

“Lafitau on the Iroquois”
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The time is rapidly approaching when the earth’s entire surface will be exposed to the European spirit of research, and each gap in our empirical sciences will be, perhaps not totally closed, but at least advanced to the extent that we will be able to more completely overview the relationship of things.²

The optimism expressed in the above passage from Forster’s essay on “The Northwest Coast of America, and the Fur Trade there” (1791) was typical of the enthusiasm for ethnographic study in the last quarter of the eighteenth century.³ Here Forster speculated on the emerging field of anthropology, anticipating the time when ethnographies will virtually cover every corner of the globe. And even though he found in the results of these writings “a certain insipid and shallow universality” (eine gewisse seichte, oberflächliche Universalität), he remained optimistic in the belief that the most distant parts of the world were gradually “emerging from the shadows” (gehen allmählig aus dem Schatten hervor) and giving the early anthropologist a more complete picture of “the relationship of things.”⁴

¹ The first version of this paper called “Eighteenth Century French Theories of Culture in North America,” was presented in the seminar on “Theories of Modernization,” Western Social Science Association, Denver, Colorado, May 1, 1975, with emphasis on Herder’s reception of Joseph-François Lafitau’ (1681-1746) comparison of ancient Greek and modern Iroquois societies.

² Georg Forster, “Die Nordwestküste von Amerika, und der dortige Pelzhandel,” 1st Publ. in Eng., 1791, in *Werke*, 4 vols. (Frankfurt: Insel, 1967-70), Vol. 2, pp. 248-366, “Der Zeitpunkt nähert sich mit schnellen Schritten, wo der ganze Erdboden dem Europäischen Forschungsgeiste offenbar werden und jede Lücke in unseren Erfahrungswissenschaften sich, wo nicht ganz ausfüllen, doch in so weit ergänzen muß, daß wir den Zusammenhang der Dinge, vollständiger übersehen können,” p. 253. The original English text was not available and translations of the German are by the present author.

³ Alfred L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn, *Culture, A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions* (New York: Random House, 1963), provide an excellent survey of German texts and writers in anthropology from the second half of the eighteenth century, pp. 11-41.

⁴ Forster, “Die Nordwestküste von Amerika” (1967-70), pp. 255-56.

Forster gave a detailed account of his little corner of the world, the American Northwest. He supplied his ethnography with statistical charts on all aspects of the fur trade there, including dates of ship arrivals and departures, names of destinations and names of ships and companies, the amounts of sales, types of fur and their value as well as the number and kinds of pelts per shipload and destination.⁵ He presented a fascinating picture of the battles and intrigues of capitalism in its growth, the problems created for the fur industry by Japanese middle men and by the unfair prices set at various junctures in the long chain of trade between export and import, beginning with trapping in the Northwest and ending with purchases around the globe. And even while his report focused on specifically the Northwest, he saw the need to integrate it with reports on other regions of America, that is, he saw in ethnography the possibility of charting the changing structure of American society: “an unbiased, philosophical traveler noticed already at the Ohio, how the natives of America and the descendants of Europe are merging, how the former are discarding their barbarism, and the latter their decadence, and how both are returning to a middle nature (Mittelnatur).”⁶

Yet, the German contribution to the empirical database of anthropology in this period, namely, to fieldwork and ethnography on North America and elsewhere on the globe, is rather rare. And despite the efforts of those like Forster to develop more objective criteria for their ethnographic reports, the results of studies that do exist, vary

⁵ Forster’s statistical approach is typical of those in social anthropology today and of that outlined in his own day by August Ludwig Schlözer, *Theorie der Statistik, Nebst Ideen über das Studium der Politik überhaupt* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck, 1804), a study of the field as it evolved in practice in Germany and one of particular interest to us today for the introduction to the origin of the field, pp. 1-25.

