Introduction

Purpose of This Study

A market-driven education has put the humanities under increasing pressure to justify their relevance.[1] Their growing marginalization in a techno-bureaucratic culture has provoked academics to persuade the public of the importance of a universal ethics at a point in time when traditional humanism—in the German context also known as *Neuhumanismus* (neo-humanism)—has come under attack for its narrow Eurocentric point of view and for excluding the voices of women, the LGBTQ community, as well as racial, religious, social, and cultural minorities. Well-known scholars have argued that the interdisciplinary broadening of literary studies to cultural studies—including visual culture, music, gender studies, postcolonial and environmental studies—has led to a fragmentation of the humanities into subdisciplines and contributed to the loss of their common mission (Steiner, Guillory, Eagleton, Nussbaum, Said).[2] These scholars suggest that a reinforcement of humanist values—that is values that coincide with those of the Enlightenment, such as the promotion of human dignity, self-perfection through education, religious and political tolerance, freedom of speech, integrity, and altruism—could provide the humanities with such a common mission and counteract the technocratization of the educational system.[3]

While the humanist model of a broad, general education still determines undergraduate curricula and the premise of academic freedom continues to be favored by the vast majority of educators, socioeconomic factors have infringed upon these principles and made them perhaps less attainable than they were in the last three decades of the twentieth century. The steadily rising cost of a university education, the prospect of future debt and unemployment have prompted significant numbers of students, parents, and even university administrators to question the importance of a liberal arts education.[4] To them, subjects of study that do not have an immediate, measurable, and practical value toward furthering a professional career have become too costly. Dwindling numbers of liberal arts majors and increasing enrollments in the professional schools, such as business and journalism, bear witness to this trend.[5]

Nevertheless, a large contingent of educators, business leaders, and students remain convinced of the importance of a broad education. The humanist objective of educating students to become well-rounded citizens, who can think independently and make informed decisions, is desirable for many constituents inside or outside of academia.[6] This volume addresses the question of whether the humanities and their humanist ideals are still viable in a technobureaucratic society that requires highly specialized knowledge. In view of the countless studies that have lamented the deplorable disinvestment in the liberal arts and emphasized their enduring significance in recent years,[7] it would be redundant to offer yet another theoretical argument for literature and the humanities as a necessary alternative to the corporatization of higher education. What is lacking is a study that shows how humanist ideas are expressed, adapted, undermined, and transformed in literary texts. This study intends to do just that. My critical readings of exemplary philosophical, aesthetic, and literary texts of different periods from the Enlightenment to the twentieth century provide insights into how social transformations and scientific innovations have affected the literary representations of individual lives and how classical eighteenth-century humanist assumptions have been challenged in response to these transformations and innovations. By discussing the ways in which these literary dramatizations and enactments of real-life situations challenge traditional humanist ideas, the study intends to show how literature has contributed to the continuing revision of the humanist discourse until it was eventually labeled *posthumanist* to distinguish it from its predecessor.

The term *posthumanism* became common during the last decade of the twentieth century to separate the traditionalist humanist reception from a more differentiated yet inclusive humanism that recognizes more recent sociopolitical developments—such as an increasingly diverse social fabric that includes the concerns of marginalized groups, gender and ethnicity issues, or scientific innovations, including artificial insemination, genetic manipulation, artificial intelligence, etc.—that challenge traditional ethical norms. The analogy to similar coinages, such as poststructuralism, postmodernism, postcolonialism, or post-Marxism, is no coincidence since all the post-isms share certain common goals, in pursuit of the overcoming of binary oppositions, based on an awareness of the politics of drawing arbitrary disciplinary, ethical, ethnic, and/or social boundaries. The various *posthumanist* positions fluctuate between continuation and radical reformation.[8] While a comprehensive attempt at defining *posthumanism* could be itself the topic of a book-length study and cannot be accomplished here,[9] I will discuss some of the most prevalent assumptions of this relatively new field.[10]

In light of the perversions of and crimes committed against humanity, despite or even in the name of humanist ethics, skepticism toward universal human values is warranted. Feminist, postcolonialist, postructuralist, and other

posthumanist approaches have rejected universalist humanism because it has neglected, if not thwarted, the emancipation of minorities by privileging an essentializing Western ethic (Said, Gilroy). Yet the fundamental values and goals that motivate these emancipation movements are not necessarily incompatible with humanist philosophy. Edward Said, for instance, points out that while humanism has been received with distrust from a postmodernist perspective because of its association with an elitist Western intellectual tradition that ignored minorities and diverging points of view, "people all over the world can be and are moved" by humanist ideals in their struggles for justice and equality (Said 10):

> I believed then, and still believe, that it is possible to be critical of humanism in the name of humanism and that, schooled in its abuses by the experience of Eurocentrism and empire, one could fashion a different kind of humanism that was cosmopolitan and text-language-bound in ways that absorbed the great lessons of the past . . . (10–11)

Said's call for a self-critical humanism that is aware of its past ideological assumptions could also figure under the label *posthumanism*. As the term implies, "posthumanism occurs as a critical practice *within* humanism" (Hayles, "The Human" 135). Accordingly, a posthumanist approach implies both a continuation and a critical revision of traditional humanist values.[11] While it upholds the inviolability of the rights of all human beings, it does not limit these to a privileged Western elite, but extends them to minorities and marginalized groups that have been ignored in traditional humanist thought. In other words, posthumanist critiques of traditional bourgeois values do not simply reject humanism out of hand but dislodge Idealist concepts of wholeness and replace them with a multiperspectival view of a continuously changing human consciousness. As a literary practice and critique, posthumanist approaches attempt to dismantle humanist master narratives and reveal their ideological underpinnings. For instance, they aspire to debunk the German Idealist assumption of the duality of body and mind as a fiction of the Cartesian tradition—a fiction that attempted to uphold the superiority of the spirit over the flesh. They no longer view the human subject as master of his own destiny but as a historically determined cultural construct that acknowledges larger contexts, such as evolution, technological progress, or ecology (Badmington, Haraway, Hayles, Herbrechter, Landgraf et al.).

In spite of all the criticisms of humanism's historically proven ideological corruptibility and discriminatory practices in its name, there are undeniable reasons for discussing iconic works of the German humanist tradition. Not least of the reasons is that it is impossible to completely evade the grasp of the long-lasting and wide-ranging tradition that thoroughly influenced the entire Western educational system during the past 250 years.[12] Neil Badmington

pointed this out, citing Jacques Derrida's call for deconstructive approaches "to repeat what is implicit in the founding concepts and the original problematic" (Badmington, "Theorizing" 15). Of course, this does not mean that repetition is a mere reinforcement of humanism's premises but rather functions as a dislocation by revealing its inadequacies. In Derrida's words, the goal is to "lodg[e] oneself within traditional conceptuality in order to destroy it" (Derrida, "Violence" 111). Rather than "destroying" humanism, however, the goal of this volume is to reveal its inadequate assumptions and to point out aspects that are worth preserving. This implies, of course, that humanism has by no means achieved its emancipatory goals, but the integration of posthumanist critiques will both advance and revitalize its progression. This study will therefore undertake careful and critical readings of canonical texts by eminent German writers in the humanist tradition in order to reveal that the borders between what is deemed humanist and posthumanist are not clear-cut and that the polysemy of many eighteenth-century texts undermines certain foundational humanist premises.

While numerous studies discuss the pros and cons of a humanist universal ethics (Badiou, Eagleton, Guillory, Scholes, Said), few of these studies explore them in the context of the German intellectual heritage of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[13] After all, the humanities and their premise of academic freedom, which is still valued today, are intrinsically tied to the emancipation of the middle classes at the end of the eighteenth century and to the fundamentals of German Idealist philosophy.[14] Education was central to the task of liberating bourgeois individuals from their willing submission to the authoritarian dogmatism of church and the absolutist state. It was seen as a transformative experience that could lead to the enlightenment of middle-class citizens and ultimately of society as a whole. While the Enlightenment idea that all humans, regardless of social and economic standing, are entitled to an education resonated all over Europe, the implementation of a more egalitarian school system that aimed at providing a general education to a broad segment of the population became particularly pronounced in German culture.[15] The development of a standard curriculum for the *Gymnasien* (secondary schools) and the German states' funding of "schools staffed by university graduates" led to "the world's first comprehensive system of universal, public, compulsory education" (McNeely 165). This systematic approach with its humanist agenda, "now imitated from Boston to Beijing" (ibid.), contributed not only to making impoverished Germany one of the most "advanced civilizations" but also to the dissemination of a humanist ethics that included the inviolability of human dignity, individual autonomy, self-tutelage, political and legal equality, and religious and political tolerance. In view of the declining enrollments in the humanities, it is important to stress the significance of these values for Western civilization and its educational system as well as for human rights discussions in general.

