodology that accompany this antipathy to separation: that an anthropological approach is descriptive, syncretic, fragmentary, and aphoristic. Such qualities are seen as particularly suitable for the human, making the novel form as it appears in the late eighteenth century a particularly

¹ Friedrich Schleiermacher, 'Anthropologie von Immanuel Kant, Königsberg 1798', *Athenaeum*, II (1799), 300–06 (p. 306).

² Chad Wellmon, 'Poesie as anthropology: Schleiermacher, colonial history, and the ethics of ethnography', *The German Quarterly*, 79 (2006), 423–42 (p. 424).

³ See Mareta Linden, *Untersuchungen zum Anthropologiebegriff des 18. Jahrhunderts*, Studien zur Philosophie des 18. Jahrhunderts, 1 (Frankfurt/Main: Peter Lang, 1976), p. 42 and p. 53.

⁴ See Alexander Košenina, *Ernst Platners Anthropologie und Philosophie: Der philosophische Arzt und seine Wirkung auf Johann Karl Wezel und Jean Paul* (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 1989), pp. 30–34.

⁵ Ernst Platner, *Anthropologie für Ärzte und Weltweise* (Leipzig: in der Dyckischen Buchhandlung, 1772. Facsimile reprint Hildesheim: Olms, 1998), p. iv.

appropriate medium for a 'Diskurs vom Menschen'.⁶ But my title refers to anthropology and *aesthetics*. Where does aesthetics fit into this picture? Schleiermacher himself refers to literature, *Poesie*, but Wellmon treats this as synonymous with aesthetics. He is not alone in doing this, and in fact there is often little concern among commentators to distinguish literature from aesthetics when discussing their overlaps with anthropology. I am also particularly concerned to address the overlaps between anthropology and aesthetics distinctly from those of literature because of the way in which anthropology and aesthetics may both be seen to grow out of – or, as John Zammito puts it, 'burst loose from'⁷ – traditional philosophical enquiry in the second half of the eighteenth century, and gather pace as an interrogation of the rational-conceptual approach as well as the 'foundationalist' aspirations of that philosophy from that time until well into the twentieth century. Both might also be broadly characterized as trying to articulate an answer to the question of what distinguishes humans from other animals, once theological accounts of human distinctness have ceased to be convincing. But I will find that the aforementioned antipathy to separation also casts useful light on the connection between anthropology and aesthetics, which in its Kantian variant is predicated on a separation of freedom and nature. In contrast to this I will cite the philosophy of expressivism, drawing out the links between expressivism as a philosophical approach and anthropology's antipathy to separation.

The obvious thinker to start with in a discussion of anthropology and aesthetics in the late eighteenth century is Immanuel Kant. We have registered Schleiermacher's scathing view of his anthropology, but Kant does pay lip-service to anthropological holism, inasmuch as he describes his own project of anthropology as being characterised by its combination of physiology – what nature makes of man – and pragmatics – what man makes of himself. But – and this is the point of Schleiermacher's criticism – his preference is very much for the latter term. Pragmatic here does not primarily refer to a practical rather than theoretical orientation, though there is clearly a practical intention behind Kant's book: although large parts of it are fairly abstract statements about human cognitive faculties – for instance the interactions between sensibility, imagination and understanding – one of its primary stated aims is to foster good habits and character in the face of desires and passions. But more centrally, its pragmatic orientation denotes the *moral* dimension of humankind's nature which underpins such a project, and brings to the fore one of Kant's main aims in writing the book, namely to wrest the increasingly popular discipline of anthropology from the 'naturalists', which may be understood broadly as what Helmut Pfotenhauer calls the 'physiologically-oriented knowledge of man'.⁸ The twin terms at play here – freedom and nature – are perhaps the crux of Kant's philosophical project, and will be of central significance in what follows.

Alongside the aforementioned holism, this 'naturalist' attitude is an enduring topos of anthropological thinking, such that Axel Honneth and Hans Joas can write 'anthropology in the German sense is interested primarily in ascertaining the human being's fundamental biological nature through scientific investigation'.⁹ This biological, physiological, and naturalistic focus is evident from the early contributions to the tradition of anthropology in the eighteenth century. Zedler's *Grosses vollständiges Universal Lexicon Aller Wissenschaften und Künste*, published between 1731 and 1750, describes anthropology as part of '*Physic*': about man's natural attributes and healthy state.¹⁰ Platner characterises anthropology as believing in 'die Wirklichkeit der Körper [...], als einen geometrischen Beweis' (Platner, *Anthropologie*, p. 103). Johann

⁶ Wolfgang Riedel, 'Literarische Anthropologie: Eine Unterscheidung' in *Wahrnehmen und Handeln: Perspektiven einer Literaturanthropologie*, ed. by Wolfgang Braungart, Klaus Ridder and Friedmar Apel (Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 2004), pp. 337–66 (p. 360).

⁷ John H. Zammito, *Kant, Herder, and the Birth of Anthropology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), p. 221.

⁸ Helmut Pfotenhauer, *Literarische Anthropologie* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1987), p. 4.

⁹ Axel Honneth and Hans Joas, *Social Action and Human Nature*, trans. by Raymond Meyer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 1.

¹⁰ *Grosses vollständiges Universal Lexicon Aller Wissenschaften und Künste*, 64 vols (Leipzig: Johann Heinrich Zedler, 1731–50), II (1732), col. 522.

