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Worldly Provincialism

German Anthropology in the Age of Empire

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Queried on the viability of “separate development” in the territory, Eiselen felt that the one exception that proved the rule was the Bushmen: “no great strides were made in making them development-conscious and they still remain much as they have been ever since we came to know them centuries ago. They do not take kindly to leading a settled life and to becoming a productive people.”⁵² Indeed, when asked how many independent ethnic states he saw emerging as a result of apartheid he concluded that it would be “very difficult to say, some of the units are very small. Unfortunately the smallest one of the indigenous ones is also the most primitive, namely the Bushmen, so that it would be difficult to think in terms of such groups being viable communities if they once become independent.”⁵³ Ultimately, when pushed, the two anthropologist expert witnesses, Eiselen and Bruwer, both used Bushmen as the example of innate group difference and thus the *raison d’être* for apartheid.

These imported discourses also provided lenses through which a descriptive confrontation with the realities of the process of colonization could be avoided. Science provided the means to fantasize about the nature of the colonial world. The image of scientific knowledge as portrayed by the South West African Scientific Society—objective, fair, and discerning—serves as an important counterpoint to the image of “the native”—impulsive, irrational, and undiscerning. To paraphrase Martin Chanock (1998), in an astonishing act of self-imagining, seen most prominently with the arrival of the crew of the good ship *Meteor*, and in the pages of their *Mitteilungen*, they saw themselves as part of a cosmopolitan world of science, as intellectual kin to the von Humboldt brothers and European scientists rather than individuals involved in the local instrumentalities of colonial oppression. Their “imagined community” was one based on the Renaissance. Their “scientific selves” helped them to evade Namibia’s colonial realities. The discourse of science helped them evade reality and construct a sense of self and other as part of the development of “civilization.” Such was the ideological hegemony of the “pristine Bushmen” that it was only in the late eighties that alternative representations of Bushmen as victims of genocide, as the most victimized of all southern Africa’s bloody victims, started to challenge this representation.

52. *Ibid.*, 110.53. *Ibid.*, 127.

Priests among the Pygmies: Wilhelm Schmidt and the Counter-Reformation in Austrian Ethnology

SUZANNE MARCHAND

In 1914, the eminent occupant of Vienna’s chair for indology and comparative ethnology, Leopold von Schroeder, penned the following lines:

The great battle (*Kampf*)—the greatest the new century has to fight—is not a world war, which many anticipate. One may well come—but I am thinking of an even bigger, even more decisive battle. It will not be about domination over East Asia, India, or Africa. Nor will it be the battle of nationalities, as fearful as are [the conflicts] partisans are perpetually inciting. This too will finally have to make way for a healthy future, because the interests of all are threatened by this path. Nor is the battle one for the economic overlordship of the Old or New World, of Europe or America; or the battle of the white and yellow races. Not the struggle between the haves and the have-nots, capitalism and the proletariat, the so-called social question and similar issues. These are all big and important questions, battles in which we are already entangled, that await us in the future, and that need to be

I would like to thank Marti Bunzl, Glenn Penny, Martin Rühl, and Manfred Laubichler for their exemplary comments on and criticism of this essay. I would like to dedicate it to George W. Stocking Jr., who inspired me to study the history of anthropology and whose scholarship continues to set the standard for the field.

decided. But the question of all questions is another one, a more central one. It is the question of the whence, where, and why of the evolution of humankind and the world, the question of the meaning and purpose of our lives, which science is unable to answer. The battle of all battles is the great battle over faith (*Glauben*)—in which science must assist, precisely where it, by nature, breaks off and demurs—the battle over *religion*, over *God*, over the question, if we want to have any religion, any faith, any god, and if so, what this religion should look like.¹

Schroeder, a historically minded linguist by training, an unconventional but ardent Christian by conviction, and a Wagnerian Germanophile by overdetermined choice, was not an unusual practitioner of ethnology in Central Europe. Indeed, if we set aside the medically trained majority of physical anthropologists, we would probably find Schroeder's views widely shared among German-speaking ethnographic scholars from Hamburg to Trieste, Strasbourg to Budapest. Though deeply interested in racial types, their central concern remained the historical development of language and culture; though supporters of imperialism, their politics was shaped by nationality conflicts at home; though worried about world war, socialism, and America's newfound economic power, the big question was the history and future of religious belief. They came to ethnology by many different routes, from the humanities as well as the sciences. Some were believers; some (like Max Weber) were skeptics. But their careers were all shaped, in one way or another, by established religion's dramatic struggle with science and secularization. And nowhere did this struggle leave such deep scars as in Schroeder's adopted home, Austria.

To approach Central European ethnology through Austria rather than through Germany is to make the end point of Nazism less obvious—though, as we shall see, not at all irrelevant—and large sections of this essay will be devoted to teasing out similarities and differences between the German and Austrian scholarly worlds. Perhaps more importantly, however, to concentrate on Austria here is to diminish the centrality of colonialism, the political context in which this book is explicitly set. By examining the scholarly world through this lens, I do not mean to deny colonialism's critical role in anthropology's history. Clearly, the extension of European trade and settlement overseas cre-

ated the conditions, intellectual, sociocultural, and material, for the professionalization of the ethnographic sciences; imperialism made anthropology "relevant," offered boundless new opportunities for ethnographic information gathering, and spurred neoromantic anxiety over the disappearance of unspoiled heathens. This was true, in part, for nations without overseas colonies (like Austria) as well as for those, like Germany, with short periods of imperial activity (and longer spells of colony-envy). But I also want to make the point that imperial ambitions and experiences were by no means the only forces shaping the cultural sciences from the 1880s to the 1940s; the *fin de siècle* crises in Christian theology, in particular, played an extremely important role in shaping twentieth-century German-language anthropology.

Of course, we are all aware that from the Spanish conquistadors to the nineteenth-century students of totemism, anthropological observers remained keenly interested in the subject of the religion (or lack thereof) of the "natives"; when we pass the notional date of 1880, however, religious issues seem to disappear in favor of colonial and racial ones. German historians, naturally, are particularly likely to follow this chronological progression. There are good reasons to stick with this trajectory—but it seems to me a mistake to write out religion entirely. Importantly, in German-speaking academia, *cultural evolutionism*—which taught that simple societies (and crude, promiscuous cultures) preceded complex, Victorian ones—never established strong roots. Here, midcentury positivism gave way after about 1890 to a neoromantic ethnology whose advocates were both critical of Western "progress" and desperate to find a regenerative spirituality. Primitivist this movement certainly was, but its practitioners were also often sincere admirers of the non-Christian cultures they studied. Some, like Rudolf Otto and Albert Schweitzer, came to ethnology and comparative religion by way of historicist biblical criticism; some, like Albrecht Dieterich, sought access to the Germanic ur-soul; some, like Hermann Graf Keyserling, pursued occult knowledge through its many global incarnations. If one reads the biographies and works of these men, it is evident that colonial politics provided the opportunity for their travels and gave additional resonance to their claims; but to explain the meaning of these works by reference exclusively to imperialism is to close one's eyes to the often more urgent hometown issues European ethnologists were determined to treat.

It may seem strange to include the famous theologian Albert Schweitzer and the obscure indologist Leopold von Schroeder in this

1. Leopold von Schroeder, *Arische Religion*, vol. 1 (Leipzig, 1914), 1–2.

account of German-speaking ethnology, but that is largely the result of the sifting processes of the history of anthropology, which tend to winnow out students of comparative religion and of ancient "high" cultures in favor of students of secular, "primitive" cultures. This does not do justice, however, to the richness of nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century ethnological thought, especially in historically oriented Central Europe. Here, debates raged among those trained as classical and biblical philologists, as "orientalists" or "Germanists," as theologians or geographers, and those who came to the field through exotic travel or local museum work. If, to reflect the complexities of these contemporary exchanges, we embrace in our histories of German anthropology not just Humboldt and Herder, Bastian and Virchow, but also the biblical philologist Julius Wellhausen, the classicist-folklorist Wilhelm Mannhardt, and the pan-Babylonists (archaeologists, theologians, and Assyriologists who speculated about Babylonian mythology and its spread), it quickly becomes apparent that the origins and uniqueness of Christianity was a subject absolutely central to their work, much as it was for others in the West, from Robertson Smith to Franz Cumont, from Jane Harrison to James Henry Breasted, from Frazer to Joseph Campbell.²

If we examine this broader history of ethnological thought, we may well arrive at a correspondingly broader understanding of the rise of radical anti-Semitism; here, scholars have all too often ignored important theological, ethnological and Assyriological debates in favor of fetishizing the biology of racism. We will also be confronted with the fact that modern anthropology has *völkisch*, religious, and romantic as well as progressive sources, and has not always been a left-wing discipline; in this way, it has a number of similarities to Central European social history, as James Van Horn Melton has beautifully illustrated.³ Finally, a wider history of ethnology also extends the options for contextualizing the sciences; we can now see ethnology not just against the backdrop of imperial experience and the rise of biological determin-

ism, but also as part of a world of multidirectional assaults on middle-class Christian and classical culture.

This enhanced backdrop is critical to a clear understanding of the new wave of German ethnological work (and speculation) produced in the period after about 1885, the era in which Germany's colonial quest began, as well as the period in which "spiritual" unification became a watchword among intellectuals and *materialism* shorthand for the new menace of socialism.⁴ Articulated in reaction to Adolf Bastian's *Elementargedanken*, Wilhelm Mannhardt's discussion of vegetative gods, and, especially, Tylor's theory of animism, a neoromantic, historicist school took off from Friedrich Ratzel's diffusionist geography. Coupling Ratzel's critique of independent evolution with Herder's sensitivity to the particularities of spiritual development, this school emphasized the spiritual integrity of each culture while also insisting on the diffusion of particular elements.

In general, I would suggest, this model suited Central European nationalists' need for invented ethnic traditions as well as their institutions' preference for philological methods over the Darwinist model; historicist ethnology emphasized the spiritual uniqueness of each realm while acknowledging that many individual elements were widely shared. Replicated across the disciplines, the neoromantic historicism after 1890 also represented a retreat from the liberal materialism of the midcentury that closely paralleled political changes under way in the Habsburg and Hohenzollern Empires.

But these retreats took German and Austrian ethnologists down separate paths, their ways divided less by colonial engagements than by dissimilar academic cultures and religious politics. In Germany, the historicist-primitivist school remained firmly anchored in the *Kulturprotestantismus*⁵ of Prussian academia; but in Austria, the historicist reaction to evolutionism provided the foundations for what I will call a counter-reformation in ethnology. Here, Austria, not Germany, took

4. For an interesting discussion of scientists' reaction to this context, see Anne Harrington, *Reenchanting Science: Holism in German Culture from Wilhelm II to Hitler* (Princeton, 1996).