By examining the controversy surrounding the development of a humanist ethics against the background of concrete examples from texts advocating a humanist agenda in German philosophy, cultural history, and literature, I will argue that humanism has in recent years not always been given due consideration because of past transgressions allegedly carried out in its name.[16] For instance, writers and intellectuals on the left of the political spectrum reacted to the glorification of the "timeless classics" after World War II by pointing out National Socialism's assimilation of aspects of the humanist tradition, such as its esteem of Greek and Roman antiquity. The implication was that of a common affinity to authoritarianism—an implication that was promoted by the Frankfurter Schule (Frankfurt School) and its neo-Marxist followers of the student rebellion of the 1960s and 1970s. Accordingly, the planned elimination of the Jews was based not only on a populist ideology that appealed to irrational nationalist sentiments with roots in the Romantic tradition but also on a pseudoscientific and rationally justified discrimination of a minority that could be traced as far back as the Enlightenment.[17] In other words, the separation of "subhuman" or "nonhuman" species from the "Nordic" image of "Man" received support from a purposive rationalism that suppressed foreign, non-European characteristics in the name of the advances of an enlightened civilization. According to this critique, the pseudoscientific discrimination of non-Western races was only the beginning of a progressing ostracism of all social groups, nations, races, and ethnicities that did not conform to the German, patriarchal, bourgeois hierarchy.[18]

However, critical readings of literary and theoretical texts that engage with the humanist discourse undermine straightforward designations of cause and effect. Even the following examples, which have been widely regarded as prototypes for a humanist ideology, contain ambiguities that reject humanism's alleged repressive discrimination against deviations from Eurocentric norms. For instance, texts like Lessing's *Nathan der Weise* (*Nathan the Wise*), Goethe's *Iphigenie*, or Schiller's *Don Karlos* did not advocate a repressive rationalism under the guise of a universal humanism. While Lessing's Nathan certainly embodies the ideal of the enlightened bourgeois patriarch and assimilated Jew, one cannot ignore that the play first and foremost promotes tolerance, even respect toward minorities and representatives of other religions or ethnic groups. In addition, Lessing's drama strongly condemns Christian dogmatism and its prejudices and calls for a constant reexamination of ingrained religious and intellectual truisms.[19] In other words, the literary texts under investigation in this volume allow much more differentiated insights into "human nature" than the alleged promotion of a Eurocentric identity politics gives them credit for. While the discrimination against "uncivilized" groups and their sensual instincts has been an implicit or explicit topic in many theoretical texts that promulgate humanist ideas, literary enactments of human behavior often un-

dermine and contest dogmatic forms of humanism.[20] The examples under consideration problematize abstract ethical concepts and ideals by casting them in familiar situations and connecting them to our most intimate self-knowledge as human beings at the sensory and emotional level. Therefore, this study aims at demonstrating how texts that appeal to the imagination can represent life in more tangible and comprehensive ways than abstract theoretical discourses can. What better way of exhibiting the purchase of the humanities than by performing what humanists do in their quests of eliciting meaning from texts? The interpretations in this volume will elucidate how poetic imagery, metaphors, and allegories can subvert normative anthropological, social, and moral assumptions and illustrate, even anticipate scientific concepts, such as human evolution or the unconscious.

Defining Posthumanism

I use *posthumanist* in a broader sense than some theoreticians who claim that humans have adopted characteristics of cyborgs or machines (Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman*; Haraway, "Manifesto"). In contrast to these studies, this volume focuses on humanist and *posthumanist* discourses rather than on the technological innovations that lead these theoreticians to conceptualize contemporary human life as *posthuman*. Posthumanism can perhaps be best described in analogy to the other "post-isms," such as postmodernism, poststructuralism, postcolonialism, etc. As a working definition that by no means claims to do justice to all the possible posthumanist approaches, the following proposition shall suffice: posthumanism contests the premises of humanist ideas that presume the unity and autonomy of the individual and the implications that are connected to these assumptions, such as the privileging and universalizing of the Western male subject, by exposing the Eurocentrism of humanist ideology as historically, geographically, racially, and socially biased (Braidotti, *The Posthuman*, 28–30, 169–85; Haraway, "Manifesto"; Halliwell, 174–75; Herbrechter 149).[21] Yet, posthumanism can be viewed as a continuation of humanism as it aims to extend individual rights to all human beings regardless of race, nationality, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religious belief, or social standing by questioning the presumptions of more traditional, Eurocentric forms of humanism.

In view of the acknowledgment of the sociopolitical, scientific, and ideological factors that have transformed definitions of what is human over the past two hundred years, posthumanist critics would agree with philosopher and feminist theoretician Rosi Braidotti's assertion that the human of humanism is "a historical construct that became a social convention about 'human nature'" (*The Posthuman* 26). Poststructuralist objections to such normative notions

of a "unitary subject"—starting with Foucault and postmodernist feminism—targeted the ideal of "Man" precisely because it takes the male European bourgeois citizen as a role model and neglects or even excludes socially, racially, and gender-related divergences from this norm. The generalizing, allegedly objective, and speculative nature of universalist definitions of human subjectivity raises the question of whether one should do away with notions of human agency or selfhood, as some posthumanist approaches have suggested (Braidotti 23–24, 26–29). Braidotti for instance agrees with systems theoreticians and other posthumanist, poststructuralist, and feminist theoreticians that "subjectivity is rather a process of auto-poiesis or self-styling, which involves complex and continuous negotiations with dominant norms and values and hence also multiple forms of culpability" (Braidotti 35, 43; Nayar 36–42). Judith Butler argues in a similar vein by stressing that a subject is conditioned or "given over to a world in which [it] is formed even as it acts or brings something new into being" (*Senses* 6). For Butler the formation of the subject is never complete. It is an ongoing process that involves the subject to some extent but is never fully self-forming (ibid.). This does not mean that one can disregard the human subject as a politically and socially responsible entity. Rather than upholding the unitary, rational, autonomous individual of traditional humanism, posthumanist theories view the subject as "constituted in and by multiplicity, that is to say a subject that works across differences and is also internally differentiated, but still grounded and accountable" (Braidotti 49). As a socially, politically, and economically embedded entity that has to negotiate time and again its continually changing relationship to the outside world, the posthuman subject is much more in flux than its humanist predecessor.[22]

Posthumanism not only borrowed from the neo-Marxist and feminist movements of the 1960s and 1970s, it also integrated the agenda of postcolonialist theory, which confronted humanist norms because "all Humanisms, until now, have been imperial," as John Davies put it (141). As Edward Said stated already in the 1970s, traditional humanist ideas that originated during the Enlightenment neither prevented the domination and exploitation of colonized nations nor of all those who do not have a recognized minority status (*Orientalism*). The Martiniquan activist, poet, and statesman Aimé Césaire was the first to point out that fascism was a form of colonialist racism with eighteenth-century roots in humanist ideology. In his groundbreaking essay "Discours sur le colonialisme," which appeared in 1955 and inspired an entire generation of postcolonialist/-humanist thinkers such as Frantz Fanon (Young, *Postcolonialism* 2), Césaire mentions numerous examples from the Enlightenment tradition that testify to the discrimination, exploitation, and torture of non-European civilizations in the name of Western humanist values. For Césaire, the practice of colonization "works to *decivilize* the colonizer, to *brutalize* him" with the result that the barbaric mistreatment of the indigenous people in non-Western cul-

tures comes home to haunt Western civilization in the form of Nazism (Césaire 35–36).[23] Thus humanism's professed goal of contesting "*the humiliation of man as such*," was not perceived as incompatible with the suppression of "primitive" nonwhite races; to the contrary, the oppression of these "savage cultures" has often been portrayed as a sign of progress on the way to a universally enlightened humanity (Schiller, Kant). Only with "the humiliation of the white man" do the racist underpinnings of the traditional Western "pseudo-humanism" become apparent to "Eurocentric hypocrites" according to Césaire (36–37).[24]

Another aspect of posthumanist thought that criticizes classical humanism's anthropocentrism concerns the human/animal boundary and the maltreatment of animals. Traditional humanism has viewed the human subject as exceptional and insists on a clearly defined human/animal distinction.[25] In contrast, posthumanist thinkers, including Donna Haraway, Cary Wolfe, Cora Diamond, Jacques Derrida, and others, argue in favor of the "decentering of the 'humanist' subject," which means they demand an awareness of trans-individual ecological systems as well as of the discursive networks and information systems, such as the new communication technologies and new media that inform the human consciousness (Soper, "Humanism" 369). Posthumanist thought attempts to take into account the complexities and exigencies of these global megastructures that limit and determine human agency. In light of these limitations, posthumanists no longer grant an exceptional status to the human subject, but view it as a part of the trans-individual context in which it is placed.[26]

Posthumanism, Canonical Texts, and the Neglect of Literary Analysis

How can we explain the contradiction between the call for a humanist education that produces worldly-wise leaders and the tendency to regard a humanist education as elitist and obsolete? While scholars have argued that the continual revision of ideas is part and parcel of the spirit of the Enlightenment from which the German humanist concept of *Bildung* originates (McCarthy, *Crossing Boundaries* 79, Israel, etc.), it is also true that humanism has often been associated with an old-fashioned, elitist education that upholds the somewhat unworldly reverence for Greek antiquity and has ignored more recent scientific, social, political, and cultural phenomena (Israel 22–23). The intransigent reverence for classical antiquity is based on the Enlightenment/humanist notion of an unchanging, essential human nature that is "independent of any particular historical, ethnic or cultural circumstances" (McCarthy, *Crossing Boundaries* 79). This notion is incompatible, however, with the posthumanist assumption of a human nature that depends on its social, historical, and cultural conditioning, and therefore is subject to change.[27] I am arguing that the

distinction between humanism and posthumanism is useful in order to differentiate an immutable Eurocentric form of humanism that originated during the Enlightenment from a posthumanism that reflects on the social, economic, and scientific transformations of modern human existence and thus keeps the emancipatory spirit of the humanist agenda alive. In other words, humanism in my usage refers to a set of ideas that was created at a specific time period, ranging roughly from the 1770s to the late nineteenth century, during which the eighteenth-century humanist ideals were conceived and implemented in the German school system. Posthumanism, on the other hand, refers to the open-ended process that attempts to extend the humanist emancipatory agenda of equal opportunity and the right to a comprehensive education to all of those underprivileged groups that had been previously excluded. Therefore posthumanism is a continuing process in pursuit of its ideal of a dignified, just, and self-governing existence for all members of society.

