The Politics of Anthropology in the Age of Empire: German Colonists, Brazilian Indians, and the Case of Alberto Vojtěch Frič

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> Ein guter Mensch in seinem dunkeln Drange,
> ist sich des rechten Weges wohl bewußt.[1]
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> ———Goethe, *Faust*

> Every Indian they find is shot, and entire expeditions have been equipped in order to kill the savages, to steal small children, and then to sell them for 100 Milreis a piece. This is happening in this century in the civilized states of Brazil!
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> ———A. V. Frič, *Globus*, 1907

On 14 September 1908, at the Sixteenth International Congress of Americanists in Vienna, Alberto Vojtěch Frič,[2] who had been sent to Brazil in 1906 to collect ethnographica for German museums, threw the otherwise orderly scientific proceedings into turmoil. During his presentation on the Bugres Indians of South America, Frič denounced the brutal treatment of the Kaingáng and Xokléng tribes at the hands of German colonists in the states of Santa Catarina and Paraná in southern Brazil. He complained to the Americanists that slavery, wide-spread murder, and bands of "human-hunters" could not only be found in the "independent states of the Congo": "such acts and much worse" were being financed by German colonists living in the "civilized states of Brazil." Frič revealed that German settlers were hiring paid killers to eradicate entire tribes of Indians and permitting the sale and clandestine enslavement of their children. He also protested that the Brazilian government was turning a blind eye to these

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[1] A good man, in the direful grasp of ill/ his consciousness of right retaineth still.

[2] Alberto Vojtěch Frič used several variations of his name in his publications and correspondence, including Alberto Frič, Albert Frič, Adalbert Frič, and Vojtěch Frič.

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atrocities, and he demanded that the congress act jointly to put an end to the violence.[3]

Frič's revelation was as infuriating as it was unexpected. But the Americanists directed their outrage at him rather than the conditions he revealed. He gained little sympathy for his proposal that they work collectively to make slavery and "the hunting of humans" impossible in Brazil.[4] Instead, Frič's moral indignation was met by pronouncements of political neutrality cloaked in the rhetoric of scientific objectivity. Berlin ethnologists Karl von den Steinen and Eduard Seler, who had initially sent Frič to Brazil, denounced him for mixing politics and science.[5] The president of the congress, Wilhelm Freiherr von Weckbecker, explained that such proposals were "outside the competence of this congress," and Berlin's daily newspapers attacked him for "meddling in things that absolutely did not concern him."[6] Indeed, by the time this incident had run its course, Frič found himself denounced as a rabid Czech nationalist, an anarchist, and an effeminate sexual deviant in Blumenau, Rio de Janeiro, Hamburg, Vienna, and Berlin.

In many ways, the professional and popular reactions to Frič are hardly surprising; scholars in other disciplines were promoting similar notions of scientific objectivity. Indeed, only four months after Frič met such staunch resistance from the Americanist Congress in Vienna, Max Weber called on a gathering of sociologists in that same city to consistently "avoid all discussion of matters moral, political, and religious" and in this way free their discipline from interest groups, state scrutiny, or political intervention.[7] As Robert Proctor has reminded us, however, scientific objectivity is not the same as political neutrality: "neutrality refers to whether a science takes a stand; objectivity to whether a science merits certain claims to reliability."[8] In the case of Frič, the Americanists' actions were anything but neutral. Their decision *en masse* to evoke the rhetoric of an objective, apolitical science had tremendous political ramifications—it allowed the language of reason and objectivity to facilitate conquest and mass murder.

This is an essay in the cultural history of anthropology,[9] a saga of life on var-

[3] A. Frič, "Völkerwanderung, Ethnographie und Geschichte der Konquista in Südbrasilien," in *Verhandlungen des XVI Internationalen Amerikanisten-Kongresses* (Wien, 1909), 63–67.

[4] Ibid. [5] *Neue Freie Presse* (NFP), no. 15829, 15 Sept. 1908.

[6] Ibid.; *Verhandlungen des XVI. Internationalen Amerikanisten-Kongresses,* LXIV; see also: *Vossische Zeitung* (VZ), Abend Ausgabe, no. 434, 15 Sept. 1908; *Berliner Lokal Anzeiger* (BLA), Abendblatt, no. 471, 15 Sept. 1908; *Berliner Tageblatt* (BT), no. 471, 15 Sept. 1908.

[7] Robert N. Proctor, *Value-Free Science? Purity and Power in Modern Knowledge* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 85. See also: Lorraine Daston, "The Moral Economy of Science," *Osiris* 10 (1995):3–24; and Laura Nader, ed. *Naked Science: Anthropological Inquiry into Boundaries, Power, and Knowledge* (New York: Routledge, 1996).