5. David Blackbourn gives a beautifully clear discussion of German academia's pervasive Protestant ethic. "German culture," he writes, "was Protestant . . . Even for those who saw themselves (in Max Weber's later phrase) as 'religiously unmusical' pride in German culture had an unspoken Protestant undertow." Blackbourn, *The Long Nineteenth Century: A History of Germany, 1780-1918* (Oxford, 1997), 293.

2. I realize that this is an unconventional list of "ethnographers"—but in their day, these students of comparative religion would certainly have been considered at the forefront of ethnographic thought.

3. James Van Horn Melton, "From Folk History to Structural History: Otto Brunner (1898-1982) and the Radical-Conservative Roots of German Social History," in *Pathos of Continuity: Central European Historiography from the 1930s to the 1950s*, ed. Hartmut Lehmann and James Van Horn Melton (Cambridge, 1994), 263-92.

a *Sonderweg*, or special path; all over Europe and America, clerics tried to take back Darwin's turf, but only in Austria did they succeed. It is this Austrian *Sonderweg*—not the usual path to racial hatred—that forms the subject of this essay.

I use the term *counter-reformation* here quite deliberately, for the Austrian anthropological reaction led by Father Wilhelm Schmidt was not a rejection of modern learning, but an attempt to reorient it to the ends of the church. Taking off from a critique of cultural Darwinism very similar to that of Boas, Rivers, and Mauss, Schmidt and his followers also wanted to professionalize anthropology; but as ardent Catholics, they wanted to do so in order to turn the science of prehistory to Christian ends. Launched from *outside* the academy, this counter-reformation sought to take back territory lost to secular science by updating doctrine and mobilizing the faithful. The movement succeeded in Austria because, here, university life was both less secularized and less central to the nation's cultural identity than was the case elsewhere, and because Schmidt's connections, organizational skills, and intellect secured him political, social, and institutional power. This is a story not of paradigm makers, but of a national school that refused to play "normal" science's game; it is an unconventional one, but perhaps its telling will serve as a warning to those who have presumed the secularization and professionalization of science to be the inevitable outcome of modern experience.

Now, how did this counter-reformation succeed, and what was its intellectual content? I want first to sketch Austria's anthropological tradition to Schmidt's emergence as a scholar, then to describe Schmidt's intellectual agenda; the next section traces the consequences of his fascination with the "pygmies." In the final section, I show how the counter-reformation succeeded in the 1920s—the result of Schmidt's intellectual acumen and extraordinary flair for organization, on the one hand, and the structural peculiarities of Austrian academia, on the other. The essay is, in many ways, simply a case study. But I hope that this case study will help us see the Austrian tradition not as a failure to develop structural functionalism, but as a response to unique intellectual conditions, formulated by, in this case, one unique individual, whose career may also offer new insight into the significance of the "battle of battles" described by Leopold von Schroeder. As the concluding essay in this volume, the tale of Wilhelm Schmidt is intended to underscore the complexities of the colonial legacy, as well as the other, sometimes more pressing, political and cul-

tural forces shaping Central European anthropology's entrance into the twentieth century.

Cultural Anthropology in Germany and Austria, 1869–1900

Understanding Schmidt and the Austrians requires some sorting out of Central European cultural similarities and differences. For centuries, of course, Austrians, Prussians, Bavarians, Saxons, and so on, had belonged to the same political entity, the Holy Roman Empire (and its successor, the German confederation); Prussia established its full independence only in 1866, by which time the Habsburg Empire's period of dominance had long since expired. United in 1871, Germany's day in the sun had not yet arrived.⁶ Naturally, one of the most salient differences between the old empire and the new Reich was that Austria, a multiethnic monarchy, was ruled and overwhelmingly inhabited by Catholics; the new German state had a huge Catholic minority, but its politics and cultural affairs were dominated by Calvinists and Lutherans. In Germany, Protestants were particularly dominant in academic circles, where their neoclassicizing aesthetics remained *de rigueur*. Importantly, for our story, this tradition carried with it a kind of taboo on the discussion of religious matters (though Protestantism remained the ideal) and a penchant for underscoring the autonomy and rationality of the Greeks, two elements that hampered the development of the study of comparative religion.⁷ Austrian—like Bavarian—classicism, on the other hand, tended to emphasize continuities in the humanistic tradition, from Greece to pagan Rome to medieval Christendom.⁸ And, as German philhellenism increasingly became a means for asserting the uniqueness of the nation of "Dichter and Denker," in Austria, the classical tradition retained more of its liberal (but Catholic), cosmopolitan inheritance, an ambience that was not lost, for example, on Germanophile radicals like Josef Strzygowski.⁹

6. In John Boyer's pithy formulation: "If German history is the narrative of power gone awry, then Austrian history is the story of power gone away." John Boyer, *Culture and Political Crisis in Vienna: Christian Socialism in Power, 1897–1918* (Chicago, 1995), xiii.

7. Eric Sharpe notes that in 1905, Germany had fifty chairs of oriental studies, but none of comparative religion. Eric J. Sharpe, *Comparative Religion: A History* (London, 1975), 125–29.

8. Anthony Grafton, "The Origins of Scholarship," *American Scholar* 48 (spring 1979): 242–46.

9. See Suzanne Marchand, "The Rhetoric of Artifacts and the Decline of Classical Humanism: The Case of Josef Strzygowski," *History and Theory* 33 (1994): 106–30.

To generalize broadly, nineteenth-century German culture was scholarly, hierarchical, and philosophical; its practitioners were intensely sober, extremely diligent, and introspective; its tastes ran to the ascetic and the extreme. Austrian culture, by contrast, was characterized by a light-hearted festivity; its practitioners were inclined to pen feuilletons rather than research papers, to craft puns, not profound philosophy (though Austria has certainly had its share of great philosophers, too). Austrians demonstrated remarkable aptitudes for decoration and combination; they mixed their natural sciences and humanities more easily than others, and created, in Vienna, the most eclectic of modern capital cities. Unlike many of their north German neighbors, Austrians did not believe the material world to be permanently debauched; matter could be redeemed, or at least enjoyed. If the Germans were philosophical, the Austrians were theatrical, which does not mean that, underneath, there were no serious social dilemmas or psychological crises. On the contrary. But the Austrian way to face crisis was, in good Freudian style, to repress, to dissemble, to ignore.¹⁰

The anthropological traditions of the two nations, at least until about 1890, are more nearly alike. "Professional"¹¹ anthropology in Austria as in Germany at the turn of the century remained heavily dominated by studies of physical type. The first Austrian scholarly organization to devote significant attention to anthropological questions was the Royal Geographical Society, founded in 1855 on the German model. When an Austrian Anthropological Society split off from the geographical body in 1870, its first president was Carl Rokitsansky, professor of anatomy at the University of Vienna and president of the Society of Medical Doctors. Like Berlin's Society for Anthropology, Ethnology, and Prehistory (founded in 1869), the Austrian society attracted many scholars, most of them natural scientists (especially geologists) or doctors; Rokitsansky's successors, as professors and presidents, as well as the successive directors of the society's anthropological museum, were almost uniformly medically trained.

10. The ideas in the last two paragraphs owe much to conversations over the years with Carl Schorske, whose work, of course, has shaped the study of Austrian cultural history for the past three decades.

11. I use the quotation marks here to remind readers that by the 1890s, there were still very few chairs for ethnology in central Europe—or anywhere, for that matter. Those who would have been considered professionals in this era were chiefly men with medical degrees who wrote on ethnological or prehistorical subjects (e.g., Bastian and Virchow), geographers and seasoned travelers (e.g., Ratzel and Schweinfurth), or, perhaps most importantly, the growing contingent of museum assistants.

In the wake of Bismarck's leap into colonization in 1884, the Germans, however, did begin to create a few teaching posts and, especially, a large number of well-stocked ethnological museums.¹² The Austrians responded to the acceleration of colonizing activity more haltingly, and no new institutions arose to initiate disciplinary professionalization. Missionary societies—including Schmidt's religious order—made new plans for proselytizing, but the academy remained unmoved. Ethnology continued to fall within the purview of the Naturhistorisches Museum. No separate training for ethnographers was available, though many orientalists and Germanists with origin-fixations developed sidelines in the subject. In 1894, our old friend Leopold von Schroeder was hired at the University of Innsbruck with the title "professor for ancient Indian history and antiquities, with consideration of ethnography in general."¹³ Faculties seem to have considered physical anthropology more scientifically respectable than cultural studies; in 1892, the ethnographer-orientalist Michael Haberlandt received permission to lecture at the University of Vienna, but when a regular post for anthropology was created in 1913, it was Rudolf Pöch, a specialist in tropical medicine, who got the job. Pöch, who spent the Great War making physical measurements of POWs, was elevated to full professor in 1919.¹⁴

If the academic positions fell to the anatomists, however, the anthropological society devoted most of its time and resources to the study of Austrian prehistory. Local patriotism was critical in the evolution of the scholarly fields supported by the society and its journal, *Mitteilungen der Anthropologischen Gesellschaft*, which covered prehistory, ethnology, anthropology, folklore studies, and natural history; prehistory in particular (*Urgeschichte*, or *Vorgeschichte*) owed both its popular prestige, and its institutional difficulties, to its origins in hometown patriotism.¹⁵ The great importance of ethnicity for the

12. On the growth of ethnographic museums, see H. Glenn Penny III, "Cosmopolitan Visions and Municipal Displays: Museums, Markets, and the Ethnographic Project in Germany, 1868–1914," Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois, 1999.

13. Apparently the president of the anthropological society was instrumental in engineering Schroeder's call to Innsbruck. See Leopold von Schroeder, *Lebenserinnerungen* (Leipzig, 1921), 145.

14. See Christian Feest, "The Origins of Professional Anthropology in Vienna," in *Kulturwissenschaften im Vielvölkerstaat: Zur Geschichte der Ethnologie und verwandter Gebiete in Österreich, ca. 1780 bis 1918*, ed. Britta Rupp-Eisenreich and Justin Stagl (Vienna, 1995), 115–27.

15. For more on prehistory's unique status, see Suzanne Marchand, *Down from Olympus: Archaeology and Philhellenism in Germany, 1750–1970* (Princeton, 1996), chap. 5.