As mentioned above, critical reappraisals of the humanities reflect the fact that scientific, ethical, and social assumptions about the human condition have been deviating from the anthropological or philosophical views of German neo-humanist thinkers, such as Kant, Herder, Schiller, Humboldt, Fichte, and Hegel. These eighteenth- and nineteenth-century philosophers promoted the humanist agenda that shaped the Western educational systems based on "renditions of classical Antiquity and Italian Renaissance ideals" (Braidotti, *The Posthuman* 13; see also McNeely 165). Their goal was to educate the growing middle class both ethically and intellectually and to create a more democratic and egalitarian society consisting of mature, responsible, and enlightened citizens. Their vision of what it meant to be human was based on the idea of self-perfection and had profound consequences as a civilizational model for the entire Western hemisphere. Yet as Kant's, Fichte's, and Humboldt's anthropological views show, the ability to reason and the right to self-determination were perceived as natural privileges of the male sex.[28]

As we will see later, even early literary representations of and reactions to eighteenth-century humanist ideas challenge, differentiate, and/or subvert various aspects of a programmatic humanism by putting them to the test in specific life-imitating situations. However, these texts do not explicitly question its patriarchal, Eurocentric bias.[29] For that reason and other assumptions, such as individual autonomy, they cannot be called posthumanist in the sense of the critics who introduced the term (Badmington, Hayles, Herbrechter, Wolfe et al.). Yet my study intends to demonstrate how such well-known literary texts from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth century already reveal some posthumanist qualities.

One may rightfully ask why the selection of canonical texts in this volume centers on texts by male authors. This group of educated middle-class men authored the vast majority of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century canonical

texts that are still read in schools and universities, performed in theaters, and considered exemplary for the humanist tradition.[30] Idealist thinkers from Kant to Humboldt to Fichte and Hegel, and many others, not only attempted to define the "Bestimmung des Menschen" (vocation of Man) as well as his duties and rights but also to determine whether the sexes have different functions in "nature" and society.[31] In other words, humanist discourses were conceived and shaped by white European men of a privileged elite. Publications by women authors, on the other hand, were relatively rare, received much less critical attention, and often addressed a female audience. In view of the undisputed patriarchal dominance in both the public and the private sphere, which denied women the status of individual autonomy, the discourse about "die Bestimmung des Weibes" (the vocation of Woman) was first and foremost a male discourse, in which women raised their voices only infrequently and with hesitancy (Lange 423).[32] Thus it is not surprising that women make up only a third of the authors in Sigrid Lange's collection of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century philosophical and anthropological essays on the "nature," "vocation," and status of Woman. Lange provides a host of reasons for this gender imbalance. Perhaps the most striking example for the subordination of women is that it was still debated, in the words of Lange, "... ob die Weiber Menschen sind" (whether women should be regarded as human beings at all).[33] Not only were women punished, even executed, for their public advocacy of equal rights, such as Olympe de Gouges in 1793, they were not granted property rights or independent legal rights (Lange 416–18). Another major obstacle toward women's emancipation was the "naturalization" of the inequality of the sexes. As many eighteenth-century dramas show, bourgeois ethics, which the middle classes used to justify their struggle against courtly depravity and libertinage, was carried out at the expense of female independence. Women were tied to the home and subject to the "natural" rule of the father.[34] As independent women were often regarded as either unnatural or immoral, many women writers were careful to respect the repressive bourgeois code of honor to avoid tarnishing their reputation (Kontje 235). This may explain why many of the texts authored by women, such as Sophie von La Roche's novel of *Bildungsroman* (novel of education) *Geschichte des Fräuleins Sternheim* (*History of Lady Sternheim*) (1771), echo the masculinist gender norms of the time. While Sophie von La Roche (1730–1807), Susanne von Bandemer (1751–1828), and Betty Gleim (1781–1827) emphasize a woman's right to an education, these women writers tread very carefully to avoid overstepping the boundaries of their traditionally subordinate role.[35] For instance, a woman's education was not intended to make her independent but to enable her "to become a better wife, mother and homemaker" (Fiero 364). Todd Kontje examined a selection of female *Bildungsromane*—a genre that reflects the limitations of the humanist discourse during the Enlightenment—by prominent women authors of this time:

Sophie von La Roche's *Die Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim*, Caroline von Wolzogen's *Agnes von Lilien* (1798), Friederike Helene Unger's *Julchen Grünthal* (1784/98), and Therese Huber's *Die Familie Seldorf* (*The Seldorf Family*) (1795/96). He summarized his findings with a quote from the *Dialectic of the Enlightenment* that deplores eighteenth-century women's compulsion "'to buy' into an ideology of female subservience" (Kontje, "Socialization" 235). Yet in spite of the women authors' conformity to dominant social expectations out of fear of social ostracism, their narratives "open up a discursive space . . . in which their primarily female readers can explore both the possibilities and limitations of the gender roles set forth in the many didactic treatises of the period" (ibid. 236). This last statement is particularly noteworthy in the context of this study because it emphasizes the equivocal polysemy of fictional texts that allows us to examine their ambiguities in innovative interpretations. This is precisely the task of the humanities and their posthumanist mission.

Yet in view of the institutional and social constraints that prevented women writers from advocating a revision of the existing gender norms, it is perhaps just as, if not more, meaningful to examine canonized literary works that do undermine the prevailing sexism and the privileging of the male intellect. Canonical texts like Goethe's *Iphigenie* or Schiller's *Kabale und Liebe* (*Intrigue and Love*) (1784) have had a continuous critical resonance that reveals the gender biases of traditional neo-humanist ideals and the attempts to revise them. The long and extensive reception of such canonized works allows us to trace the modification that foundational humanist values underwent from neo-humanism to anti-humanism to posthumanism, which is the underlying focus of this volume. The critical preservation and continuous refashioning of a set of canonized works through innovative interpretations can show us to which extent this core mission of the humanities has been carried out in the past and what it might look like from a posthumanist perspective. The humanities can survive only if there is a common, albeit always changing, ground for what their core values are and which works best represent these values.

This volume's emphasis on canonical humanist texts arises from concerns about the loss of a common archive as well as "the loss of the knowledge on how to read" (Caruth 1087).[36] In the afterword to the 2010 *PMLA* issue on "Literary Criticism for the Twenty-First Century," Cathy Caruth suggests that "critical language and theoretical language both repeat and differ from the language of literature" and in this sense signal the erasure of the literary work. Thus, she claims, literary works are not only superseded by their criticism but also survive because of the critical attention they receive (Caruth1091). Caruth refers to an essay by Ankhi Mukherjee in the same issue that emphasizes the ghostly afterlife of classical works. Rather than viewing a classical work as a beacon of timeless essential quality or as a stable pillar of transhistorical values, a canonized literary work deserves the attribute of a classic because it is still alive

and capable of capturing conflicts that are of intense interest to posthumanist audiences—or as J. M. Coetze expressed it, a work that "generations of people cannot afford to let go of . . . and hold on to at all costs" (cited in Mukherjee 1034).[37] Thus the "postness" of classics that outlive the age of their creation in critical reflections defies widespread denunciations of the humanities as outmoded and irrelevant. In other words, canonical works have become classics not simply because of their timelessness but also because of their timeliness. As the analyses of the selected texts will show, their continuing relevance can be attributed to their engagement with humanist values and to their in-depth explorations of these values that reveal their ambiguities and contradictions. After all, these texts owe much of their critical attention to their polysemous nuances. Moreover, canonical texts can illustrate the changing views and modifications to which traditional eighteenth-century humanism has been subjected over time.

In light of continuous reassessments of literary texts, the humanities are often accused of lacking objective scientific criteria and not producing reliable, applicable research results. Because many humanities research projects have no easily recognizable practical value, outside funding is relatively rare.[38] Given these perceived shortcomings, it is not surprising that university administrators tend to consider the humanities less relevant than the sciences.[39] Although a clear "distinction of a disciplinary dichotomy between nature and culture, matter and spirit" may be neither justifiable nor desirable in light of the coinciding methodologies of the various disciplines, I will maintain this distinction because it continues to exist at the institutional level of higher education. The divide between applicable research with marketable results, generally associated with the natural and social sciences, and interpretive scholarship that is based on historical, social, and cultural variables continues to determine the value attached to specific disciplines and professions. As a response to this customary privileging of the sciences at the institutional and professional levels, many humanities disciplines have attempted to broaden their appeal by making their curricula interdisciplinary. For instance, literary studies have frequently been replaced by cultural studies that focus on more contemporary social, political, and cultural developments. The inclusion of subdisciplines, such as gender and film studies, also contributed to reduced emphasis on literary interpretation. German-American scholar Paul Michael Lützeler is not alone when he expresses his astonishment at "how little is said about the specific qualities of literature in . . . volumes that are devoted to German Studies" (Lützeler, "The Role of Literature" 514). As a tireless promoter of German studies for well over four decades, Lützeler has good reasons based on facts and data when he deplores "that we [scholars of literature] have remained silent about the intellectual and emotional joy we derive from reading and discussing literature, and we have failed to mention the imagination and fantasy this sets in motion . . ." (ibid.).[40]

In this context it is important to point out that the interpretive and communicative skills commonly practiced and acquired in the humanities are also of practical value. This volume argues that these skills of reading, evaluating, and interpreting literary texts not only sharpen our social sensibilities and our ability to communicate with others successfully but also enable us to question our own prejudices. Literary works of all ages, and especially those of lasting relevance, can teach us these skills. My readings seek to prove that classical literary works survive because they can provide—in Ottmar Ette's terms—"knowledge for living" (Ette 983–93). Ette's plea for reorienting the humanities "*as sciences for living*" supports my intention to demonstrate literature's distinctive qualities in a climate that seems to favor the universal "objectivity" of the sciences over literature's representations of particular and subjective experiences in specific environments. For Ette, the use and "swift dissemination of the term *life sciences*," which has become associated exclusively with the biosciences, illustrates the marginalization of the humanities.[41] Disputing that knowledge of life could be obtained exclusively through scientific exploration, Ette emphasizes the value of literature as transmitting "knowledge for the living gained through concrete experiences in immediate life contexts . . ." (Ette 986).