Christian Lossius, in his *Neues philosophisches allgemeines Real-Lexikon* (1803), calls anthropology 'die natürliche Geschichte oder Naturgeschichte des Menschen'.¹¹ Two hundred years later Charles Taylor, one of the foremost proponents of the tradition of philosophical anthropology in the twentieth century, still associates anthropological thinking with an adherence to 'naturalist epistemology' or the 'naturalist temper'.¹² This naturalist or sensory focus also provides the connection between anthropology and aesthetics in the view of most commentators, in view of Alexander Baumgarten's conceptualisation of the aesthetic as the analysis of sensory knowledge, which seeks to do justice to the sensuous dimension of experience. One might draw a line from Baumgarten's notion of sensory knowledge to Helmut Plessner's interest in the cognitive potentials of seeing and hearing, which he thought should replace the discussion of beauty as regards the value of art:¹³ 'Für Plessner wäre eine so verstandene Anthropologie gerade Grundlage der spezifisch modernen Kunsttheorie, der Theorie der avantgardistischen Kunst.'¹⁴ But I think that the connection between aesthetics and anthropology in the late eighteenth century works at more levels than this nexus of the sensory and the cognitive, insofar as neither can be simply reduced to a valorisation of the sensory, biological, or physiological component of experience and meaning. Of course, any valorisation of the sensory is already complicated, inasmuch as the sensory is not just sensory, but rather also among other things emphasises elements of experience that cannot be subsumed under concepts. In this vein Andreas Käuser reads anthropology's naturalism as an 'Antidiskurs zum herrschenden Wissenschaftskonzept der Aufklärung' (p. 198),¹⁵ with its preference for knowledge that is abstract, conceptual and disembodied. Wolfgang Riedel likewise identifies anthropology's sensory focus as part of a de-idealisation of literature: 'Dieser Diskurs bewegt sich [...] in größtmöglicher Nähe zu Erfahrung und Erleben, Aisthesis und Emotion, und ist von daher gekennzeichnet durch eine geradezu spezifische Leibaffinität.'¹⁶ But both this final emphasis on the body in Riedel's formulation and Käuser's analysis of the overlap between aesthetics and anthropology are still largely bound to a reading of the sensory or corporeal, for instance in the latter's discussion of the body's contribution to communication. In my view this focus on the body risks perpetuating a dualism which is – and this is my underlying thesis in this essay – precisely what some contributions to the anthropological tradition are concerned to overcome.

In the case of aesthetics, it barely needs stating that theories about the aesthetic dimension in the late eighteenth century are proposing something more complicated than a valorisation of sensory knowledge. Admittedly, Kant initially follows Baumgarten in wanting aesthetics to refer not to beauty or art but to the dimension of experience that is characterised by such terms as sensation, receptivity, and the mode of how we are affected by objects. But it becomes central to the philosophical significance of the aesthetic in Kant's writings that its non-conceptual nature is associated with the other pole of human experience: not sensory receptivity, but human *spontaneity*. Emblematic of this is Kant's concept of the 'aesthetic idea', characterised in the *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, Paragraph 49, as 'diejenige Vorstellung der Einbildungskraft, die viel zu denken veranlaßt, ohne daß ihr doch irgendein bestimmter Gedanke, d. i. Begriff, adequat sein kann'.¹⁷

¹¹ Johann Christian Lossius, *Neues philosophisches allgemeines Real-Lexikon*, 4 vols (Erfurt: Rudolphi, 1803), I, 304.

¹² Charles Taylor, *The Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), p. 22.

¹³ See Helmut Plessner, *Die Einheit der Sinne: Grundlinien einer Aesthesiologie des Geistes* (Bonn: Cohen, 1923).

¹⁴ Andreas Käuser, 'Anthropologie und Ästhetik im 18. Jahrhundert: Besprechung einiger Neuerscheinungen', *Das achtzehnte Jahrhundert*, 14 (1990), 196–206 (p. 201).

¹⁵ See also Katherine M. Faull, 'Introduction' in *Anthropology and the German Enlightenment: Perspectives on Humanity*, ed. by Faull (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1995), pp. 11–19 (p. 13).

¹⁶ Wolfgang Riedel, 'Literarische Anthropologie: eine Unterscheidung', in *Wahrnehmen und Handeln*, pp. 337–66 (p. 360).

¹⁷ Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft, Akademieausgabe der Gesammelten Werke*, v (Berlin: Königlich Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1913), p. 314.

Phenomena that excite the cognitive faculties but which are not reducible to concepts are taken by Kant to be a means of accessing the infinite and super-sensory realm of ideas, shorn of any particular purpose. Again this may be mapped onto the fundamental antinomy in Kant's work: freedom and nature. Reason and ideas are associated with freedom, whereas understanding is associated with nature. Like his anthropology, Kant's mature aesthetics is primarily concerned with accommodating an idea of human freedom within a world of determinate nature. This articulation of freedom and nature is expressed in several ideas: beauty, even if it appears in the seemingly purposeless mechanism (nature), is associated with something purposive, usually seen as a quality of free human reason. Or, similarly, beautiful objects are seen to be ones in which infinite ideas are given finite, sensuous form.¹⁸ Likewise the aesthetic experience is taken by Kant to indicate something universal and disinterested, even if it is always at some level subjective and determinate.

