

CHARACTER MASKS OF SCHOLARSHIP:
SELF-REPRESENTATION AND SELF-EXPERIMENT AS PRACTICES
OF KNOWLEDGE AROUND 1770

Hole Rößler*

The characters with which one masks oneself
Are more distinct than natural character

—Denis Diderot¹

In his lecture entitled “Von den Charakteren in der Geschichte” [On Characters in History] at the Institute of History at the University of Göttingen, Georg Christoph Lichtenberg (1742–1799) observed in 1765 that “demands are now being heard for every book to contain a representation of the physical features of its author.”² Lichtenberg’s statement was doubtless the result of his own reading experience, where he could not have failed to notice the considerable increase in author portraits on the frontispieces of books at the time.³ Author portraits were, however, nothing new in the second half of the eighteenth century. A tradition of *virii illustres* literature, stretching back to early Renaissance humanism, had been providing interested readers with information about the external appearance of famous scholars in the form of descriptions and representations in illustrated biographies and *theatra eruditorum* ever since the late fifteenth century.⁴ In addition, it had become increasingly common since the seventeenth century to include a portrait of the author at the front of books, often of voluminous works; pictorial representation as an addition to the author’s

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¹ “Les caractères d’emprunt sont plus tranchés que les caractères naturels.” Denis Diderot, ‘Réfutation suivie de l’ouvrage d’Helvétius intitulé *L’Homme*’, in Jules Assézat (ed.), *Œuvres complètes de Diderot* (Paris 1875), 20 vols., II: 263–456: 283.

² Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, ‘Von den Charakteren in der Geschichte’, in id., *Schriften und Briefe*, ed. by Wolfgang Promies (Frankfurt/M. 1994), 6 vols., III: 497–501: 498.

³ Roland Kanz, *Dichter und Denker im Porträt. Spurengänge zur deutschen Porträtkultur des 18. Jahrhunderts* (München 1993), 56–58.

⁴ Claudia Valter, ‘Gelehrte Gesellschaft: Wissenschaftler und Erfinder im Porträt’, in Hans Holländer (ed.), *Erkenntnis, Erfindung, Konstruktion. Studien zur Bildgeschichte von Naturwissenschaft und Technik vom 16. bis zum 19. Jahrhundert* (Berlin 2000), 833–859: 846; Kanz 1993 (note 3), 46–56.

name was meant to reinforce his authority.⁵ These representations, however, were frequently loaded with allegoric and emblematic meaning through attributes and inscriptions. The author portraits whose existence Lichtenberg saw as the result of a new and general need among his contemporaries differed clearly from earlier representations in how they were meant to be interpreted and, accordingly, in the information they contained. What the reader could hope to obtain from a printed, graphic visualisation of the author's physique was no longer only a representation of outstanding scholarship predominantly by means of topoi but information about the author's individual frame of mind. In the year of Lichtenberg's lecture, the Swiss philosopher Johann Georg Sulzer (1720–1779) described the basic capacity of a portrait to make emotional disposition visible as one of its essential features: "Above all, there is nothing compelling, dignified, grand or exalted in the disposition and the character of a thinking being that cannot be made visible in facial features. The same is true for the opposite qualities. Everything in attitude and in character that is contemptible, spiteful, or detestable is expressed in the face and in physical comportment."⁶ From this perspective, the pictorial "representation of the physical features" of a scholar offered the possibility to learn something about his character. Revealing in this respect is an episode from Adrien Baillet's biography of René Descartes (1596–1650), published in 1691. According to Baillet, Descartes's "mental disposition" [disposition d'esprit] was expressed in a portrait; Descartes, however, first attempted to prevent its publication and insisted at least on eradication of the date of his birth noted on it, as he "had an aversion to casters of horoscopes, whose errors one seemed to encourage when publishing a person's date of birth."⁷ The—at least latent—preference for pictures as a medium to convey a person's invisible qualities, as opposed to birth dates, implies a transition from astrological to physiognomic paradigms. These were to

⁵ Susanne Skowronek, *Autorenbilder. Wort und Bild in den Porträtkupferstichen von Dichtern und Schriftstellern des Barock* (Würzburg 2000), 15.

⁶ Johann Georg Sulzer, 'Von der Kraft (Energie) in den Werken der schönen Künste', in *Vermischte philosophische Schriften. Aus den Tagebüchern der Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin gesammelt* (Leipzig 1800), 2 vols., I: 124–147: 140. See also Kanz 1993 (note 3), 99–105.

⁷ "parce, dit-il, qu'il avoit aversion pour les faiseurs d'horoscope, à l'erreur desquels on semble contribuer quand on publie le jour de la naissance de quelqu'un." Adrien Baillet, *La vie de Monsieur Des-Cartes* (Paris 1691), 2 vols., I: 8.

determine anthropological knowledge particularly in the second half of the eighteenth century.⁸

In this sense, a portrait of the author promised information that the text itself could not offer, but which was apparently seen as important for reading the text: a direct and incorruptible insight into the author's character, which, in turn, would allow an assessment of his moral and intellectual integrity. An author's portrait thus had the function of a paratext that was partly intended to guide the reception of the actual text.⁹ Lichtenberg's additional astute and tart observation that the author, contrary to popular opinion, "frequently had less to do with his book than Cesar had to do with the current constitution of the German Empire,"¹⁰ signified the importance that a wide readership assigned to the person of the author for assessing the quality of his work, as well as the expectations that were correspondingly connected with the portrait.

Lichtenberg's comments hint at a practice of making claims about the credibility of texts which was common among the contemporary media and constituted an important factor in the social anchoring of both the scientist and the sciences in the second half of the eighteenth century. The connection of a particular work to the inalienable mental and emotional disposition of its scholarly author, established with the help of the portrait, can be considered as the consequence of seventeenth-century epistemological probabilism,¹¹ as well as of social change within the scholarly community. With the expansion of empirical natural philosophy,

⁸ On the significance of astrology with respect to (polemical) assessments of people in the sixteenth century, see the classic essay by Aby Warburg, 'Heidnisch-antike Weissagung in Wort und Bild zu Luthers Zeiten', in Dieter Wuttke (ed.), *Ausgewählte Schriften und Würdigungen* (Baden-Baden 1979), 199–304.

⁹ Gérard Genette, *Paratexte. Das Buch vom Beiwerk des Buches* (Frankfurt/M. 2001). Genette's multi-faceted view of texts does not, however, include the portrait and its close relation to the author's reputation. On the adaption of Genette's concept to author portraits and frontispieces, see Christel Meier, 'Das Autorbild als Kommunikationsmittel zwischen Text und Leser', in Fondazione Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo (ed.), *Comunicare e significare nell' alto medioevo* (Spoleto 2005), 499–538: 502–503; and Volker Remmert, *Widmung, Welterklärung und Wissenschaftslegitimierung. Titelbilder und ihre Funktion in der Wissenschaftlichen Revolution* (Wiesbaden 2005).