The textual analyses that follow this introduction will show how literature represents concrete experiences, determined by a multitude of complex situations, contexts, and interactions, and cannot be reduced "to a single logic" (ibid.). In this sense, the literary examples in this volume will also distinguish themselves from the philosophical and aesthetic discourses of the same period. This distinction between aesthetic or philosophical writings, on the one hand, and literary representations that "can translate life knowledge into experiential knowledge . . ., unfettered from the discipline-bound rules of academic discourse," will become clear (ibid.).

On the History of Humanism and Its German Reception

The following condensed history of humanism is meant to provide a brief chronological background to contribute to a better understanding of the roots of the humanist tradition in classical antiquity. It highlights the neo-humanist intentions to liberate the individual from its dependence on religious dogmas and absolutist worldly hierarchies. In addition to providing a historical perspective, this overview of the humanist tradition seeks to reveal the ideological uses and abuses that were carried out in its name. While this volume focuses on neo-humanist concepts from the Enlightenment to the twentieth century, there are certain core principles that the German neo-humanism of the late eighteenth century inherited from Renaissance humanism. The "belief in the power of the human intellect to bring about institutional and moral improve-

ment," the admiration of classical Greek and Roman culture, the "conviction of the importance of the rational faculties of man," the emphasis on "ethics rather than theology" as well as the curiosity about the nature of "Man" are qualities that describe eighteenth- and nineteenth-century humanism as well as its sixteenth-century predecessor (Gilmore 205–6). Back then, the quest for new horizons had led to European expeditions to foreign lands. The discovery of the new world and the encounter with its "savage" population both asserted and questioned the superiority of European civilization before eighteenth-century neo-humanism. While "the travellers' accounts [often] sought in the new lands a confirmation of what the ancient texts had mentioned, fictionally or mythically," such as the Argonaut myth, the encounters with "savages" living together in harmony also challenged the Christian belief in original sin and post-lapsarian corruption: "The image of savages being good, without being compelled to be so by force of law was insulting to the Christian conscience of Western man . . ." (Scaglione 66–67). Echoes of this aversion to notions that challenged the belief in the superiority of Christian ethics and Western civilization can still be found in the anthropological views of Enlightenment figures, such as the universal histories of Kant and Schiller. Yet the confrontation with different cultures also inspired self-critical reflections not only on Western values but also on human nature. One could even argue that self-interrogation is always already implicit in the humanist quest for knowledge, as the subject's point of view is challenged in the encounter with the Other.[42] The need to define the role of the human being in an expanding universe on the one hand raised doubts about the "natural" superiority of Western Man, and on the other hand provided an opportunity to export Western civilization to the rest of the world, or in the words of Myron Gilmore, "Europe was in a position to take a view of the world, and this perspective was not to be closed" (31).

While humanism's reliance on Greek and Roman sources and its focus on the individual challenged religious dogmas and metaphysics, it also borrowed ideas from Christian ethics, such as neighborly love and empathy. Christian influences are particularly strong in the German tradition because of the Reformation. For instance, the Lutheran questioning of the church hierarchy and the personalization of the relationship to God can be regarded as both a derivative and substitution of humanist ideas. While Luther deviated from the humanist concept of free will by declaring humans entirely dependent on salvation, the Protestant internalization of religious authority and reliance on introspection can be viewed as a step toward the individual's self-empowerment. The classics and Christian ethics continued to serve as an inspiration for the civilizational model of eighteenth-century neo-humanism. The belief in social progress through education manifested itself in far-reaching educational improvements. The founding fathers of the humanities and of the German educational system, Friedrich Philipp Immanuel Niethammer (1766–1848), and

Wilhelm von Humboldt, sought to defend the study of the classical languages, the *humaniora*, in view of the growing significance of the natural sciences and modern languages, the *realia* (Schauer). Their educational reform for schools and universities advocated a broad rather than specialized education (HuGS 1:282–87). The academic purpose was to educate the middle class in an aesthetic, intellectual, and moral sense. The aesthetic and moral categories of the true, the good, and the beautiful were derived from Greek antiquity of *kalos kai agathos*, the ideal of physical and moral perfection.[43] The humanist curriculum, promoted by Niethammer and Humboldt (1767–1836), comprised ancient Greek, Latin, literature, and history. It was designed to promote and develop all intellectual and emotional faculties in order to achieve perfect harmony of the internal and external capacities of "Man."[44] The neoclassical writings of Winckelmann, Humboldt, Schiller, Goethe, Hölderlin, and others upheld a Hellenic ideal that was not just a matter of the past but also a goal worth striving for. The aim was the formation of a morally supreme, universally educated, autonomous (male) individual, an individual who was independent and in command of his life.[45] These ideals were meant to break down the existing aristocratic class hierarchy by allowing the public to have access to a general education. By teaching individual self-reliance rather than focusing on profession-specific knowledge, this humanist education aimed at avoiding the perpetuation of existing professional hierarchies in a future bourgeois society (Benner 180, 198).

Yet despite the emancipatory trajectory of the neoclassical program that resonated with the ideals of the French Revolution and the American Bill of Rights, the political dimension of the German humanist agenda remained confined to the realm of the private, or spiritual, sphere. It has been argued that the autonomous realm of art promoted by classicist and Romantic aesthetics helped compensate for the lack of the political rights and freedom of the individual (Bürger, Mathäs). The reasons for the so-called German *Sonderweg* are too diverse and complex to be discussed here, ranging from the Lutheran belief in inner freedom and obedience toward authority, German provincialism and lack of a national identity, to the Kantian separation of the spiritual and material world.[46] Both the tendency toward *Innerlichkeit* (introspection) of Pietist autobiographies, the Romantic *Weltabgewandtheit* (detachment from the world), and the elitism of dominant figures of German arts and letters may have contributed to an institutionalized humanist education that was accessible only to the intellectual elite. This intellectual elitism developed regardless of the premises of the Enlightenment that intended to make education available to a broad spectrum of citizens. The empowerment of the individual was stopped short in its tracks, however, by the reinstatement of the old aristocratic order after the Vienna Congress (1815) and by the censorship during the Metternich era. This political development sustained the apolitical if not conservative trajectory of humanist education.

The fact that humanist ideals, such as individual autonomy, became even more illusive during the nineteenth century in the wake of industrialization and urbanization can explain the growing skepticism toward their premises in fin-de-siècle literature. The dire social reality of the majority of working-class people, the alienating conditions of industrialized production, the anonymity of urban life, and the realization that human beings were much more determined by instinctual drives as well as social and economic constraints than their alleged spiritual freedom discredited the humanist ideal of individual autonomy. The dominant late nineteenth-century worldview was no longer compatible with the Romantic and Idealist values of the early nineteenth century. Thus the paradigm shift from the dominance of Idealist to materialist and vitalist perspectives can be attributed to far-reaching socioeconomic, scientific, and demographic developments that had a deep impact on people's prospects, ideals, and attitudes toward life. Under the influence of the Darwinian model of evolution, Nietzsche and Freud initiated attacks against the neo-humanist Idealism in the philosophical realm. Their reflections sought to debunk the false glorification of the intellectual and spiritual capacities of "Man" and demonstrated their dependence on the physical and emotional conditions of the body. The fin-de-siècle "Umwertung aller Werte" (revaluation of values) had deeply rooted causes—causes that were connected to a widespread existential reorientation.

As a reaction to the alienating conditions, many literary works that appeared before and after World War I deal with the precipitous transformations from a nineteenth-century class-based society to a modern mass society with its anonymous bureaucratic networks and lack of binding values. Authors like Arthur Schnitzler, Lou-Andreas Salomé, Stephan Zweig, Frank Wedekind, Franz Kafka, Hermann Hesse, and Thomas Mann, to name just a few, all depicted the impact of these changes on the psyche of bourgeois individuals. In view of the fundamental socioeconomic, demographic, and political changes, the scientific discoveries that radically transformed our understanding of the world and "human nature," it might seem surprising that humanist ideals survived two world wars and are still providing moral and legal guidance when it comes to deciding how one should live ethically. One could certainly argue that these ideals had already been utopian, even at the time of their inception at the end of the eighteenth century, and were far from being realized. The writers who upheld these ideals in their literary works were fully aware that they projected an Idealist foil to which they could compare a less-than-perfect reality. Values like integrity, empathy, tolerance, generosity, truthfulness, loyalty, responsibility, and self-improvement persisted precisely because they are in themselves not subject to historical changes but are meant to be beacons of hope for humanity and a better world. In this sense, humanist values have assumed a quasi-religious status. Classicist works like Goethe's *Iphigenie* or Schiller's *Don Karlos* already foregrounded the idealization of their dramatizations. These plays

are not meant to represent the empirical reality of their day and age, although their characters bear universal human traits that let us recognize familiar behavior and empathize with them. Their endurance as canonized classics can be attributed to the distance they create between their audiences and the plays' temporally and socially removed settings and their highly artificial language. Relying on mythical or historical sources of the distant past and representing them in classical meter, they purge the action from all unnecessary empirical detail to direct the focus on the essence of human interaction. Yet, in spite of or because of these distancing formal elements and the universality of their themes, classical works can over time become formulaic, lacking specificity and urgency. For instance, classical plays have very little to say about social problems, such as poverty, unemployment, prostitution, and the abuse of women and children. This is why modern productions of classical plays often try to relate them to contemporary events. Another shortcoming of the generalizing nature of humanist values is their flexibility that makes them vulnerable to ideological (mis)representation, which is particularly obvious in humanism's twentieth-century reception.