⁶ Forster, “Die Nordwestküste von Amerika” (1967-70), p. 366.

considerably in quality and reliability.⁷ A notable exception is of course the work of Johann Blumenbach (1752-1840) and his studies in raciology, a branch of physical anthropology, which emerged from the field of physiology, a field of science firmly established as a discipline early in the eighteenth century by Albrecht Haller (1708-1777).⁸ In social anthropology the German contribution tended to be more philological. It was bibliographic and archival, it was text-oriented, and even as late as the 1780's this tendency dominated, particularly in the writings of Herder, where philology and philosophy are at times indistinguishable.

To recognize the archival tendency in early theoretical anthropology one needs only to look at the translation history of a specific document such as Miguel Vanegas' *A Natural and Civil History of California*; the Spanish original appeared in 1758, was immediately translated into English in 1759, and from the English was translated into Dutch in 1761, into French in 1766-67, and German in 1769.⁹ But many of these texts were hardly motivated by the political and economic gain of nations like England, Spain, Holland, France, where detailed regional reports would enhance the access of colonial

⁷ Robert Lowie, *The History of Anthropological Theory* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1937) states that travelers and early ethnographers elucidated observations admirably, but failed to go deeply into native beliefs and customs, and for this reason, Forster's work remains "inestimable," p.6.

⁸ Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, *On the Natural Variety of Mankind*, in: *The Anthropological Treatises of Johann Friedrich Blumenbach*, Thomas Bendyshe, ed. And trans. (London: Longman, 1865), pp. 65-143 (1st ed. 1775); pp. 145-276 (3rd ed. 1795), and his work in physical anthropology represents a distinct branch of his anthropology closer to the natural sciences than that of most of his contemporaries. According to Bendyshe (Preface) Blumenbach was the father of anthropology because of his discovery of three truths: the plurality of races, their characteristics deduced from conformations of the skull, and the necessity of not equating all divisions of mankind by common taxonomic language. Stanley Garn, ed. *Readings on Race*, 2nd ed. (Springfield, Illinois: Thomas, 1968) echoes these views, stating that Blumenbach's role in the history of theoretical anthropology by observing his position as a monogenist who believed in racial determinism, "but unlike the racists of the nineteenth century and thereafter, both Blumenbach and Buffon believed that the degenerative course of racion could be reversed," p. 84.

⁹ Miguel Venegas, *Natürliche und Bürgerliche Geschichte von Californien, nebst einer neuen Charte dieses Landes und der nachbarten Meere*, Johann Adelung, trans. from the English ed., 1759 (Lemgo: Meyer, 1769). Adelung justifies translation and further study of the work because it raises unsolved questions like the perception that California is a peninsula or the question as to whether the American Indians could have crossed from Asia via the Bering Strait, pp. 2-5.

powers in unchartered areas of the world. Germans of the late eighteenth century on the other hand seem to have been less motivated to study foreign cultures for political reasons, and so Forster's vision seems typically German for here the reception of ethnographic reports seems more detached and objective, removed from the goals of national expansionism.

The significance of this philological activity might best be illustrated through a closer look at the German reception of one particular text, one which was to leave a lasting mark on German theoretical anthropology: Joseph François Lafitau's *Customs of the American Indians compared with the Customs of Primitive Times* (1724), a classic in the history of anthropology.¹⁰ It was in eighteenth-century Germany that Lafitau gained his first important recognition and it was at the hands of an unknown philologist and translator, Johann Friedrich Schröter (1710-88), that the work was lifted from its dormant state, translated and published in 1753 in Germany, where it caught the attention of Johann Gottfried Herder.

The German reception of Lafitau's study on America is at first glance not obvious, for the French text lies buried beneath a general title, the *Allgemeine Geschichte der Länder und Völker von Amerika*, a two volume work probably intended as the first part of a series.¹¹ As recently as 1934 Walter Wadepuhl referred to the German title of the series in his study on "Goethe's Interest in the New World," not realizing the French

¹⁰ Joseph François Lafitau, *Moeurs des sauvages américains, comparées aux mœurs des premiers temps*, W. N. Fenton and E. L. Moore, trans. 1st ed. 1724, 2 vols. (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1974).