¹⁰ Lichtenberg 1994 (note 2), III: 498.

¹¹ Barbara J. Shapiro, *Probability and Certainty in Seventeenth-Century England. A Study of the Relationships between Natural Science, Religion, History, Law and Literature* (Princeton 1983). Probabilism in the seventeenth century is distinctly different from the "Probabilistic Revolution" that arose around 1800, which refers to the application of mathematical probability theory to subject matter in the natural and social sciences. Lorenz Krüger, Lorraine J. Daston and Michael Heidelberger (eds.), *The Probabilistic Revolution*, vol. 1: *Ideas in History* (Cambridge and London 1987).

the subjectivity of human perception had become an urgent problem, to which the moral integrity of the scholar offered an answer that, while it could not ensure the truth, could at least ensure the credibility of his observations.¹² In brief, it was, paradoxically, a question of personality as to whether the personal could be separated from the generation of “pure” scientific facts. In the seventeenth century, and even later, it was primarily social class that guaranteed a person’s ability to perceive correctly and communicate perception faithfully; in many cases this was the equivalent of being a member of the nobility, either by birth or by institutional association.¹³ In the course of the eighteenth century, particularly in German-speaking areas, a new, bourgeois and well-educated elite came into existence.¹⁴ This elite group functioned to a very considerable extent as the agents of professionalisation and institutionalisation of the sciences, but it could not lay claim to a metaphysical commitment to the truth as a quasi birthright. Instead, this socially heterogeneous group based its credibility on character as a moral entity that is inherent in the subject and is partly physiologically and partly habitually conditioned. According to physiognomic theory (and undoubtedly even more in accordance with popular knowledge), character could be recognised particularly in the countenance or in its representation, which explains why authors and readers attached a certain importance to frontispiece portraits. Hence if a scholar such as Albrecht von Haller took an interest in the quality and the “faithfulness” of his own portrait,¹⁵ this should not necessarily be taken simply as an expression of vanity.

Based on these introductory observations, in what follows, the example of different statements made by Haller is used to examine the epistemic significance of the “figure of the savant”, i.e. his physical appearance in its representation in various media as a constitutive factor in the plausibility, acceptance and dissemination of scientific knowledge. The focus is

¹² See the seminal work by Lorraine Daston, ‘Objectivity and the Escape from Perspective’, *Social Studies of Science* 22 (1992), 597–618, and ‘The Moral Economy of Science’, *Osi-ris* 10 (1995), 3–24.

¹³ Stephen Shapin, *A Social History of Truth. Civility and Science in Seventeenth-Century England* (Chicago and London 1994); Simon Schaffer, ‘Self Evidence’, *Critical Inquiry* 2 (1992), 327–362.

¹⁴ Fritz K. Ringer, *Die Gelehrten. Der Niedergang der deutschen Mandarine 1890–1933* (München 1987), 23–47.

¹⁵ Erich Hintzsche (ed.), *Albrecht von Hallers Briefe an Auguste Tissot 1754–1777* (Bern, Stuttgart and Wien 1977), 60, 452 and 481–482; Marie Therese Bättschmann, ‘Haller im Porträt’, in Hubert Steinke, Urs Boschung and Wolfgang Proß (eds.), *Albrecht von Haller. Leben—Werk—Epoche* (Göttingen 2008), 497–514: especially 501–506.

on communicative “practices of knowledge” which cannot be counted as scientific practices in the strict sense but which nonetheless play a significant role in the social construction of scientific facts. The objective of the study is to demonstrate that the anthropological category of character assumed a key role in the development and theoretical foundation of new forms of empiricism.

SELF-OBSERVATION AND SELF-EXPERIMENT

In his work entitled *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht* (1798), Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) mentioned Haller—whose scientific and poetic works he apparently knew and admired—in connection with the dangers for the mind and the soul associated with continued and intense self-observation.¹⁶ Haller had indeed repeatedly made himself the object of his own observation and examination, as evidenced among other sources by the posthumously published *Fragmente religiöser Empfindungen* (1787) from his diaries—to which Kant referred—as well as the two-part *Abhandlung über die Wirkung des Opiums auf den menschlichen Körper* (1776/1777). The *Fragmente* already documented not only Haller’s life-long struggle with self-imposed duties of religious faith but also his attentiveness—increasing with age and illness—to his own health and its impacts on his emotional state.¹⁷

This more or less systematic introspection, in which he had engaged at least since 1736, was transformed into a professional activity by Haller in his *Abhandlung*, a report on an approximately four-year period of self-observation. In 1773 Haller contracted a painful inflammation of the urinary passage which he attempted to mitigate, although not to heal, with opium. He begins his report on the course of his illness and the effects of

¹⁶ Immanuel Kant, *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht*, ed. by Karl Vorländer (Hamburg 1980), I, 1, §4, 20.

¹⁷ Albrecht von Haller, ‘Fragmente religiöser Empfindungen’, in Johann Georg Heinzmann (ed.), *Tagebuch seiner Beobachtungen über Schriftsteller und sich selbst. Zur Charakteristik der Philosophie und Religion dieses Mannes* (Bern 1787), 2 vols., II: 219–319; Urs Boschung, ‘Albrecht von Hallers Krankheiten in seiner Korrespondenz’, in Martin Stuber, Stefan Hächler and Luc Lienhard (eds.), *Hallers Netz. Ein europäischer Gelehrtenbriefwechsel zur Zeit der Aufklärung* (Basel 2005), 221–275. Haller was not an isolated case. Self-observation and its recording became a widespread practice among the middle class in the eighteenth century. See Gudrun Piller, *Private Körper. Spuren des Leibes in Selbstzeugnissen des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Köln, Weimar and Wien 2007). In particular, one’s own medical history was a major feature of this phenomenon. See *ibid.*, 265–276 and *passim*.

opium with a preliminary observation about his normal physical condition: "My urine was normally—as is usual for scholars—rather colourless and frequently had a common but certainly not offensive odour, and was also clear and free of sediment."¹⁸ This physiological self-categorisation, by which Haller placed himself among the learned members of society, can be explained with reference to the topoi of uroscopic diagnosis: clear urine free of sediment had for centuries been seen as a symptom of melancholy, which in turn had long been considered the typical temperament of scholars.¹⁹ According to Haller's colleague and long-time correspondent Auguste Tissot (1728–1797) of Lausanne, a melancholic could "observe and examine the same object in all its aspects and without distraction, remaining fixed on a single idea."²⁰ The melancholic was thus the ideal empiricist.