[8] Proctor, *Value-Free Science?*, 10.

[9] In this essay I employ "anthropology" as a general term that encompasses both physical anthropology and what we now more commonly refer to as cultural anthropology. In nineteenth-century Germany, however, physical anthropology and cultural anthropology were considered two

ious frontiers—scientific pursuits and colonial incursions; it explores the contradictions at the heart of Germans' liberal anthropology, and it considers the boundaries of behavior that governed anthropologists' actions abroad. As much of the literature on the history of anthropology and colonialism suggests, imperial and colonial interests were not foremost in anthropologists' minds when they went into the field, and many reacted negatively to the abuse they witnessed abroad. As a result, colonial authorities often held them in suspicion as individuals who might cause problems by exposing the limits of Western civilization.[10] In this sense, Frič was not unique; but the case of Frič is particularly instructive. Examining the popular and professional reactions to the views of someone who was so clearly identified as deviant reveals conventional expectations about anthropologists' behavior and some of the unwritten rules and regulations that guided their decisions. In particular, the case of Frič unveils the degree to which the entire science of anthropology, from its leading professionals and patrons at home to its practitioners and supporters abroad, was invested in maintaining a disinterested, almost "clinical" distance between anthropologists and their subjects, one that observed a strict division between politics and science. This incident also shows that there were normative codes of behavior governing anthropology even while it was an emerging discipline, and that these codes were not just created and regulated by scientists. Historians of science have long been aware of the ways in which scientists police their disciplinary boundaries.[11] But the case of Frič shows quite clearly how this policing also serves the interests of non-scientists, how the larger norms of society get called into play, and how this relationship is fundamentally political.

The case of Frič, centered around an incident that is important precisely because it did *not* have an impact on the profession, also exposes some of the lim-

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distinct fields, and most of the actors in this essay would have defined themselves as ethnologists. Consequently I refer to them as ethnologists throughout the essay.

[10] Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, "Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda," in F. Cooper and A. Stoler, eds., *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 14; see also Henrika Kuklick's discussion of Northcote Thomas and others in *The Savage Within: The Social History of British Anthropology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

[11] See *inter alia* Diana Crane, *Invisible Colleges: Diffusion of Knowledge in Scientific Communities* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1972); Thomas F. Gieryn, *Cultural Boundaries of Science: Credibility on the Line* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999). The boundaries between religion and science in the British tradition have seen perhaps the most attention. See, for example, Jack Morrell and Arnold Thackray, *Gentlemen of Science: Early Years of the British Association for the Advancement of Science* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981); and Steven Shapin, *A Social History of Truth: Civility and Science in Seventeenth-Century England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994). For an example in anthropology, see Henrika Kuklick, "After Ishmael: The Fieldwork Tradition and Its Future," in Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, eds., *Anthropological Locations: Boundaries and Grounds of a Field Science* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 47–65. For more general statements on the ways in which disciplines constitute a system of control in the production of discourse, see Michel Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge*, A. M. Sheridan Smith, trans. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 224–25. I am grateful to Lynn Nyhart for her insight into these debates.

itations that can accompany professionalization. As we know, professionalization is never limited to technical training; it also includes behavior. The professional is not only able to do certain things, the professional is certain things, and thus professionalization both enhances and limits. Mary Douglas has argued that institutions do much of our thinking for us, that moral opinions and judgments are "prepared by social institutions," and that as a result it is "very rare" for anyone tied to a large institution "to choose a moral stand on individual or rational grounds."[12] Although one could follow Douglas and argue that in the case of Frič anthropological institutions dominated the Americanists' actions in Vienna and delimited their actions abroad, I want to suggest with the case of Frič that this "institutional thinking" extended well beyond the institutions of anthropology and into a public sphere in which non-scientists and scientists alike carefully regulated the politics of a putatively apolitical anthropology. Moreover, my main concern here is not simply to argue that "apolitical" positions are always already political and often immoral; nor do I simply want to unpack a particular "colonial situation" in a way that indicts the moral ambiguity of the silence that scientists and other scholars too often accept as a part of the Faustian bargains we make with our societies. Rather it is my intention to show the very real potential of individuals to break out of those bonds and affect change, and the possibilities for critique that come with remaining on the margins.

PROFESSIONALS, COLLECTORS, AND GERMAN ANTHROPOLOGY IN 'THE FIELD'

There is no question that colonialism was the "*sine qua non* of ethnographic fieldwork."[13] Colonial expansion expedited the very act of going into "the field" and provided the basic structures and conditions for anthropologists' experiences. But as many scholars have pointed out, there was no single "colonialism," no single set of parameters that structured experience;[14] nor, for that matter, was there a single anthropology: "different modes of anthropology have taken hold in different colonial contexts."[15] Anthropologists' attitudes toward indigenous peoples varied significantly when they practiced anthropology in a settler colony that was dependent on indigenous labor, one with a surplus of European workers, or in territories controlled by other states.