These are broad brush strokes, but the point for my concerns is that Kant's analysis of the aesthetic is predicated on the separation of nature (in its manifestations as understanding or empirical experience) and freedom (in its manifestations as reason, logic or the free play of imagination), even if the aesthetic is seen to be an experience in which they are combined. In this analysis, the aesthetic experience is seen to reconnect various seemingly separate elements of experience. It explains our connection to the world, grounded in subjectivity but partaking of universal value. It explains the connection between different elements of ourselves, such as the understanding and imagination, which Kant sees as deriving from nature and freedom respectively, and which are seen to achieve harmony in the pleasure of the experience of beauty (see Paragraph 9 of the *Kritik der Urteilskraft*). Here my main concern is to underline the dualism at the heart of Kantian aesthetics, which is the same one that Schleiermacher discerns in his anthropology: the separation between a world of nature and a world of freedom. One might even speculate that Kantian and post-Kantian aesthetics remains beholden to dualism because it is precisely *conceived* as the means to reunite two spheres. The point where this connecting role becomes a specific project is in Schiller's aesthetics, in which aesthetic experience can unify or rebalance our sensuous and rational faculties, as expressed in Letter XXI of the *Ästhetische Briefe*. He refers to mankind's capacity to achieve this balance the 'Schenkung der Menschheit'.¹⁹ Schiller's debt to Kant is apparent when he sees this harmony of our sensuous and rational faculties as generating a freedom that he calls 'aesthetic'. ('Über die ästhetische Erziehung', p. 377) Schiller's writings are also the point at which the overlap between aesthetics and anthropology becomes apparent: his work has been described as 'programme of anthropological aesthetics'.²⁰ But it is worth noting that there is a tension between such a project, in which unity is something to be achieved, for instance in the aesthetic experience, and the anti-dualist attitude of Schiller's early, more 'anthropological' essays, in which the premise is that humankind is already an 'innigste Vermischung' of body and soul: 'Diß ist die wunderbare und merkwürdige Sympathie, die die heterogenen Principien des Menschen gleichsam zu *Einem* Wesen macht, der Mensch ist nicht Seele und Körper, der Mensch ist die innigste Vermischung dieser beiden Substanzen.'²¹

I call these early essays 'anthropological' because much late eighteenth century anthropology does not see holism as project of reunifying the faculties, but is pointedly *anti-dualist* in its concern to avoid this kind of hard-and-fast conceptual separation in the first place. I have already cited Platner's anthropological conceptualisation of humankind as a 'harmony' of mind and body. Likewise Heinrich Weber in *Anthropologische Versuche* (1810) defines 'true anthropology' as the 'Wissenschaft des ganzen concreten Menschen, äussere und innere Menschenlehre

¹⁸ See Andrew Bowie, *Aesthetics and Subjectivity: From Kant to Nietzsche*, 2nd edn (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), p. 43.

¹⁹ Friedrich Schiller, 'Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen in einer Reihe von Briefen', NA, 20, pp. 309–412 (p. 378).

²⁰ Walter Hinderer and Daniel Dahlstrom, 'Introduction', Friedrich Schiller, *Essays*, ed. by Hinderer and Dahlstrom (London: Continuum, 1993), pp. vii–xxv (p. viii).

²¹ Friedrich Schiller, 'Versuch über den Zusammenhang der thierischen Natur des Menschen mit seiner geistigen', NA, 20, pp. 37–75 (p. 64).

zusammen'.²² One can discern a range of positions in the anthropological texts, from those that retain dualist categories, to those that go further in rejecting their validity. Even the former, though, insist on the many influences of mind on body and vice versa. Carl Schmid in his *Empirische Psychologie* (1791) sees mind and body 'in wechselseitigem Verhältnisse zu einander',²³ and sees his task as investigating the reciprocal relationship between man's internal aspects ('Empfinden, Denken und Begehren') and external aspects ('seine Körper, die mit ihm zunächst verbundene Materie, oder die fort dauernden Erscheinungen seines äussern Sinnes') (*Empirische Psychologie*, p. 11). Karl Pölitiz characterises anthropology in *Populäre Anthropologie, oder Kunde von dem Menschen nach seinen sinnlichen und geistigen Anlagen* (1800) as a 'Lehre von den äussern und innern bleibenden Erscheinungen an dem Menschen', albeit describing it in this regard as an 'isolated science'.²⁴ Victorin Laaber in *Grundzüge der neuern Philosophie* (1801) describes anthropology as the analysis of inner, mental and outer, physical aspects of experience, and in particular of their mutual 'Wechselwirkung'.²⁵ Johann Wezel in *System der empirischen Anthropologie* (1803) characterises anthropology as the 'Wissenschaft von der doppelten Natur des Menschen in ihrem Zusammenhange, gegenseitigen Verhältnisse und Einflüsse'.²⁶ The point that I want to draw out of the above statements is that the stated aim is not to explain the interconnection between mental and corporeal experience, nor to achieve harmony between the two. Rather because things are interconnected in experience, the challenge is for knowledge to trace and describe the manifold interrelations between disparate elements. Several of the contributors to the discourse on anthropology in the late eighteenth century state explicitly that they are not interested in explaining the interconnection between body and mind, rather they precisely take man's *unity* as a starting premise, as the *sine qua non* of meaningful experience. Platner insists that the question of how the connection between soul and world is possible is irrelevant to him (see Platner, *Anthropologie*, pp. xi-xii). Johann Feder, albeit not wanting to give up on dualist categories, sees the connection between mind and body as being a matter of everyday experience.²⁷ Wilhelm Liebsch in *Grundriß der Anthropologie physiologisch und nach einem neuen Plane bearbeitet* (1808) criticizes some contributions to anthropology for being premised on the idea that mind and body are separate, which he adjudges to be an 'unverweisliche und irrige Voraussetzung'.²⁸