Haller's use of a humoralistic commonplace corresponds with a quite conventional form of argumentation found in autobiographical writings of the eighteenth century, which frequently drew upon temperament and character to justify personal success or failure.²¹ Of importance here, however, is the fact that Haller was reacting to the impending epistemological dilemma of self-observation in a scientific context. In a case where the subject and the object of observation seem to be identical, the objectivity and hence the validity of findings based on observation are open to serious question. Haller's mention of a visible physical quality (urine colour) thus served to signify an invisible physical disposition (temperament) which, in turn, guaranteed his intellectual capability (as a scholar by nature)

¹⁸ Albrecht von Haller, *Abhandlung über die Wirkung des Opiums auf den menschlichen Körper* (Bern 1962), 8–9. "Lotium mihi solebat, ut solet litteratis, palladium satis et copiosum esse, et odore saepe grato, foetido nunquam, limpidum praeterea et absque sedimento." Albrecht von Haller, 'Commentatio de opii in corpus humanum efficacia', *Novi Commentarii Societatis Regiae Scientiarum Gottingensis* 7 (1777), 1–16: 4. See Andreas-Holger Maehle, 'Selbstversuche und subjektive Erfahrung in der Opiumforschung des 18. Jahrhunderts', *Würzburger medizinhistorische Mitteilungen* 13 (1995), 287–297; Karl S. Guthke, 'Bekenntnisse eines schweizerischen Opium-Essers: Hallers Briefe an Pringle', in id., *Die Entdeckung des Ich: Studien zur Literatur* (Tübingen und Basel 1993), 115–122.

¹⁹ Michael Martin and Heiner Fangerau, 'Historische Umbrüche in der Harndiagnostik und ihre Visualisierung in "Frames"', *Der Urologe* 45 (2006), 742–748: 747; Michael Stolberg, *Die Harnschau. Eine Kultur- und Alltagsgeschichte* (Köln, Weimar and Wien 2009), 72–74. On melancholy as a disease of scholars, see Raymond Klibansky, Erwin Panofsky and Fritz Saxl, *Saturn und Melancholie. Studien zur Geschichte der Naturphilosophie und Medizin, der Religion und der Kunst* (Frankfurt/M. 2004), 334–350. Haller's first biographer already attested to his melancholy state of mind, referring to it as "hypochondria". See Johann Georg Zimmermann, *Das Leben des Herrn von Haller* (Zürich 1755), 366–368.

²⁰ Samuel Auguste David Tissot, *Von der Gesundheit der Gelehrten* (Zürich 1768), 76.

²¹ Piller 2007 (note 17), 37–42.

to remain unbiased in observation and judgment of acute pathological and pharmaceutical disorders of the body. The scholar's body revealed his ability to objectify it. The implication of a difference between object and observer that is inherent in the subject was clearly reflected in the fact that Haller described the progression of his disease not only through an unvarnished presentation of the most intimate physical symptoms but also in terms of his changing sensations and moods. For although he reported moments of mental "fatigue", during which he was occasionally "incapable of a clear, sustained train of thought", as well as the dwindling of "mental and physical powers" when the effect of the opium wore off, his meticulous description of these conditions in particular made clear to readers that objective, scientific observation remained unaffected by vicissitudes of this sort.²²

Jean Senebier (1742–1809) described how it was possible to perceive reliably even under conditions of pathological disorder in his *L'Art d'observer*, which was published in 1775 and reviewed by Haller in that same year:²³

As long as well-equipped senses that remain virtually unchanged have the same perceptions of the same objects at different times, it is natural to envisage changes in the degrees of most diseases that affect the senses and hence changes in the nature of their effects; and when one can perceive them, it cannot be difficult to guard against the falsities that they can generate.²⁴

The senses, which Senebier understood as "instruments", are calibrated by experience, so to speak, so that any kind of intrinsic disturbance can be filtered out of what has been perceived. This indeed assumes a capacity for reflection that only an accomplished and experienced observer can possess.

Haller explicitly assured his readers that he had not experienced any diminishing of "mental capability or amount of working time" despite his increasing consumption of opium.²⁵ Even in one case where he took too high a dosage, it was "nevertheless not as if I had lost my sense of reason or could not perceive sensations."²⁶ The possibility raised here of not perceiving sensations implies that the body is not only an epistemic object

²² Haller 1962 (note 18), 13, 14, 16 and 20.

²³ Albrecht von Haller, 'L'art d'observer par Jean Senebier', *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 50 (1775), 419–423.

²⁴ Johann Senebier, *Die Kunst zu beobachten* (Leipzig 1776), 2 vols., I: 102–103.

²⁵ Haller 1962 (note 18), 20–21.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 16.

but at the same time also takes on the role of an instrument whose data can be read by a distinctly separate cognitive entity.

The manifestation of the body in this dual role of object and instrument calls into serious question the widespread theory of the “disappearance” of the body among modern natural scientists and its claim to generalisability.²⁷ In the case of self-observation and self-experiment, it would be clearly wrong to say that the scientist has lost “the feeling of the unconditional actuality of this body of his, that is, the feeling of his *bodily authenticity*”—in so far as such feelings can be historiographically recorded to any extent.²⁸ On the contrary, in the rhetoric as well as in the theory of self-observation and self-experiment, “bodily authenticity” is among the inalienable conditions of cognition. Thus Haller, for example, referred to self-observation as a verification of the independence of the qualities of blood as well as of the basic immutability of the temperament: “The same person maintains—under very different nourishment, whether derived from plants or animals—his unchanged original habits and nature, which are related to his constitution, I have experienced this in myself, I might abstain from meat or wine, or I might partake of these things alternately.”²⁹ Likewise, the existence and authenticity of one’s own body are essential prerequisites that enable the disease- and narcotic-induced changes described by Haller in the *Abhandlung* to become an argument for his theories. Here, basically two types of empiricism can be distinguished, each with its own logic of generating objectivity. One is the intensive self-observation already mentioned, in which the states between the poles of pain and insensitivity, as well as the related mental and emotional states, are described in the sequence of their occurrence—which requires a great measure of credibility owing to claims made, in terms of form and content, about the distance of the subject from his physical perceptions. That the idea of a quasi-instrumental objectivity is linked

²⁷ Werner Kutschmann, *Der Naturwissenschaftler und sein Körper. Die Rolle der “inneren Natur” in der experimentellen Naturwissenschaft der frühen Neuzeit* (Frankfurt/M. 1986); Franz Breuer, ‘Wissenschaftliche Erfahrung und der Körper/Leib des Wissenschaftlers. Sozialwissenschaftliche Überlegungen’, in Clemens Wischermann and Stefan Haas (eds.), *Körper mit Geschichte. Studien zur Geschichte des Alltags* (Stuttgart 2000), 33–50.