In the German context, ethnographic museums and anthropological societies predated the acquisition of colonies, and the vast majority of Germans' ethno-

[12] Mary Douglas, *How Institutions Think* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1986), 120.

[13] George W. Stocking Jr., "Maclay, Kubary, Malinowski: Archetypes from the Dreamtime of Anthropology," in G. Stocking, ed., *Colonial Situations*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 10.

[14] See *inter alia* Nicholas Thomas, *Colonialism's Culture: Anthropology, Travel, and Government* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

[15] Patrick Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology: The Politics and Poetics of an Ethnographic Event* (New York: Cassell, 1999), 6.

logical inquiry continued to take place outside the colonies they began to acquire after 1884. Largely because of this context, salvage anthropology (the frenzied effort among anthropologists to acquire as much material culture as possible from areas that they believed would soon succumb to the tide of colonial modernity) persisted among Germans through World War I. In contrast, by the first decade of the twentieth century, much of British anthropology began turning toward functionalism, a mode of inquiry focused on acquiring detailed knowledge of functioning societies with a stress on the values of traditional indigenous cultures. Many anthropologists and colonial authorities argued that this new methodology would facilitate and maintain twentieth-century colonial administrations.[16] But because of their limited colonial territories, most German anthropologists operated in a different colonial context and with a different method in mind. They remained fixated on a salvage anthropology that turned around acquisitions, one which was much better suited to the Conradian universe[17] of extraction, poaching, mining, and scavenging that, despite the moralistic rhetoric of the "new imperialism,"[18] continued during the first decades of the twentieth century to characterize the frontier borderlands between "civilization" and the "not yet civilized."[19]

In early 1906, Alberto Vojtěch Frič became part of German ethnology and moved into these contexts when he arrived at Berlin's *Museum für Völkerkunde* with artifacts he had recently collected from the Bororo Indians in Brazil. Frič was not a professional ethnologist, but rather an amateur naturalist who had gained an interest in Brazil's Indians during his travels in South America. Frič came from a prominent family in Prague whose members included revolutionaries, politicians, and scientists—one of his uncles, Josef V. Frič, helped lead the Prague revolution of 1848; his father Vojtěch Frič was a deputy mayor of

[16] Stocking, "Introduction," in *Colonial Situations*, 4. While Stocking stresses that we should not overplay the relationship between functionalism and the new imperialism emerging at the end of the nineteenth century, the link between these modes of colonialism and anthropology are clear. Moreover that link is not diminished by Talal Asad's argument that the knowledge anthropology produced was "often too esoteric for government use." As Rainer Buschmann has shown, it makes good sense that Richard Thurnwald, the father of German functionalism, operated in German colonial territory. See Asad, "From the History of Colonial Anthropology to the Anthropology of Western Hegemony," in *Colonial Situations,* 315; Buschmann, "Colonizing Anthropology: Albert Hahl the Ethnographic Frontier in German New Guinea," forthcoming in H. Glenn Penny and Matti Bunzl, eds., *Worldly Provincialism: German Anthropology in the Age of Empire* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), 230–255.

[17] By evoking Conrad here I do not mean to call up the hallucinatory quality in the *Heart of Darkness*, that text historians of Europe and empire know so well. Rather I want to evoke the themes Conrad develops in *Nostromo* about personal power and individual responsibility in a frontier zone absorbed in the realities and possibilities of violent change. As Jeffrey Meyers has proposed, "the central tragedy of *Nostromo* is the incompatibility of material interests and moral principles." That is also a critical theme in the case of Frič. Jeffrey Meyers, *Joseph Conrad: A Biography* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1991), 222.

[18] Cooper and Stoler, "Between Metropole and Colony," 31.