The political upheavals after World War I and the disorienting social, economic, and cultural transformations during the first three decades of the twentieth century led to a yearning for the restoration of an autocratic, even authoritarian state. The anxieties of a modern, technological age—an age that resulted in alternative lifestyles and the decline of the traditional patriarchal family, the emancipation of sexual minorities, and the demand for gender equality—and the nostalgic longing for an authoritarian nationalistic state that could compensate for the loss of a binding order were exploited by the National Socialists. Political advocates of the left and the right—conservative monarchists, nationalists, as well as advocates of a modern democracy—appropriated and instrumentalized the humanist legacy for political purposes (Benda, *Die Bildung des Dritten Reiches*; Hesse's and Thomas Mann's speeches). In view of the loss of individual autonomy in an industrialized, technology-driven mass society that supposedly diminished the value of the individual life, humanism was now often invoked to deplore this loss. It could serve as a conservative reactionary ideology that attempted to turn the clock back in search of an unalienated form of existence, an imagined life in tune not only with one's own desires and aspirations but also with a *Volksgemeinschaft* (national or ethnic community) that provided a sense of *Heimat* (home).

However, humanism was also used in opposition to its instrumentalization as a "rein traditionelle, lebensfeindlich-reaktionäre Geisteshaltung" (purely traditional, life-negating reactionary disposition), even before and during the Nazis' rise to power (Maier 3). The term "Der dritte Humanismus" ("the Third Humanism") was coined by philosopher Eduard Spranger and popularized by classical philologist Werner Jaeger. Like eighteenth-century Wei-

mar classicism, the movement modeled the *Bildungsideal* (ideal of education) on the spirit of Hellenic antiquity, yet it also intended to distinguish itself from previous humanist movements by adapting it to modern culture and life (Spranger, *Geisteswissenschaften* 7).[47] In fact, the "Third Humanism" was far from reactionary, and even considered itself as revolutionary (Maier 4). It was open to include Nietzschean and Freudian ideas as well as those of twentieth-century writers, such as Stefan George and Thomas Mann. The movement also viewed itself as part of the European tradition in contrast to conservative and nationalist groups that attempted to claim the humanist legacy for themselves (Maier 4).

The instrumentalization of humanism for the reinterpretation of German history is also obvious after 1945. While the Nazis used aspects of neoclassical aesthetics to show the superiority of the "Aryan" race as represented in Greek sculpture (Breker statues), the restorative humanism of the postwar years attempted to resume the democratic legacy of the Weimar Republic.[48] Humanism was invoked again during the reconstruction after World War II to remind the world that there was an ethical Germany that adhered to the humanist principles of Greek antiquity. After the division of Germany in 1949, both the FRG and the GDR claimed to be the true heirs of the humanist legacy.[49] Since the reception of humanism was more variegated in the Federal Republic, my focus will be on West Germany. The revival of the humanist tradition is understandable because many of its representatives, such as Eduard Spranger (1882–1963), Karl Jaspers (1883–69), Martin Heidegger (1889–1976), Ernst Robert Curtius (1886–1956), Max Rychner (1897–1965), Friedrich Sieburg (1893–1964), and Benno von Wiese (1903–87), had already been active during the Weimar Republic and were well established. They exerted a great deal of influence on postwar cultural politics. While many of these intellectuals had been opposed to the emergence of fascism, there were also some who had collaborated with the Nazis, such as Heidegger, Sieburg, and von Wiese. What all these philosophers and literary critics had in common was the admiration of Goethe and the Hellenistic tradition. Humanism provided a welcome opportunity to improve Germany's badly damaged reputation by pointing out its cultural achievements. After both world wars the adulation of the eighteenth-century classics emphasized the arts' independence from political and economic instability. The privileging of the classics upheld a static high culture with ostensibly universally and eternally binding human values that diverted attention away from Germany's recent national past and toward a common Western culture, of which Germany also wanted to be a part after its "reemergence" from Nazi tyranny.[50]

While the admiration of the classics and their humanist ontology prevailed in both literary and philosophical discourses during the postwar years, there were also differing points of view that advocated either humanism's radical

transformation or even its expulsion. Karl Jaspers, for instance, declared "that postwar Germany was permanently separated from all previous traditions" and that it was therefore impossible to simply revive its cultural legacies (Brockmann 127). Nevertheless, he proposed a new type of humanism, one that "can no longer unfold in private" and "is made subject to political conditions" (Jaspers 79). Jaspers condemned as deceptive all forms of "despotism" including Marxism (ibid.) and other ideologies that appeal to the masses, such as psychoanalysis. Instead he promoted a humble devotion to God (73), individual independence (93), and responsibility (77). Despite his call for a "new" humanism, he was very committed to humanism's "Greek sources"—especially the idea of *paideia* (education)—and convinced that Western humanism had "the most venerable tradition" (85). While it was conceivable for Jaspers that "a coming humanism [could be] based on the Western reception of Chinese and Hindu foundations of humanity," he was also concerned about "the end of Western man," which was bound to happen if humanity chose to deny its tradition (87–88). It is not very hard to see why these notions of humanism would be considered inadequate today. The myopic focus on Western Man and the implied marginalization of all other human beings—which was typical of the German postwar discourse—made this brand of humanism untenable by the end of the 1960s.[51]

Growing numbers of the postwar generation had now come of age and were admitted to the universities, although the educational system was still elitist and inaccessible to many underprivileged groups. The call for a more radical democratization of society came from the universities. The students also rebelled against the remnants of fascist authoritarianism, which could still be found in the legal system as well as in the political and educational institutions. For them, post-Marxist ideology of the so-called Frankfurter Schule became a natural ally, because their representatives, such as Theodor W. Adorno (1903–69), Max Horkheimer (1895–1973), Herbert Marcuse (1898–1979), and Walter Benjamin (1892–1940), were decidedly antifascist during the Weimar Republic and suffered from political persecution during the Nazi era. In addition, they also advocated a more socially just society and vociferously opposed late capitalism and its consumerism. The student movement adopted and revived many ideas from their neo-Marxist approach, which had emerged already during the 1920s, such as the criticism of mass culture and the political manipulation of the mass media, as well as the skepticism toward the instrumentalization of reason and technological progress. Because their agenda shares nonetheless many goals with humanism—and adopted Kantian and Hegelian ideas—it might be more appropriate to call the values that emerged during the rebellious 1960s posthumanist rather than anti-humanist, although the term was a later invention. Yet one could argue that the leftwing political movement of the 1960s did not include important aspects of the posthumanist discourse.

For instance, the feminist as well as the gay and lesbian movements emerged precisely because the early student movement displayed a lack of awareness of gender issues (Kraushaar 226–33; Sanders; Koenen 233–56).

During the rebellious decades of the 1960s and 1970s, intellectuals of the postwar generation began to question the values that were espoused by their parents. They accused the established politicians, many of whom had served in political positions during the Nazi era, of using the humanist discourse for opportunistic reasons and for washing themselves clean of their fascist past. They were highly suspicious of a humanist rhetoric, which, under the guise of universal equality, discriminated against all groups that did not conform to the Western European, male, patriarchal norm. In their view, a discourse that had been used to justify authoritarian, nationalist, and antidemocratic politics was indefensible. It only served to justify the status quo and legitimize those who held power. The extraparliamentary opposition on the left as well as the emerging feminist movement identified traditional humanist ideology with a corrupt patriarchal establishment. Like the left-wing activists of the post-1968 generation in the United States, the German student movement attacked "the core of a liberal individualistic view of the subject, which defined perfectibility in terms of autonomy and self-determination" (Braidotti, *The Posthuman* 23) because it did not correspond to the lived reality of the average middle- or working-class individual.[52]

And yet, despite their aversion to the "eternal values" of traditional humanism, which "continued to define the subject of European thought as unitary and hegemonic" (ibid.), the rebellious postwar generation promoted emancipatory ideals, which one might call humanist. For instance, the idea of giving minorities a voice, the criticism of patriarchy, the critical questioning of traditional values and institutions, the contestation of hierarchical power structures, the opposition to fascist and other authoritarian regimes, the fight against the disproportionate distribution of wealth in capitalism, the push for a reform of the elitist education and justice systems, and the fight for world peace and against the resurgence of nationalism, imperialism, and militarism are all part of a humanist agenda, albeit from a socialist point of view. These demands aimed at a more just and equal society that granted more rights to the socially and economically disadvantaged.

The Humanities and the Sciences

While the humanities have a long record of successfully counteracting the fragmentation of human existence by giving meaning to the wealth of seemingly unrelated aspects of scientific knowledge, the increasing specialization of the scientific disciplines during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries raises

doubts about their integrative powers. Their waning importance can be attributed to the erosion of universal belief systems that were founded on the privileging of the human mind and the distinction of Man as a thinking animal. While the significance of the sciences has been continually on the rise in view of their practical applicability and immediate benefits to technological, social, medical, and economic progress, they lack the ability to address ethical questions and depict subjective sensations. As mentioned previously, the humanities and their humanist ideals have survived scientific innovations through hundreds of years because they can address these questions from a subjective, internal point of view. Literary imagination enables us to divulge universal human experiences and confronts us with the consequences of complex scientific processes and other historical, external events and constellations in a comprehensible manner. In the following I will discuss how literary imagery and metaphorical language are able to personalize and universalize scientific phenomena, as well as stimulate their exploration.