²⁸ Kutschmann 1986 (note 27), 404 [original emphasis]. In instances such as this the fundamental problem of Kutschmann’s study becomes apparent. He overlooks the often rhetorical and topical character of self-pronouncements made by scientists and reconstructs an actual physical sensation out of them.

²⁹ Albrecht von Haller, *Anfangsgründe der Physiologie des menschlichen Körpers* (Berlin 1759–1776), 8 vols., II: 231; cf. id., *Elementa physiologiae corporis humani* (Lausanne and Bern 1756–1766), 8 vols., II: 147–148.

with this greater attention to non-quantifiable processes is evidenced by the programmatic use of an instrument as a metaphor by Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) in his *Rêveries du promeneur solitaire* (1782), which he began writing in 1776:

I shall make use on myself, in some respects, of the methods made use of by naturalists on the air, in order to know its daily state. I shall apply the barometer to my soul, and these operations, well directed and long repeated, may be productive of results as certain as theirs. But I shall not extend my undertaking quite so far. I shall content myself with recording the operations without endeavouring to reduce them to system.³⁰

That Haller also completely renounced systemisation in this sense, when he admitted that he would “present only his observations” without advancing a “theory of opium”, was no coincidence.³¹ Indeed: allegedly unsystematised and theory-free observation and its likewise artless recording following only the principle of *ordo naturalis* promised an unvarnished picture of the nature of the body such as could be delivered otherwise only by unbiased measuring instruments.³²

In a second type of empiricism, Haller did apply a concrete measuring instrument when seeking to register changes in the “unfeeling” part of the body.³³ For this he used a “clock that measured by the second”, with which he determined the frequency of his pulse at different intervals from the point in time at which he absorbed opium. Haller thereby joined an already well-established tradition of quantitative self-observations and self-experiments, begun by the Italian physician Santorio Santorio (1561–1636), who took measurements of changes in his own weight caused by metabolism over a period of three decades.³⁴

Both types of empiricism are obviously consistent with the physiological concept whose formulation earned Haller a place in the annals of medical history and historical anthropology. While measuring activity of

³⁰ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, ‘The Reveries of the Solitary Walker’, in *The Confessions of J.J. Rousseau: With the Reveries of the Solitary Walker* (London 1783), 2 vols., II: 143–296: 153–154.

³¹ Haller 1962 (note 18), 17.

³² On the gesture of “naturalness” in scientific texts, see James W. McAllister, ‘Die Rhetorik der Mühelosigkeit in der Wissenschaft und ihre barocken Ursprünge’, in Helmar Schramm, Ludger Schwarte and Jan Lazardig (eds.), *Spektakuläre Experimente. Praktiken der Evidenzproduktion im 17. Jahrhundert* (Berlin 2006), 154–175.

³³ Haller speaks of the “feeling part of the body” as opposed to the heart. Haller 1962 (note 18), 8.

³⁴ Giuseppe Ongaro, ‘Introduzione’, in Santorio Santorio, *La medicina statica* (Florence 2001), 5–47.

the heart is concerned with irritability, i.e. muscular response to stimulus, observation of physical sensations is concerned with sensibility, i.e. neural stimulus transmission. Although perhaps self-evident to Haller on the basis of his long-time practice of self-observation, his integration of systematic observation of sensations and mental states—particularly as presented in the *Abhandlung*—qualifies as an original contribution to the body of legitimate methods of empiricism in natural science. In Senebiers's *L'Art d'observer*, for instance—which on account of its merely compilatory character (as noted by Haller) was representative of methodological reflections in the empirical sciences at the time—one searches in vain for details on observation of internal states and processes.³⁵

Haller appears to have realised by the 1770s at the latest that the qualities of his own sensibility constituted at least complementary arguments in support of his theory of their difference from irritability. In the German edition of his major work on physiology first published in 1753, *Von den empfindlichen und reizbaren Theilen des Menschlichen Körpers* (1772), he added a brief description of a self-observation that had already attained the status of an experiment: "As I suffered from gout myself, I performed the following experiment numerous times when the pain was greatest: I flexed the tendons of my large toe, which caused no pain until the angle made by the tendon reached the skin and stretched it, at which point the pain became unbearable."³⁶ For Haller, this was proof that the joints did not contain nerves and thus were insensitive to pain; hence the source of pain from gout was the nerves in or under the skin. There appears to be no doubt about the objectivity of this observation, given that this passage is found at the end of a series of descriptions of animal experiments and thus constitutes an argumentative conclusion and highpoint relating to the sensitivity of joints.

Already in the first edition of this work, *De partibus corporis humani sensilibus et irritabilibus*, Haller had dealt with the effects of opium on the

³⁵ Senebier 1776 (note 24), I: 64–78. Senebier deals with the body of the scientist only when he treats the sensory apparatus as an "instrument" of observation. See *ibid.*, I: 102–103 and 105.

³⁶ Albrecht von Haller, 'Von den empfindlichen und reizbaren Theilen des Menschlichen Körpers', in *Sammlung kleinerer Hallerischer Schriften* (Bern 1772), 3 vols., II: 1–103: 22–23. This passage was also not yet contained in the translation of this work that appeared in 1756. See *id.*, 'Untersuchung von den empfindlichen (sensibiles) und reizbaren (irritabiles) Theilen des menschlichen Körpers', *Der Königlich-Schwedischen Akademie der Wissenschaften Abhandlungen* 15 (1756), 14–39 and 96–127. It is quite probable that the reason for this was the fact that Haller's gout first appeared in 1756. See Urs Boschung, 'Lebenslauf', in Steinke, Boschung and Proß 2008 (note 15), 15–82: 47.