Habsburg Empire, as well as Austria's lack of overseas colonies, exacerbated tendencies to study the self, though the empire's proximity to the Ottomans and its long tradition of orientalist scholarship did introduce some diversity.¹⁶ While in Germany passionate discussions about the divergent methodologies and social roles of the humanities and natural sciences made it increasingly necessary for anthropologists to take a side,¹⁷ this was not so in Austria; nor was there here such a deep gulf between students of ancient "high" civilizations (*Kulturvölker*) and students of contemporary "primitives" (*Naturvölker*). Carl von Rokitsansky combined Darwinism and Bohemian Reform Catholicism in his insistence that, though all organisms sought to destroy their rivals, by imitating Christ, men could overcome suffering.¹⁸ And Freud, of course, moved easily from medicine to classics, from Greek mythology to modern neuroses, from our ur-ancestors to ourselves.

Thus, Austrian students of culture tended to be less university-oriented than their German contemporaries, more interested in Asia and Europe than in Africa, and less concerned about divisions between the natural and cultural sciences and the *Naturvölker* and *Kulturvölker* than their neighbors to the north. But it is in the relationship between culture, politics, and religion that Austria really differed from Germany. Here we must recall Bismarck's attempt to destroy "disloyal" Catholic institutions in the so-called *Kulturkampf* of the 1870s, the National Liberal "war" on ultramontanism that succeeded only in creating a powerful new Catholic Center Party, able to play liberals, conservatives, and socialists off one another in pursuit of its own interests. The German Catholics' newfound political power, however, was not matched by a substantial new presence in *cultural* affairs. In Austria, on the other hand, the fin de siècle saw the emergence of an energetic, self-assertive Catholic political and cultural elite. Exemplified by Franz Martin Schindler, a liberal Catholic intellectual who served as profes-

16. On Austrian orientalism, see Karl Roeder, "The Oriental Academy in the *Theresienzeit*," in *Topic* 34 (fall 1980): 19-28; Marchand, "Rhetoric of Artifacts." The fact remains, however, that in Germany, too, the study of folklore, prehistory, and orientalia was vastly more popular than the study of the manners and customs of peoples beyond Eurasia. If the onset of colonization brought with it new excitement about "the other," funding for anthropological research did not increase appreciably as a result of Bismarck's new ventures, nor did ethnology replace classical art and languages as the mainstay of middle-class education in Germany or in Austria.

17. Leipzig is an important exception to this generalization.

18. William M. Johnston, *The Austrian Mind: An Intellectual and Social History, 1848-1938* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1972), 225.

sor of moral theology at the University of Vienna, this new generation, as John Boyer describes, abandoned old-fashioned anticapitalist politics for a more pluralist view. In doing so, they responded to current problems not by indulging in antimodernist maunderings but by developing "a Catholic science of society" and organizing and publicizing, within the academy and without.¹⁹

Small wonder then, that Father Wilhelm Schmidt, though born and bred a German, would choose Austria as the place to make his career. Indeed, his wide-ranging pattern of activity and his vision of science's modernizing (but still pious) function are highly reminiscent of Schindler's career. Though academics, both made their impact on Austrian society by forming and utilizing Catholic lay organizations (and publications) as forums; both were ardent seekers of a means to reconcile Catholicism with science; and both were tireless, skillful users of modern media. The political and cultural power of men like Schindler, and Schindler's disciple Ignaz Seipel (a priest cum professor who would become Austrian chancellor in the 1920s) made the anthropological counter-reformation possible. But it was Schmidt's hard work, intelligence, and obdurate leadership that made it actually happen.

An Unconventional Ethnologist: Pater Wilhelm Schmidt

Recent histories of anthropology make little mention of Wilhelm Schmidt, but in his Austrian context, he was at least as influential as any of his contemporary discipline-founders.²⁰ Like his counterparts Franz Boas, Marcel Mauss, and W. H. R. Rivers, Schmidt appeared on the anthropological scene in the 1890s, at a pivotal moment both in the history of anthropology and in the history of religion. In this decade, the ur-histories conjured by cultural evolutionists of the 1860s and 1870s came under new scrutiny, and major anthropological presumptions—the ur-existence of animism, promiscuity, simple languages, and irrationality—were increasingly contradicted by ethnographers' experiences and skeptical readings of the sources. The critical response to this double crisis—which made prehistory again both mysterious and crucial—was, for Schmidt and many of his contempo-

19. Boyer, *Culture and Political Crisis*, 304-8.

20. Ernest Brandewie has been trying for many years to give Schmidt his due. See Brandewie's two books *Wilhelm Schmidt and the Origin of the Idea of God* (London, 1983), and *When Giants Walked the Earth: The Life and Times of Wilhelm Schmidt, SYD* (Fribourg, 1990).

mist rug. Schmidt would later insist that it was Schroeder's lecture—and especially Lang's antievolutionist critique—that inspired his own (unrelenting) study of the idea of God.²⁹

It is not difficult to see why Schroeder and Lang—both sharp critics of the Tylorian progression from animism to religion to science—appealed to the young scholar-priest. But crucially, Schmidt also immediately perceived that more ethnographic evidence would need to be amassed to defend their anti-Darwinian claims. For him, as for other German-speaking ethnologists, another pair of lectures would prove pivotal in this regard. In November 1904, the ethnologist Bernard Ankermann and the medieval historian turned ethnologist Fritz Graebner presented papers to the Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte, which, according to a 1938 reminiscence, “laid the foundations for culture-historical ethnology.”³⁰ The papers sought to demonstrate historical connections between Oceania and southern Africa, and in arguing strenuously for diffusion, put another nail in Darwinian cultural evolution. “From this day forward,” the 1938 account insisted, “faith in the decades-long hegemony of the idea of single-track evolution of all human culture began to wane.”³¹ Drawing on the earlier work of Friedrich Ratzel and Leo Frobenius, Ankermann and Graebner claimed to have identified cultural complexes so unique that they must have diffused and have traceable histories; Frobenius had called these complexes—which he believed to be organic entities with their own agency—*Kulturkreise*; and soon a term arose to describe this sort of diffusionist-historicist thinking: *Kulturkreislehre*.³² If Ankermann, Graebner, Frobenius, and other members of this “school” perpetually criticized one another's formulations, the general principles of *Kulturkreislehre* appealed greatly to the young Schmidt and would remain his methodological

29. Schroeder, *Lebenserinnerungen*, 165. Lang's view of Schmidt's work—and of Schmidt's keen approval of his own writings—is worth noting. Lang cheered Schmidt's assis-
tance in the campaign against “the anthropologically orthodox doctrine of the rise of religion
in Animism,” but insisted that his own objections to animism were not a priori (suggesting
Schmidt's were), but based on a clear-eyed reading of the facts. See Andrew Lang, review of
Schmidt, *L'Origine de l'Idée de Dieu*, in *Folk-Lore* 21 (1910): 523.

30. Editor, “Bernhard Ankermann,” in *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 70 (1938): 129.
31. *Ibid.*

32. On Frobenius, see Suzanne Marchand, “Leo Frobenius and the Decline of the West,”
Journal of Contemporary History 32, no. 2 (1997): 153–70; and Janheinz Jahn, *Leo Frobenius:
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dogmatics long after—characteristically—its deficiencies had made it unpalatable to other scholars.³³ In Schmidt's hands, *Kulturkreislehre* would become the basis for a political as well as an anthropological worldview, the means by which Austria's nationality question could be solved.³⁴

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34. See Bornemann, P. *Wilhelm Schmidt*, 116–29; Ernest Brandewie, “Wilhelm Schmidt and Politics during the First World War,” in Rupp-Eisenreich and Stagl, *Kulturwissenschaft im Vielvölkerstaat*, 268–83.

35. The extremely interesting story of Schmidt's efforts to secure patronage for *Anthropos* is documented in Karl J. Rivinius, SVD, *Die Anfänge des “Anthropos”*. Briefe von P. Wilhelm Schmidt an Georg Freiherrn von Hertling aus den Jahren 1904 bis 1908 und andere Dokumente (St. Augustin bei Bonn, 1981).

36. See, e.g., Schmidt's attack on J. G. Frazer for his dismissal of Reverend T. G. H. Strehlow's accounts of Australian totemism. Schmidt, “Is Ethnological Information coming from Missionaries Sufficiently Reliable?” *Anthropos* 6 (1911): 430–31.

aries, the work of the Scottish scholar of comparative religion Andrew Lang. In his seminal *The Making of Religion* (1898), Lang argued for the ur-existence of monotheism and the nonexistence of primitive promiscuity (as well as the probable existence of telepathy). Lang impressed many readers, and challenged many to rethink the "primitive" mind. Only Schmidt, however, a man who firmly believed evolutionism to be a Protestant heresy, saw in Lang's work the plough that would prepare the ground for an anthropological counter-reformation.

Born in Germany in 1868, Schmidt had joined the Societas Verbi Divini—a recently founded order of Catholic missionaries—at age fifteen.²¹ After his ordination, Schmidt was sent to the University of Berlin, where he devoted three semesters primarily to the study of the Arabic and Hebrew sources of medieval philosophy.²² Although Adolf Bastian, the anti-Darwinian ethnologist, was a member of the Berlin faculty at the time, there is no evidence that the two Catholic scholars ever met. Indeed, Schmidt felt very isolated during his stay in Berlin; inside the mystrium of Prussian *Wissenschaft* in the years following the *Kulturkampf*, he experienced at close quarters the mutual hostility between primarily Protestant academia and the Catholic Church.²³ In 1895, he was sent to teach at the SVD's major seminary near Vienna, and soon thereafter, appreciative of Austria's Catholic culture and apparently wishing to avoid the Wilhelmine draft, he became a citizen of the Habsburg Empire.²⁴ Schmidt's first encounter with ethnology resulted from his study of Melanesian languages—a subject he began to pursue in the wake of the opening of an SVD mission in New Guinea in 1896. New Guinea, at the time, was formally administered by the German New Guinea Company; the empire would take over in 1899. Here, as elsewhere, the activities of the SVD order were intimately bound up with the extension of colonial dominion. The order's founder, Arnold Janssen, sent his first missionaries to China in 1879; in

21. Founded in 1875, this order was particularly active in colonies where German influence was strong. Brandewie, *Giants*, 15.

22. Schmidt's own discussion of his studies can be found in Fritz Bornemann, ed., *Remembering Arnold Janssen: A Book of Reminiscences* (Rome, 1978), 155.

