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Hannes Bajohr, ed., *Der Anthropos im Anthropozän: Die Wiederkehr des Menschen im Moment seiner vermeintlich endgültigen Verabschiedung* (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2020), 244 pp.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.37536/ecoazona.2022.13.1.4682>



Hannes Bajohr's essay collection *Der Anthropos im Anthropozän* may be read as part of an ongoing response to Bruno Latour's questioning of the extent to which the Anthropocene is a "poisonous gift" to the humanities and anthropology in particular (cf. Latour 35). The volume, largely based on the communications presented at a conference held in Berlin in 2019, comes not as a critique of the Anthropocene as concept or analytical tool, nor as another argument suggesting a new set of its causes or beginnings. Instead, its essays, from a range of humanities and social science disciplines, focus on "the human," the title's broadly understood *anthropos* of the Anthropocene. Assembled under the heuristic hypothesis of this figure's supposed ultimate vanishing (12), the contributions ask what the signifier "human" means in a discourse that thinks our species, like volcanos, cyanobacteria, or plate tectonics, as a geophysical power. What makes the volume particularly valuable is the way in which it inscribes itself in a range of anthropological responses to the Anthropocene by drawing attention to the potentials of a specific, somewhat underrepresented German tradition of "philosophical anthropology."

Three main parts, which include four essays each that are in part reprints, interlink this tradition with well-known questions and thinkers of the Anthropocene, and debates of neo- and post-humanism. The essays in the first section, by Joachim Fischer, Marc Rölli, Daniel Chernilo, and Katharina Block, start out by reflecting on the potentials of philosophical anthropology as it emerged in early-twentieth-century Germany in response to phenomenological theory, bringing representatives of this tradition such as Günther Anders, Arnold Gehlen, or Helmuth Plessner in conversation with current debates. The second part, seeking to explore different figures of "the human" more broadly, addresses prominent issues of Anthropocene thought, among them questions of scale (Philip Hüpkes) and the relation between categories of the human and the non-human (Mariaenrica Giannuzzi). Less familiar to most readers might be the perspectives of Frederike Felcht, who discusses the *anthropos* in the context of Foucauldian biopolitics, and Sebastian Edinger, whose chapter proposes exploring Anthropocene politics as telluric politics using Panajotis Kondylis' theory. The essays in the third section, by Christian Dries and Marie-Helen Hägele, Arantzazu Saratxaga Arregi, and Stefan Färber, return explicitly to German philosophical anthropology through the idea of a "negative

anthropology” (10-12). Dipesh Chakrabarty’s broader outlook on the future role of the humanities in the Anthropocene (a reprint translated into German by Bajohr) closes the volume.

Overall, the collection, compiling a wide range of views from various disciplines, could have benefited from a more thorough interlinking of single chapters, which often appear somewhat disconnected and arbitrarily conjoined. While the resulting redundancies in terms of general introductions to the Anthropocene and the book’s bulkiness might be expectable given its breadth of perspectives, the excessiveness with which the essays revolve around “the human” as connective term raises the more serious question of an overly strong focus on the discursive dimension of the Anthropocene. Such a focus is, of course, neither per se inadequate nor entirely surprising in this case, considering that the bulk of Bajohr’s volume explicitly sets out to explore a German anthropological tradition that views the human as a creature distinguished from others by technologically and cognitively (i.e. discursively) constructing its environments. Yet, it thereby almost paradigmatically displays how humanities approaches might risk an overemphasis of the discursive that loses sight of the defining material dimension of the Anthropocene, abandoning its truly innovative perspective of seeing humanity as an earth system force that brings the geobiological into view. After all, the Anthropocene is not simply a new discourse, but fundamentally changes the status and function of discourse, something that, I feel, the volume at points does not stress enough. That the Anthropocene not only represents a rupture regarding the stable ecological conditions of the Holocene, but also breaks with the status of discourse as such in unprecedented ways, vanishes from view—also through the idea, partially criticized by contributors (35, 78, 118), that “the human” was ever gone, which figures as a purely discourse-related repressive hypothesis.

This said, however, the merits of Bajohr’s volume outweigh such a broader critique and the fact that the book is somewhat unwieldy if read from cover to cover. Some articles, for instance those by Chernilo or Hüpkes, may be useful as primers for German readers not yet familiar with the Anthropocene. The collection’s main achievement, however, is no doubt spotlighting the potentials of an early-twentieth-century German philosophical anthropology—a gesture that this review modestly hopes to extend to an Anglophone audience. Especially the chapters of the first and third main parts introduce and promote what one contributor calls the “German path” (“deutscher Sonderweg”) of philosophical anthropology (179), which, reread in an Anthropocene light, deserves more critical attention. More broadly, this might also increase awareness of the ways in which debates over the Anthropocene may profit from reconsidering particular national traditions in coming to terms with central concepts of nature, culture, history, or the human. Unwrapping the “poisonous gift” (Latour 35) of the Anthropocene also means exploring the new epoch and multiplying the *anthropos* through different lenses of the past that have addressed the human as “biological” force and that must now be translated into a view of the human as “geological” force, crucially also via a reinterpretation of the discursive. If, as Dipesh Chakrabarty suggests in the introduction to his most recent book, the humanities need to engage in “collectively thinking our way toward a new philosophical anthropology” (Chakrabarty 20), reassessing ‘old’ philosophical

anthropologies such as the German tradition presented in Bajohr's volume seems vital as part of the multidisciplinary conversation on the Anthropocene.

Works Cited

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