(animal) organism, and had determined that the drug reduced the sensibility of the nerves and the irritability of most muscles, while the activity of the heart remained largely unaffected. This relative non-involvement of the heart was challenged not long afterwards by the Scottish physician Robert Whytt (1714–1766) on the basis of his own animal experiments, which showed reduced heart frequency under the influence of opium.³⁷ Supported by students, followers and epigones, an extraordinarily lively debate between the two scholars ensued in the following years, which subsided for the most part after Whytt's death in 1766. As Andreas-Holger Maehle has shown, Haller referred to this controversy in his *Abhandlung* when he reported on increased activity of the heart following consumption of opium, which contradicted other sedating effects and thus was further confirmation of the theory that irritability and sensibility were independent of each other.³⁸

The decisive change in this continuation of a debate that had taken place more than twenty years before lies, however, in the transformation of the epistemic object. Haller and Whytt had originally obtained most of their empirical results from vivisections and therefore had to extrapolate from a disturbed to an intact organism, and transfer their observations more or less explicitly from animals to humans. In response to Whytt, Haller had expressed criticism of the value of the findings of his learned opponent's experiments: "Opening an animal's abdomen or severing its head or spinal cord in order to study the more or less slow effects of a toxin is certainly not the proper way to ascertain the truth."³⁹ This does not constitute a fundamental rejection of animal experiments, which would also have applied to Haller's own research;⁴⁰ rather, it raises questions about the adequacy of means as well as their epistemic value. Compared with animal experiments, which involved "too much uncertainty",

³⁷ On the dispute between Haller and Whytt, see Andreas-Holger Maehle, *Drugs on Trial. Experimental Pharmacology and Therapeutic Innovation in the Eighteenth Century* (Amsterdam and Atlanta 1999), 158–162; Eugenio Frixione, 'Irritable Glue. The Haller-Whytt Controversy on the Mechanism of Muscle Contraction', in Harry Whitaker, Christopher U.M. Smith and Stanley Finger (eds.), *Brain, Mind and Medicine. Essays in Eighteenth-Century Neuroscience* (New York 2007), 115–124.

³⁸ Maehle 1999 (note 37), 162.

³⁹ "Ouvrir le ventre d'un animal, lui couper la tête ou la moelle de l'épine, pour connoître les effets plus ou moins lents d'un poison, n'étoit sûrement pas le moyen d'apprendre la vérité." Albrecht von Haller, 'Response à la critique de M. Whytt', in *Mémoires sur les parties sensible et irritables du corps animal...* (Lausanne 1762), 4 vols., IV: 99–133: 131.

⁴⁰ In this sense, Maehle is spotting a self-contradiction of Haller's that originated in his rhetoric of controversy. See Maehle 1999 (note 37), 159.

Haller's self-observation laid a greater claim to truth, as observation was made directly on a human organism which did not have to be damaged in order to be studied, with the result that the effect of the drug could be observed in its entirety.⁴¹ Self-experiments proved, in brief, to be non-invasive vivisections of the human body. In its literary representation, the "figure of the savant", i.e. the "image of the body" compiled from different direct and indirect assertions, assumed the function of making the physiological norm (in this case the effect of opium on the heart muscle) visible despite—or perhaps better in—pathological deviation.

CHARACTER AND PRIVACY

The transformation of his own body into a discrete epistemic object, which Haller presented in his *Abhandlung*, had already been anticipated to a certain extent by the strict separation of body and soul as a consequence of the distinction between sensibility and irritability.⁴² In the so-called *Kleine Physiologie (Primae lineae physiologiae, 1747)*, Haller likewise provided detailed evidence that most of the body's vital functions were completely independent of the soul and the grasp of its volition.⁴³ In particular the heart, whose activity received special attention in the *Abhandlung*, functions as a relevant example of the autonomous movement of organs; simultaneously, this makes it an appropriate object for self-observation and self-experiment, as it cannot be manipulated by the mere power of the mind. But the most impressive picture of this separation bordering on alienation appeared in Haller's work *Von den empfindlichen und reizbaren Theilen* in the form of an amputation fantasy which—as was frequently the case in his accounts of sensations—he described in the first person: "And if I cut off one of my fingers or if a bit of flesh is separated from my leg, neither the finger nor the missing flesh concerns me any longer; I no longer imagine what these parts suffer, I no longer feel pain from them, I no longer have any thoughts about their injury. The severed finger and the torn off muscle are not inhabited by my soul or by any part of it..."⁴⁴

⁴¹ Haller 1962 (note 18), 5–8.

⁴² Philipp Sarasin, *Reizbare Maschinen. Eine Geschichte des Körpers 1765–1914* (Frankfurt/M. 2001), especially 52–57 and *passim*.

⁴³ Albrecht von Haller, *Grundriß der Physiologie für Vorlesungen* (Berlin 1781), 2 vols., I: 367–371.

⁴⁴ Haller 1772 (note 36), II: 58. Cf. id., 'De partibus corporis humani sensilibus et irritabilibus', *Commentarii Societatis Regiae Scientiarum Gottingensis* 2 (1752), 114–158: 138.

Moreover, the removed body part marked the interface between physiology and religion. In his *Briefe über einige Einwürfe nochlebender Freygeister* (1775–1777), Haller returned to the argument about the wounded body in order to refute Voltaire's concept of a material and expanded soul. Thus he maintained that with the exception of a certain part of the brain where the soul was located, not even injuries of the spine, although it is part of the brain, can deprive "the soul of its reason, consciousness and memory."⁴⁵ And even "after serious injuries and destruction of the brain" it was possible "through the reunification of its parts or, perhaps without this, merely by the will of God, for the soul to recover its memory and personality."⁴⁶

The theoretical possibility of interference-free observation of disturbances to one's own body is based on the physiologically proven immaterial nature of the soul and the corresponding guarantee of its functions. The dualism of an infected and affected body as an epistemic object, on the one hand, and an uninfluenced, perceiving and discriminating mind (as part of the soul) on the other hand, which constitutes an epistemological necessity in Haller's *Abhandlung*, has a structural similarity with the *Paradoxe sur le comédien* formulated several years before by Denis Diderot (1713–1784). In this brief publication, Diderot argued that an actor can act out feelings convincingly only if he is not simultaneously experiencing them himself and if he maintains an emotional and intellectual distance from his persona.⁴⁷ The actor is not to "play" his role in the sense of individual and spontaneous expression; rather he should "embody" it by making his body a medium of clear and objective signals.⁴⁸ The basic prerequisite for the success of embodiment in this respect is suppression of physical signals conveyed by one's own acute feelings and emotions.

That the body has a basic media-like function that makes such embodiment at all possible was clearly stated by Haller himself in his *Kleine Physiologie*: "It is impossible to mistake the fact that the CREATOR has given characteristics to each of the passions so that we cannot deceive one another too easily in our social life. Particular muscles, primarily in the face, the voice and the eyes express the passions of the soul so precisely

⁴⁵ Albrecht von Haller, *Briefe über einige Einwürfe nochlebender Freygeister wider die Offenbarung* (Bern 1775–1777), 3 vols., I: 274.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, I: 276.

⁴⁷ Denis Diderot, *Paradoxe sur le Comédien. Ouvrage posthum* (Paris 1830).