23. Over the course of the rest of his long life, Schmidt would repeatedly plump for the creation of a Catholic university and urge his fellow Catholics to infiltrate the Protestant-dominated world of German science. See, e.g., Schmidt, "Die Grundgedanken der katholischen Universität für die Länder deutscher Zunge," *Schönere Zukunft* 51 (16 September 1934): 1345–47; 52 (23 September 1934): 1373–75.

24. Fritz Bornemann, *P. Wilhelm Schmidt, S.V.D., 1868–1954* (Rome, 1982), 14.

1892, SVD priests arrived in Togo; in 1906, they reached Japan. Missions to the "priest impoverished" nations of South America began in 1889.²⁵ Often, SVD members did entangle themselves, quite seriously, in colonial politics. In China, for example, the order's aggressive nationalism and proselytizing played an important part in unleashing the Boxer Rebellion.²⁶ Clearly, Schmidt's brethren used colonial settings to advance their spiritual cause, and his devotion to ethnology—and his superiors' toleration of his endeavors—owed a great deal to the exciting new prospects colonialism offered to ambitious European clerics. Ultimately, however, Schmidt's ethnology was intended not to assist in converting the heathen, but to secure faith in Europe; like Schroeder, he believed the big battle was to be waged over the European soul, not over colonial possessions.²⁷

Like many other philologists of his generation, Schmidt gradually began to incorporate material culture into his linguistic studies. In his first works, he sought to classify Australian languages, using cultural as well as linguistic data. But it was none other than Leopold von Schroeder who acquainted Schmidt with Lang's work and pushed the priest into ethnology's path. In 1902, Schmidt attended a meeting of the Anthropological Society at which the Baltic-German Indologist delivered a lecture on the three sources of primitive religion—reverence for nature, cults of the dead, and belief in the highest Being. Seeking a means by which to appreciate the intricacies (and superiority) of early Aryan religion and mythology, Schroeder had invoked Lang against the cultural evolutionists. Like the Indologist, Lang held fast to a degenerationist worldview, in which animism, ancestor worship, and polytheism *followed* the dissipation of an original, universal belief in a higher God.²⁸ Importantly, too, for Schroeder, Lang had defended his claims with extensive ethnographic evidence, insisting that the evolutionists were simply sweeping contradictory accounts under the ani-

25. See Bornemann, *Remembering Arnold Janssen*, 146.

26. See Joseph W. Esherick, *The Origins of the Boxer Uprising* (Berkeley, 1987), 79–88, 123–26. Thanks to Michael Ts'in for this reference.

27. Schmidt did, however, endorse German colonial efforts, especially in the wake of the so-called Dernbergian turn after 1906. See Edouard Conte, "Völkerkunde und Faschismus? Fragen an ein vernachlässigtes Kapitel deutsch-österreichischer Wissenschaftsgeschichte," in *Kontinuität und Bruch: 1938–1945–1955: Beiträge zur österreichischen Kultur- und Wissenschaftsgeschichte*, ed. Friedrich Stadler (Munich, 1988), 237–38.

28. It was logical, he wrote, for post-Adamic man "to go a whoring" after practically useful ghosts, ghost-gods, and fetishes" that could do him some good, leaving behind the one true God, who was not bribable. Andrew Lang, *The Making of Religion* (London, 1898), 282.

mist rug. Schmidt would later insist that it was Schroeder's lecture—and especially Lang's antievolutionist critique—that inspired his own (unrelenting) study of the idea of God.²⁹

It is not difficult to see why Schroeder and Lang—both sharp critics of the Tylorian progression from animism to religion to science—appealed to the young scholar-priest. But crucially, Schmidt also immediately perceived that more ethnographic evidence would need to be amassed to defend their anti-Darwinian claims. For him, as for other German-speaking ethnologists, another pair of lectures would prove pivotal in this regard. In November 1904, the ethnologist Bernard Ankermann and the medieval historian turned ethnologist Fritz Graebner presented papers to the Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte, which, according to a 1938 reminiscence, “laid the foundations for culture-historical ethnology.”³⁰ The papers sought to demonstrate historical connections between Oceania and southern Africa, and in arguing strenuously for diffusion, put another nail in Darwinian cultural evolution. “From this day forward,” the 1938 account insisted, “faith in the decades-long hegemony of the idea of single-track evolution of all human culture began to wane.”³¹ Drawing on the earlier work of Friedrich Ratzel and Leo Frobenius, Ankermann and Graebner claimed to have identified cultural complexes so unique that they must have diffused and have traceable histories; Frobenius had called these complexes—which he believed to be organic entities with their own agency—*Kulturkreise*; and soon a term arose to describe this sort of diffusionist-historicist thinking: *Kulturkreislehre*.³² If Ankermann, Graebner, Frobenius, and other members of this “school” perpetually criticized one another's formulations, the general principles of *Kulturkreislehre* appealed greatly to the young Schmidt and would remain his methodological

29. Schroeder, *Lebenserinnerungen*, 165. Lang's view of Schmidt's work—and of Schmidt's keen approval of his own writings—is worth noting. Lang cheered Schmidt's assis-
tance in the campaign against “the anthropologically orthodox doctrine of the rise of religion
in Animism,” but insisted that his own objections to animism were not a priori (suggesting
Schmidt's were), but based on a clear-eyed reading of the facts. See Andrew Lang, review of
Schmidt, *L'Origine de l'Idée de Dieu*, in *Folk-Lore* 21 (1910): 523.

30. Editor, “Bernhard Ankermann,” in *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 70 (1938): 129.

31. *Ibid.*

32. On Frobenius, see Suzanne Marchand, “Leo Frobenius and the Decline of the West,”
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Schmidt's first book, *L'Origine de l'Idée de Dieu*, appeared in 1908; having written this long-winded review of current anthropological thought in German, he translated it into French in hopes that it might be of assistance to beleaguered French Catholics.³⁷ Eventually, this book would become the introduction to a twelve-volume treatise, each segment of which had the same aim: to prove that all peoples believed in a single, high God. Despite Schmidt's repetitive conclusions, however, his contemporaries recognized his works to be full of important data and trenchant critiques of other ethnographers, and his journal continued to publish cutting-edge essays (especially those of continental scholars).

One might say that Schmidt's politics, before 1914, were essentially those of "Leonine accommodation" translated to the scientific sphere. Schmidt took seriously the church's attempt under Leo XIII to adjust its ideals to modern conditions—at least in the realm of science. Privately, he compared Catholicism's resistance to evolutionary theory to its now embarrassing early modern hostility to the work of Galileo.³⁸ During the period between 1909 and 1923, when modernism fell out of favor in Rome, Schmidt stuck to his conviction that "nature and revelation could never actually stand in contradiction with one another";³⁹ he refused to believe that science could in any way endanger faith in God. And to demonstrate the truth of his convictions, he was ready to go to ur-history's root and engage the "hottest" ethnological subject of his day: the pygmies.

Priests among the Pygmies

The "pygmies," in Schmidt's day, was a collective name for a number of small-sized peoples that included, primarily, the Andaman Islanders, the Eta of the Philippines, the Malaysian Semang, and the African Batchwa (Bushmen). Rumored to exist since the days of Herodotus and Aristotle, true African pygmies had been "discovered" by Georg Schweinfürth in the 1870s. A Europe-wide scholarly debate

then ensued: were they proper humans?⁴⁰ Controversy on this point raged for some time among physical anthropologists and linguists; among students of culture, it was presumed that pygmies, like other "primitives," had neither religion, nor morals, nor much in the way of culture. But the pygmies had their defenders, including the conservative French anthropologist A. de Quatrefages. In a posthumous publication of 1895, Quatrefages described the virtues of the Mincopies (Andaman Islanders), Aetas, and other "pygmies"; they were monogamous, respected private property, and most especially "have moral ideas similar to our own, and are attached to religious beliefs like those of the most civilized peoples."⁴¹

Schmidt, beginning his ethnological studies in the wake of Lang's assault on animism, took up the defense of pygmies where the conservative Frenchman left off, turning it into a powerful argument against cultural evolutionism. If he could show that the pygmies were the oldest surviving humans, and that they lacked neither religion nor morals, he could defeat the most threatening claim of the emerging human sciences, namely, that monotheistic religion was not an essential and indispensable part of humanness, but merely a social product. If he could suggest the probability of an ur-revelation and a primeval fall from grace, so much the better. For the young priest, who would later be known as "Pygmäen-Schmidt,"⁴² these primeval "survivors" offered the opportunity to show that Darwinian agnosticism, not Catholicism, represented an ideologically motivated worldview. The pygmies, in short, could be the key to a modern, scientific apologetics.

It was Schmidt's contribution to ethnology to join together the skeptical comparative religion of Lang and new data on pygmy culture, collected largely by Catholic priests, to create a unique, anti-Darwinian portrait of prehistory.⁴³ He sketched this project in his *The*

40. Joan Mark, *The King of the World in the Land of the Pygmies* (Lincoln, Neb., 1995), 43. The pygmies also became sideshow fodder; at the St. Louis World's Fair in 1904, they were the main ethnographic attraction. William R. Everdell, *The First Moderns: Profiles in the Origins of Twentieth-Century Thought* (Chicago, 1997), 217.

41. A. de Quatrefages, *The Pygmies*, trans. Frederick Starr (1895; repr. New York, 1969), 122.

42. Bornemann, *P. Wilhelm Schmidt*, 78.

43. Ernest Brandewie suggests that Schmidt's pygmy portrait was heavily influenced by Alexandre Le Roy's *Les Pygmées Négrilles d'Afrique et Négritos de l'Asie* (c. 1900), in which this mission bishop in West Africa described pygmy belief in a high God (Brandewie, *Giants*,

70). Undoubtedly Le Roy did have an impact on Schmidt; but Quatrefages treated the topic first.

37. Josef Franz Thiel, "Der Urmonotheismus des P. Wilhelm Schmidt und seine Geschichte," in Rupp-Eisenreich and Stagl, *Kulturwissenschaften im Vielvölkerstaat*, 257.

38. In his appeal to missionaries for help on *Anthropos*, he emphasized that "the law of absolute love of truth, which Pope Leo XIII proclaimed for history, writing in such marvelous words, must be likewise adopted by ethnology." Schmidt, "Einladung," in Rivinius, *Die Anfänge des "Anthropos"*, 194.

39. *Ibid.*, 193.