These anti-dualist reflections do not happen in a vacuum, of course. The context for these writings may be speculatively reconstructed from theories associated with vitalism and to a lesser extent mechanism and animism, which in the course of the eighteenth century gradually introduce decidedly holist elements in thinking about humankind's make-up. At the start of the century Georg Ernst Stahl, ostensibly an animist, revalorises physiological elements, insofar as he suggests that the body has 'intelligences', evident for instance in the way it moves the blood flow to where it is needed (Stahl, *De Motu Tonico Vitali*, 1692). This insight leads to his view of pathology and physiology, dealt with in *Theoria Medica Vera* (1708), based on the 'organic body', preparing the way for an approach that takes man as an *integrated whole*.²⁹ Albrecht von Haller's

²² Heinrich Benedict von Weber, *Anthropologische Versuche zur Beförderung einer gründlichen und umfassenden Menschenkunde für Wissenschaft und Leben* (Heidelberg: Mohr und Zimmer, 1810), p. 7.

²³ Carl Christian Erhard Schmid, *Empirische Psychologie* (Jena: Cröker, 1791), p. 11.

²⁴ Karl Heinrich Ludwig Pölitiz, *Populäre Anthropologie, oder Kunde von dem Menschen nach seinen sinnlichen und geistigen Anlagen* (Leipzig: Kramer, 1800), p. 6 and p. 16.

²⁵ Victorin Laaber, *Grundzüge der neuern Philosophie*, 2 vols (Wien: Doll, 1801) II, p. 381.

²⁶ Johann Karl Wezel, *System der empirischen Anthropologie, oder der ganzen Erfahrungsmenschenlehre*, 2 vols (Leipzig: Dyksch, 1803), I, p. 13.

²⁷ See Linden, p. 42.

²⁸ Wilhelm Liebsch, *Grundriß der Anthropologie physiologisch und nach einem neuen Plane bearbeitet*, 2 vols (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1806–08), II, p. xxiii.

²⁹ See Johanna Geyer-Kordesch, 'Georg Ernst Stahl's radical Pietist medicine and its influence on the German Enlightenment' in *The medical enlightenment of the eighteenth century*, ed. by Andrew Cunningham and Roger French (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 67–87 (p. 69, p. 75).

identification in 1756 of irritability as a property of muscle fibres has also been seen as a theory of 'innate bodily faculties' that discredits strictly mechanist and animist models.³⁰ In mid-century there are a number of other contributions that start to identify more specific interconnections between mind and body. David Hartley's *Observations on Man, his Frame, his Duty* (1749) is the first book on psychology that links mind and physiology via the nervous system. Johann Gottlob Krüger, as part of his *Naturlehre* (1740-50), under the section on pathology, discusses the connection between nerves and mind in terms of analogy.³¹ Johann Georg Sulzer investigates the physiological basis for imagination in *Untersuchung über den Ursprung der angenehmen und unangenehmen Empfindungen* (1751/2), and fixations or memories are seen to be the basis of experiences that are as present and intense as physical sensations, with the conclusion that in some experiences sensory and mental capacities are indistinguishable (see Dürbeck, *Einbildungskraft und Aufklärung*, p. 135, pp. 153-155). Ernst Platner himself investigates the physiological dimension of attention, memory and imagination (see Platner, *Anthropologie*, pp. 103-170), aspects of his work that go some way to refuting Pfortenhauer's verdict that it ends up in a physiological dead-end, and Käuser's view that anthropology's sensory focus suffers from a 'mangelnde Dialektik' and 'syntheselose Antinomie' ('Anthropologie und Ästhetik im 18. Jahrhundert', p. 204.).

The antipathy to separation that is my central theoretical idea here is also evident in the methodological orientation that is associated with anthropology, which Sergio Moravia characterizes as a process of 'epistemological liberalisation'.³² Key methodological tenets here which link directly to anthropology's naturalism are empirical observation, description, and the physiological basis of writings on anthropology – all in keeping with the new positivism and objectivism that characterised modern science since the seventeenth century. But it is also important to note that the methodology that is the stated preference of some of those associated with anthropology is hybrid, syncretic, and interdisciplinary. Tessitore calls it an 'Ausdehnung des Erkenntnisbereichs über die Gesetze des diskursiven Denkens hinaus'.³³ This extension can mean a reference to multiple sources, and a variety of texts, such as religious texts or literary works, as well as science and philosophy,³⁴ what Pfortenhauer refers to as a 'Mischformen der Argumentation' (*Literarische Anthropologie*, p. 4). Gottfried Wenzel in *Menschenlehre oder System einer Anthropologie nach den neuesten Beobachtungen, Versuchen und Grundsätzen der Physik und Philosophie* (1802) describes the demands on the anthropologist made by such methodology: 'Philosoph, Physiker, Anatom und Physiolog muß der Mann sein, der in dem grossen Gebiete der Anthropologie Fortschritte Machen will'.³⁵ The association of anthropology with aphoristic method is also important here. In the *Vorrede* to his *Anthropologie* Platner describes the advantage of aphorism in terms which might be taken as consciously *anti-systematic*: 'Die aphoristische Schreibart hat den Vorzug der möglichsten Kürze, und dieses ohne Nachtheil der Vollständigkeit.' (p. xix) The key quality of aphorism here seems to be that it eschews any fundamental, philosophical explanation of the relationship between parts. In this vein Pfortenhauer makes the link between aphorism and anthropology's antipathy to separation: 'Allein der aphoristische Stil darf Sachverhalte witzig-experimentierend und ohne systematische Trennungen und Hierarchisierungen fassen' (*Literarische Anthropologie*, p. 6). Käuser likewise

³⁰ See Hubert Steinke, *Irritating Experiments: Haller's Concept and the European Controversy on Irritability and Sensibility, 1750–90*, Wellcome Series in the History of Medicine, 76 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005), p. 10.

