

Christiane Schwab

Sketches of manners, esquisses des moeurs*

The Journalistic Sketch (1830–1860) as an ethnographical format of knowledge¹

Abstract: In the first half of the 19th century – originating in London and Paris – journalistic descriptions of social types and cultural routines became a popular medium for the measurement of ever more diverse societies. This paper examines the social sketch as a format of early social and cultural research. It deals with the genesis of the social sketch in the context of a liberalized press market, sheds light on its stylistic and epistemic versatility, and connects the popularity of this journalistic format and its forms of representation to the recovery of experiential images of society and scientific principles, as well as with politically engaged social research. The social sketches are meaningful products and agents of a consolidating public dialogue based on social and cultural research, which broke away from literary forms and was differentiated within academic disciplines only in the second half of the 19th century.

Keywords: history of anthropological thought, history of knowledge, 19th century, European journalism

Introduction

A novel literary form of social self-observation [*gesellschaftlicher Selbstbeobachtung*] started to develop in London and Paris in the 1820s. With the growing newspaper and periodical market, journalistic descriptions of social types and cultural routines became a popular medium to sketch the increasing diversity of society. The tendency to include “sketch of manners” and “*esquisse des moeurs*” in the titles of these serials reveals their intention to serve as documentation that was closely connected to the ethnographical paradigm of the bourgeois modernity (Köstlin 1994: 8).

* German version in *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* 2016, 112 (1): 37–56. Translated by Brent Wood.

¹ This article is based on the preparatory research for the project *Sezierungen des Gesellschaftlichen. Publizistische Skizzen und die Formierung ethnografisch-soziologischer Wissensordnungen (1830–1860)*, which has been worked on since the winter semester 2016/17 by a DFG-funded research group (Emmy Noether Program). I would like to thank my colleagues from the Department of European Ethnology at the Humboldt University in Berlin and the Humboldt graduate school for their support with the application. I would also like to thank the reviewers of this article for their stimulating comments.

This paper calls for an examination of the social sketches – from the perspective of a history of knowledge and scholarship – as an ethnographical format² and for an analysis of their role in the context of the development of sociological-ethnographical-ethnological interests. Even though the authors of the social sketches referred repeatedly to statistical, philanthropic, moralistic and cultural-philosophical debates, the connection of these texts to early social research is scarcely known.³ One reason for this is that until today, rather than looking at the history of knowledge, the focus has been more on the history of scholarship that was applied during the formation of disciplines, institutions and schools at the end of the nineteenth century, and that deals mostly with texts from a context of “academic” discussions.⁴ These findings, which Johan Heilbron, Lars Magnusson and Björn Wittrock presented for the history of sociological scholarship (Heilbron et al. 1998), are confirmed by looking at the ethnological-anthropological research traditions.

Of course, there are repeated references in introductory and overview works to figures who practiced cultural research before it became an academic discipline, for example, Joseph Marie Degérando (1772–1842), Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm (1785–1863 and 1786–1859, respectively), and Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl (1823–1897). And, yes, some scholars have presented fundamental studies on the early history of ethnology.⁵ However, even in the discipline of European ethnology/*Volkskunde*/folkloristics (and despite the fact that it locates many of its constitutive figures and

- 2 If we consider “ethnography” as the systematic depiction of cultural and social phenomena, “ethnology” as comparative cultural research, and “sociology” as the study of social interactions and structures, all three of these aspects are embodied in the social sketches. Based on this, the social sketches can be considered as an ethnographical form of knowledge. However, if we consider “ethnography,” “ethnology” and “sociology” in the sense of historical scholarship as institutionalized discourse structures – in this perspective, the works of Malinowski are generally characterized as “ethnographical” founding documents – the social sketches are to be characterized as “proto-ethnographical” works. This position is also contentious if one considers that – at least in German-speaking regions – the terms “ethnography” and “ethnology” were already used in an academic context towards the end of the 18th century (usually synonymous with descriptions of peoples [*Völkerbeschreibungen*]) (Kohl 2012: 100).
- 3 The social sketches are not part of the classic canons of examination within literary studies either. However, notable scholarly traditions have been developed regarding the French “*tableaux des mœurs*” and “*physiologies*,” as well as the Spanish “*artículo de costumbres*” (Costumbrismo article) and have provided substantial observations regarding genre theory (Lauster 2007; Preiss and Stiénon 2012).
- 4 While the history of scholarship in its traditional form examines the progress of academic knowledge (within academic institutions), the history of knowledge inquires more intensely about the sociocultural conditions of the production of knowledge and about the relationship between the different knowledge orders (e. g. between everyday knowledge and academic knowledge) (Sarasin 2011). The distinction between the history of knowledge and the history of scholarship is becoming less clear with respect to the increasing orientation of the history of scholarship towards cultural and social history.
- 5 Cf. Herbert 1991; Stagl 2002; Stocking 1991; Vermeulen 2015.