⁴⁸ Erika Fischer-Lichte, 'Verkörperung/Embodiment. Zum Wandel einer alten theaterwissenschaftlichen in eine neue kulturwissenschaftliche Kategorie', in id. (ed.), *Verkörperung* (Tübingen and Basel 2001), 11–25: 12–13.

that they can also be captured by portrait painters.⁴⁹ The reference to the possibility of artistic imitation, by which Haller emphasised the explicit symbolic nature of facial expression, only appears to contradict the previously asserted certainty of making deceit more difficult. Rather, this remark underscores the fact that imitating the involuntary signs of emotional processes is a task for specialists—which makes it unsurprising that Haller, by virtue of these brief observations, in 1785 became a source of authority for the theory of acting based on semiotic arguments advanced by Johann Jacob Engel (1741–1802).⁵⁰

As Diderot's actor instrumentalised his body into a medium that could express emotions, Haller transformed his body, in its literary representation in the *Abhandlung*, into a theatre of physiological and pharmaceutical phenomena by which he appeared to be unaffected in his function as an observer. This physical mode proved to be a logical continuation and internalisation of the anatomical view in which the body had always appeared as a stage.⁵¹ The concept of character provided the anthropological foundation for this transformation, which accordingly provided the epistemological possibility of scientific self-experiment. The significance of character in assessing people and their merits was apparent, for example, in a passage in Haller's biography by Vinzenz Bernhard Tschärner (1728–1778), *Kurzgefasste Nachrichten von dessen Leben, Charakter und Werken* (1778), where Tschärner—as a matter of course—proposed details about Haller's stature, physiognomy and handwriting that were to be taken as indications of his character.⁵²

Regardless of different theoretical models, however, the concept of character made possible an intrinsic division of the subject. According to Kant, whose explanations can be taken as representative of discourse on character in the second half of the eighteenth century, a person's character is formed by natural qualities (disposition, temperament) and, as the case may be, from acquired "mentality" [Denkungsart; character in a narrow sense].⁵³ A specific and characteristic mentality, however—fully

⁴⁹ Haller 1781 (note 43), I: 364, §567.

⁵⁰ Johann Jacob Engel, *Ideen zu einer Mimik* (Berlin 1804), 2 vols., I: 113–114; Erika Fischer-Lichte, *Semiotik des Theaters* (Tübingen 1983), 3 vols., II: 156–177.

⁵¹ Hartmut Böhme, 'Der Körper als Bühne. Zur Protogeschichte der Anatomie', in Helmar Schramm et al. (eds.), *Bühnen des Wissens. Interferenzen zwischen Wissenschaft und Kunst* (Berlin 2003), 110–139.

⁵² Vinzenz Bernhard Tschärner, 'Albrecht von Haller. Kurzgefasste Nachrichten von dessen Leben, Charakter und Werken', *Der Teutsche Merkur* 2 (1778), 248–266: 265.

⁵³ Kant 1980 (note 16), 226–239.

in the spirit of the Enlightenment—is accorded only to someone who “adheres to certain practical principles that he has irrevocably prescribed for himself through his own reason.”⁵⁴ Regardless of the truth of these principles, they can be seen as offering the possibility of overcoming natural qualities: “It is not a matter of what nature makes of an individual but of what the individual *makes of himself*; for the former is a matter of temperament (in which the individual plays a largely passive role) while the latter makes him recognisable as having character.”⁵⁵

The emphasis on (elitist) self-creation of the subject clearly separates Kant’s anthropological model from the concept of character in a society of estates, which tended to be typological and which was probably discussed most prominently in the work of Jean de la Bruyère (1645–1696). Simultaneously, in the idea of independence and self-determination contained in Kant’s model, it is possible to see why the category of character became a basic building block in the metaphysics of the process of emancipation of the bourgeoisie. In other words: the development of a differentiated concept of character was a direct consequence of social change in the mid-eighteenth century. On the one hand, the concept of character represented the struggle for autonomy on the part of the economic and intellectual bourgeois elite. On the other hand, it functioned as the central moral authority of the subject—which first made this social development possible—by increasingly separating the possession of social competences such as sincerity, credibility and reliability from class and genealogical criteria.

Character has its true place in the private sphere—a space that first developed along with bourgeois society and which constituted its social and symbolic basis. This private sphere, where formation of the personality and self-observation are cultivated, is in principle related to a public—as Jürgen Habermas has shown in his seminal presentation of the development of the bourgeois public sphere.⁵⁶ The self-creation and self-insurance of the subject took place in public view in the salon or in letters and published diaries. At the same time, in communication, it was precisely through subjective areas such as intimacy, sensitivity and inwardness that the image of the private sphere as the sanctuary of freedom, sincerity and truthfulness was confirmed. The bourgeois private sphere established itself between

⁵⁴ Ibid., 235.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge 1991), 43–51.

the unreasoning state of nature and the unreasonable rules of a representative public and its institutions, and, in accordance with its self-image, was committed to the rules of reason alone and hence was predestined for the production of genuine knowledge.

The meaning of privacy for the cultures of knowledge in German-speaking areas in the eighteenth century has been elaborated over the last decade by studies on academic societies and “private” lectures. With respect not only to rules of access but also to pertinent symbols of privacy such as the robe—the virtually obligatory garment of the professor—these studies have shown that private gatherings were highly conventionalised and ritualised despite their professions of distance from the constraints of the university public and the general public.⁵⁷

Haller’s form of experiment on the self makes sense only against the background of bourgeois society. Approaches that attempt to explain the occurrence of scientific self-experiments at the end of the eighteenth century by referring to a “romantic unity of subjectivity and objectivity” through which the “study of the self... becomes a study of all of nature and the world” completely miss the point of Haller’s investigation, his scientific interests, and the underlying socially based and anthropologically grounded epistemology.⁵⁸ On the one hand, by describing his own sensations and disclosing intimate details, Haller was making direct reference to contemporary publicity of private matters. On the other hand, Haller’s character—as he had it presented in rich detail over more than forty pages in his biography, *Leben des Herrn von Haller* (1755), by his student Johann Georg Zimmermann (1728–1795)—stands in the background as a source of moral authority, a potential for self-objectification, and a basis of credibility.⁵⁹ It was not—or not only—the scientific authority he

⁵⁷ William Clark, ‘On the Table Manners of Academic Examination’, in Hans Erich Bödeker, Peter H. Reill and Jürgen Schlumbohm (eds.), *Wissenschaft als kulturelle Praxis, 1750–1900* (Göttingen 1999), 33–67; id., *Academic Charisma and the Origins of the Research University* (Chicago and London 2006), 93–140 and 150–158; and Martin Mulsow, ‘Von der Tischgesellschaft zum Oberseminar. Zur historischen Anthropologie mündlicher Wissenskommunikation’, in id., *Die unanständige Gelehrtenrepublik. Wissen, Libertinage und Kommunikation in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Stuttgart and Weimar 2007), 121–142.

⁵⁸ Birgit Griesecke, ‘Einleitung’, in Nicolas Pethes et al. (eds.), *Menschenversuche. Eine Anthologie 1750–2000* (Frankfurt/M. 2008), 33–65: 43. Basically, it can be maintained that, despite a few scattered publications, the theory and practice of self-experiment prior to 1800 has until now hardly received any attention as a subject of historical research.