³¹ See Gabriele Dürbeck, *Einbildungskraft und Aufklärung. Perspektiven der Philosophie, Anthropologie und Ästhetik um 1750* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1998), p. 123.

³² Sergio Moravia, 'The Enlightenment and the Sciences of Man', *History of Science*, 18 (1980), 247–68 (p. 247).

³³ Fulvio Tessitore, *Kritischer Historismus: Gesammelte Aufsätze*, Collegium Hermeneuticum: Deutsch-italienische Studien zur Kulturwissenschaft und Philosophie, 11 (Köln: Böhlau, 2005), p. 25.

³⁴ Christian Thies, *Einführung in die philosophische Anthropologie*, 2nd edn (Darmstadt: WBG, 2009), p. 13.

³⁵ Cited in Linden, p. 125.

insists: 'Nicht also ein kohärentes System, eine in sich schlüssige und logische Darstellungsweise ist somit kennzeichnend für eine anthropologische Ästhetik, sondern eine fragmentarische Diskursform' ('Anthropologie und Ästhetik', p. 205).

The methodological turn is also the point at which to bring literature back into the picture, before returning to the question of the connection with aesthetics. To Wellmon's fairly unspecific notion of dialectical dynamism as the quality that underlies the association between literature and anthropology I propose to add the qualities of antipathy to separation and methodological hybridity. Crucial here is the growing status of narrative prose, and in particular the previously low-status fictional novel, during the second half of the eighteenth century, which is seen as the point at which – before the advent of the human and social sciences – discussion of man and his psychology first takes centre-stage. In this vein Wolfgang Riedel describes literature as 'Medium des Menschenstudiums', the best medium for showing 'das Innre des Menschen'.³⁶ He shows how this phenomenon is evident in the novels that study human and moral development (e.g. those of Wieland), but also those diaries that make a point of self-observation (e.g. those of Lichtenberg), and even those pointedly psychological stories with a moral intention (e.g. Schiller's moral case studies). Moral material and lessons clearly abound here, but Riedel discerns a shift from moral interest to psychological interest in the character, and specifically the origin or development of the mind (see 'Anthropologie und Literatur', pp. 133-4). One of the places this multi-faceted approach to literature gets most clearly theorised is in Christian Friedrich von Blanckenburg's *Versuch über den Roman* (1774), in which he makes a claim for the appropriateness of the novel form for the age, analogous to the Greeks' epic poem.³⁷ In the main body of the essay he implores contemporary novelists to attend to the simultaneous presentation of mind, body, and environment in their main characters:

Der Dichter wird in der Zusammensetzung seines Charakters, Rücksicht auf seine Zeit, seine Erziehung, sein Alter, sein Land, seine Religion, seinen Stand im bürgerlichen Leben, auf die Eigenschaften selbst, die er ihm gibt: mit einem Worte, auf seine ganze Verfassung Rücksicht nehmen müssen [...]. Er wird so gar auf körperliche Umstände, auf Temperament und andere Dinge mehr sehen, und den Einfluß derselben nie aus dem Auge lassen. (*Versuch*, p. 65)

The focus on human development and biography in these examples is a crucial instance of the process by which anthropology absolves itself of the need to follow strict philosophical method and to observe categorical separations, insofar as it marks the point at which knowledge of the human starts to become less abstract and more concrete and contextual, less systematic and more individual and personal. Helmut Pfotenhauer explores the methodological implications of anthropology's literary manifestation in autobiography, referring to 'die Lebensbeschreibung – und genauer: die eigenen Lebensbeschreibungen, die Ausbreitungen des Individuell-Eigenartigen am Ich' (*Literarische Anthropologie*, p. 14). I will come back to this issue of 'Ausbreitungen' later, but an obvious contrast here with philosophy that has universal ambitions is that personal self-reference is permitted: Pfotenhauer refers in this regard to the 'Neigung zum literarischen Selbstbezug im Sachbezug' (p. 6). We can trace this attitude back to Johann Gottfried Herder, in whose most anthropological essay, 'Vom Erkennen und Empfinden in der menschlichen Seele' (1778), we find the assertion that the 'tiefste Grund unsres Daseins ist individuell, so wohl in Empfindungen als Gedanken'.³⁸ In keeping with this, Herder thinks that the life story, and autobiography in particular, is the most authentic way to write the 'Seelenlehre', displacing the

³⁶ Wolfgang Riedel, 'Anthropologie und Literatur in der deutschen Spätaufklärung. Skizze einer Forschungslandschaft', *Internationales Archiv für Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur*, Sonderheft 6 (1994), 93–157 (pp. 111, 133).

³⁷ Christian Friedrich von Blanckenburg, 'Vorbericht', in Blanckenburg, *Versuch über den Roman* (Leipzig: Siegers, 1774. Facsimile reprint Stuttgart: Metzler, 1965), pp. 11–12.