Already at the end of the eighteenth century, German writers like Herder, Humboldt, Schiller, and Goethe deplored the fragmentation of the sciences. In their view, the specialization of knowledge threatened a holistic worldview, which was the prerequisite for the development of a comprehensively educated, autonomous personality.[53] The neo-humanist curriculum can be considered as an attempt to respond to the specialization of knowledge and the lack of a coherent worldview. The scientific diversification at the time was contrasted to a comprehensive understanding of nature in an idealized ancient Greece that allegedly knew no fragmentation of the self and the world. The goal of the *humaniora* was to overcome the disorienting pace of specialization and the neglect of ethical considerations in scientific advances. With the development of empiricist methods and materialist assumptions during the Enlightenment, German philosophers and writers launched a counterattack against what they perceived as an instrumental reason that neglected the divine, spiritual nature of humankind. Immanuel Kant, his student Johann Gottfried Herder, and Friedrich Schiller, for instance, attempted—with different emphases—to hold on to the spiritual freedom of "Man" *in spite of* or perhaps even *because of* the growing body of empirical scientific research that threatened to undermine human autonomy.[54] Kant's *Idee zu einer Idee einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht* (*Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose*) (1784), for instance, deliberately projects an underlying metaphysical intention and chiliastic trajectory onto world history in order to provide a "tröstende Aussicht in die Zukunft" (consoling perspective) and guidance in furthering the progress toward a more enlightened human civilization (KW 11:47–49). During this period, advances in the emerging life sciences boosted the interest in the question of what is human from a scientific point of view and superseded Cartesian assumptions about the "nature of Man."[55] Empirical studies and sci-

entific experimentation contested metaphysical and religious explanations and had the advantage of being verifiable. In the nineteenth century, Darwinism and the emergence of evolutionary biology based on genetics challenged the binary model of Idealist thinking and the claim of the supremacy of the human mind (Whimster 174; Braidotti, *The Posthuman* 146).[56] On a closer look, however, one can see that scientific reasoning was not entirely devoid of metaphysical underpinnings. After all, literary and visual symbols facilitate the communication of scientific knowledge and make it comprehensible to the human imagination.[57]

Charles Darwin's or Ernst Haeckel's genealogical trees present an image of life that reminds us in many ways of Plato's and Aristotle's *scala naturae* or Jean Baptiste Lamarck's Great Chain of Being. Do the scientific uses of the tree metaphor that visually captures evolution and the hierarchical order of the species not suggest that science often relies on anthropomorphic imagery and is frequently informed by figments of the human imagination? In other words, the recurrence of the tree metaphor in scientific discourses seems to imply that knowledge is often based on sensory experiences and ideas. To be sure, it would not be difficult to point out the countless scientific discoveries that have successfully revised human misperceptions or flights of fancy. Yet, the continual revisions of scientific knowledge throughout history suggest that human understanding is tied to its epistemological limitations and their sociocultural contexts. For instance, who could seriously doubt that a human being who lived a few hundred years ago in central Africa had a different understanding of time, distance, and ethical conduct from a contemporary inhabitant of an advanced Western society?[58]

In light of such culturally conditioned sensations, emotions, and perceptions, it is hardly a surprise that scientific knowledge is linked to projections of the human imagination and must be expressed in metaphorical form to be tangible. For instance, human states of emotion, like fear or love, can be rendered in scientific terms. However, their sensory experience may be much more effectively communicated in poetic language. Scientific theories, albeit rationally understandable, often remain obscure to a general audience. Without relating scientific data to phenomena of the human experience through metaphorical representation, science would be incomprehensible to a lay audience, as Goethe's dictum "Gray is all science, and green is the golden tree of life" so vividly expresses (HA 3.1: 2038–39); or in the words of Stephen Toulmin, "Human life does not lend itself to abstract generalizations" (*Cosmopolis* 33). Metaphors are, of course, for the most part represented in language, which leads Edward Said to a broad definition of humanism as "the exertion of one's faculties in language in order to understand, reinterpret, and grapple with the products of language in history, other languages and other histories" (Said 28).

In order to make the increasing body of knowledge accessible to a general audience, Enlightenment writers took advantage of a wide range of literary forms and genres. Fables, essays, dramas, and all kinds of poetry and narrative prose engaged with scientific, philosophical, anthropological, psychological, and ethical concepts and successfully made abstract ideas not only intellectually but also emotionally comprehensible. For instance, Goethe wrote *Die Metamorphose der Pflanzen* first as a botanical essay (1790) and later transformed it into an elegy (1799). Likewise, the pedagogical intention of making abstract moral concepts more tangible can be detected in Lessing's fables or, for instance, his drama *Nathan der Weise*. In opposition to empiricist scientific treatises that generally do not reflect on the subjective perception of the observing subject, poetic renditions of abstract concepts often present the subject in a dialogical situation with nature or another object that renders the dynamic reciprocity of the subject-object relations. The observing subject does not assume an unassailable, "objective" position—taking stock of natural phenomena or pontificating a moral truth—but is presented as part of nature, in a dialogic exchange, and often confronted with a moral dilemma. In other words, *belle letters* are capable of recreating sensory experiences or thought processes from an internal or subjective point of view. This rendition of immediacy allows the author to evoke firsthand impressions by putting the recipients in the protagonists' shoes. In contrast, scientific discourses generally strive to distance the reader from individually distorted perceptions by "objective" descriptions from a neutral, external point of view.

George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's *Metaphors We Live By* (1980) provides a plethora of examples of how our everyday speech is pervaded by metaphors. Accordingly, the metaphorical use of language is derived from anthropologic experiences, such as spatial and temporal orientation, and is deeply embedded in human culture (Lakoff and Johnson 22). Metaphorical expressions and especially "spatialization metaphors are rooted in physical and cultural experience" (ibid. 18). For instance, the idea that "more" often means "up" and "less" is associated with "down" or "happy" is "up" and "good" is "up" and vice versa is an indication that human emotions are surreptitiously associated with universal physical proficiencies, such as the sense of direction, and conceptualized metaphorically according to ingrained ways of perceiving the world. While these metaphorical concepts are culturally determined, they are tangible and easily comprehensible for members of the same culture. Even for members of a different culture, they may be understandable because they can be based on universal physical phenomena, such as gravity. Metaphors are often used because they are able to render abstract concepts in terms of familiar experiences. It is therefore not hard to see why metaphoric language is generally much more captivating than technical jargon. While we associate metaphor with poetic language, we often forget that metaphors are very much part of our everyday speech, even

of descriptions of scientific processes. Lakoff and Johnson propose that "[the] intuitive appeal of a scientific theory has to do with how well its metaphors fit one's experience" (19). If this is true, one could even pose the question whether the human imagination, its conceptual orientation, and apperception predetermine our epistemological orientation and therefore our cognitive interest. Consequently, the humanities and the study of language, their verbal illustrations of universally physical and cultural experiences, are able to yield insights into the anthropocentric conditioning of scientific theories. Yet, empiricist and positivist methodologies are deemed to be objective and tend to exclude ancillary, nonmeasurable factors or cultural predispositions that may influence the scientific approach.[59] The hermeneutic examination of empirical and rational methods in the context of their cultural conditioning can reveal the limitations and ideological prejudices of certain scientific inquiries.[60] Interdisciplinary collaborations between scientists in the natural and human sciences can be mutually beneficial as they can elicit connections between sentient and intellectual faculties as well as contextualize empirical processes and make them comprehensible for a broader audience.

Outline of Chapters

The concern with the question of what is human is evident in the great historical narratives that appeared during the late eighteenth century, called *Universalgeschichte* (universal history). Fueled by the growing interest in the evolution of humanity, these accounts link history to genealogy. Chapters 1 and 2 of this study examine examples of such narratives that center on the question of how to educate humanity effectively. The chapters discuss the use of poetic language in theoretical discourses since these histories of humankind transcend disciplinary boundaries and rely heavily on allegories, metaphors, and imagery as pedagogical tools. Chapter 1 focuses on Gottfried Ephraim Lessing's *Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts* (*The Education of the Human Race*) (1780); the second chapter examines Friedrich Schiller's "Was heißt und zu welchem Ende studiert man Universalgeschichte?" ("What Is and to What End Do We Study Universal History?") (1789) and "Die Sendung Moses" ("The Legation of Moses") (1789). Chapters 1 and 2 discuss the following questions: Why did these historical accounts become popular during the second half of the eighteenth century? To what extent do these narratives represent and disseminate humanist ideas? Which narrative strategies and rhetorical devices do the authors use to educate their audiences? The chapters problematize Enlightenment teleology by presenting history from subjective points of view that challenge seemingly objective accounts and truth claims.

"The Sublime as an Objectivist Strategy" (chapter 3) suggests that the aesthetic category of the sublime helped objectify an essentially subjectivist aesthetics. The chapter presents the Kantian sublime as an aesthetic category that effectively promotes freedom and individuality. The sublime thus serves to preserve the idea of the human as a spiritual being that is capable of liberating itself from its bodily confinements. While Schiller follows Kant in deriding the sensual aspects of human nature as egotistical and amoral, his dramas also challenge some of the Kantian premises. When Schiller's protagonists sacrifice lives in the service of ethical ideas, the sublime's oppressive spirit reveals itself. The discussion of Schiller's dramas demonstrates how literary fiction, that is the nuanced representation of imagined interactions of fictional characters in hypothetical but concrete situations, can challenge, differentiate, and correct generalizing philosophical and scientific claims.