[19] Michael Taussig, *Shamanism, Colonialism, and the Wild Man: A Study in Terror and Healing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

Prague; his uncle Antonín Frič was a curator of the natural history collections of the Prague National Museum.[20] Frič himself attended the Technical College of Prague for only one year before leaving for Brazil in 1900 at the age of eighteen. Frič concentrated on botany during his first trip, particularly the study of cacti. The natural history collection he exhibited in Prague upon his return in 1902 contained a few examples of Brazilian Indians' material culture, but it was only during his second trip to Brazil, when he was struck by how quickly Brazil's Indians appeared to be dying out, that he made a conscious turn toward ethnology.[21]

Frič approached Karl von den Steinen and Eduard Seler, the directors of the American section of the Berlin museum, with the intention of selling all or a part of his collection. He impressed them with the quality of the artifacts he presented, which Seler termed "amazingly well preserved," as well as the "exceedingly meticulous catalog" that accompanied them.[22] His ability to collect, order, and transport feathered headdresses and other fragile items under difficult conditions, and his capacity to make "good observations" about the cultural importance of these objects, seemed to qualify him to return for more.[23] Thus although he had no actual training as an ethnologist, no university degree, and hardly fit the description of the new professional "field-worker" championed by museum directors, both Seler and von den Steinen reacted positively to his inquires about working in the museum as a volunteer, and to his suggestions that they support him in another trip to South America in the fall of 1906.[24] Indeed, they also opened up the doors to him gaining support from Georg Thilenius, the director of Hamburg's ethnographic museum.[25]

Frič was an attractive choice because the well-trained, professional collector was largely an unrealized ideal of nineteenth-century anthropology. The directors of ethnographic museums in the late nineteenth century were generally overworked, understaffed, short of funds, distracted by patrons, desperate to increase their collections, and unable to send themselves or their employees everywhere they wanted to go. The directors of these museums would have preferred to send only well-trained, "professional" ethnologists into the field.[26]

[20] Josef Kandert "Alberto Vojtěch Frič—On the Centenary of his Birth," in *Annals of the Naprstek Museum* 11 (1983):111–46; *Ottův Slouník Naučný* 28, Prague 1909, 452. I am grateful to Ralf Melville for his assistance with this material.

[21] Kandert, "Frič," 137.

[22] Seler to Thilenius, 24 Oct. 1907, in the archive of the Museum für Völkerkunde Berlin (MfVB): "Die Reise des Adalbert Frich [sic] nach Südamerika, Vol. I," (Frič) 1943/07.

[23] Seler to Thilenius, 24 Oct. 1907, in MfVB: "Frič," 1943/07.

[24] Seler and v. d. Steinen to the General Administration of the Royal Museums (GVKM), 6 Jan. 1906, in MfVB: "Den Umzug und die Aufstellung der Sammlungen des Museums," vol. 7, 35/1906.

[25] Thilenius to Paul Ehrenreich, 28 Mar. 1906, and Frič to Thilenius, 2 Apr. 1906, in the archive of the Hamburgisches Museum für Völkerkunde (MfVH): D 2,36 "Sammelreise von A. V. Frič, Prague—nach Süd-Amerika."

[26] The definition of a "professional" changed over time and the process of professionalization varied within different national contexts. Compare Kuklick, *The Savage Within* and H. Glenn Pen-

Adolf Bastian and Rudolf Virchow, the founders of Berlin's *Völkerkunde* Museum and the recognized leaders of German anthropology until their deaths during the first decade of the twentieth century, had been calling for better-trained collectors since the 1870s.[27] They condemned as "completely useless" the artifacts collected by amateurs (even national heroes like Hermann von Wissmann, the first European to cross equatorial Africa) because they too often lacked any information about the name and origins of these artifacts, not to mention observations about their cultural functions.[28]

Such arguments only increased in the early twentieth century as the largely self-educated directors of German ethnographic museums were replaced by a new generation of professionals holding the highest university degrees.[29] Arguments about what one collected, how objects should be acquired, and who was competent to engage in collecting them dominated much of ethnologists' discussions at their meetings, in their journals, and with their patrons.[30] When museum directors such as Georg Thilenius set out to gain support for large-scale expeditions, they legitimated the expense of these ambitious ventures by arguing that only "specialists" could approach their tasks with "complete knowledge of the general questions" driving ethnological inquiry and the "currently available results" from the areas they studied.[31] Only trained professionals, he insisted, had "the technical skills at their disposal that [were] necessary for avoiding failures and safeguarding results."[32] By the turn of the century, ethnologists across Europe and the United States were agreed that only educated, well-prepared collectors could be relied on for good collections, and thus in order to maintain their professional standards and compete with their counterparts abroad, German ethnologists increasingly called for well-organized expeditions staffed by a number of professional ethnologists, physical anthropologists, and natural scientists.

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ny, *Objects of Culture: Ethnology and Ethnographic Museums in Imperial Germany* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

[27] See for example, Guido von Usedom, "Plan zu einer Ethnographischen Museum in Berlin," 6 Aug. 1873 in the Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz (GSA), Rep. 76, Ve. Sekt. 15., Abt. XI., Nr 2, Bd I, 46–48; and A. Bastian *Führer durch die Ethnographische Abtheilung* (Berlin 1877), 13.