³⁸ Johann Gottfried Herder, 'Vom Erkennen und Empfinden in der menschlichen Seele', *Herders Sämtliche Werke*, ed. by Bernhard Suphan, 33 vols (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1877–1913), VIII (1892), pp. 165–235 (p. 207).

tendency to reduce experience to universalizable concepts ('Vom Erkennen und Empfinden', p. 180.) Arnold Gehlen, a thinker who contributes to the discourse on philosophical anthropology in the early twentieth century, is making the same point two hundred years later when, in *Der Mensch: Seine Natur und seine Stellung in der Welt*, he suggests that one can approach reality either in terms of 'Begriffsschemata', such as drive theory, or one can accept that human responses to experiences are so variable, notwithstanding the array of instinctual drives that we are subject to, that there is a point beyond which we can only understand a person's reality in terms of individualised description: 'Entweder erhält man für "den Menschen" eine beliebig lange Liste inhaltlich ausgeleerter Begriffe, oder, wenn man konkretisieren will, fällt man notwendig ins Beschreibend-Biographische zurück.'³⁹

This preference for 'concrete' description of a life over universal, abstract concepts is characteristic of anthropology. We have already encountered a variant of it in Heinrich Weber's characterisation of anthropology, cited at the outset, as dealing with the 'ganzer, concreter Mensch'. This concrete quality is contrasted with an approach that is excessively theoretical, as is encapsulated in Hans-Jürgen Schings' remark that the eighteenth-century 'anthropologisch-psychologischer Roman' is anti-theoretical, marking (in the case of Wieland's *Don Silvio*) the 'Sieg der Natur und der natürlichen Erklärung, also auch der Anthropologie, über die Schwärmerei, das Wunderbare, also auch über die Metaphysik'.⁴⁰ It seems reasonable to interpret Schings' reference to metaphysics here in terms of the antipathy to separation that is the central theme of this essay, where metaphysics denotes precisely the kind of methodology that separates reason and logic from need and volition. It is important to register that the enemy here is not philosophy *per se*, which after all in the eighteenth century was also often used as a term for the kind of investigation of cognitive processes that we now label psychology, but rather philosophy that proceeds by means of conceptual and categorical separation and abstraction. Certainly anthropological writings contain repeated verdicts on such approaches to philosophy. Karl Pölitz, for instance, characterizes anthropology in contrast to 'historische, zur Wissenschaft erhobene, Darstellungen der verschiedenen philosophischen Meinungen über das Verhältniss der Dinge an sich zu den Erscheinungen' (Pölitz, *Populäre Anthropologie*, pp. 14-15). Jutta Heinz discerns a gradual 'Emanzipation der Anthropologie von der Philosophie'. Johann Karl Wezel's *Versuch über die Kenntnis vom Menschen* (1784/85) sums up this development. Wezel's work is identified for two reasons: firstly, it presents an 'anthropologische Matrix' of internal and external influences and phenomenal effects;⁴¹ secondly, Wezel's methodology largely eschews 'jegliche definitorische Bestimmungen', 'ideologische Vorannahmen [...] oder metaphysische Gewißeheiten', and keeps 'die Zahl relevanter Vorannahmen bewußt niedrig'. In place of these modes of analysis the author is seen to limit himself to the 'von Wezel einzig anerkannten "Gesetz der allgemeinen Verknüpfung"' (*Wissen vom Menschen*, p. 37), the formulation of which I take to be consciously loose.⁴²

A key figure in exploring the philosophical implications of anthropology, and in particular the antipathy to separation that is my central theme here, is Johann Gottfried Herder. Herder doesn't write a book on anthropology, and his first reference to anthropology is oblique to say the least: in the *Anlage* to an early essay called 'Wie die Philosophie zum Besten des Volks allgemeiner und

³⁹ Arnold Gehlen, *Der Mensch: Seine Natur und seine Stellung in der Welt. Gesamtausgabe*, 10 vols planned (Frankfurt/Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1978-), III,1 (1993), p. 389.

⁴⁰ Hans-Jürgen Schings, 'Der anthropologische Roman. Seine Entstehung und Krise im Zeitalter der Spätaufklärung', in *Deutschlands kulturelle Entfaltung 1763-1790: Die Neubestimmung des Menschen: Wandlungen des anthropologischen Konzepts im 18. Jahrhundert*, ed. by Bernhard Fabian, Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann and Rudolf Vierhaus (Munich: Kraus-Thomson International, 1980), pp. 247-75 (p. 253).

⁴¹ Jutta Heinz, *Wissen vom Menschen und Erzählen vom Einzelfall: Untersuchungen zum anthropologischen Roman der Spätaufklärung* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1996), pp. 37-38.

⁴² Heinz, p. 37. The quotation is from Johann Karl Wezel, *Versuch über die Kenntnis des Menschen*, 2 vols (Leipzig: in der Dykischen Buchhandlung, 1784/5. Facsimile reprint Frankfurt/Main: Athenäum, 1971), I, 129.

nützlicher werden kann' (1765), Herder speculatively proposes that philosophy be 'auf Anthropologie zurückgezogen',⁴³ conceptualising anthropology as a philosophy with more modest scope and aims. This might explain Wolfhart Pannenberg's reference to Herder as 'the point of departure for modern philosophical anthropology'.⁴⁴ The fragmentary proposal comes in the context of an essay in which Herder takes issue with the orientation of philosophy around abstracted logic and rational, speculative analysis, allegedly divorced from need or volition and in his view unnecessarily and erroneously separated from psychology and instrumental knowledge. Again, here, antipathy to conceptual separation seems to be the watchword. In 'Vom Erkennen und Empfinden', Herder protests against philosophy that separates out aspects of experience with artificial classifications:

Wer mir sagt, was Kraft in der Seele sei und wie sie in ihr würke; dem will ich gleich erklären, wie sie außer sich, auch auf andre Seelen, auch auf Körper würke, die vielleicht nicht in der Natur durch solche Bretterwände von der Seele geschieden sind, als sie die Kammern unsrer Metaphysik scheiden. Überhaupt in der Natur ist nichts geschieden, alles fließt durch unmerkliche Übergänge auf- und ineinander; und gewiß, was Leben in der Schöpfung ist, ist in allen Gestalten, Formen und Kanälen nur Ein Geist, eine Flamme. ('Vom Erkennen und Empfinden', p. 178.)