Chapter 4, "The Importance of Herder's Humanism and the Posthumanist Challenge" examines Johann Gottfried Herder's significance for the humanities. Herder's humanism can serve as a prime example for how the humanities should refocus their central mission of addressing universal, humanist objectives (universalism) without neglecting cultural diversity (particularism). By contrasting Herder's eighteenth-century humanist philosophy with contemporary ideas by German philosopher Thomas Metzinger, the chapter proposes that Herder's humanism preempts some of the posthumanist assumptions about Idealist humanism. A close reading of Herder's essay "Vom Erkennen und Empfinden der menschlichen Seele" ("On Cognition and Sensation of the Human Soul") (1778) reveals how Herder uses poetic descriptions of sensory experiences and emotions to render human states of consciousness more tangible than purely scientific discourses. Moreover, a contrastive analysis of textual passages reveals that contemporary philosophers like Metzinger resort to culturally mediated metaphors of the humanist tradition to illustrate their posthumanist ideas.

Chapter 5 examines Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's dramas *Iphigenie* (1779–86) and *Torquato Tasso* (1790), which have been characterized as canonical literary manifestations of humanism in the German tradition. With reference to philosopher Mark Johnson's *The Meaning of the Body*, the interpretation ties into my underlying argument that literary explorations express the significance of sensory aspects of human nature through metaphoric imagery. Johnson's investigation that is based on recent research in cognitive neuroscience reaffirms Herder's claim that meaning is grounded in our bodily experience. A close reading of select passages demonstrates how both *Iphigenie* and *Tasso* problematize and acknowledge—long before Freud and Nietzsche—the powers of a subconscious human nature. Both texts undermine a humanism that presumes the subject's control over his/her animalistic drives. While

Goethe's plays uphold humanist principles, they also expose their rhetorical invocation to cover up ulterior motives.

Chapter 6, "Incorporating Change: The Role of Science in Goethe's and Carl Gustav Carus's Humanist Aesthetics," focuses on the similarities and differences of Goethe's and Carl Gustav Carus's (1789–1869) aesthetics as examples of a Romantic humanist worldview. Analyses of select passages from Goethe's and Carus's aesthetic, literary, and scientific writings show how these writers promote the concept of *Bildung* (education) by intermingling anthropomorphic image making with theoretical discourses. The chapter situates their amalgamations of scientific, literary, and aesthetic discourses in the context of their indebtedness to Romantic *Naturphilosophie*, which strove to unite the sciences and arts by viewing nature as an all-encompassing monistic system. My reading of Goethe's "Metamorphose der Pflanzen" ("The Metamorphosis of Plants") (1798) and Carus's *Briefe über Landschaftsmalerei* (*Letters on Landscape Painting*) (1831–35) and *Briefe über das Erdenleben* (*Letters on Earthly Life*) (1841) demonstrates how both writers express in these works the philosophical principles that underlie their aesthetics: the tension between the unchanging laws of Nature and its constant *Dauer im Wechsel* (dynamic transformation) as well as *Einheit des Mannigfaltigen* (unity of the manifold). The chapter also reveals how Carus's scientific and philosophical pursuits resulted in taxonomic hierarchies that aimed at preserving the superiority of the "white" race and the Western male scientist.

Chapter 7 interprets Gottfried Keller's novella "Kleider machen Leute" ("Clothes Make People") (1874) against the background of the materialist philosophies of Ludwig Feuerbach and Karl Marx. The chapter presents Keller's engagement with key concepts, such as alienation, objectification, idealization, and nostalgia, in the context of bourgeois society's growing consumerism and depletion of spiritual values. It analyzes Keller's novella in view of the transformative changes that a capitalist economy brought to rural communities and their inhabitants during the second half of the nineteenth century. While Keller's story reveals how socioeconomic conditions influence human behavior, it also portrays fundamental, all-too-human character traits with ironic empathy.

Chapter 8, "The End of Pathos and of Humanist Illusions," reads Arthur Schnitzler's *Liebelei* as a fin-de-siècle response to the Schillerian concept of pathos. More specifically, the chapter discusses how the spiritualization and glorification of romantic love became untenable at the end of the nineteenth century, when sexuality was recognized as an instinctual force and bourgeois morality was unmasked as a smokescreen that served to conceal sexual instincts. While Schnitzler's late nineteenth-century drama is a disillusioning critique of some of Schiller's key assumptions about human nature and the hyperbolic idealization of romantic love, truth, and faithfulness, the play also reveals a melancholy regret over the loss of humanist ideals.

Chapter 9, "Blurring the Human/Animal Boundary: Hofmannsthal's *Andreas*," can be read as a probing critique of the *Bildungsroman* and the Idealist mind-body dualism. The chapter shows how progress in the life sciences influenced the representation of human nature in fiction and thus undermined the mind-body dualism and the humanist concept of *Bildung*. By revealing the protagonist's suppression of animalistic instincts, embodied in the figure of the *Knecht* (groom), Hugo von Hofmannsthal's text exposes the humanist ideal of self-perfection as a self-deluding belief that leads the protagonist on a path to self-alienation. The *Knecht* is presented as a subhuman species between human and animal. The beastly servant can be interpreted as refractions of the protagonist's self-image that expose the gap between his bourgeois aspirations and his animal instincts.

Chapter 10, "Weimar and the Invocation of the Humanist Legacy," focuses on Thomas Mann's political essays with reference to *Tonio Kröger* (1903) and *Der Zauberberg* (*The Magic Mountain*) (1924). The chapter describes Mann's development from his antidemocratic nationalist views before and during World War I to his antifascist humanism during the 1920s. An in-depth examination of biographical, fictional, and essayistic sources seeks to reveal the dialectics between Mann's aesthetics and ideological transformation. The references to *Tonio Kröger* and *Der Zauberberg* show how his probing vacillations between two antagonistic points of view informed both his essayistic and fictional works and allowed him to mobilize his humanist background in defense of the Weimar democracy.

Chapter 11 interprets Hesse's novel *Steppenwolf* (1927) as the precursor of a posthumanist novel. It is posthumanist in a temporal sense because it engages with the nineteenth-century humanist legacy from a twentieth-century perspective. The novel's brazen critique of traditional bourgeois values does not simply reject traditional humanism and its philosophy of individual autonomy. It dislodges Idealist concepts of wholeness and self-perfection and replaces them with a multiperspectival view of a continuously changing human consciousness, an open-ended process toward self-awareness. Hesse's novel depicts the protagonist's gradual disillusionment with this Idealist worldview by giving a detailed account of the deconstruction of his personality—a personality that, as it turns out, does not consist of a spiritual essence but dissolves into an accumulation of acquired conventions, habits, cultural and philosophical traditions, even specific historical events and constellations. Hesse's attempt to go beyond a mere negation of humanist values implies transcending the humanist paradigm in every respect, including its form. Rather than presenting a linear narrative, Hesse chooses three different viewpoints, which contribute to the novel's multiperspectivity.

The conclusion discusses the dialectic between the emergence of the humanist, anti-humanist, and posthumanist constructs of human nature and more

recent humanitarian and scientific developments. By referring to posthumanist texts by writer and philosopher J. M. Coetzee (*The Lives of Animals*, 1999) and Peter Sloterdijk (*Regeln für den Menschenpark* [*Rules for the Human Zoo*], 1999), the chapter discusses how these posthumanist texts position themselves in relation to traditional eighteenth- and nineteenth-century anthropological models. Based on this investigation, the chapter reflects on the validity and value of the humanist paradigm—whether it might still have purchase, whether a recovery of the humanities is possible, and, if so, whether it is desirable.

Notes

1. See, for instance, Stanley Fish, "The Crisis of the Humanities Officially Arrives," *New York Times*, October 2010, https://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/10/11/the-crisis-of-the-humanities-officially-arrives/ (accessed 14 August 2018).
2. In his "Presidential Address 2004: The Humanities in a Posthumanist World," Robert Scholes refers to George Steiner's "The Muses' Farewell" (2002), Terry Eagleton's *After Theory* (2003), and John Guillory's *Cultural Capital* (1993). The reference to Martha Nussbaum refers to both *Cultivating Humanity* (1999) and *Not for Profit* (2010); the reference to Edward Said refers to *Humanism and Democratic Criticism* (2004).
3. It is easy to see that these values coincide with Enlightenment ideals. John McCarthy, for instance, argues that "enlightenment is the *means* of perfecting humanity (=goal of humanism), and not identical to humanism itself, [as] the ideals of humanism cannot be realized without true enlightenment" (*Crossing Boundaries* 79). Citing Johann Gottfried Herder's *Letters on the Advancement of Humanity* (1793–97), McCarthy asserts that true enlightenment is the "destiny of humanity, [and that] like nature itself, [it] is essentially unchanging and independent of any particular historical, ethnic, or cultural circumstances that might tend to favor or obstruct its fulfillment in the individual." The editors of *Posthumanism in the Age of Humanism* (2019) call "the German cultural sphere, the specifically German Enlightenment classically humanist" (4). Posthumanism deviates from the Enlightenment claim of an unchanging human nature, however. Moreover, Ian Hunter's *Rival Enlightenments: Civil and Metaphysical Philosophy in Early Modern Germany* (2001) contests the thesis of a common monolithic Enlightenment discourse by showing that the early Enlightenment goals and concerns at the end of the seventeenth century were very different from those of the late eighteenth century.
4. Although the liberal arts cannot be equated with a nineteenth-century humanist education since their emphasis is not necessarily on the Greek and Roman classics, they share some common goals with the humanist idea of providing a broad general education that permits their constituents to become well-rounded citizens.
5. For a more detailed analysis of the declining enrollments of humanities majors in American colleges, see Jeffrey Selingo, "As Humanities Majors Decline, Colleges Try to Hype Up Their Programs," *The Atlantic*, 1 November 2018, https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2018/11/colleges-studying-humanities-promotion/574621/ (accessed 4 November 2018).
6. For more information about the popularity and challenges of the Humanities, see *AAC&U News* (August 2017), https://www.aacu.org/aacu-news/newsletter/2017/

august/perspectives; also https://www.aacu.org/aacu-news/newsletter/2017/august/facts-figures; https://www.aacu.org/blog/value-of-and-challenges-for-humanities (all accessed 29 August 2018).