Place of the Pygmy-People in the Developmental History of Mankind of 1910 and continued to elaborate it for the rest of his life. The book opened with a discussion of the physical features of pygmies, the point of which was to show that all pygmies belonged to a single race, and thus must have a common origin and/or ancestor. Schmidt detailed the childlike characteristics of pygmies, including fetuslike lanugo and broad noses. The pygmies, according to Schmidt, also had childlike vices, like inconstancy and impetuosity. Schmidt then turned to another important point: the proof that pygmies were more ancient than Australian Aborigines, whose totemic rituals were, of course, a staple in every contemporary anthropologists' intellectual diet. But if older than other groups, the pygmies were not less intelligent than others; Schmidt, throughout his life, relentlessly opposed K. T. Preuss's theory of *Urdummheit*, or primeval stupidity.⁴⁴

To answer the question, "If the pygmies are so smart, why had they failed to develop higher culture," Schmidt took his cues from Genesis. The original inhabitants of the Garden of Eden had not needed to exert themselves; likewise, the pygmies, living in tropical environs abundantly supplied with foodstuffs had not needed to abandon hunting and gathering for agriculture or animal raising. This life of Edenic leisure, however, had its drawbacks: "Life at the gathering stage has too little constancy, and the hunt has too many of the qualities of pleasurable occupation. Neither [gathering nor hunting] lends itself to the achievement of what is the basis of all cultural progress: constant work."⁴⁵

But if pygmies failed to punch higher culture's clock, they did not lack the single most important component of culture: religion. Schmidt, as we have seen, obsessively collected and relentlessly reiterated evidence that the most primitive of peoples were monotheists. The pygmies, Adam's closest surviving kin, were monogamous and altruistic; they loved children and respected property; murder, theft, and sex before marriage were virtually unknown.⁴⁶ Indeed, one had to conclude, the ethnologist insisted, "that in many, very many ways, these

44. For example, Schmidt, *Der Ursprung der Gottesidee: Eine historische-kritische und positive Studie*, vol. 1, *Historisch-kritischer Teil* (Münster, 1912), 442-43.

45. Schmidt, *Die Stellung der Pygmäenvölker in der Entwicklungsgeschichte des Menschen* (Stuttgart, 1910), 112. Other members of the Austrian school had different theories on this question. Schebesta believed progress was the result of specialization and the division of labor. See Paul Schebesta, *Among the Forest Dwarfs of Malaya* (1928; repr. London, 1973), 243-44.

46. Schmidt, *Stellung der Pygmäenvölker*, 140-68.

little creatures are even 'better men' than the average [man] among the higher, more civilized peoples, not excluding many Europeans."⁴⁷ The lesson, in all this, for human history was the following: "We were not by nature imbeciles and libertines, and the development of this human race was not a process like the gradual healing of a madman or the disciplining of a prisoner."⁴⁸ By 1910, Schmidt was hardly alone in disputing the nineteenth-century's assumption that primitive peoples had had no religion at all. Continuing throughout his long life to beat a horse already dying at his career's outset, Schmidt made the Adamic pygmies the centerpiece of his long crusade against evolutionism.

By "evolutionism," however, Schmidt and his school meant less the Darwinian theory of biological evolution than the anthropologists who had spun out speculative histories of mankind from Darwin's theory. The Viennese ethnologists tended to divide evolutionary theory into two parts and to counsel agnosticism on the question of biological evolution, and absolute rejection of cultural evolution.⁴⁹ We do not know what man's body looked like in ancient times, Schmidt insisted, but we do know that the earliest humans possessed a unique spirituality not shared by apes. We should abandon the nineteenth-century's "ape fixation" (*Affen-Enthusiasmus*) and follow our evidence, not seek (nonexistent) transitional forms.⁵⁰ Reiterating Lang's accusation that evolutionary theory failed to explain the evidence increasingly being amassed by ethnographers, Schmidt and company emphasized their credentials as "objective" historians of culture. Trying to turn the tables on those who accused him of religious prejudice, Schmidt in 1912 suggested that the theory of animism was a Protestant fetish that had prevailed simply because Catholics lacked sufficient knowledge of ethnology to disprove it.⁵¹

This was, of course, a deficiency Schmidt was working hard to overcome, using his own (missionary) collectors and observers. Regrettably for Schmidt, however, missionary ethnography was precisely the sort of enterprise his generation of non-Austrian anthropologists scorned.

47. *Ibid.*, 116.

48. *Ibid.*, 299.

49. This tactic was very much the result of censorship on the part of the church, Schmidt otherwise was ready to concede the probability of biological evolution. See Bornemann, *P. Wilhelm Schmidt*, 81-83. The tactical phrasing was still being used by Wilhelm Koppers in *Primitive Man and His World Picture* (1949), trans. Edith Raybould (London, 1952), 41-54.

50. See, e.g., Schmidt, "Älteste Menschheit" (written 1935-37), in *Wege der Kulturen: Gesammelte Aufsätze* (St. Augustin bei Bonn, 1964), 46-50.

51. Schmidt, *Der Ursprung der Gottesidee*, 1:58-69, 89.

Missionaries had been central in the positivist, collecting stage of ethnology; but when interest turned to the "scientific" study of culture, they became both obsolete and a threat to the objectivity of the field. Already by 1914, "being there" had become central to British anthropologists, and the armchair ethnographer at the top of the missionary feeding chain (that is, Schmidt) had lost much credibility. Missionaries and officials, Rivers insisted, had other preoccupations and could not be expected to devote sufficient time to objective observation.⁵² Indeed, most of the new professionals now presumed that missionaries, in particular, could *not* be objective observers at all. By the fin de siècle, French, British, American, and Prussian academics shared the presumption that religious conviction (especially Catholicism) compromised science; hence, the royal road to scientific respectability required the jettisoning of confessional baggage.

In Austria, where clerics still played a major role in higher and lower education, this supposition was not only insulting but also impractical; with no overseas colonies or academic status, Austrian field-workers would be few and far between. But in trying to speak to the profession at large while retaining his clerical credentials, Schmidt faced insuperable odds: a modernizer in an antimodern institution and an antimodernist in a modernizing profession, his Catholic science was to be tried in a court in which God had been ruled a hostile witness.

That the fundamental issue of human religiosity could no longer be decided by anthropological evidence is apparent in a 1910 exchange between Schmidt and the young A. R. Brown in the journal *Man*. The topic was the mutually engrossing subject of religion and the pygmies. Trying to catch Brown in a contradiction, Schmidt had noted Brown's "ungrudging praise" for every statement in E. H. Man's book on the Andamanese, at the same time as he refused to credit Man's claims that the natives worshiped a single high God, Puluga. Brown, Schmidt argued, had every reason to accept Man's claims. Here, as elsewhere, Schmidt objected fiercely to modern attacks on early data collectors, arguing, sensibly, that to believe everything *except* accounts of religious belief and practice was something of a sleight of hand.⁵³ More-

over, Schmidt claimed, evidence drawn from Austronesian mythology suggested that Puluga had originally been a sky god, an idea shared by many pygmy peoples.⁵⁴ Brown had simply written God out of his story. "I regret very much that the *debut* of such a hopeful scholar as Mr. Brown was devoted to such partial aims, and that the results of his valuable and extremely interesting researches were not applied in a more independent and broad-minded spirit. It is to be hoped that in the book about his expedition Mr. Brown will free himself from all such aspirations and go straight along the path which his materials alone shall show him."⁵⁵

Brown would not, of course, allow such an assault on his scholarly credentials to go unanswered, and his response, as David Tomas has noted, signaled less a revolution in anthropological method than the new authority of the "trained scientific student."⁵⁶ Brown attacked Schmidt for perpetually seeking "evidence of a pre-formed theory," for interpreting the beliefs of people of whom he had no personal knowledge, and for making unwarranted comparisons between groups. Denouncing Schmidt's historical reconstructions, Brown insisted on the importance of local knowledge and word usage and outlined the extremely limited conditions under which anthropologists could speculate about "survivals." Until we have proved, with direct evidence, that a modern belief could not arise in any other way than as a survival of an older one, we have no certainty, he insisted; "and this," he concluded, "is a task which is in nearly all cases quite impossible." In effect, Brown was saying that history was no concern of "scientific" ethnography. Indeed, the double threat of religious dogmatism and historical speculation in Schmidt's work made him, for Brown, the fledgling discipline's paradigmatic enemy. "As long as such arguments are tolerated and listened to," the British ethnographer thundered, "so long must ethnology remain in its unscientific stage."⁵⁷

Now, it is certainly true that in a career that stretched from the 1890s to the 1950s, Schmidt did no fieldwork, traveled little outside Europe, and seems never to have met any Africans or Southeast Asians, much less any pygmies. But this did not mean that the Austrians despised fieldwork; on the contrary, Schmidt valued missionary

52. George W. Stocking Jr., *The Ethnographer's Magic and Other Essays in the History of Anthropology* (Madison, Wis., 1992), 39.

53. The Austrians, for their part, implicitly tended to trust missionary accounts that suited their purposes; Schmidt and Koppers, for example, depended heavily on the accounts of the early missionary Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg in demonstrating the fundamental nature of Indians' belief in a single God. See Helmuth von Glasenapp, *Das Indienbild deutscher Denker* (Stuttgart: K. F. Koehler, 1960), 169.

54. W. Schmidt, "Puluga, the Supreme Being of the Andamanese," *Man* 2 (1910): 6.

55. *Ibid.*, 7.

56. David Tomas, "Tools of the Trade: The Production of Ethnographic Observations on the Andaman Islands, 1858-1922," in *Colonial Situations: Essays on the Contextualization of Ethnographic*, ed. George W. Stocking Jr. (Madison, Wis., 1992), 99.

57. A. R. Brown, "Puluga: A Reply to Father Schmidt," *Man* 217 (1910): 33-37.

anthropologists precisely because they lived among the natives for long periods of time.⁵⁸ He worked hard to acquire funding for his students to go to the field, especially to study pygmies. Far from being ignorant about other schools' methods and conclusions, Schmidt's students felt themselves to be fully accredited modern scholars. Three of the most noteworthy of Schmidt's SVD ethnologists, Wilhelm Koppers, Martin Gusinde, and Paul Schebesta, all completed extensive studies in the field, living, respectively, amongst the Bhils in India, the Yamana of Tierra del Fuego, and the Semang of Malaya (as well as the Bambuti of the Ituri forest). In 1949, Koppers was fulsome in his praise of Malinowski's fieldwork, saying, "We only regret that the good could not be achieved without the anti-historical extravagances."⁵⁹ But these accomplished fieldworkers were not likely to follow Malinowski's model, for they remained fundamentally committed to a historical and descriptive, rather than an interpretive science of anthropology.⁶⁰

It should also be emphasized that *Kulturkreislehre* was very much a method oriented to the study of material culture. Ratzel had reached his diffusionist conclusions chiefly through comparing artifacts, and two of the school's leading theorists, Fritz Graebner and Leo Frobenius, were avid collectors and students of material culture. The museum continued to play a greater role in German ethnology than seems to be the case elsewhere, in part because of the empire's late appearance on the colonial scene and in part because of Germandom's peculiar intellectual and institutional traditions. Schmidt, himself, noted that the pursuit of *Kulturkreislehre* required the possession of good museums; those, like the French, who were hampered by their limited collections, were not likely to make much ethnological progress.⁶¹ As the other anthropological founding fathers moved from the study of forms toward the study of meanings, however, this museum-oriented anthropology began to lose its relevance for the discipline's central debates.