documents in a time of romantic fascination with the lower classes), there are only a sparse number of detailed studies on social and anthropological knowledge creation in the first half of the 19th century.⁶ Harm-Peer Zimmermann interpreted this research situation with an understanding of “reactionary” *Volkskunde* set in its ways that is quite one-sidedly suspected as a forerunner of Nazi ideology (Zimmermann 2001: 10–15); Karl Braun also described the necessity of refocusing and deconstructing the role of pre-scholarly *Volkskunde* in the context of a political romanticism (Braun 2009).

In view of the (non-)established research prospects, it is hardly surprising that documentary journalism⁷ of the early 19th century had, so far, been rarely considered regarding the history of scholarship. This is true, even though individual voices have repeatedly emphasized how crucial literary discourses were for the refinement of social and anthropological reasoning and representation. This includes, for example, Wolf Lepenies, who considered the works of Honoré de Balzac (1799–1850) and other contemporaries as early sociological documents (Lepenies 1985), and Johan Heilbron, who examined the moralistic literature of France and England in the 18th century as part of his study on the development of sociology (Heilbron 1995). Leonie Koch-Schwarzer pursued a similar approach in her study on the works of the moral philosopher Christian Garve (1742–1798) as a contribution to an early anthropological cultural science (Koch-Schwarzer 1998).⁸

This paper, as an initial ethnological exploration of the social sketches, firstly, outlines the economic context in which this medium emerged and, subsequently, introduces two serials representing this form of journalism that have been published in Paris and London since the end of the 1830s.⁹ Concerning these collections and the individual texts within, the specific features that characterize the social

6 Cf. the recently published anthology *Episteme der Romantik. Volkskundliche Erkundungen* (Simon et al. 2013), cf. monograph Schwab 2009; Zimmermann 2001; Bausinger 1968. The 18th century and the Age of Enlightenment, with its activities in political economics, the education of the masses and encyclopedic descriptions, had become increasingly relevant for the history of the discipline since the turn towards social sciences in the 1960s and 1970s; cf. monographs by Koch-Schwarzer (1998) and Sievers (1970) on this.

7 The term “journalism” was introduced in France as a neologism for newspaper reports and was quickly adapted by other European languages (King and Plunkett 2005: 293).

8 Another research area in which literary forms are connected to early social research deals with travel reports and apodemics (cf. e.g. Stagl 2002). Furthermore, the socio-critical journalism of Henry Mayhew (1812–1878) and Charles Booth (1840–1912) have already been repeatedly characterized as expressions of early urban research (cf. e.g. Herbert 1991: 205–252; Lindner 1990).

9 German language journals and serials had also published social sketches, although not on the same scale as in England and France (cf. *Berlin, wie es ist – und trinkt* (1832–1859); *Frankfurter Bilder* (1835), *Skizzen aus den Hansestädten* (1836) or *Wien und die Wiener in Bildern aus dem Leben* (1844)). A sub-project of the research group will examine the social sketches in the context of German-speaking regions.

sketches as a conventional genre¹⁰ of ethnographical social research can be worked out in detail in a further step. In conclusion, I will discuss the social sketches as significant products and agents, as well as forums of consolidating social and anthropological discourse, that became increasingly detached from literary forms and the responding market context in the middle of the 19th century and differentiated within academic disciplines.¹¹

New media – new formats

The characteristics often used to describe our media society – quantitative distribution and qualitative differentiation of medial formats, the increased speed of communication and pervasiveness of media throughout all social spheres (Jarren 2001) – also seem appropriate to characterize the “journalistic revolution” (Lauster 2007: 2) that was taking place at the beginning of the 19th century.¹² John Boening referred to the rapid spread of serials in England and continental Europe in the early 19th century as a “tectonic shift in Western Europe with regard to the role of periodicals and their impact on cultural practices” (Boening 2004: 285). New print and distribution technologies were equally responsible for this development as well as the consolidation of the new readership, the liberalization of state controls and the commercialization of periodicals (for example, by financing partially with advertisements) (ibid.; King and Plunkett 2005). Starting in the 1820s, the ever more affordable newspapers and periodicals served increasingly as a forum for political, literary, artistic and scientific debate which had previously been limited to private