[28] Cornelia Essner, *Deutsche Afrikareisende im neunzehnten Jahrhundert: Zur Sozialgeschichte des Reisens* (Stuttgart: Steiner Verlag, 1985), 42.

[29] The directors of the Hamburg (1904), Berlin (1905), Leipzig (1907), and Munich (1907) museums were replaced during a generational shift by younger men who had completed both a Ph.D. and a *Habilitation*. None of the earlier directors had been *habilitiert*, only two had honorary Ph.D.s, and only Bastian had a permanent connection to a university.

[30] See for example Richard Thurnwald, "Über Völkerkundemuseen, Ihre Wissenschaftlichen Bedingungen und Ziele," *Museumskunde* 8, 4 (1912):197–214.

[31] Thilenius was following an international trend, shadowing the example of the British expedition to the Torres Strait in 1898 and especially the Jesup North Pacific Expedition (1897–1902), organized by Boas. See: Hans Fischer, *Die Hamburger Südsee-Expedition* (Frankfurt a. M.: Syndikat, 1981).

[32] Thilenius, "Denkschrift über ein hamburgische Expedition nach der Südsee, in 1907." MfVH: SSE 1. This is a typical argument. Cf. Thurnwald, "Über Völkerkundemuseen."

Such ventures, however, were more the exception than the rule. Thilenius was able to organize a widely heralded two-year expedition to the South-Seas in 1908–1910, complete with its own ship, crew, and a full contingent of scientists from Hamburg and Leipzig, which seemed to set a new standard of comprehensive inquiry with its scale. But Europe's leading ethnologists simply lacked the funds necessary to launch multiple expeditions of this nature. As a result, they continued to quietly turn to amateur collectors who could support themselves, adventurers funded by other institutions, missionaries, government employees, dealers in ethnographic artifacts, and individuals such as Frič, who seemed eager to work for next to nothing in exchange for the chance to participate in the production of knowledge and to gain the opportunity for travel, adventure, and perhaps even prestige and fortune.[33]

The willingness of museum directors to employ a range of different collectors at the same time they were calling for the professionalization of their science stemmed from the powerful sense of urgency driving ethnology during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The directors of German museums sought to acquire ethnographica from all corners of the globe in the hopes of gaining a comprehensive picture of humanity.[34] This fundamental goal had motivated aspiring cultural scientists to begin establishing ethnographic museums in the 1860s and 1870s, and it continued to guide ethnologists' efforts well into the twentieth century. These efforts became increasingly frenzied, however, because on the one hand, ethnologists' experiences abroad led them to believe that Europe's dynamic expansion threatened their intellectual project. They were worried that contacts with Europeans might cause "native" peoples to either quickly "lose all of their originality" or simply "disappear like snow before the rising sun of civilization."[35] Ethnologists thus feared that they might quickly lose their ability to acquire detailed studies of materials from many areas of the world, map the distribution of artifacts across the globe, and engage in a comparative analysis of material culture. On the other hand, their intellectual concern was also combined with their professional anxiety that someone else (independent collectors, dealers in antiquities, or representatives of other museums) might get to the remnants of these "ancient" or "primitive" peoples first, and that the most comprehensive picture of humanity might end up in

[33] The market in "primitive art" also drove many collectors and traders of ethnographica. Indeed, it continues to do so today. Raymond Corbey, *Tribal Art Traffic: A Chronicle of Taste, Trade and Desire in Colonial and Post-Colonial Times* (Amsterdam: The Royal Tropical Institute, 2000).

[34] For a nice discussion of the historicist tradition that spawned this movement see: Matti Bunzl, "Franz Boas and the Humboldtian Tradition: From *Volksgeist* and *Nationalcharakter* to an Anthropological Concept of Culture," in George W. Stocking Jr. ed., *Volksgeist as Method and Ethic: Essays on Boasian Ethnography and the German Anthropological Tradition* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996), 17–78.

[35] See, for example, "Proposal for a Museum for Völkerkunde," prepared by the Berlin Association for Anthropology, Ethnology, and Prehistory, 2 July 1872, in Staatliche Museen zu Berlin Museum für Völkerkunde, "Die Gründung des Museums, Vol. 1," (1872–1893), 1214/73. This rationale, of course, was not limited to this time and place.

someone else's museum, which could undermine the importance of their own institutions, their professional positions, and ultimately, threaten their salaries.[36] Therefore, the directors of German museums, much like their counterparts across Europe and the United States, continued to enlist whomever they could to help fill their museums, fighting aggressively among themselves to be the first to contact "new" peoples and to acquire (or as they put it to "save") as many examples of non-European material culture as they could before it all disappeared.