¹¹ Jacob Baumgarten, ed., *Allgemeine Geschichte der Länder und Völker von Amerika*, 2 vols. (Halle: Gebauer, 1752-53). Schröter was the translator of the Lafitau work which comprises most of the first volume, pp. 1-504.

connection nor the value of the text for the history of anthropology, criticizing the book as “more poetry than fact.”¹²

The first volume of the Schröter translation is an abridged version of the Lafitau text on the American Indians, while the second includes selected translations from various other sources on French, Dutch and British settlements in North and South America. But it was from this source that Herder drew inspiration on the customs of the American Indians, and it was from Herder that contemporaries learned of Lafitau.¹³ And so first the translator, Schröter, and then the philosopher, Herder, form the link between Lafitau’s ethnography of the American Indian and later studies in classical scholarship in Germany, studies such as Georg F. Creuzer’s *Symbolik und Mythologie der Altern Völker* (1810-12)¹⁴, and the emergence of German theoretical anthropology in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

But what was it about the Lafitau text that caught Herder’s interest? In general Herder felt the work contained “a compendium of ethics and poetics of the savages” (ein Kompendium der Ethik und Poetik der Wilden)¹⁵, and in particular he felt the songs and dances of the Iroquois were authentic and comparable to those of primitive European traditions: “Death songs, war songs, battle and burial songs, hymns of praise to the

¹² Walter Wadepuhl, *Goethe’s Interest in the New World* (New York: Haskell, 1973, reprint, 1934), p.2, only notes that Goethe borrowed the Schröter translation of Lafitau’s work on February 9-12, 1798, from the Weimar library. However, Wadepuhl did not recognize its value as he criticizes the Lafitau work for “its strong religious leanings,” p.12, when it is precisely the theological historiography which gives strength and innovation to Lafitau’s work.

¹³ William Fenton and Elizabeth Moore, “Introduction,” in: Lafitau, *Moeurs des sauvages* (1974), pp. xxix-cxix, briefly comment on Herder’s role in the German reception of Lafitau’s study on America and on his theory of culture, p. cvii.

¹⁴ See John E. Sandys, *A History of Classical Scholarship*, 3 vols. (New York: Hafner, 1958), vol. 3, pp. 1-240, for a survey of German classical philology.

¹⁵ Johann Gottfried Herder, “Fragment über die beste Leitung eines jungen Genies zu den Schätzen der Dichtkunst” (1795), in: *Sämtliche Werke*, Bernhard Suphan, ed., Suphan-Ausgabe (SA), 33 vols. (Berlin: Weidmann, 1877-1909), repr., Hildesheim: Olm. 1967), Vol. 9, p. 542. All translations are by the present author.

fathers and about the fathers – everything is common to the bard of Ossian and the savages of North America.”¹⁶ And then the relationship Lafitau had drawn between the culture of the American Indians and that of antiquity, Herder drew between primitive tribes in North America and those of his own Germanic heritage. The songs and **crys**^{sic} of the American Indian were comparable to the Celtic and Scottish discoveries of Macpherson, discoveries which fascinated Herder and hastened studies in Germanic language, folklore, myths, and legends (SA, 9:542-43).

In his “Fragment über die beste Leitung eines jungen Genies zu den Schätzen der Dichtkunst” (SA, 9:541-44), namely, in a brief four page discussion of the value of Oriental poetry for awakening poetic instinct in writers, here Herder suggests various primitive sources of genuine poetry which would lead the individual beyond the “rubble of strange concepts, pedantic chaos or false forms of taste” (Schutte von fremden Begriffen, pedantischem Wuste oder falschen Geschmacksarten, SA, 9:541). According to Herder poetry has its source in a linguistic mythology (Sprachmythologie), in religious imagery, in sayings, sounds, maxims, and songs, all of which lie in great abundance in the soul of the poet, only waiting to be formed and shaped according to opportunity and urge (SA, 9:541). It is in this essay on sources important to the “rebirth” (Wiedergeburt) of imagination and feelings that Herder comes once more to refer to Lafitau’s study of the customs and songs of the American Indians.

