

Verena Winiwarter, Harald Wilfing, eds.. *Historische Humanoekologie: Interdisziplinaere Zugaenge zu Menschen und Ihrer Umwelt*. Vienna: Facultas University Press, 2002. 262 pp. EUR 25.00, cloth, ISBN 978-3-85076-565-7.

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Every researcher working in an interdisciplinary team should be familiar with the main issue of this book, and yet this issue often remains a kind of hidden agenda rather than being discussed openly or even published: combining science and humanities in interdisciplinary approaches to humans and their environment. Thus, the subtitle of this book is even more thrilling than the heading, which promises an introduction to human ecology with a long term approach. And not one, but eight critical introductions followed by lists of selected readings are delivered by prominent Austrian and German scholars from the perspectives of biology, geography, anthropology, history and sociology. From different angles of each discipline, the development of concepts and key words is reviewed as well as personal experience with inter- and transdisciplinary research practice.

In her introduction, Verena Winiwarter states that she wished this book had been published before she started doing interdisciplinary research, and the aim to produce a useful companion is, for the most part, fulfilled. First, Bernd Herrmann analyzes thoroughly the contributions and the shortcomings of western anthropology, ethnology and prehistory regarding the inter-relations between humankind and the environment. After that, Axel Borsdorf demonstrates various geographical approaches to the central problem of the man-environment-

relation in spatial and also in temporal respects. Bernhard Glaeser discusses the roots and developments of scientific approaches called human ecology in the twentieth century in the light of their theoretical framework. Maria Teschler-Nicola introduces an evolutionary ecological approach to human behavior towards the environment. A related approach in environmental psychology between nature and culture is presented by Ludwig Huber, and Karl Brunner sketches a variety of aspects of nature in medieval culture and history. In a comprehensive contribution, Rolf Peter Sieferle provides a refreshing critical review of current sociological debates about risk assessment, uncertainty, catastrophes and risk management in the light of a vast treasure of human strategies and experience documented in world history.

Verena Winiwarter explains how disciplinary images of the environment influence the communication between historians and biologists. This central paper is commented on from a biological perspective by Harald Wilfing, from a cultural anthropologist's view by Justin Stagl and from a self-critical sociological viewpoint by Marina Fischer-Kowalski. These contributions and the following include many practical comments on interdisciplinary research which could provide an introduction to collaborators from different scientific cultures, at least for the organizers of such team-

work. Finally, Verena Winiwarter and Harald Wilfing convey their experience of decades in inter- and transdisciplinary projects by both answering the same questionnaire; answering the questionnaire individually could be recommended to any team researcher. My task of criticizing this book might best be done in outlining a follow-up volume which should be published in English and would include some of the most advanced fields in environmental history: historical climatology and demography, pollution history and environmental ethics, involving the faculties of economy, law, philosophy, physiology and medicine, which are still missing in this concise publication.

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