

Maria Suutula. *Zur Geschichte der Natur-Zerstörung: Frau und Tier in der wissenschaftlichen Revolution.* (European Studies in the History of Science and Ideas, 7.) 272 pp., illus., bibls. Frankfurt/Berlin: Peter Lang, 1999. \$42.95 (paper).

This book seeks to revise the history of the Scientific Revolution from an ecofeminist perspective. Maria Suutula intended neither to write a new history of ideas nor to explore new sources on the seventeenth century. Instead, she aims to criticize the scientific methodology developed in this period. Ecofeminism dislikes objectivity, empiricism, and value-free research. It advocates science in the interest of women, animals, and nature (whatever that is). Science should be founded in social practice and, most important, it should be ethical and done with due respect for life.

In addressing these issues, Suutula pays particular attention to the relation between religion and science, to scientific descriptions of sexuality, and to the use of animal experiments. She explores descriptions of "beastlike" human nature in contemporary philosophical thinking, discusses analogies of women and animals, and considers the shift in perspective from a divine nature to nature as a machine.

Many seventeenth-century philosophers and scientists get words in egdewise in the book's numerous quotations. However, since none of them is introduced, the reader gets no idea of the context of their work or of why they have been chosen. Like the compilation of quotations, the selection of images is tendentious. The drawing of a hairy woman from Ulyssis Aldrovandi (1642) is used as proof of the misogyny of science. Suutula finds that seventeenth-century philosophers and scientists demonized female sexuality. Quotations like "The man penetrates the secrets of nature" (p. 57) and "A dirty woman in bed is a sow" (p. 91) are meant to unmask scientists as women-haters. Suutula presumes that they undertook animal experiments because they found killing amusing and because the Christian religion justified what they were doing. In short: scientists in this period were barbarous, sadistic, and disrespectful of nature and its creatures.

To sum up, *Zur Geschichte der Naturzerstörung* is highly ideological. It does no good for the feminist movement in science history and offers no new insights into the Scientific Revolution. A last word about the publisher's work: Suutula is not a native German speaker, which should have been a reason for a careful editing of her book. However, as in the case of most books published by Peter Lang, no one besides the author has read the manuscript; the predictable result is that the German is very poor.

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