⁵⁹ Zimmermann 1755 (note 19), 373–417; [Albrecht von Haller], ‘Zürich (= J.G. Zimmermann, Das Leben des Herrn von Haller)’, *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 66 (1755), 615–616. On Haller’s contribution to Zimmermann’s work, see Erich Hintzsche,

acquired through many publications, but also his reputation as an unimpeachable, industrious and god-fearing person on which Haller could rely as the qualification that made his perceptions credible in the eyes of his readers without his having to call upon additional references. A century earlier, in the rare case of a self-experiment, this appears to have been unthinkable—as reported by the Italian physician Giorgio Baglivi (1668–1707) in his *Dissertatio de anatome, morsu & effectibus Tarantula* (1695). An unnamed Neapolitan colleague of his had had himself bitten by two tarantulas “in the presence of six witnesses and a notary,” in order to study the subsequent effects of the toxin on his own body, which lasted for several months.⁶⁰ Haller no longer needed eye witnesses or even people who could testify to the truth based on their profession in order to validate what he described—although the *Abhandlung* was not just concerned with his physical condition but with the resolution of a scientific question.

The extent to which Haller was concerned about how he was perceived by the public is known—his erstwhile panegyrist Zimmermann even openly accused him a few years after his death of thirst for glory.⁶¹ The reason, however, why the thoroughly bourgeois practice of demonstrative self-determination was particularly distinct in Haller’s case was that, in addition to a psychological component, it also had an epistemological bearing. This was apparent, for instance, in Haller’s view of physiognomy as presented by Johann Caspar Lavater (1741–1801). In the third volume of his *Physiognomische Fragmente* (1777), Lavater expressed an opinion on Haller’s frame of mind based on a sample of his handwriting: “The letters appear to be carelessly formed and strewn, but the lines are parallel. The former indicates phlegmatism, the latter tidiness. *Facility* and *neatness* are conspicuous.”⁶²

Haller reacted to the imputation of a phlegmatic temperament in October of the same year in an unmistakably defensive tone:

‘Einige kritische Bemerkungen zur Bio- und Ergographie Albrecht von Hallers’, *Gesnerus* 16 (1959), 1–15: 3–4.

⁶⁰ Giorgio Baglivi, ‘Erste Dissertation Von der Anatomie, Biß und Wirkungen der Tarantel’, in *Des vortrefflichen Herrn Georgii Baglivi . . . Zwey Bücher De Praxi Medica . . .* (Lübeck and Franckfurth 1705), 497–585: 566.

⁶¹ Johann Georg Zimmermann, *Ueber die Einsamkeit* (Leipzig 1784–1785), 4 vols., II: 178.

⁶² Johann Caspar Lavater, *Physiognomische Fragmente, zur Beförderung der Menschenkenntniß und Menschenliebe* (Leipzig and Winterthur 1775–1778), 4 vols., III: 115 [original emphasis]. The handwriting sample, remarkably, was not an excerpt from correspondence between the two scholars but apparently the postal address of Lavater’s brother Diethelm.

Is phlegmatism to be detected in one's handwriting? Does the writer of this initial inscription make himself suspected of this vice? What we find in it is a half-lame hand weakened by far too much writing, and haste in writing. If the writer had succumbed to phlegmatism and written slowly, there would have been no traces of weakness to indicate phlegmatism. And is handwriting not for the most part an imitation of the writing master?⁶³

Haller objects that handwriting is a sign not of one's intrinsic nature but of how this nature has been overcome through work and imitation; thus it is a sign of one's own character as the result of rational self-determination.

THE EPISTEMIC PORTRAIT

Changes in the visual self-fashioning of scholars can be better understood against the background of the concept of character. The significance of a portrait for the social construction of the figure of the savant was formulated by Lavater: "A truthful image is the only shield a great man has against all attacks stemming from envy—and the most appropriate safeguard against excessive praise."⁶⁴ As exaggerated as this assertion may have been even in Lavater's time, it leaves no doubt that the portrait fulfilled an important socio-epistemic function and also makes clear its relationship to an individual's work. An author's portrait, in particular, is more than just a decorative extra; rather, its purpose is to establish the image of a character that can provide crucial moral authority for the reception of his work, as in the case of Haller's self-observations and self-experiments.

By contrast with author portraits in the seventeenth century, who were portrayed in garments appropriate to their social status and with objects such as books and instruments that indicated their scholarly interests, the eighteenth century saw the prominent emergence of the motif of the "private"—frequently including the above-mentioned robe and a cap.⁶⁵ Benjamin Franklin, for instance, whose political career benefited not least from his fame as a scientist, purposely cultivated an anti-luxurious appearance during his stay in Paris between 1776 and 1785, as we learn

⁶³ [Albrecht von Haller], 'Leipzig und Winterthur (= J.C. Lavater, Physiognomische Fragmente III)', *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* 124 (1777), 993–998: 995. Haller also refers to his "almost lame hand" in his autobiographical fragment. Albrecht von Haller, 'Aufzeichnungen Haller's über seine eigenen Lebensschicksale von 1753 an', in Emil F. Rössler (ed.), *Die Gründung der Universität Göttingen. Eine Sammlung bisher ungedruckter Entwürfe, Berichte und Briefe* (Göttingen 1855), 378–384: 378.

⁶⁴ Lavater 1775–1778 (note 62), II: 273.

⁶⁵ Kanz 1993 (note 3), 69.

from some of his letters, by failing to wear a wig and dressing in simple clothes. He also had numerous portraits made in this guise, copies of which were to be distributed in accordance with his wishes.⁶⁶

Haller, too, is depicted in everyday dress in numerous representations.⁶⁷ Artur Weese's inventory of portraits of Haller contains 30 paintings and graphic depictions representing the iconography of the private—accounting for about one quarter of the total (excepting medals and sculptures).⁶⁸ The fact that these representations, which are based without exception on templates from the 1770s, depict Haller without signs of his official status by no means represents the “unscrupulous objectivity of a sober view that conceals nothing and presents what it sees without embellishment;” rather, it corresponds to a widespread convention.⁶⁹ For the artists—whose work Haller supported by sitting for portraits—it was not a matter of portraying him as a “sickly and discontented old man;” the concept of scholarly iconography had simply undergone fundamental change.⁷⁰ For his part, Haller pronounced himself satisfied with a copper engraving done by Balthasar Anton Dunker (1746–1807) which, although it showed him as an “old man” [v(i)eillard], nonetheless reflected his physiognomy.⁷¹ Likewise, Lavater, who included two portraits of the scholar he so admired in the fourth part of his *Physiognomischen Fragmente* published the year after Haller's death, gave clear preference to the “private” with respect to physiognomic authenticity (fig. 1). He does not mention physical degeneration; rather, he describes the picture engraved by Heinrich Pfenninger as being the “truest” likeness, suitable for immediate physiognomic interpretation:

⁶⁶ Michael Müller, ‘Franklin in Paris’, in Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (ed.), *Geist und Galanterie. Kunst und Wissenschaft im 18. Jahrhundert* (Leipzig and Paris 2002), [58–60]. See Brandon Brame Fortune, *Franklin & His Friends. Portraying the Man of Science in Eighteenth-Century America* (Washington 1999).