In an attempt to illustrate his concept of “linguistic mythology” Herder pointed out the differences between the Hebraic grammar and language, emphasizing that the former is only “philosophical scaffolding” (philosophische Gerippe) and language itself is a living field of poetic forms and flowers (das lebendigste Feld von dichterischen

¹⁶ Herder, “Briefwechsel über Ossian” (SA), Vol. 5, p. 166.

Formen und Blumen, SA, 9:541). And, wrote Herder, while the jump from Asiatic to American soil seems great, the comparison does show that the customs and thoughts of the “five nations” can serve to guide us in relying on instincts, to show us that truly significant poetry can emerge without dependence on the rules of art (SA, 9:542). From this comparison Herder once again made a broad leap across cultures to his Germanic heritage: “I recommend the Edda of the old northerners simply as the other side of the coin, for these people were on the European side of the globe, that which the Indians were, and still are, on the American side” (SA, 9:542). They have in common a strength of soul and boldness in imagery and so through living forms of Indian poetry, Herder, the European, relived his Germanic past.

Of particular significance to Herder’s reception of Lafitau’s comparative approach was the view that the American Indians crossed to North **American**^{sic} from Asia via the Bering Strait, and that the climatic conditions over time brought changes to the two races: “I think their gradual transition from northern Asia and the condition of their new environment explains much.”¹⁷ This statement implied that Herder was assuming a uniform origin in the evolution of the human species, although Herder actually stopped short of such an observation and argued primarily the conditions under which cultures spread and evolved across the face of the earth.¹⁸ That is, Herder’s

¹⁷ Herder, *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (SA), Vol. 13, p. 242. Karl J. Fink, “Herder’s Theory of Origins: From Poly- to Palingenesis,” in *Johann Gottfried Herder: Innovator Through the Ages*, Wulf Koepke, ed. (Bonn: Bouvier, 1982), pp. 85-101, argues that together the concepts of polygenesis and palingenesis reflect Herder’s position “that cultures originated and evolved from multiple centers and that, despite cultural diversity, there are cross-cultural universals which can be discovered in the human psyche,” p. 85.

¹⁸ Harris, *The Rise of Anthropological Theory* (1968), argues that the controversy reached a high point between 1800-1859, but even Darwin’s *Origin of the Species* (1859) did not put to rest questions about singular versus multiple origins of mankind, questions which survive in twentieth century anthropology, even though “there is too much to be said for Huxley’s view that Darwinism had saved all that was ‘good’ in the rivalry between monogenism and polygenism,” p.93-94.

position on the controversy between monogenesis and polygenesis was not always clear, for he seldom reduced his theoretical statements to either-or structures and instead combined both into a tensile formula of unity in diversity, as in the opening thesis of Book Seven of his *Ideen*: “Even though the human race appears in many forms on the earth, it is still everywhere one and the same human species” (SA, 13:252).¹⁹

Herder speculated considerably on the origins of the human race, and in Book Ten of his *Ideen* commented on the oldest archival evidence showing that “the human race emerged in Asia” (SA, 13:406). Yet his major focus is on the endurance, sustenance, survival, and evolution of cultures: “The imaginative power of human beings is everywhere organic and climatic, however, everywhere it is guided by tradition” (SA, 13:299). And so most of Herder’s comprehensive theoretical statements on anthropology signal a return to basic principles of comparison developed by Lafitau in his study of North American Indians. That is, Herder asked with Lafitau about the process by which a tradition evolved, grows and matures.

Thus, neither monogenesis nor polygenesis was as important to Herder as another form of genesis: palingenesis. This concept embodies notions about recurrence of forms in tradition, or as Lafitau presented the topic in his title: “The customs of the American Indians as compared with the customs of primitive times.” This form of genesis gave emphasis to the evolutionary concepts basic to the emerging German theories of anthropology.