Perhaps, had Schmidt been a less dictatorial type, or had another Austrian ethnologist been able to snatch away his powerful social and institutional positions in the interwar era, this historical school might

58. See Schmidt's "Einladung," 180.

59. Koppers, *Primitive Man*, 75, 18.

60. For a discussion of the latter-day Vienna School's critiques of Schmidt, see Henryk Zimon, "Wilhelm Schmidt's Theory of Primitive Monotheism and Its Critique within the Vienna School of Ethnology," *Anthropos* 81 (1986): 243-60.

61. Schmidt, "Die kulturhistorische Methode in der Ethnologie," *Anthropos* 6 (1911): 1017-18.

have provided a true alternative to the emerging orthodoxies of structural functionalism in Britain, Durkheimianism in France, and cultural historicism in America.⁶² But in the 1920s, the Germanic and Anglo-French traditions clearly parted company, and even the more historically oriented Americans began to emphasize their divergence from German models. Writing in 1936, Clyde Kluckhohn lamented the consistent unfairness Americans and especially Brits had exhibited in treating *Kulturkreislehre*; though these schools too had their biases, they had relentlessly harped on the Catholicism of the Viennese, and failed to read any of their post-1914 work.⁶³ Some of this, of course, had to do with politics; German-speaking scholars were very much isolated (and themselves retreated) from international discourse after the war's end. Moreover, the Germans had lost their colonies as well as many prewar sources for ethnological funding, and therefore found it harder than ever to convince others of their superior insight into the field.

In any event, introspection was the order of the day; the 1920s was the great era for the creation of chairs and national schools, most of them dominated by single figures (Boas in America, Radcliffe-Brown in England, Mauss in France). Germany did not, to my knowledge, have such a figure in the 1920s;⁶⁴ Austria had Schmidt. The intellectual as well as institutional consequences were momentous. In the next section, we will see how politics, institutions, and personality contributed to the exclusively Austrian success of Schmidt's "battle" against the all too Protestant theory of cultural evolutionism in the Great War period after World War I.

Counter-Reformation Triumphant

There have been many explications of structural-functionalism's rise, but few of historicist diffusionism's fall—which may not be the same

62. Writing in 1937, Robert Lowie could still insist that Schmidt's *Kulturkreislehre* really did not differ so much from the culture area theory of the Boasians. It was unfair, Lowie argued, to accuse the hard-working, wide-ranging Viennese scholars of coloring their ethnographies with Catholic prejudice. Robert H. Lowie, *The History of Ethnological Theory* (New York, 1937), 177.

63. Kluckhohn, "Some Reflections," 173-87.

64. German ethnology's great founding fathers, of course, arrived somewhat earlier: Rudolf Virchow and Adolf Bastian both belonged to the generation of 1848, not the generation of 1900. On Virchow's preeminence, see Benoit Massin, "From Virchow to Fischer: Physical Anthropology and 'Modern Race Theories' in Wilhelmine Germany," in *Volkgeist as Method and Ethic: Essays on Boasian Ethnography and the German Anthropological Tradition*, ed. George W. Stocking Jr. (Madison, Wis., 1996), 82-94.

story at all. Certainly, specialization played a very significant role in diffusionism's obsolescence. After several decades of Darwinian and anti-Darwinian culture histories, professional anthropologists increasingly found diffusionism impracticable and superficial. As avalanches of data and case after case of artifacts flooded Europe, it seemed less and less possible that one researcher could hold world prehistory in his head. Moreover, as ethnographic studies grew more intensive and sophisticated, epistemological and evaluatory problems grew more trenchant: did the blow gun mean the same thing in African cultures as in Melanesian ones? To those sensitive to these complex problems, diffusionism's grand attempts to re-create the history of mankind—like Grafton Elliot Smith's Egyptian fantasies, or Schmidt's history of the idea of God—seemed at best superficial, at worst absurd.⁶⁵

In Austria, however, Schmidt stuck to *Kulturkreislehre*, and to the increasingly utopian project of reconstructing world prehistory. Schmidt's views prevailed (excepting 1938–45) long into the period after World War II. He became the arbiter of cultural anthropology at the University of Vienna (though he seems to have taught few courses), the editor of Austria's leading ethnological journal, and an important distributor of patronage. But scholarly success simply allowed him to enlarge his sphere of influence. Far from settling into a life of specialized scholarship, Schmidt in the 1920s threw himself into a wide range of political and cultural activities.

In the following section, we will see how Schmidt gained dominance over his field after the Great War, and in doing so, assured Austria's departure from the secularizing, and specializing, norm. It seems to me critical, here, not simply to write Schmidt out of the history of anthropology because he failed to keep step with "the West"; his obsolescence should tell us a great deal about the cultural world of postwar Austria and, also, offer an illuminating contrast to the more familiar worlds of anthropology's other founding fathers.

Above all, Wilhelm Schmidt conceived of his role as that of a "mobilizer of auxiliary troops"⁶⁶ in what Schroeder called "the great battle over faith." As we have seen, in the years before the Great War,

65. In 1936, Kluckhohn did try to defend the importance of diffusionism's wide-angle view: "Perhaps the central reason for careful examination of the *Kulturkreislehre* is that it attempts to provide a schematization for the archaeological and ethnological facts of the whole world—at a time when the recognition that even very early peoples were no respecters of continents is being forced on us." Kluckhohn, "Some Reflections," 196.

66. Schmidt, *Der Ursprung der Gottesidee*, 1:72.

Schmidt devoted his extraordinary energy to a myriad of Catholic causes and secured for himself and for *Kulturkreislehre* a wide audience and influential patrons. In all of his endeavors, his ethnographic work, his politics, and his religious convictions were intertwined, often to the horror of his superiors. Indeed, they did occasionally try to reign in Schmidt, especially in the years before 1914. The war, however, brought Schmidt new prominence, both within his order and in wider Catholic sociopolitical circles. Charged by the royal family to accomplish a special mission, Schmidt applied his titanic energies to the organization of hundreds of homey library-canteens for soldiers. This close contact earned him the respect of Kaiser Karl, and in the war's last years, Schmidt served as the last Austrian kaiser's confessor. Although his order acted quickly to suppress the priest's two (anonymous) books on the causes of the war and the future of the Austrian Empire, by 1918, Schmidt was clearly becoming a politicocultural "player" with a high degree of notoriety and autonomy.⁶⁷

In the years after 1918, Schmidt's career as Catholic scientific impresario took off. Soon after the war, he began organizing a series of international "Religion and Ethnology Weeks" for missionaries and scholars, which proved an exemplary means for the dissemination of Schmidt's own theories.⁶⁸ In 1921, he received the right to lecture on ethnology at the University of Vienna; in 1927, he and his close collaborator Wilhelm Koppers were put in charge of the university's new Institute for Anthropology (Institut für Völkerkunde). Through the good offices of their Catholic-conservative friend, Hermann Michel, the general director of Vienna's Naturhistorisches Museum, they were able to exert great influence on Austrian ethnological collections and exhibits.⁶⁹ Granted an audience with Pope Pius XI in 1923, Schmidt so impressed the pontiff that he not only subsidized Schmidt's journal and the pygmy fieldwork of his students, but also commissioned him to organize a Lateran Ethnology Museum, as well as a huge missionary ethnography exhibition in Rome. In the 1920s, Schmidt began contributing articles on political topics to *Schönere Zukunft* and *Hochland*, popular journals for well-educated Catholics.⁷⁰ He gave thousands of

67. For a description of these books, see Brandewie, "Schmidt and Politics."

68. Bornemann, *P. Wilhelm Schmidt*, 94–108.

69. Peter Linimayr, *Wiener Völkerkunde im Nationalsozialismus: Ansätze zu einer NS-Wissenschaft* (Frankfurt am Main, 1994), 27.

70. On the politics of *Schönere Zukunft*, see Erika Weinzierl, "Kirche und Politik," in *Österreich 1918–1938: Geschichte der Ersten Republik*, vol. 1, ed. Erika Weinzierl and Kurt Skalnik (Graz, 1983), 469–72.

lectures all over Europe, especially to lay audiences. In his ecosystem, Schmidt, who dominated Austrian ethnology until his death in 1954, was the equivalent of Franz Boas plus Father Coughlin, or Marcel Mauss plus Jacques Maritain. His modernist activism revived a dormant tradition of missionary ethnography and made *Kulturkreislehre* the cultural anthropology of choice in Catholic Central Europe.⁷¹

At this juncture, it is critical to underscore the ways in which Schmidt's institutional ambit differed from that of other anthropological "founding fathers." Unlike Boas, Mauss, and Malinowski, Schmidt was not primarily a university professor. A public intellectual, he spoke to groups of many different types on topics of contemporary relevance, as well as on scholarly subjects. He used Catholic intellectual circles to spread his message, and he tapped these "private" sources for funding.⁷² Elsewhere, ethnographers had increasingly become dependent on public funds for their endeavors, a circumstance that made many liable to the charge of assisting in colonial oppression.⁷³ It is unlikely that Schmidt could have flourished in any other context than his own; but in Austria, the universities did not have the sort of cultural centrality they possessed, for example, in Germany, and the social power of Catholic organizations had not been broken, as in France. Austria's cultural infrastructure, too, played a big role in the making of this counter-reformation.