While engaged in what Joseph Conrad would have termed their "scramble for loot,"[37] German ethnologists and their collectors could be found in Egypt, Turkey, and across the Middle East, throughout most of Africa, in Asia, Australia, and South and Central America, where they eagerly acquired ethnographica from colonizers, the colonized, and an array of "untouched" indigenous peoples. Leo Frobenius, for example, whom scholars generally regard as the first German field worker of note, actually spent most of his early career working in foreign territories.[38] And despite Germany's growing threat to the British empire, British authorities allowed Frobenius to work in their colonies. They even assisted his efforts because anthropology, like science in general, was commonly regarded as being above politics: it was an international endeavor that was supposed to contribute to a general production of knowledge.[39] Paradoxically, the ways in which such cosmopolitan networks intertwined with colonial structures made it possible to "do" anthropology in this aggressively nationalist and imperialist age. It was between these structures that anthropology thrived.

If the space in which German ethnologists moved was geographically broad, "the field" was also a socially intimate place. Field sciences depend on the creation and maintenance of personal relationships with public and private agents ranging from the governors, diplomats, and military officers from multiple nations, to local officials, merchants, informants, and many others.[40] As Jane Camerini has made clear in her work on Alfred Russel Wallace, his "mastery as a natural scientist" stemmed as much from his ability to meet the material, social, and personal demands of his collecting activities in the Malay Archipelago during the 1850s and 1860s as from his ability to rise to the intellectual

[36] On the competition for artifacts see *inter alia* Douglas Cole, *Captured Heritage: The Scramble for Northwest Coast Artifacts* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1985); and Enid Schildkrout and Curtis A. Heim, eds., *The Scramble for Art in Central Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

[37] Conrad discusses the extremes of imperial extraction in some detail in his "Geography and some Explorers," in *Last Essays,* Richard Curlem, ed. (London: Dent, 1926), 83–114.

[38] On Frobenius and his place in German ethnology see *inter alia* Elke Haberland, ed., *Leo Frobenius: An Anthology* (Wiesbaden: 1973).

[39] For further discussion of this point see Penny, *Objects of Culture.*

[40] Henrika Kuklick and Robert E. Kohler, eds., *Science in the Field, Osiris,* 2d Ser., 11 (1996); and Gupta and Ferguson, eds., *Anthropological Locations.*

challenges posed by scholars back home.[41] The same was true for ethnologists and their collectors decades later. Regardless of whether they were in Africa, Asia, or the forests and pampas of South America engaged in either the frenzied collecting of "salvage anthropology" or long-term, *insitu* observations of functioning cultures, ethnologists relied on the complex human infrastructures in these areas to negotiate the field, and the best of them recognized the critical role that reputation, reliability, and trust played in creating and maintaining these structures.[42]

There was, then, a striking disconnect between the demands of a field science like anthropology and the abilities and expectations of many of its practitioners. Independent collectors like Frič gained almost no training in the expectations that would be placed on them and, at best, limited logistical and financial support from the scientific institutions that employed them.[43] Thus, despite ethnologists' rhetoric about the importance of sending professional scientists abroad, and the degree to which the process of professionalization continues to dominate the historiography of the discipline today, the urgent desire to act quickly drove Europe's leading ethnologists to violate their own codes of professionalization and retain people who not only had limited technical skills but also lacked a clear understanding of the normative codes that governed this emerging discipline.[44] They continued to eagerly enlist people like Frič, be-

[41] Jane R. Camerini, "Wallace in the Field," in *Science in the Field, Osiris*, 2d Ser., 11 (1996):44–65.

[42] On the role of respectability, trust, and reputation in science, see: Niklas Luhmann, *Die Wissenschaft der Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt, a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1994); Morrell and Thackray, *Gentlemen of Science;* and Shapin, *A Social History of Truth.*

[43] Frič, for example, negotiated contracts with both the Hamburg and Berlin museums that committed him to collect first for Hamburg in Argentina, Paraguay, and Brazil, and then, after completing these ventures, move on to the Rio Araguaia Basin to collect for Berlin. The Hamburg museum promised to pay him 15,000 marks in installments, and the Berlin museum pledged an additional 20,000 marks. They guaranteed him an average price of 15 marks for each item he sent them from South America, and Frič agreed to give them everything he acquired at this price. He also agreed to provide them with itemized catalogs of his collections and unaltered copies of his notebooks and records, and gave them the right to sort out any duplicates that he might later attempt to sell. In exchange, Frič received his initial advances, a free passage to South America through the *Hamburg-Südamerikanische Dampschifffahrts-Gesellschaft*, and letters of introduction and papers identifying him as the representative of these museums. If he failed to fulfill the contract, he alone was liable for the money advanced him, but how he went about fulfilling it was left largely up to him. A copy of the contract, signed by Thilenius on 7 July 1906, and Frič on 9 July 1906, is in MfVH: D 2,36.