10 The terms “genre” and “format” are equally suitable when dealing with the early ethnographical form of the social sketches. While the term “genre,” influenced strongly by literature and art studies, is based primarily on substantive and formal criteria, the term “format” was introduced in media studies to take the commercial production context of the television industry into account (Frahm and Voßkamp 2005: 265). In addition to the content aspects, the concept of “format” implies, in particular, the idea of elements that can be industrially reproduced and published as a series (ibid.). The aspects of seriality and reproducibility also shaped the origin of the social sketches in the commercial newspaper and magazine market. The term “format” is also frequently used in the sociology of knowledge, where it is directed mostly towards the mediality of knowledge and its appearance in historically convertible media varieties. In this function, the term was also taken as a basis for the DFG research association “*Volkskundliches Wissen und gesellschaftlicher Wissenstransfer: Zur Produktion kultureller Wissensformate im 20. Jahrhundert*” (cf. e.g. Dietzsch et al. 2009: 14).

11 Institutionalization processes of individual disciplines are beyond the focus of this paper. The function of the social sketches in the context of consolidating social and anthropological disciplines will be determined in a future phase of the research project.

12 Despite common tendencies in western Europe, the medial transformations developed with regional differences. This is, among other things, due to the respective size of the reading population, censorship from the state and church, and the financial strength of the publishing houses. Refer to Boening (2004) and Koch (2005) for more information on the particularities and similarities of the newspaper markets in England, Germany and France around 1840.

salons, academic institutions and expensive subscription systems (Boening 2004: 288; Heilbron 1995: 120).

The social sketches placed themselves as a hybrid between social research, politics, art and entertainment in the program of periodicals and could serve various functions simultaneously. The entertaining and often illustrated texts provided orientation by describing social types, behaviors, places, means of transportation and institutions in detail. They marveled – often in a humorous way¹³ – at the new phenomena of urban life, responded to current debates and events, and promoted and appealed to political awareness. The format of the social sketches, which was presumably first institutionalized in sections in the Parisian satirical magazines at the end of the 1820s,¹⁴ established itself quickly in the newspaper market of other European cities (Lauster 2007: 28 ff.) and was soon also published in serials and collective publications, such as *Paris, ou le Livre des cent-et-un* (1831–1834), *Berlin, wie es ist – und trinkt* (1832–1850) or *Los españoles pintados por si mismos* (1843–1844).

These compilations, two examples of which are presented in the following section, are especially interesting from an academic point of view because of their order-instilling form and their pretension as an encyclopedic work. The initially fragmented, anecdotal social sketches appear here in a context that concentrates mostly on a specific socio-spatial entity. In the context of such a collection, the individual social sketches (and their illustrations) did not alone constitute micro-analyses of social phenomena, but were combined as synthesizing reflections on concepts, such as city, class, society and nation.

Social sketches in serials: *Heads of the People* (1838–1841) and *Les français peints par eux-mêmes* (1839–1842)

Heads of the People and *Les français peints par eux-mêmes* made a significant contribution to the development and popularization of social sketches and their compilatory form of organization, establishing them as a format between entertaining journalism and social surveys. *Heads of the People: or, Portraits of the English* was published in two volumes in 1840 and 1841, though many of the articles had already appeared in various periodicals since 1838. The editor, Douglas Jerrold (1803–1857),

13 The humorous, or even satirical content of many social sketches is due, among other things, to verbal exaggerations, the use of dialogues in the vernacular, stereotypical illustrations and the use of allegedly precise scientific concepts to achieve ironic detachment.

14 Letters and travel reports could be considered forerunners of the social sketches when they were printed as a series in newspapers and periodicals. Étienne de Jouy (1764–1846) had already published the sketch series *L'hermite de la chaussée d'Antin* in the *Gazette de France* from 1811 to 1814. The literary, epistemic genesis that authors of the social sketches repeatedly portrayed range from the writings of Jouys about the *Tableaux de Paris* (1782–1788) and from Louis-Sébastien Mercier (1757–1837) and the social observations by Joseph Addison (1672–88) to the satirical-moralistic work *El diablo cojuelo* (1641) by Luis Vélez de Guevara (1579–1644).

who repeatedly supported social reforms as a publicist, stated in the preface of the first volume that the main goal of this work was to document social development. The articles, as “records of English character,” should “preserve the impress of the present age; ... record its virtues, its follies, its moral contradictions, and its crying wrongs” (Jerrold 1840a: iii). Reading them should teach and amuse simultaneously:

“The student of human nature may derive the best of lore; the mere idling reader become at once amused and instructed; whilst even to the social antiquarian, who regards the feelings and habits of men more as a thing of time ... the volume abounds with facts of the greatest and most enduring interest.” (ibid.)