As the final clause indicates, of all the thinkers associated with anthropology, Herder takes the most decisive step away from Cartesian dualism and towards monism. One can discuss the strengths and weaknesses of monism and dualism as ontological positions, as Hugh Nisbet usefully does,⁴⁵ but in my analysis the primary motivation for Herder's antipathy to dualism and for his use of the vitalist concept of *Kraft* is his concern to avoid hard-and-fast conceptual distinctions and categorical separations of different aspects of experience: reason and logic from need and volition, and so on.

This issue of conceptual and categorical separation brings us back to Schleiermacher and his criticism of Kant, whose apriorism is another instance of philosophy that operates by such a method. Schleiermacher takes the view that the *sine qua non* of anthropology is the conjoining of the free and the determined elements of our nature: 'Anthropologie soll eben die Vereinigung beider seyn, und kann nicht anders als durch sie existieren' ('Anthropologie', p. 302). He thinks Kant's approach to anthropology is typical of his usual method, which proceeds by the 'Abteilungen der Wissenschaft' (p. 301), and thereby robs the self [Ich] of 'aller Darstellung und alles Zusammenhanges' (pp. 302-03). In this way Schleiermacher's critique of Kant's 'Denkart', with its conceptual distinctions and categorical separations, touches on core philosophical tenets to do with knowledge and selfhood.

Anthropology's antipathy to separation means that its naturalist aspect cannot be understood exclusively in terms of this 'Leibaffinität', as Riedel and others suggest. Such an emphasis on the body arguably invokes the dualism that key strands of anthropological thinking take issue with. In this vein, I also want to suggest that what Schings calls the 'Sieg der Natur und der natürlichen Erklärung' over metaphysics may be identified precisely as the interweaving of psychological and physical, internal and external factors, combined with the avoidance of excessive ideological or metaphysical explanation. We have registered Blanckenburg's call for the simultaneous presentation of mind, body, and environment. Implicit in this call is Blanckenburg's view of the inseparability of inner and outer aspects of our experience, both in terms of mind and body, and internal self and external environment. He thinks that a novel is not just about external adventure, for external action and external causes can never be the driving force for action (see *Versuch*, p.

⁴³ Johann Gottfried Herder, 'Wie die Philosophie zum Besten des Volks allgemeiner und nützlicher werden kann', in *Herders Sämmtliche Werke*, XXX/2 (1899), 31–61 (p. 37).

⁴⁴ Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Anthropology in Theological Perspective*, trans. by Matthew J O'Connell (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1985), p. 43.

⁴⁵ See H. B. Nisbet, *Herder and Scientific Thought*, MHRA Dissertation Series, 3 (Leeds: Maney, 1970).

260). Rather the novel must present an 'anschauende Verbindung des Innern und Aeußern', which makes the novel into a 'vollkommene[s] dichterische[s] Ganze' (p. 301, p. 10). He sees the novel as being held together by the 'innere Geschichte eines Charakters', and as distinguished from drama by its unique focus on the 'Veränderung des Inneren Zustandes seiner Personen' (p. 390, p. 391). But if a novel tells just the inner story, then the reader will feel that they are only getting half the story (see p. 396), and in any case Blanckenburg views inner thoughts and outer experience as barely separable: 'So verhält es sich im wirklichen Leben. Das Innre und Aeußere des Menschen hängt so genau zusammen, daß wir schlechterdings jenes kennen müssen, wenn wir uns die Erscheinungen in diesem, und die ganzen Aeußerungen des Menschen erklären und begreiflich machen wollen' (p. 263). (It is notable that, often, when Blanckenburg refers to inner or outer aspects of a character he writes in bold [see pp. 260, 388, 395, 401].) The common ground between Blanckenburg's concerns here and those of anthropologists like Pölitiz and Wezel underlies Jutta Heinz's characterization of his ideas on the novel as a 'Fortführung der Anthropologie mit anderen Mitteln' (*Wissen vom Menschen*, p. 137). Moreover, in my view this kind of presentation of the external world of body, events and actions interwoven with the internal world of thoughts, attitudes, and desires doesn't so much suggest a departure from theory, but arguably something more proto-phenomenological. Heinz calls Wezel's descriptive approach in 'Versuch über die Kenntnis vom Menschen' phenomenological (*Wissen vom Menschen*, p. 69). Mareta Linden uses the same term in assessing Carl Pölitiz's 'sceptische Anthropologie' (*Untersuchungen zum Anthropologiebegriff*, p. 115), a view supported by his stated desire to tread a middle path between an 'Aggregat physiologischer Untersuchungen' and a 'Darstellung von Verhältnissen' based on Kant's '*dogmatische (kantische) Kritik*' (Pölitiz, *Populäre Anthropologie*, pp. 9-10).