⁶⁷ Marie Therese Bättschmann has pointed out that in addition to this, some paintings of Haller had a private function, i.e. they were located in the private quarters of close relatives where they were seen by guests. See Bättschmann 2008 (note 15), 498–501. These portraits, however, represented the previous iconography of scholars, depicting Haller with a wig, a book, and a professor's gown.

⁶⁸ Artur Weese, *Die Bildnisse Albrecht von Hallers* (Bern 1909), no. 23–27, 31, 62–67, 84–86, 97–102, 106, 110–118 and 121–123. There are several variations among these portraits, as well as contemporary and later copies. This is also the case for the portraits that show Haller wearing a wig and a robe.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 69.

⁷¹ Bättschmann 2008 (note 15), 505.



Fig. 1. Albrecht von Haller, Etching after Heinrich Pfnenniger in: Johann Caspar Lavater, *Physiognomische Fragmente, zur Beförderung der Menschenkenntniß und Menschenliebe* (Leipzig 1775–1778), 4 vols. IV: 253.

“The nose, although a little too large, is full of sagacity; the mouth and the chin alone show the finest interpretive understanding.”⁷²

Johann Georg Heinzmann (1757–1802), who published a posthumous edition of Haller’s diaries (which have not been preserved), went a step further by including a portrait at the front as a title vignette that depicted not only the prominent physiognomy of Haller’s profile but also—appropriately for the book’s contents—showed him bare-headed and more or less “exposed.” (fig. 2).

⁷² Lavater 1775–1778 (note 62), IV: 253.

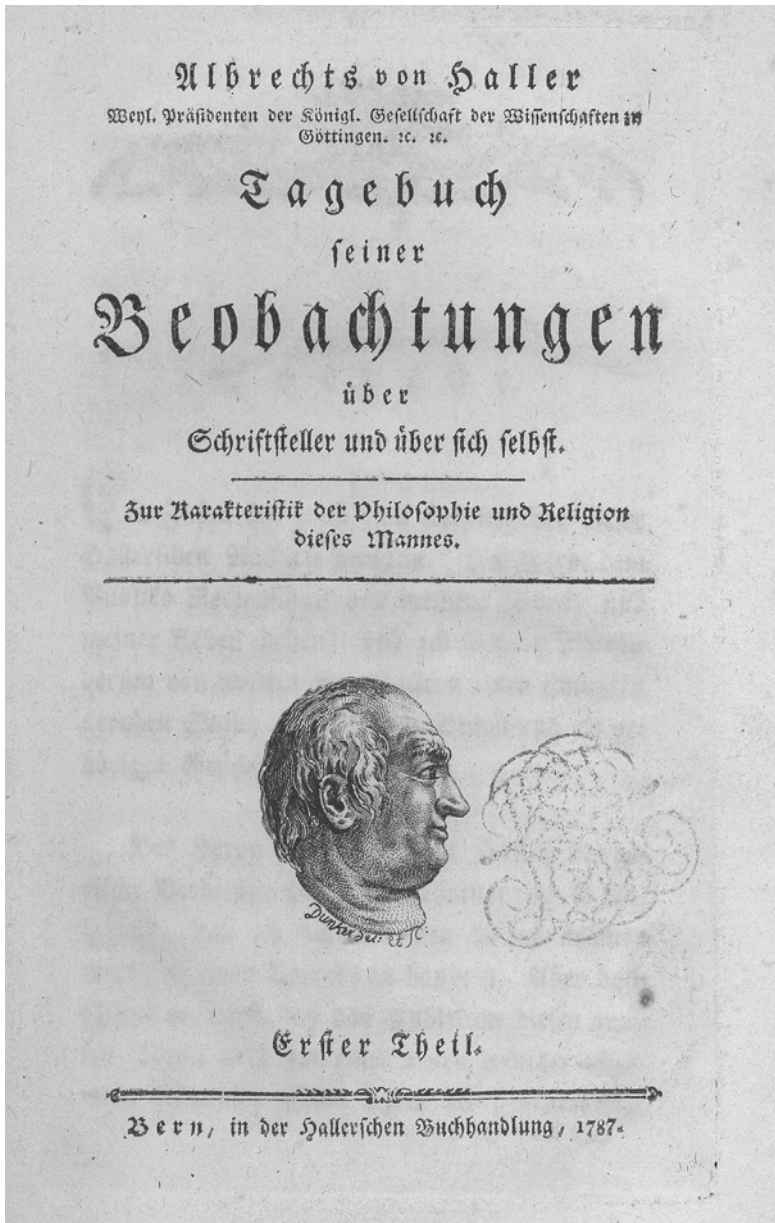


Fig. 2. Albrecht von Haller, Etching by Balthasar Anton Dunker, in Johann Georg Heinzmann (ed), *Albrechts von Haller [...] Tagebuch seiner Beobachtungen über Schriftsteller und sich selbst. Zur Charakteristik der Philosophie und Religion dieses Mannes* (Bern 1787), 2 vols., I: title page.

The crucial point is that the “private” portraits of Haller came into existence at a time when he increasingly incorporated his own body into his writings as an epistemic object and simultaneously more or less implicitly cited his character as a factor that would authenticate his scientific findings. The change in the exhibited self-image of the scholar, visible in the representations, gave Haller the epistemological possibility in his later years to transform bourgeois self-observation into a methodologically secure practice of knowledge. Presenting the scholar as a private person was tantamount to promising that the truth alone would be served beyond the constraints of society—more or less in the “natural state” of scientific pursuit. The fact that every form of scholarship and every variation in the “figure of the savant” is, of course, fundamentally artificial, despite all discursive and iconic assertions, was already maintained by Haller’s *bête noire*, Julien Offray de La Mettrie (1709–1751), in *L’homme machine*, the celebrated and infamous work that he published in 1749: “We were not originally fram’d to become learned; nay it is perhaps by a sort of abuse of our organized faculties, that we become so”.⁷³

⁷³ Julien Offray de La Mettrie, *Man a Machine* (London 1749), 46.