The serial consists of articles on individual types (“heads”) that should represent respectively a specific social group. As “popular portraits,” according to the editor, they consolidate “in individual peculiarity the characteristics of a class” (Jerrold 1841: iii). The readers of “heads” are indeed introduced to all social classes when figures such as not only “The Chimney Sweep” and “The Basket Women,” but also “The Young Lord” and “The Tory” are covered. Furthermore, the type portraits should make the contemporary cultural transformations and social changes more tangible. Accordingly, several texts provide information on the ways of life of traditional “English faces” (Jerrold 1840a: iii), for example, “The Old Schoolmaster;” other texts deal with representative figures of modern England, for example, “The Fashionable Authoress,” “The Capitalist” and “The Factory Child.” The individual articles are quite heterogeneous in their form. Covering about seven to twelve pages, they combine detailed descriptions of clothing, forms of action and daily routines; historiographical surveys; political, psychological and philosophical observations; and narrative elements, such as anecdotes and dialogues, that should demonstrate the manner of speaking and behaviors of a particular type. The construction of social types as descriptive units combined with related cultural-historical, political and socially critical thinking was presented internationally by *Heads of the People* as a model that would leave a lasting impact on the development of the social sketches as a documentary knowledge format (see below).

The work was also pioneering in the use of illustrations. Each of the 83 chapters is preceded by a visual portrait of the “head” being described. The illustrations indicate significant references to the approaches of physiognomy that gained in popularity around 1800 as a sign of empirically oriented world interpretation and had developed models to conclude social characteristics and individual character traits from phenotypic appearances of people (Percival and Tytler 2005; Wechsler 1982). In accordance with the physiognomic teachings oriented to the visual sense, the meticulous depiction of posture and facial expressions helps the illustrations to convey specific living conditions, such as the financial woes of the “Poor Curate” and the day-to-day monotony of the “Family Governess.” The visual access to social life that has also become an important cognitive tool in contemporary cultural-anthro-

pological thinking (Cowling 1989; Moravia 1973: 41 ff.) and the close link between written and illustrated representation would become increasingly important in the successive works on *Heads of the People*.

The articles in *Heads of the People* were almost simultaneously translated into French;¹⁵ Léon Curmer (1801–1870), editor of the French edition, also published rather quickly an ambitious copy of the serial: *The French paint themselves*¹⁶ (*Les français peints par eux-mêmes*). The articles appeared in over 400 individual publications and were collectively published in eight volumes between 1840 and 1842.¹⁷ Starting with the fourth volume, the subtitle of the *Encyclopedia of morals and customs in the nineteenth century* (*Encyclopédie morale du dix-neuvième siècle*) declared the project's ambitious goal that Curmer commented on in the closing words of the eighth volume: "All social classes have been explored ... The most elegant salons, the most infamous dives ..., everything has been researched" (Curmer 1842: 457).

Regarding its presentation method, the "*Encyclopédie morale*" appears even more eclectic than its English model. Although most of the articles deal with social types, there are also cultural-historical essays ("The youthful generation forty years later"), politically engaged social surveys ("The Army"), commentary on academic and political institutions ("The Army" and "École Polytechnique"), and even a statistical analysis with numerous tables ("The Population of France"). Each type-portrait in *Les français* is also preceded by an illustration. However, this illustration does not only show the upper body and head of the figure, but shows them in their entire appearance. Furthermore, there are two additional illustrations on the first page of text of many articles, one of which references the spatial environment and social milieu of the specific figure and the other which depicts the figure in connection with typical objects. That the illustrations in *Les français* play a prominent role is also substantiated by the design of the table of contents that lists all the illustrations with page numbers and names of the illustrators.

A hybrid knowledge format

The social sketches consolidated themselves at a time when the documentation of sociocultural forms was rooted largely within a literary and journalistic context (Lepenies 1985). Moreover, it was due to the absence of the institutionalization of social and anthropological discourses that different forms of sociographic representation and knowledge were hardly distinguishable from one another. The multifaceted documentary nature of the social sketches that I will illustrate with an article

15 Léon Curmer (Ed.): *Les Anglais peints par eux-mêmes*. 2nd vol. Paris 1840–1841.

16 The quotes in French and Spanish were translated by the author. In some cases, the original is included in the text.

17 *Le Prisme. Encyclopédie morale du dix-neuvième siècle* was published as an additional volume in 1841.

from the serial *Les français peints par eux-mêmes* stems from these genre-related and epistemic (dis-)orders.