[44] The same lack of training was remarked upon by earlier collectors, such as those employed by Ceaser Godeffroy to create one of Germany's best early ethnographic collections and Adrian Jacobsen, who collected close to a fifth of all the material in Berlin's ethnographic museum by the 1890s. Choosing collectors who were both inexperienced and untrained also remained common, as the files in the Berlin museum illustrate quite well; for example, MfVB: "Reise des H. von Zengen," 1371/04. On Jacobsen and Godeffroy's collectors see Cole, *Captured Heritage*; H. Glenn Penny, "Science and the Marketplace: The Creation and Contentious Sale of the Museum Godeffroy," *Pacific Arts* 21/22 (July 2000):7–22; and Peter Probst, "Beobachtung und Methode Johann Stanislaus Kubary als Reisender und Ethnograph im Spiegel seiner Briefe an Adolf Bastian," *Baessler-Archiv, Neue Folge* 31 (1983):23–56.

cause their salvage mentality, combined with their passion for possession and their search for the "best" objects consistently outweighed their scientific concerns with the quality of their collectors or their performance in the field. This led, of course, to a striking division between ethnologists' rhetoric about the goals of their science and the realties of acquisition, and it also led to their continual acceptance of poorly trained and untested collectors which, as in the case of Frič, exposed the degree to which financial limitations and professional goals often guided their decisions as much as their concerns with "dying cultures" or their intellectual agendas.[45]

In general, Europe's leading ethnologists were able to maintain this division between the ideal and the real—between the orderly intellectual world in which sciences like anthropology were contemplated, evaluated, and discussed, and the Conradian universe of brutal ambition and extraction in which acquisitions often took place. But in the case of Frič, these worlds of discourse and practice collided, causing a rupture in the rhetorical veneer of scientific authority. As Frič bumbled into the chaos, violence, and disorder that was southern Brazil, he threw a spotlight on the contradictions inherent in ethnologists' actions abroad, and he threatened the public face of anthropology by questioning the integrity of this most human of sciences in ways that had to be policed.

PRACTICING ANTHROPOLOGY IN BRAZIL

When Frič arrived in Southern Brazil in September 1906 he entered a world Germans had helped to create and in which they continued to play an important, if somewhat controversial role. Intellectually, German scientists had accumulated more information than anyone else about the indigenous peoples of Brazil, including the Brazilians themselves.[46] By the turn of the century, a long list of German naturalists and ethnologists had traveled through Brazilian forests making the first significant contacts with an array of Indian tribes such as the Waurá, Trumäi, and Suyá, creating grammars and dictionaries for indigenous languages, postulating the spread of linguistic divisions among Brazil's Indians and, of course, observing, recording, and collecting for museums.[47] But German colonists' economic and cultural impact on Brazil was even greater. They played a critical role in developing Paraná, Santa Catarina, and Rio Grande do Sul, the three southernmost states of Brazil. By the turn of the

[45] For further discussion see Penny, *Objects of Culture*, chs. 2–3.

[46] David Hall Stauffer, "The Origin and Establishment of Brazil's Indian Service: 1889–1910" (Ph.D. diss., University of Texas at Austin, 1955), 63. Cf. John Hemming, *Amazon Frontier: The Defeat of the Brazilian Indians* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987).

[47] In the decades around the turn of the century these included, among others, Karl and Wilhelm von den Steinen (1884, 1887–1888), Paul Ehrenreich (1887–1888), Hermann Meyer (1895–1899), Max Schmidt (1901–1927), Fritz Krause (1908), and Theodor Koch-Grünberg (1899–1924), all of whom made successful careers out of their ventures. For an annotated (though not comprehensive) list of well-known ethnologists who explored Brazil before 1914, see Hemming, *Amazon Frontier,* 483–512.

century, over 300,000 German-speaking people lived in these regions and cultivated a genuine Deutschtum, in which trade with Germany was paramount and German remained the language of choice for many of these states' businesses and public institutions well into the twentieth century.[48] Moreover, German colonists were responsible for creating a significant amount of these states' industry and for generating a considerable proportion of Brazilian wealth.[49]