7. Among them are Mark Edmundson, "On the Uses of a Liberal Education" (*Harper's Magazine* [September 1997]: 39–59); National Endowment for the Arts, "Reading at Risk: A Survey of Literary Reading in America" (Washington DC, 2004), https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/RaRExec_0.pdf; Don Michael Randel, "The Public Good: Knowledge as the Foundation for a Democratic Society" (*Daedalus* 138, no. 1 [Winter 2009]: 8–12); Michael Bérubé, Hester Blum, Christopher Castiglia, and Julia Spicher Kasdorf, "Community Reading and Social Imagination" (*PMLA* 125, no. 2 [March 2010]: 418–25); Mark W. Roche, *Why Choose the Liberal Arts?* (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame UP, 2010); Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa, *Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses* (Chicago, IL: U of Chicago P, 2011); Ottmar Ette, "Literature as Knowledge for Living—Literary Studies as Science for Living" (*PMLA* 125, no. 4 [October 2010]: 977–93); Werner Hammacher, "95 Theses on Philology" (excerpt in *PMLA* 125, no. 4 [October 2010]: 1087-95); Paul Jay, *The Humanities in "Crisis" and the Future of Literary Studies* (New York: Palgrave, 2014); William Deresiewicz, "The Neoliberal Arts: How College Sold Its Soul to the Market" (*Harper's Magazine* [September 2015]: 25–32); *Excellent Sheep: The Miseducation of the American Elite and the Way to a Meaningful Life* (New York: Free Press, 2015); Charles Bernstein "95 Theses" (*Profession*, 4 October 2016).
8. The editors of *Posthumanism in the Age of Humanism* (Landgraf, Trop, Weatherby) also point to a "lack of a methodological agreement among posthumanists" (2).
9. See, for instance, Cary Wolfe, *What Is Posthumanism?* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2010); Katherine N. Hayles. *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1999).
10. Feminist theoretician Rosi Braidotti, for instance, argues that the posthuman condition requires an entirely new concept of human agency that rejects the long-established idea of an implied Eurocentric identity on which humanist ideology rests (*The Posthuman* 37–39, 149). The introduction to *Human, All Too (Post)Human*, a collection of essays that challenges posthumanism from a Marxist perspective, views the prevalent usage of the notion as "'decentering the human in favor of a turn toward the nonhuman'" against "'speciesism' of the 'Anthropocene.'" This characterization is, however, somewhat misleading since the term is not primarily employed to announce "the advent of the nonhuman common," as the authors (Jennifer Cotter et al.) imply, but includes the human, while contesting its dominance over all the other species (1). The authors cite Richard A. Grusin, *The Nonhuman Turn* (U of Minnesota P, 2015) in support of their argument.
11. The editors of *Posthumanism in the Age of Humanism* (Bloomsbury, 2019) emphasize that "the prefix 'post' always implies continuation. Anytime a past is used as a negative foil it continues to shape the 'post' in some way" (2).
12. Landgraf, Trop, and Weatherby even suggest that "any future posthumanism will have to avow a complex relation to the quasi-humanist modernity that arose in the German-speaking countries around 1800" (4).
13. Among the studies that deal with the reception and critique of the German humanist tradition are Theodor Litt, Dietrich Spitta, Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, and Peter Sloterdijk. Their evaluations of German humanism will be discussed later in the book.

14. In this regard I deviate from Jonathan Israel's point of view that rejects the idea that the Enlightenment could be tied socioeconomic shifts. While it is true that "leading representatives of Enlightenment thought came from aristocratic, bourgeois, and artisan backgrounds and the Enlightenment movement itself always remained socially heterogeneous and non-class specific, in terms of its spokesmen, objectives, and socioeconomic consequences" (Israel 33), it is also true that in many works of German literature bourgeois ethical values were contrasted to the immoral courtly society.
15. Wilhelm von Humboldt was appointed head of the section for ecclesiastic affairs and education in the ministry of the interior of Prussia in 1808. Soon after, between 1809 and 1810, he implemented a radical reform of the entire Prussian education system, based on the principle of a free and common education from elementary school through high school. His idea of combining both teaching and research would become the institutional model for research universities throughout Germany and in most Western countries.
16. In this regard, the focus of my study differs from that of *Posthumanism in the Age of Humanism*. While the collection of essays also takes a historical approach and examines the challenges that modern scientific discourses after Kant pose for the philosophical and humanist tradition (4), my study investigates literary, philosophical, and scientific discourses from the Enlightenment to the early twenty-first century in the context of social, ideological, and cultural contexts. By reflecting on the epistemological changes in which period-specific humanist, anti-humanist, and quasi-posthumanist literary texts engage with traditional humanist premises, it reveals the emancipatory trajectory that all humanisms have in common. In addition, it interrogates the distinctions between literary, philosophical, and scientific discourses and makes a case for the humanities and the practice of literary analysis. In spite of their different foci, both volumes complement each other as they are both based on the assumption that the critical responses to traditional humanist thought anticipate aspects of posthumanist thought, and vice-versa that posthumanist discourses must be considered as expansions on humanist ideas.
17. Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer's *Dialectic of the Enlightenment* is, of course, the most prominent example of this argument. Numerous scholars, such as John McCarthy, Daniel Wilson, and Robert Holub, reassessed their critique as a somewhat jaundiced yet understandable reaction the fascist appropriation of purposive reason. See Daniel Wilson and Robert Holub, eds. *Impure Reason*, 1993.
18. Richard Gray's monograph *About Face* describes the history of racial discrimination in the German tradition from the earliest attempts to establish physiognomy as a scientific discipline (Lavater) to the chauvinist and racist ideologies of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as a linear development. Paul Gilroy's *Against Race* also points out the connections between eighteenth-century German anthropology and philosophy and twentieth-century racism. I will discuss these connections in chapter 6.
19. Likewise, Goethe's Iphigenie is far too complex a figure to be called a mouthpiece for a monolithic humanist ideology. Her actions to deceive her benefactor not only render her "verteufelt human" (deviously human) according to Goethe's own judgment but also question the assumption of a stable, homogenous subject. Schiller's *Don Karlos* can be read as a critique of purposive reason as well. Marquis Posa, the character who fights for a more humane and enlightened state in an authoritarian system, becomes a manipulative schemer who betrays his best friend, albeit with good intentions, to fulfill his political goals. Thus, the text reflects on the danger of a latent dogmatism in an en-

lightened rationality that supposedly rejects the unquestioned adherence to dogmatic principles.

20. Examples for this dogmatic rationality that privileges the European white educated male and views eighteenth-century Western civilization as superior to all others are numerous and can be found in the anthropological writings of, for instance, Kant, Schiller, Fichte, Lavater, Humboldt, Carus, among many others. I will refer to several of these texts during the ensuing analyses.
21. See Jonathan Israel quoting John Robertson, *The Case for the Enlightenment*: "Postmodernist theorists urge us to forget the Enlightenment's quest for universal moral and political foundations, claiming different cultures should be left 'to determine their own priorities and goals without our discriminating politically or morally between them'" (1–2). Landgraf, Trop, and Weatherby define posthumanism "as an attempt to critically interrogate the status of the human as exceptional, as autonomous, as standing outside of a web of relations, or even as a subject or object of knowledge corresponding to a determinate set of practices" (1).
22. Braidotti, for instance, introduces the term "nomadic subjectivity" to account for the subject's instability and "vulnerability" that does not have to be viewed as frightening, however, but rather as an "interconnection between self and others" that fosters a "global sense of inter-connection between the human and the non-human environment in the face of common threats" (*The Posthuman* 50).
23. Césaire goes even further by claiming that "the very distinguished, very humanistic, very Christian bourgeois of the twentieth century . . . has a Hitler inside him" (36).
24. Judith Butler also provides an example of how the postcolonialist discourse permits insights into the parochial universalism of traditional humanism. She shows how Jean-Paul Sartre's preface to the first edition of Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963) hands the white reader "dislocation and rejection" by addressing an audience for which the book has not been written. By recommending to the European elite a volume that is not intended for them but for Fanon's black brethren, Sartre attempts to put his white readers in the uncomfortable position of "the socially excluded and effaced" (Butler 174). Thus the white reader is excluded from a discourse among black brethren whose fathers had been humiliated and treated with "that very indifference [that] has been taken up and returned to its sender in new form" (ibid.). By placing his readers in the position of the outsider, Sartre subjects them to social annihilation and forces them to feel the shame and rage of the colonized (Butler 177). Sartre's recreation of this emotional experience makes it difficult for the European liberal to oppose the suffering of the colonized in a noncommittal way and to maintain the aloofness "that outsources its violence to preserve its spuriously humanist self-definition" (ibid. 179). Sartre's direct address to his European readers can also be read as a critique of a universal humanist discourse that maintains the status quo by paying lip service to a nonviolent humanism of Western origin demanding no further involvement. It was this type of ontological discourse that focused on the "Human Condition" in general without making any distinction between oppressors and oppressed, Western and non-Western cultures, etc., that became the target of criticism of the left in the late 1960s.
25. Patrick Fortmann confirms such attempts by German naturalists Herder, Soemmerring, and Gall to defend the distinction between the human and the animal. While these naturalists "cannot help but acknowledge common features in the brains and minds of humans and nonhuman animals," Fortmann shows that their "species-

transcending frameworks [nevertheless attempt] to redeem human exclusivity" (Fortmann 52).

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 Horkkheimer 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-bucher-der-weltliteratur-aus-westlicher-sicht/die-100-besten-bucher-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) *Betrachtunge 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. (Studie 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 postmodernist 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.