The text "*Le mineur*" ("The Miner") was written by journalist and author François Fertiault (1814–1915). The author introduces his portrayal with preliminary considerations in which he addresses the dangers of working in the mines and provides an overview of mining in France (Fertiault 1841: 340–342). It includes a side note on the formation of coal and on mining technology with further footnotes. At the end of this informative part, in which Fertiault borrows from forms of enlightened (travel) reports and treatises of natural history, he takes his readers inside the mine: "You may now follow me" (ibid.: 342). Because the work processes in a mine are highly differentiated, Fertiault explains, the "miner's society" consists of many different "special categories," for example, the hewer and the coal drawer (Fertiault 1841: 342). Fertiault also deals with the personal attitude miners have about their work. Despite the dangers and the low pay, miners are proud of their job (ibid.: 343) and that is why, according to Fertiault, there had been only one notable riot in the last few years, *L'émeute des quatre sous* of 1833 in the mines of Anzin (ibid.: 344). The next section deals with the miners' festival calendar; Fertiault describes, with scenic pictures, the activities of the annual festival for the patron of miners, at which upcoming promotions were announced and the engineer gave a "toast to the prosperity of the mine" (ibid.: 347).

Fertiault dedicates the next part to the dangers that miners faced. He provides a list of their health risks and describes a series of accidents that allegedly happened in the mines in the past (ibid.: 347–350). Fertiault then covers the "*Chanson du mineur*" ("The song of the miner") and includes all the stanzas and notations (ibid.: 351–352). The author stresses that this song has been composed entirely by the miners ("*composée par les mineurs eux-mêmes*") (ibid.: 351). As with every oral tradition that is "passed on from mouth to mouth and memory to memory" (ibid.: 352), this song has also "inevitably undergone modifications" (ibid.). These observations, that clearly draw upon the contemporary folkloristic, antiquarian debates (Bausinger 1968; Dorson 1986), are followed by information on the working clothes and regional origin of the miners. Since a considerable proportion of the latter came from abroad, they had a large "variety of characters and customs" (Fertiault 1841: 353). At the end, after portraying a rather positive image of work in the mines, Fertiault adopts an explicitly socio-critical tone. His statement that miners are kept like prisoners in "earth cages" (ibid.: 354) and slave away like "underground bees" (ibid.) surprisingly contradicts the more picturesque representation in the rest of the text. Fertiault encourages his readers to stand up against the miners' working conditions and to acknowledge their contribution to the "wealth of the entire nation" (ibid.). Not only the speculators and factory owners, whose machines are kept going by the

miners, but also the entire population should “appreciate this occupation that ... nurtures our economy and our industry” (ibid.).

The article “*Le mineur*” combines forms of political commentary, studies on natural history and geography, genre painting, ethnographical and folkloristic¹⁸ analysis, philanthropical reports and sociological-ethnographical interpretation into a multifaceted representation that sheds light on various aspects of miners and mining. It deals with social orders and hierarchies, cultural forms and traditions, as well as material and geographic conditions, historical contextualization and an activist appeal. The example shows how the flexible format of the journalistic sketch consolidates not only a variety of forms of representation and knowledge, but also discursive positions on early sociological-ethnographical images and analyses. This was at a time when descriptive documentation of cultural and social research had not yet been specialized within institutional knowledge genres.

Historicizing concepts of man and society

The social sketches’ high level of detailed descriptions of cultural forms and social practices characterize them as a documentary, ethnographical genre.¹⁹ The journalist Mariano José de Larra, one of the first theorists of this form, recognized their empirical and historicizing approach towards social life (Larra 2002). According to Larra, although human activity and behavior had been discussed previously and attentively in moralistic writings of the Baroque and Enlightenment, these texts had, generally speaking, dealt with “general” virtues and vices in the sense of a universalistic human nature (ibid.). The concept of “society” (“*sociedad*”) and the corresponding understanding that human beings could be understood alone “in interaction with new and specific forms of society” (ibid.) would only prevail afterwards. Just a few years later and from a completely different geographic region, Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl (1823–1897), who also worked for many years as a journalist and publisher (Ballis 1998), realized that the new perspective on “society as public power” had promoted a more critical view towards humanity (Riehl 1851). This is

18 Social sketches often describe scenes from the life of the of lower social classes and/or give an account of legends, proverbs and songs. Many of the authors also published collections of customs, religious beliefs, fairy tales and legends, e. g. Philibert Audebrand (*Fontainebleau, paysages, légendes, souvenirs, fantaisies*, 1855), Emile Gigaut de La Bédollière (*Contes du temps passé*, 1848) and William Howitt (*History of Priestcraft in all Ages and Nations*, 1833).