And what of aesthetics? When we left it, we were faced with a choice between Baumgarten's sensory dimension of experience and Kant's super-sensory spontaneity. As a final reflection, I want to argue that the antipathy to separation that I have highlighted as a thread in anthropological thinking has a counterpart in aesthetics, specifically in the philosophical thinking about grounds which goes by the name of 'expressivism'. Expressivism articulates the idea that the medium of expression is more than a transparent conduit for pre-existing content, but rather shapes and limits, as well as by the same token expanding the possibilities of what may be expressed. As Andrew Bowie puts it, art 'becomes the kind of language in which idea, word and thing are inseparably bound up with each other, rather than arbitrarily attached'.⁴⁶ Charles Taylor characterises expressivism in similar terms, whereby language is seen to constitute consciousness by its modes of expression:⁴⁷ it is 'an articulation which both manifests and defines' (*The Sources of the Self*, p. 375). So what is specifically 'aesthetic' about expressivism, and does this have common ground with my reflections on anthropology? To take the first question first, it might be enough to say that the expressivist conception of how meaning works is *creative*, in the sense that our means of expressing things about the world, language, also to some extent *constitutes* how we understand that world. That is to say, one variant of expressivism, expounded most extensively by Charles Taylor in *Human Agency and Language*, refers to the idea that any knowledge of the world is not simply a 'representation' of a reality that pre-exists our perception and understanding of it, but also involves *constituting* the world and the meanings associated with it (see p. 229). Metaphors and figures of speech offer obvious examples of this constitution of meaning: knowledge and ignorance are described in terms of light and dark; conceptual sophistication is expressed among other things in terms of depth. These figures of speech do not simply *reflect*, but also *constitute* the way we understand reality and think about meaning. It seems to be this world-constituting function of language that Taylor is getting at when refers to the expressive view of meaning as 'retain[ing] more of the mystery surrounding language' (p. 221).

⁴⁶ Bowie, p. 129.

⁴⁷ See Charles Taylor, *Human Agency and Language: Philosophical Papers*, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), I, 229.

Another dimension of this expressive conceptualisation of reality concerns identity and selfhood. Taylor points out that expressive theories 'refer us to subjects for whom [...] things can be manifest' (*Human Agency and Language*, p. 221), such that an 'expressive view of human life' is one that involves a working out of identity on the part of the individual, rather than being a matter of relating (or conforming) to pre-existing models, or an objectively given world (*Sources of the Self*, p. 374). Various theoretical contributions in the late eighteenth century contribute to this reorientation of our sense of reality. Aesthetic theory, for instance, marks an important episode in which the focus shifts from the qualities of the object to the qualities of the subjective experience (see *Sources of the Self*, p. 373). Kant draws transcendental conclusions from this phenomenon, but it may also be traced back to the emphasis on the concrete, individual subject referred to above. This is brought to a point in the German tradition of *Bildung*, in which individual self-realisation and the unfolding of our capacities is as important as economic success or political emancipation. This suggests that there is a significant ontological dimension to the 'Ausbreitungen' of personal identity that we have seen Pfothner refer to, as well as Riedel's focus on individual development in the anthropological novel.

But what is specifically 'anthropological' about this constellation of ideas associated with expressivism? Certainly, expressivist theory has been associated with anthropology, as it has been with aesthetic theory: Andreas Käuser describes the 'anthropological' approach to knowledge as one that acknowledges a semiotics of 'expression' (*Ausdruck*) ('Anthropologie und Ästhetik', p. 205), though he does relatively little to explain what this might mean. He does refer to non-linguistic, corporeal communication, but again this is too beholden to a narrow understanding of anthropology as naturalism. My thesis here is that understanding anthropology in terms of antipathy to separation allows us to grasp the anthropological element of expressivist theories. I want to argue that the connection with anthropology's antipathy to separation inheres in the sense in which expressivism refutes the hard-and-fast separation between external reality, as something that is given, and the internal mental contents that re-present it or the inner identity that makes sense of it. The notion that these are separable is the standard position of objectivist or representationalist epistemologies, for whom true knowledge is what Taylor in an essay called 'Overcoming Epistemology' calls 'a correct representation of an independent reality'.⁴⁸ Of course refuting such a view is commonplace since Kant's phenomenological turn, but the point is that Kant's 'Denkart', at least as it is characterised by Schleiermacher, i.e. his desire to separate human freedom from the determinate nature that surrounds it, is in danger of contradicting his own phenomenological insight. Likewise, even if Kant's aesthetics is concerned to present aspects of experience and self-understanding that cannot be reduced to objective or conceptual terms, his focus on disinterestedness, in which human freedom is seen to be manifested in universal judgments of aesthetic value, and the 'aesthetic idea', seem to resort to a kind of arch-concept, divorced from any interest, context, or set of culturally located values. I hope to have shown that the anthropological tradition is guided by an attitude that is more reticent about such abstractions. It is informed by an antipathy to separation which is not just concerned to account for the mutual interaction of internal and external aspects of experience, but also has important philosophical implications, which the overlap with the novel-form brings out: experience, meaning and identity are at some level always concrete, located, individual, a process of self-articulation – at the same time as they partake of an environment of language and values that render them more than acts of simple voluntarism or in some way self-transparent.

⁴⁸ Charles Taylor, 'Overcoming Epistemology' in *After Philosophy: End or Transformation?*, ed. by Kenneth Baynes, James Bohman and Thomas McCarthy (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987), pp. 464–88 (p. 466).