But it was Schmidt's personality that played the decisive part in prohibiting the adoption of the new social anthropology in Austria. His omnipresence in ethnological and Catholic cultural circles was the result not of circumstances but of colossal effort and of charismatic, intractable self-confidence. Schmidt, whose curriculum vitae already listed 166 items by 1911,⁷⁴ continued to produce essays, letters, lec-

tures, and books at an astonishing pace throughout his half-century career. Somehow, however, he found time to teach, preach, organize, and, especially, to endeavor, in print or in person, to stamp out dissent among his anthropological colleagues. His dictatorial tendencies increased as his institutional influence grew. Having taken over the Institute for Anthropology in 1927, he and his fellow Catholics prevented the ethnographer Michael Haberlandt from obtaining an academic position in ethnology; the "political Catholics" "drove the Protestant Haberlandt to the wall."⁷⁵

Schmidt's tyrannical mien, however, was most evident in his dealings with his own SVD "brothers." Those who specialized in fieldwork, like Paul Schebesta, grew dissatisfied with the "big picture" approach of *Kulturkreislehre*, but were not permitted to step outside it.⁷⁶ Schebesta, in fact, would ultimately dispute Schmidt's central claim that all pygmies belonged to a single culture; but "disputing," here, simply meant wasting one's breath. Schmidt refused to listen when his field-workers challenged his idyllic reveries; on one occasion, he threatened to put a bullet through his brain rather than believe his pygmy paradise a fiction.⁷⁷ In the early 1930s, he and Koppers suppressed a historicizing movement launched by young Viennese scholars, leading one of them to compare the "law" under which they lived to that of "a medieval court, where every single one has to toe the line if he is not to be ostracized."⁷⁸ This "ethnohistory" movement would only be able to voice its criticisms of Schmidtian *Kulturkreislehre* in the later 1950s.⁷⁹ Still, his colleagues recognized that Schmidt had opened the way for them, intellectually as well as institutionally; his stubbornness, as Schebesta insisted in 1968, "in no way diminishes his importance for

75. Leopold Schmidt, quoted in Olaf Bockhorn, "Von Ritualen, Mythen, und Lebenskreisen," in *Völkische Wissenschaft*, ed. Wolfgang Jacobbeit et al. (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 1994), 508.

76. For Schmidt, studies of single cultures were simply *Vararbeit*—ethnology began where these studies were combined and shaped into an historical narrative. See Bornemann, P. *Wilhelm Schmidt*, 209. Schebesta's work, in particular, seems to have earned the respect of other professionals; if still tinged by religious romanticism, his studies contained much difficult-to-obtain information. For his romantic accounts of the Semang, see, for example, *Among the Forest Dwarfs*, 277–81.

77. Thiel, "Der Urmonotheismus des Schmidt," 258–59.

78. Lebzelter quoted in Walter Hirschberg, "The Viennese Study Group for African Culture History (WAFK) during the Years 1930–1932," in *Ethnohistory in Vienna: Forum*, vol. 9, ed. Karl R. Wernhart (Aachen, 1987), 16.

79. Walter Hirschberg, "'Culture and Dynamics' in Ethnohistory," in Wernhart, *Ethnohistory in Vienna*, 47.

71. *Kulturkreislehre*, according to one recent commentator, "shaped ethnological work in Central Europe during the whole first half of this century and can be described as the most significant methodological contribution of German-speaking anthropology (*Völkerkunde*) to the history of ethnology." Helmut Straube, "Leo Frobenius (1873–1938)," in *Klassiker der Kulturanthropologie von Montaigne bis Margaret Mead*, ed. Wolfgang Marschall (Munich, 1990), 167.

72. The work of Martin Gusinde in Tierra del Fuego, for example, was funded by the archbishop of Santiago (Koppers, *Primitive Man*, 136–38).

73. See, for example, the essays in Talal Asad, ed., *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter* (London, 1973). If they now seem dated, some of these essays also rightly describe the ways in which social anthropologists developed critical positions on colonialism, a subtlety often overlooked in more recent literature.

74. Brandewie, *Giants*, 71.

our science, to which he gave an extraordinary stimulus and far-reaching goals."⁸⁰

Schmidt's scientific inertia was accompanied by the deepening of his political conservatism over the course of the 1920s and early 1930s. As we have seen, Schmidt's prewar science and politics fit nicely into the world of Catholic "modernism," the educated clergy's attempt to beat liberalism at its own game. But increasingly, Schmidt turned to other causes and other enemies. His wartime political books showed that he had developed great faith in the multinational empire and new affection for his German birthplace. Naturally, the Versailles settlements put an end to his plans for the revitalization of the Habsburg Empire; but he remained a monarchist, as well as a Germanophile. In the wake of the war, he could not accommodate himself to the new social and political realities of republican rump Austria and "Red Vienna." Like his contemporary Ignaz Seipel, he grew more and more confident that liberalism was dead and that the real enemy lay to the far left.⁸¹ That Schmidt was able, in this era, to deploy the pygmies for a new set of antiliberal causes gave his work a new lease on life and dangerous new relevance.

A few examples of Schmidt's popular essays should suffice to suggest the political dimensions of his work after the Great War—the period in which, it must be underlined, anthropology throughout the West gained academic status. In a 1925 essay on the origins of the family, for example, Schmidt clearly attempted to discredit the communal housing experiments of the Viennese socialist government. A second aim of the essay was to disparage attempts by feminists to gain equal rights for women.⁸² In a later, synthetic analysis of the origins of maternity, the moral of Schmidt's ethnological parable was even clearer.⁸³ In the beginning—the closest approximation to which was pygmy culture—men and women were partners with defined spheres; it was now time to return to a modified version of the hunting and gathering stage,

80. Paul Schebesta, "P. W. Schmidts Studie über den Totemismus der Äquatorialen Waldneger und Pygmäen," in *Anthropica: Gedenkschrift zum 100. Geburtstag von P. Wilhelm Schmidt*, ed. Anthropologisches Institut, Studia Instituti Anthropos, vol. 21 (St. Augustin bei Bonn: Verlag des Anthropos-Institut, 1968), 322.

81. On Seipel's rightward movement, see Klemens von Klemperer, *Ignaz Seipel: Christian Statesman in a Time of Crisis* (Princeton, 1972), 277–91.

82. Schmidt, "Familie," originally written for the *Handwörterbuch der Staatswissenschaft* (Jena, 1925), reprinted in *Wege der Kulturen*, 13–42.

83. Schmidt, *Das Mutterrecht*, Studia Instituti Anthropos, vol. 10 (Vienna, 1955), 185.

men working in the cities and women gardening and raising children in the suburbs. Nor did Schmidt simply spin out these politicized ur-fantasies from the quiet of his study; in 1934—in the wake of Dollfuss's coup from the right—he helped to found "Familienschutz," an organization that promoted lower taxes and greater influence for fathers of three or more children as a means to ward off the degeneration of the (German) *Volk*.⁸⁴ Clearly, the Durkheimian sociology and Freudian psychology that shaped new anthropological endeavors elsewhere did not suit this *völkisch*, Catholic plan. Thus Schmidt stuck with the pygmies and with hyperdiffusionism, and the Austrian school, now given official academic status, remained the captive of yesteryear's antievolutionist critique.

Like the eugenicists and Spenglerians of his day, Schmidt harbored a deep pessimism about the future of Western civilization. He, however, blamed incipient Western degeneracy not on miscegenation or city life, but chiefly on declining Catholicism and the advent of Bolshevism, whose way had been prepared by liberalism.⁸⁵ Similarly, although he pined for Austria's reunification with Germany, Schmidt's version of *Anschluss* was that of the "big Austria" advocated in 1848; that is, he longed for a return to the Holy Roman Empire in its pre-Lutheran glory days. He also longed for a strong state that would fight off the "Turkish threat" of socialism and take measures to ensure the survival of the German *Volksgemeinschaft*; but these measures were to involve conversion, not murder.⁸⁶ He sympathized with many of the policies of the Austrian fascist regime and was, unquestionably, an anti-Semite of the sort typical for right-wing Austrian Catholics of his generation. In one essay of 1934, Schmidt complained bitterly about the ways in which the Austrian people were being denied access to new, antievolutionist (and anti-Bolshevik) ideas by "the machinations of [the old, materialist party's] primarily Jewish leaders"; his recipe for combating these Jewish "machinations," however, was not expulsion but the establishment of a Catholic university.⁸⁷

Schmidt knew a number of prominent Nazis and was apparently concocting a plan for church-state accommodation in the wake of

84. Bornemann, *P. Wilhelm Schmidt*, 253–57.

85. Schmidt, "Freiheit und Bindung des Christen in der Gesellschaft," *Schönere Zukunft* 9, no. 3 (15 October 1934): 53.

86. *Ibid.*

87. Schmidt, "Was vermag der Katholizismus der Wissenschaft zu bieten?" *Schönere Zukunft* 31 (29 April 1934): 794.

Hitler's annexation of Austria in March 1938.⁸⁸ But Schmidt failed the make-or-break test for Nazi anthropologists: he did not believe biology was destiny. Essentially a Lamarckian,⁸⁹ he held inheritance to be less decisive than environment. He thought Nazi racial hierarchies ridiculous, and said so, in the mid-1930s as well as after the war.⁹⁰ In an essay of January 1934 entitled "On the Jewish Question," he wrote: "The problem of the Jewish people as a race definitively cannot be understood according to the usual categories; its basis rests not on material but on spiritual factors (not in the physical factor of 'blood,' but in the spiritual factor of an historical disposition of the will)." The Jews had failed their national mission by denying Christ, he wrote, but through conversion they could join the Christian community, if not the German *Volksgemeinschaft*. The essay denounced Jewish cultural dominance (in schools, medical institutions, cinemas, law firms), but warned explicitly against solving the Jewish problem through force. Once converted, the Jews, like the Christian Africans, Chinese, Indians, and pygmies, belonged to *Christentum*. If they could never belong to *Deutschum*, it was "not because they are lesser beings, but because they are other beings."⁹¹ The semiuniversals of Catholic *Kulturkreislehre*, it seems, could be reconciled with the Austro-fascist corporate hierarchies, or even with Mussolini's colonial endeavors;⁹² the worldview of Pygmy-Schmidt, however, could not be used to justify genocide.