19 A specific “methodology,” however, remains mostly vague. The authors of the sketches deal with the question of how they came to gain insights into their subjects differently. They often present themselves as first-person narrators (such as in an ethnographical essay) who witnessed the situation described (“I observed on that day ...”) or create characteristic ideal scenes (“In the morning, market women call ...”). Studies are often quoted as a certification of authenticity (see below). A systematic analysis and typology of the authentication strategies, as they are to be made out in the writings, will still have to be carried out.

also apparent from the success of the social novel that presents humanity “in the local colors of a specific section of society” (ibid.). According to Riehl, “the triumph of the historical, social world view on the leveling philosophical one” (ibid.) is based on the fact that “stereotypical” figures are now portrayed as “socialized individuals” (ibid.); this, to him, is also the “reason why even the aesthetically most shallow and supine work ... would be of great value for the cultural historian” (ibid.).

The selective assessments from Larra and Riehl on literary and artistic tendencies coincide with the contemporary developments of empirical social research. Since the end of the 18th century, more and more approaches towards social coexistence have established themselves that attempt to explain social order beyond the principle of estate, theological and rationalistic systems. Han Vermeulen described only recently in a comprehensive study how descriptive and comparative ethnography became increasingly systematic in the surroundings of the University of Göttingen in the 18th century (Vermeulen 2015).²⁰ Johan Heilbron, Lars Magnusson and Björn Wittrock have shown how the French Marquis de Condorcet (1743–1794), philosopher, scholar and politician of the Enlightenment, coined the term “social science” around 1790 (Heilbron et al. 1998). Condorcet’s concepts were further developed at the *Institut de France* (founded in 1795) into a materialistic, positivistic social science which then spread to England (ibid.: 3 ff.). Sergio Moravia also viewed the institutions of post-revolutionary France, especially the *Société des observateurs de l’homme* (founded in 1799), as fundamental for the development of empirically oriented social and cultural research (Moravia 1989).

The new secular and historicizing conceptions of people and society were popularized by the press and literature, and the social sketches are one of the key media for this process. Their focus is on the sometimes amusing, sometimes seriously critical, documentation of cultural patterns and socioeconomic conditions that are based on experience-oriented approaches to social life. The example of the miner illustrates this clearly. Here, it is neither about utopian working and social models nor abstract virtues such as “diligence,” “obedience” or “caring.” Rather, Fertiault, referring to the everyday working life of a French miner in the 1830s, addresses historically and geographically specific conditions of a particular form of social organization. Fertiault, like many other authors of documentary prose, uses the construction of representative social types as a heuristic tool to capture the complexity of social life in their everyday state and to document them in “socialized-individual figures” (Riehl 1851). Honoré de Balzac, who wrote several articles for *Les français peints par eux-mêmes*,²¹ outlines this procedure as follows: “A type is a figure that

20 For the significance of the University of Göttingen as an early center of ethno-sciences, see also Bachter (1998) and Stagl (2002).

21 For example, “*L’épicier*” in the first volume in the series (1840) and “*La femme de province*” in the sixth volume (1841).

comprehends in itself the characteristic traits of all those that are alike to him in some way or the other. He is the model of the type" (Balzac 2014: 6637). Conveyed by the type category, sociocultural practices and conditions could be related to a significant number of people, and, simultaneously, they could be individualized by adding biographical narratives, scenes and dialogues. In the social sketches and social literature of the 19th century, the one-dimensional moralistic character depictions, that were based on a universalistic human nature, gave way to the experience and complexity-oriented methods of representation that tried to comprehend man as a historical social being.

Scientific modelings

Authors of the social sketches frequently resorted to scientific concepts and classification methods to measure and present social phenomena and orders in a realistic and analytical manner. Many of the sketches were structured in such a way that a social type was initially presented based on general characteristics, followed by detailed specifications about its various "variants" or "classes."²² The authors were also fond of using expressions such as "microscopic observation," "genus," "anatomy" and "physiology" along with the descriptions of sociocultural phenomena. "[W]here's the Linnaeus to classify these radical representatives?" asked the author of the article "The Radical Member of Parliament" in *Heads of the People* (Akolouthos 1841: 354), and Frederick Tomlins wrote about the type of the capitalist as a new "species" (Tomlins 1841: 208). It was not his task "to trace the history of the heads we dissect, but to characterise their peculiarities" (ibid.). However, if one hypothetically "unite[s] the historian with the anatomist" (ibid.), it would quickly become clear that: "The American war produced a few *specimens*" (ibid., italics added). In his article on the miner, Fertiault also "explores" various regions of France (Fertiault 1841: 340) and uses concepts from physiognomy and botany. In a "physiognomy" of the miner (Fertiault 1841: 345), his superstitious nature is a "characteristic feature" ("*trait caractéristique*" [ibid.], italics added) and, moreover, he is similar to an indigenous plant (ibid.: 343) that is never able to escape its habitat. Balzac, in turn, compared social structures with zoological orders in the preface of his work *The Human Comedy (La Comédie humaine)* (1829–1850): "For does not society modify Man, according to the conditions in which he lives and acts, into men as manifold as the species in Zoology?" (Balzac 1842).