¹⁹ Karl J. Fink, “Herder’s Theory of Origins” (1982), argues that the principle of “unity in diversity” so common to Herder scholarship may also be expressed “with the concepts poly- and palingenesis,” p.85. See also, Karl J. Fink, “Herder’s Life-Stages as Forms in Geometric Progression,” *Eighteenth Century Life*, 6 (1981), pp. 39-59, where emphasis is given to Herder’s use of “a syntax of progression,” particularly the “je-desto” structure, which emphasizes unity and progressive growth, as opposed to adversative and disjunctive syntax as suggested by the either-or possibilities of mono- and polygenesis, p. 45-53.

And so Herder added to Lafitau's comparative approach [to] the concept of palingenesis, a concept from historiography which emphasized the eternal recurrence of thoughts, ideas, and cultural life. Herder discovered it in the writings of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-81) and combined it with the comparative approach of Lafitau, giving emphasis to the view of continuity and evolution in human culture.²⁰ The combination of Lafitau's comparative anthropology with the concept of palingenesis became a powerful framework for Herder's theory of anthropology. And it is in this synthesis where we see the strongest and most lasting influence of Lafitau on Herder. Late in life, in 1797, he wrote in an essay on the "Land of the Souls" (Land der Seelen) of the eternal recurrence in the writings on Celtic poetry, recalling once more Lafitau's work on the myths and dreams of the eighteenth century American Indian: "Lafitau tells a fairy tale of a young American who, saddened by the death of his only beloved sister, decides to search for her in the land of spirits."²¹ Herder concluded the tale by observing the similarity of the Indian myth to Greek mythology and the story of Orpheus' search for his beloved Eurydice. Thus, in the Indian myth "the young hero became a second Orpheus" (SA 16, 334).

Textual comparisons between the works of Lafitau and Herder would yield many more points important to theoretical anthropology. But it might suffice to emphasize the affinity of both writers to a classical formula of eighteenth century anthropology: that the stages of an individual's life mirror those of mankind, namely that ontogeny recapitulates

²⁰ Herder, "Palingenesie. Vom Wiederkommen menschlicher Seelen," in: *Zerstreute Blätter*, (SA), 16:341-59), opens his essay with the same question with which Lessing concluded his essay on *Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts* (Berlin, 1780), p. 94: "Warum könnte jeder einzelne Mensch nicht mehr als Einmal auf dieser Welt vorhanden gewesen seyn?" p. 341.

²¹ Herder, "Land der Seelen," in: *Zerstreute Blätter*, (SA), 16:334.

phylogeny.²² This formula was also basic to Giambattista Vico's (1668-1744) *New Science* (1725), written one year after that of Lafitau and together with his ushered in an era of developmental theories in the history of theoretical anthropology.²³ And late eighteenth century Germans like Herder were heir to these theories. Johann Adelung, for example, in his *Versuch einer Geschichte der Cultur des menschlichen Geschlechts* (1782), focused the first chapter on the "Human Being, an Embryo," (Der Mensch ein Embryo) and climaxed the eighth and last one with a study on "Man in Enlightened Enjoyment" (Der Mann im aufgeklärten Genusse).²⁴ The formula remained central to anthropological theories well into the nineteenth century, also appearing in Georg Hegel's *Anthropologie* (1817, 1827, & 1830), where "the stages of life" (Verlauf der Lebensalter), proceed from that of the child to the adult and to the elderly.²⁵

From the title of Lafitau's work, namely, "Customs of the American Savages, compared with the Customs of Primitive Times," Herder and an entire generation of theoretical anthropologists drew inspiration for study of a living history, advocating through anthropology the study of ancient societies. Here then lies the source of the

²² Karl J. Fink, "Ontogeny Recapitulates Phylogeny: A Classic Formula of Organicism," in: *Approaches to Organic Form*, Frederick Burwick, ed. (Hingham, MA: Reidel, 1987 forthcoming), pp. 1-38, studies the analogical relationships between the life and the history of the individual, particularly as viewed in eighteenth century theoretical anthropology. For a larger study on this tradition in biology see Stephen Could, *Ontogeny and Phylogeny* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977).