The enthusiasm with which Austrians greeted Hitler's arrival in March 1938 meant that the Führer was not obliged to tolerate cultural or political deviations—militant Catholicism, of course, was both. Evidentially, Pope Pius anticipated that the *Arschluss* would not be good for his valued ethnological adviser, and thus sent a car to whisk Schmidt out of danger's way just as the German troops descended on

Austria.⁹³ Safely ensconced in a Swiss village, Schmidt continued to pursue his studies and his organizational work and to torment his brethren. Back in Austria, Wilhelm Koppers's chair at the University of Vienna was "temporarily suspended" in mid-1938; Koppers was officially dismissed in 1939, on grounds of being (unlike Schmidt) a well-known opponent of Germanization. The cleric-ethnologist took the opportunity to go to India to do fieldwork. His chair was taken over by Viktor Christian, an orientalist and member of the SS; the teaching of ethnology was passed on to young party members, many of whom had been students of Schmidt. Hardly had Schmidt left town when Walter Hirschberg published a tribute to Bernard Ankermann in which the "otherworldly Kulturkreis constructions" of the Vienna school were denounced in favor of Ankermann's more painstaking, and more racially oriented, ethnohistory.⁹⁴ The Germanophilic scholar of Mexican ethnology Fritz Röck survived denunciation by joining the Nazi Party and perpetually reiterating his hostility to the clerics of the *Kulturkreis* school.⁹⁵ By 1939, racial biology had achieved institutional hegemony, and confessional anthropology, like confessional folklore,⁹⁶ had been silenced.

Schmidt and his school do not look so bad in light of the antics of their colleagues in physical anthropology. While Schmidt's school had become dominant by mobilizing Catholic lay groups and utilizing non-university-related sources of funding, scholarly posts and museum collections in Austrian anthropology had remained heavily slanted toward anatomy and *völkisch* prehistory. The leading scholars in these schools were just as Germano-nationalist as Schmidt, but they were much more inclined to adopt racist principles. In 1933, the prehistorian Oswald Menghin published *Geist und Blut*, a volume of essays in which he identified Germans and Jews as two fundamentally different *Volkstypen*, the former agrarian, the latter nomadic. Menghin sympathized greatly with the *Arschluss* idea until it occurred, and Catholic neoconservatives like himself lost out to Nazi radicals.⁹⁷ Rudolf Much,

93. Bornemann, *P. Wilhelm Schmidt*, 281–82.

94. See Walter Hirschberg, "Bernard Ankermann," in *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 70 (1938): 131. Thanks to Glenn Penny for this reference.

95. Liniemayr, *Wiener Völkerkunde im Nationalsozialismus*, 54–56, 75–116. Liniemayr shows in detail how extensively Röck integrated Nazi ideology into the museum's programs and exhibits.

96. Bockhorn, "Ritualen, Mythen, und Lebenskreise," 489.

97. On Menghin, see Richard S. Geehr, "Oswald Menghin, ein katholischer Nationaler," in *Geistiges Leben im Österreich der Ersten Republik* (Munich, 1986), 9–24.

88. See Bornemann, *P. Wilhelm Schmidt*, 280–81; Schmidt also contributed extensively to *Schönere Zukunft* after 1933, though the editor's sympathetic stance with respect to Nazism must have been known to him.

89. Schmidt, *Rassen und Völker in Vorgeschichte und Geschichte des Abendlandes*, vol. 1, *Die Rassen des Abendlandes* (Lucerne, 1946), 147–48.

90. Schmidt, "Rasse und Weltanschauung" (1935), reprinted in *Wege der Kulturen*, 269–84.

91. Wilhelm Schmidt, "Zur Judenfrage," *Schönere Zukunft* 17 (21 January 1934): 408–9. Quotation reads: "nicht weil sie minderwertig wären, sondern weil sie anderwertig sind" (409).

92. On Schmidt's favorable attitude towards Italian fascism, see Conte, "Völkerkunde und Faschismus?" 241–42.

Vienna's specialist in German *Altertumskunde* until his death in 1936, produced a cadre of pro-Nazi students.⁹⁸ The anthropology chair at the university was held by a series of men committed to racial classification; and two more anthropologists with Austrian origins, Felix von Luschan and Richard Thurnwald, were early and active members of racial hygiene societies.⁹⁹ Already by 1939, Vienna's Museum of Natural History had erected two exhibits suffused with Nazi racial ideology: "Austria's Contribution to the Study of German Colonial Regions" and "The Spiritual and Racial Physiognomy (*Erscheinungsbild*) of the Jews." An enormous caption for the physiognomic photos in the latter exhibition read: "The Jewish Question can only be solved by clearly differentiating the Jews from the non-Jews"¹⁰⁰—an obvious incitement to ethnic cleansing.

The point not to be missed here is that Schmidt's politics were typical of the Christian Social Right of the 1920s and 1930s, which has its own sins to answer for. One of these, perhaps its most besetting, is that its ambiguous relationship with Nazism allowed conservative Austrians to learn nothing from World War II. Schmidt and his school were particularly culpable in this regard. Although the prominent priest's departure from Austria was arranged by the pope rather than an act of opposition on Schmidt's part, Schmidt ever after played the role of beleaguered exile. He blamed Nazism on Prussianism, thereby absolving German culture—and Catholic Germans and Austrians—of all responsibility; he also subscribed to the "first victim of Nazi aggression" view of Germany's annexation of Austria.¹⁰¹ In his *Die Rassen des Abendlandes* (1946), he tried to show that race was not really a German concept at all; and he lumped Nazi barbarism together with other costs of civilization, such as the breakdown of families, blaming all on rampant materialism.¹⁰²

98. See Bockhorn, "Ritualen, Mythen, und Lebenskreisen."

99. Marion Melk-Koch, "Zwei Österreicher nehmen Einfluß auf die Ethnologie in Deutschland: Felix von Luschan und Richard Thurnwald," in Rupp-Eisenreich and Stagl, *Kulturwissenschaften im Vielvölkerstaat*, 137.

100. Klaus Taschwer, "'Anthropologie ins Volk': Zur Ausstellungspolitik einer angewandten Wissenschaft bis 1945," in Herbert Posch and Gottfried Fliedl, eds., *Politik der Präsentation: Museum und Ausstellung in Österreich, 1918–1945* (Vienna, 1996), 249–51.

101. Schmidt, *Rassen und Völker*, 310–11, viii.

102. "The catastrophic reduction of human spirituality, which leads to the beastializing and mechanization of huge masses of mankind, means not only the exclusion of millions of men from cultural progress, but also produces a swamp of intellectual stagnation, moral rot, and social corruption, whose miasmas have the effect of poisoning and stunting the free [nations]" (*ibid.*, 314).

The lesson our anthropological Loyola took from the Nazi experience was that it was essential for Germany to return to Catholicism; the Reformation had done its worst and it was high time to return to Germanic Christian unity.¹⁰³ In 1949, his successor, Wilhelm Koppers, echoed this sentiment; rather than waste our breath discussing the future of Western civilization, which had in any case given way to a new world order, "Would it not be better," Koppers asked, to say that we should use all our powers to bring about such a world civilization and to see to it that Catholic Christianity, which had repeatedly saved Europe from ruin, should play a decisive role in the shaping of its destinies? Christianity would then be called upon once more to save all that could be saved of our Western culture, while coming to an understanding with the mentality of India and the Far East and seeking to take over their cultural heritage. In doing so Christianity would fulfill a mission similar to that which it accomplished so successfully with regard to the intellectual heritage of classical antiquity.¹⁰⁴ There are, Schmidt pronounced in a postwar radio address, "healthy, even necessary catastrophes. They open eyes and prepare souls to see the eternal West and the roots of its existence, which reach millennia-deep into history's soil."¹⁰⁵ The cataclysm of the world war would permit the West to reroot itself in Catholicism and the land; redeemed from the sins of religious schism and hyperindustrialism, the West would be ready, once more, to take up the incomplete task of Christianizing the world.¹⁰⁶ In the era of decolonization, a theory that had once combated the hubris of evolutionism took on a grander and even more delusory civilizing mission.

It was this sort of maudlin, conservative universalism, as well as the failure to see Nazism as anything other than a particularly virulent form of materialism, that characterized mainstream Austrian culture after 1945, the left's attempts at modernization notwithstanding. Even men and institutions deeply compromised by the *Anschluss* returned to power.¹⁰⁷ The Austrian school's resistance to Nazi racial determinism

103. *Ibid.*, 31. Schmidt had begun this campaign already in 1919. See Bornemann, *F. Wilhelm Schmidt*, 37–40.

104. Koppers, *Primitive Man*, 135–36.

105. Schmidt, "Werdendes Abendland," in *Erbe und Zukunft des Abendlandes* (Bern, 1948), 7–8.

106. Schmidt does not explicitly state the new Christianizing mission, but it is heavily implied in the address; see, e.g., *ibid.*, 14.

107. Brandewie gives an interesting account of the Africanist Hermann Baumann, who held a chair in Vienna's Department of Anthropology during the Third Reich. In 1945, Baumann, a Nazi, was prohibited from practicing his profession in museums or universities and

permitted it to smoothly reestablish its dominance (at the University of Vienna) after 1945, and Wilhelm Koppers returned to his chair. The octogenarian Schmidt, though he continued to reside in Switzerland, engaged in a furious new round of lectures, publications, and radio broadcasts; and his influence in Austrian Catholic circles remained considerable. But Schmidt, like many of his conservative colleagues, had fallen more and more out of step with changes in his profession. Indeed, by the time of his death in 1954, diffusionist historicism had begun to look distinctly quaint, and even slightly barmy, more and more evident as a relic of a dilettantish age. Now the secular path not taken in the 1910s and 1920s clearly defined the "scientific" approach to anthropology; in a postwar world of international agencies, declining missionary activity and church patronage, and continuing secularization and professionalization, the intellectual and institutional bases of Schmidt's achievements crumbled. In the long run, a counter-reformation in one country could not survive. The "battle of battles," in this field, in any event, had been lost.

It is not my purpose, here, to reopen the battle, but to admonish historians not to forget it. The centrality of religion as a subject for ethnographers in this century is not simply a meaningless "survival"; the attempt to treat religion and its history objectively lies at the heart of anthropology's professionalization story. The ways in which this issue could be treated varied, depending greatly on the institutional, political, and confessional structures of each nation. In Austria, the acquisition of anthropological authority did not necessitate the adoption of an agnostic stance. But Schmidt's departures from the "Western" norm, and especially his intellectual inflexibility, doomed his attempt to derail the secularization of cultural anthropology. Schmidt's counter-reformation ultimately failed, but at its height, it succeeded in making the study of ethnology more relevant to more Austrians than ever before or since. As always, local battles engage the public more passionately than distant ones; and if colonial questions shaped the wider context, for many early-twentieth-century ethnographers and their audiences, the battle nearest to their hearts remained the battle over the past, present, and future course of faith.

had to earn a living in a carpenter's shop making coffins. Perhaps partly on Schmidt's recommendation, Baumann was allowed to work at the Frobenius Institute, and by 1955 had been fully rehabilitated, and made professor at the University of Munich. Brandewie, *Giants*, 277.

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