Certainly, such plays on words may have quite often served the readers' amusement and they should not be regarded as a one-sided expression of scientific think-

22 See, for example, the remarks on "The Farmer": "The Farmers of England, in the present day, may be divided into three classes; and we will take a sketch from each, as we see them hastening towards their place of general rendezvous, the weekly market" (Alice 1841: 58).

ing. However, such scientific references in the social sketches cannot be dismissed as mere rhetorical playfulness. This is demonstrated by the fact that scientific approaches also had a significant influence on early sociological thinking beyond the literary genre. There were two main reasons for this: Firstly, since the end of the 18th century, the natural sciences, especially botany, zoology, physiology and anatomy, enjoyed great success and were positively received by a (largely urban) mass public with the help of the expanding newspaper and magazine market (Morus et al. 1992; Stiénon 2012: 52 ff.). Secondly, the models and concepts developed here provided a promising tool to interpret social forms of behavior and societal structures beyond rationalistic or theological speculations. Johan Heilbron has examined how introducing approaches and classification modes from natural sciences to political and social subjects had already advanced the “empiricization” of proto-sociological thinking at the end of the 18th century (Heilbron 1995: 98 ff.), which was then continued in post-revolutionary institutions. The French physiologist and philosopher Pierre-Jean-Georges Cabanis (1757–1808), for example, tried to establish a social science of people based on physiology in his work *On the relations between the physical and moral aspects of man (Rapports du physique et du moral de l’homme)* (1802) (ibid.: 109 ff.). With the same concerns, Henri de Saint-Simon (1760–1825) published *On Physiology as Applied to the Improvement of Social Institutions (De la Physiologie appliquée à l’amélioration des institutions sociales)* (1812). Auguste Comte (1798–1857), who worked as the latter’s secretary, adopted Saint-Simon’s evolutionist and materialist ideas, which would later influence John Stuart Mill (1806–1873), who admired and criticized Comte’s works. Inspired by natural science, Mill would then develop these ideas of anthropological scholarship further based on scientific principles in his work *On the Logic of the Moral Sciences*, published in 1843 (Stocking 1991:39). The influence of models from natural sciences established itself as a constitutive characteristic of social research of the early 19th century. The social sketches followed this tendency and combined scientific approaches with ethnographical, documentary forms to reflect on everyday life in both an amusing and analytical way for their readers.

Social sketches and reformist discourse

The genre of the social sketches has close connections to social research with political and philanthropic motivations that had become increasingly specialized in the first half of the 19th century and gained public influence (Lyon-Caen 2007). Many social sketches, as the miner article clearly did, took part in political debates and quoted relevant studies. The authors themselves were often active as social reformers. Such connections between social sketches and activist social research are of particular interest for the history of scholarship, because research approaches developed in government and philanthropic studies on topics such as public hy-

giene, crime and pauperism, would influence the development of cultural and social sciences profoundly (ibid.; Poovey 1993). Furthermore, a look at these connections promises new insights into the relationships between ethnographical and folkloristic undertakings and philanthropic and emancipatory debates in the 19th century.

Now, I would like to provide a few examples of the relationship between journalistic social sketches and social reformist discourse. Journalist Arnould Fremy (1809–189?) dedicates the article “*L’enfant de fabrique*” from the serial *Les français peints par eux-mêmes* to the “customs [*les mœurs*] and fate of a particular group of youths who are employed in the factories, or more precisely, exploited” (Fremy 1841: 258). Fremy relies on French and English studies on child labor and wants his text, which was published shortly before a bill was passed on child labor, to be understood as an instrument to help form opinions. At the end of the article, he makes several proposals to reduce child labor and, like Fertault, urges his readers to review the societal conditions critically. In *Heads of the People*, the article “The Factory Child” (Jerrold 1840b) by the editor Douglas Jerrold is the English counterpart to “*L’enfant de fabrique*.” Jerrold points out that he had already written a play some years earlier to attract “public sympathy in the cause of the Factory Children” (ibid.: 186). His article in *Heads of the People* is structured around the figure of a girl. She is not even ten years old yet and becomes part of the factory structure, already making her first experiences in everyday working life. In several scenes, Jerrold describes the hostile conditions that confront the child and complains about the girl’s lost childhood (Jerrold 1840b: 186).