²³ Fenton and Moore, "Introduction," in: Lafitau, *Moeurs des sauvages* (1974), p. xci, argue that "it is more likely that Giambattista Vico (1668-1744), ... learned of Lafitau's work even before it appeared, although he gives not a hint of it in *Scienza Nuova* (1725)." Other critics found in the Fenton and Moore study who credit Lafitau for ideas commonly attributed to Vico include Kaspar Kälin, *Indianer und Urvölker* (Freiburg, Switzerland: Paulus, 1943) and Frank Manuel, *The Eighteenth Century Confronts the Gods* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1959). Isaiah Berlin, *Vico and Herder* (New York: Viking Press, 1976), footnotes a possible connection between Vico, Herder, and Lafitau, pp. 35, 124, and 150, but documents no textual reference and with the title of his book leaves the impression that there was a closer connection between Herder and Vico than Herder and Lafitau.

²⁴ Johann Adelung, *Versuch einer Geschichte der Cultur des menschlichen Geschlechts* (Leipzig: Hertel, 1782), outlines the stages of human development in his preface.

²⁵ Georg Hegel, *Philosophie des Subjektiven Geistes*, M. J. Petry, ed. and trans., 2 vols. (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1979), Vol. 2, pp. 94-95.

historical dimension to Herder's anthropology, not only does the development of an individual reflect the stages of the history of mankind, but so do primitive societies today serve to mirror primitive societies in the evolution of culture. That is, for the early German anthropologist the life of an individual did form an analog to the history of mankind.

Studies on the history of anthropology generally focus on the last 100 years of the field, although most historians would agree that its origin lies in the eighteenth century. Marvin Harris, for example, marks the beginning of "the science of culture" with the year 1690, the date of John Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, while Clyde Kluckhohn and Alfred Kroeber find theories of culture with "a modern ring" in Herder's *Ideen*, published between 1784-91.²⁶ Yet the origin of the field can be specified more closely. In fact 1791, the publication date of the last volume of Herder's *Ideen*, marks a high point in the development of theories which were conditioned by notions of historicism, by a progress ideology and the view of a purposeful development, by the concept of a *telos*. Herder's work is the culmination of a tradition which defined culture from the Judeo-Christian perspective, emphasizing visions of maturation, improvement, and fulfillment in the evolution of human culture. That is, Herder's anthropology is teleological and the materials of culture collected in field work around the globe were presented in his theory as dynamic, as items in process.

Only a few years later, seven to be exact, in 1798, Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) published his "pragmatic anthropology," distinguishing fields in physical anthropology, namely, physiology as defined by Haller and raciology as outlined by Blumenbach, from

²⁶ Harris, *The Rise of Anthropological Theory* (1968), p. 8; Kroeber and Kluckhohn, *Culture* (1963), p. 39.

psychological ones.²⁷ Kant argued that “anthropology is the systematically worked out doctrines of our knowledge of man, and can be either physiological or pragmatic. – Physiological knowledge of man involves investigating what nature makes of him: pragmatic, what man as a free agent makes, or can make and should make, of himself.”²⁸ Thus Kant chose to exclude the biological dimensions of the human being, arguing that we have no knowledge of “the nerves and fibers of the brain” (Gehirnnerven und Fasern).²⁹ In his view the anthropologist cannot penetrate the biological processes of thought and so “in this play of his perceptions” he remains “a pure spectator” (blosser Zuschauer): “The human being, who notices when he is being observed and studied, will either appear embarrassed, and hence cannot show himself as he is; or he displaces himself, and here, does not want to show himself as he is.”³⁰

And so Kant’s anthropology first of all shed the historical bonds of previous theories and secondly it formed systematic and objective criteria for the study of those things we can observe from literary sources, namely, the psychological, mental, and emotional dimensions of the human being. His scheme included discussion of mental facilities, of cognition, consciousness, and the ego, as well as related categories such as sagacity, wisdom, and dreams. A second section included chapters on emotions, on aesthetic sensibilities, passions and feelings of morality, and a third one, concluding his outline, treated personal, sexual, racial, and national character.

²⁷ Immanuel Kant, *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht*, 1st ed., 1798, in *Werke*, W. Weischedel, ed., 12 vols. (Frankfurt: Insel, 1964), Vol. 12, pp. 399-690. Following Haller’s work in physiology and Blumenbach’s in raciology, there were many specialized studies in physical anthropology at the turn of the century, between the appearance of Kant’s anthropology in 1798 and Hegel’s in 1817. For a list of empirical sources from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries see Hegel, *Philosophie des Subjektiven Geistes* (1979), Vol. 1, pp. xcvi-civ.

²⁸ Kant, *Anthropologie* (1964), Vol. 12, p. 399.

²⁹ Kant, *Anthropologie* (1964), Vol. 12, p. 399.

³⁰ Kant, *Anthropologie* (1964), Vol. 12, p. 401.

Kant chose to exclude from his anthropology phsyico-chemical features and to define anthropology as a psychological state, which could be observed and studied from various “resources of anthropology: world history, biographies, indeed, plays and novels” (Hülfsmittel zur Anthropologie: Weltgeschichte, Biographien, ja Schauspiele und Romane).³¹ And in doing so Kant placed literary sources in the service of a science, setting into motion the development of a science which would place greater emphasis on objective categories of the mind than on the contextual development of the individual, initiating twentieth century psychology rather than modern anthropology.

Following Kant’s work of 1798 it was no longer possible to return to a teleological anthropology as conceived by Herder. Nor has it been possible since that watershed period to reconcile the “pragmatics” of Kant with the “telos” of Herder, although today we still struggle with the possibilities of such an integration, asking if a teleological science is possible, or conversely, if an organic science, namely, the study of life-forms, if such study is possible without accounting for a *telos*. Perhaps no one has examined the question as seriously as Ernest Nagel who in his essay from 1953 on “Teleological Explanations and Teleological Systems” looked specifically at the extent to which the study of living organisms, or the extent to which the field of biology, can be reduced to physio-chemical explanations. According to him “vital processes have a *prima facie* purposive character; for organisms are capable of self-regulation, self-maintenance, and self-reproduction, and their activities seem to be directed toward the attainment of goals that lie in the future.”³²

³¹ Kant, *Anthropologie* (1964), Vol. 12, p. 401.

³² Ernest Nagel, “Teleological Explanations and Teleological Systems,” pp. 537-558, in: *Readings in the Philosophy of Science*, H. Feigl and M. Brodbeck, eds. (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1953), p. 539.

As Nagel's statement would seem to indicate, we have to some extent overcome Kant's attempt to dehistoricize theoretical anthropology. We seem again to be open to the strength of Lafitau's ethnography of the American Indian *as compared* to that in primitive times, and to hear the "modern ring" in Herder's theory of culture. Indeed, those writers on the other side of the watershed, those who recognized that the individual mirrors the whole and that the living organism has a *telos*, it seems they are the ones who broke ground for the recent challenge to study the human being as a stochastic individual, namely, to estimate the human being as the sum of his past and as the potential of a random number of events in the future. Or, as Adelung argued in his "Geschichte der Cultur" (1782): "Human culture consists of an ever increasing sum of perceptions, which must of necessity expand, because the experiences from which they originate grow incessantly."³³ Goethe put it more aesthetically in a poem from his *West-östlicher Divan* entitled "Unbounded" (Unbegrenzt): "That you cannot end, that makes you great, / And that you never begin, that is your fate" (Daß du nicht enden kannst, das macht dich groß, / Und daß du nie beginnst, das ist dein Los).³⁴

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³³ Adelung, *Geschichte der Cultur* (1782), "Vorrede."

³⁴ Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *West-östlicher Divan*, in: *Goethe. Poetische Werke*, Berliner-Ausgabe (Berlin: Aufbau, 1979), Vol. 3, p. 28.