Similar to Jerrold and other authors that the editor of *Heads of the People* commissioned,²³ the lawyer Louis-Mathurin Moreau-Christophe, who contributed two sketches to *Les français peints par eux-mêmes*, also maintained a close relationship with social reformist circles and debates. In 1837, Moreau-Christophe was appointed general inspector of French prisons and traveled throughout Europe and North America to compare and report on the differing conditions for prisoners. In addition to several studies on penitentiary systems, Moreau-Christophe was also the author of comparative writings on pauperism, for example, *The problem of poverty and the solution to it among historical and modern peoples (Du problème de la misère et de sa solution chez les peuples anciens et modernes)* (1851). For *Les français*, Moreau-Christophe adapted his research in the articles on prisoners and poverty for a broad audience. According to the historian Judith Lyon-Caen, the popularization of his socio-critical writings in the well-known serial prompted lasting broad public engagement with the problems of pauperism (Lyon-Caen 2007).

23 For example, the local politician, writer and cultural historian William Howitt (1792–1879) and the officer and social politician William Nugent Glascock (1787–1847).

Social sketches as an ethnographical form of knowledge Perspectives on a cross-genre history of knowledge and scholarship

This paper examines the journalistic social sketch as an early genre of ethnological and sociological thinking and ethnographical representation. The verbal and visual sketches and their encyclopedic, holistic compilations, as has been shown, are to be evaluated as products and agents of the same social, political and epistemic transformations which would also lay the foundations for the works of Wilhelm and Jakob Grimm, Auguste Comte, John Stuart Mill and Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl. The many references of this format to early sociological and ethnological discussions and forms of representation provide several starting points for the history of knowledge and scholarship. However, what seems to me to be particularly interesting and revealing from the perspective of an ethnology of European societies is an examination of the social sketches as a formative genre in which the *cultural technique of ethnographical representation, interpretation and observation* was practiced and refined in a very specific way. The focus of the social sketches is on the visual and verbal documentation of sociocultural phenomena on one's own doorstep that are essayistically surrounded by historical, cultural, psychological and political observations. The sketches, consequently, combine a variety of sociographic forms of representation and knowledge. The journalistic context, in turn, required a pragmatic reduction of the social world to concrete, tangible, recognizable types and situations²⁴ and a focus on the *Lebenswelten* of their reader (unlike the theorizing essays by Comte and Mill). As a heuristic format of an ethnography and ethnology "at home," the social sketches promoted the detailed and multiperspective documentation and interpretation of social phenomena and structures, and they also contributed, with respect to their commercial orientation, to the popularization of cultural self-observation (primarily in bourgeois, urban milieus). Hence, looking at the social sketches in the context of early sociological and ethnological discussions always includes a history of knowledge "from below."

This paper established the initial approaches for a reassessment of early ethnographical journalism for the history of knowledge and scholarship whose function for the consolidating social sciences and humanities still needs to be clarified.²⁵ Based on the hybrid and transnational genre of the verbal and visual sketches, a

24 Despite significant innovations in ethnographical techniques of representation in the course of the Writing Culture debate (see, for example, van Maanen 1988:130 ff.), the "ethnographical fragment" (Hannerz 1995: 64) is still a fundamental element of research and presentation.

25 If, in synchronous perspectives, I have already been able to document numerous links between journalism and literature and "academic" social research, it is unclear to what extent the representatives of institutionalized *Volkskunde*/Ethnology/Social Anthropology/Folklore Studies towards the end of the 19th century refer to the forms and content of representation of journalistic and social literature from the previous decades.

variety of new perspectives on the development of sociological, ethnological and ethnographical interests could be proposed that combine the approaches from the history of knowledge, cultural studies and social sciences. The relationship between the socially engaged journalistic writings and folkloristic projects could be examined. The relevance of concepts from natural sciences and the increased importance of visual knowledge in the 19th century (Crary 1992) for the consolidation of thinking within the cultural and social sciences could also be assessed. The adaption of the social sketches in (post-) colonial regions of the world²⁶ could also be addressed or the early ethnographical self-observations could be re-examined as a “public, democratic” trend. The exploration of the sketches in their discursive and social framework encourages the development of broader perspectives on the history of knowledge and scholarship that break with the genre-based, national linguistic and disciplinary research traditions. As a format between art, scholarship and journalistic entertainment, the social sketches lead directly to the “wild knowledge” of pre-disciplinary structures. They also beckon the reformulation of early social and anthropological thinking and its conditions that still provides stimuli for a multimedia and multi-perspective social and cultural research today.

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26 See *Los Cubanos pintados por sí mismos* (Santiago de Cuba, 1852) and *Museo de cuadros de costumbres* (Bogotá, 1866) for the adaption in the Spanish (former) colonies.

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