By 1907, however, these colonists were faced with a number of problems. There was a marked decline in German immigration to Brazil after 1900, and despite the colonists' best propaganda efforts, it continued to wane.[50] The German national government also gave the colonists much less attention than they wanted, and while the colonists and their sponsors in Germany did their best to whip up nationalist support in their favor, the Imperial German government remained unwilling to make them any political commitment. From the government's point of view, these colonies were first and foremost economic endeavors initiated by independent associations located in the German Hansa cities, and like most of Germany's colonial efforts, they were unable to provide the nation with large returns. Moreover the international pressures mounting around Germany's emergence as a significant world power made their presence in Brazil a thorny issue. Any indication that Germany might consider increasing their interest in Brazil and thus violate the Monroe Doctrine[51] led to immediate reactions in the North and South American press and wild accusation by Brazil's nativists about the looming "German threat."[52] The highly unstable nature of Brazilian politics, combined with Germany's generally delicate position in international relations, made the imperial government increasingly uneasy about colonists' demands and especially the actions of German nationalists in Brazil.[53]

The colonists were frustrated not only by their failed attempts to increase

[48] VZ, no. 228, 17 May 1907. According to Robert Gernhard, 100,000 of these lived in Santa Catarina alone in 1900. Gernhard, *Dona Francisca, Hansa und Blumenau: Drei deutsche Muttersiedlungen im südbrasilischen Staate Santa Catharina* (Breslau: Schlesische Verlags, 1901), 1.

[49] The best source on the economic and political relations between Germany and Brazil remains Gerhard Brunn, *Deutschland und Brasilien (1889–1914)* (Köln: Böhlau, 1971). See also Frederick C. Luebke, *Germans in Brazil: A Comparative History of Cultural Conflict During World War I* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987).

[50] Brunn, *Deutschland und Brasilien*, 153.

[51] Nancy Mitchell, *The Danger of Dreams: German and American Imperialism in Latin America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 159; Brunn, *Deutschland und Brasilien,* 58–84.

[52] The most notorious example was the incident that took place in 1905 when officers and men from the German naval ship *Panther* violated the sovereignty of Brazilian soil to seek out and retrieve a German sailor who had deserted. Repeated international protests led to the dismissal of the *Panther*'s commanding officer and an official apology from Kaiser Wilhelm II. Brunn, *Deutschland und Brasilien*, 80–100; Mitchell, *The Danger of Dreams*, 157.

[53] Public pronouncements by the German Foreign Office that they had no intentions of gaining further influence in Brazil were also reiterated in their inner-departmental correspondence. Brunn, *Deutschland und Brasilien*, 68.

German immigration, win greater support from the German nation, and wage political battles with nativists who sought to undermine their influence in Brazil. Their efforts to increase their settlements and to expand their holdings into the forests also generated ongoing conflicts with Brazilian Indians.[54] Such conflicts had a long and violent legacy in Brazil that was characterized for centuries by acts of extreme brutality, and many German colonists were willing to carry on this cruel legacy.[55] While representatives from the colonies publicly proclaimed that the violent actions against the Indians were "defensive," isolated, and often exaggerated by their enemies,[56] they were nevertheless consistently brutal and publicly supported by both residents and the governments of Santa Catarina and Paraná, not to mention the many statesmen in Brazil who felt that North Americans had pursued the best possible Indian policy: eradication.[57] By the first decade of the twentieth century, many colonists referred to neighboring Indians as "vermin" and "animals," and most seemed to agree that organized assaults by professional "Indian hunters" who murdered entire communities in night-time raids were necessary. Again and again, they expressed the belief that there was "no really practical alternative to extermination," and argued that the brutality of this action was ultimately irrelevant because it succeeded in quickly and cheaply removing "the Indian obstruction to national progress."[58] Indeed, nowhere in Brazil was conflict between Indians and "civilization" more intense by 1908 than in Santa Catarina.[59]

As Frič initially entered Brazil, however, he did so as one of Germany's many scientists, skirting above the political conflicts and interacting with colonists, local authorities, and indigenous peoples within the single, insulated context of "science." When he arrived in Paraná, he was able to draw on the legacy of German scientists in Brazil and the wide networks of settlers, consulates, and local authorities who were eager to support scientific travelers, and as a result he quickly set out on his collecting ventures. During his initial excursion into the forests he was able to assemble a collection of artifacts from the "Sambaquicultur," which he was convinced no other museum could equal, and in his pub-

[54] Stauffer, "The Origin and Establishment of Brazil's Indian Service," 47.

[55] On the general legacy of conflict and violence, see Shelton H. Davis, *Victims of the Miracle: Development and the Indians of Brazil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977); Hemming, *Amazon Frontier*; John Hemming, "Indians and the Frontier," in *Colonial Brazil*, Leslie Bethell, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987):145–89; Darcy Ribeiro, "Brazil's Indian Frontier," *Americas* 6, 3 (1954):18; Michael Taussig, *Shamanism, Colonialism, and the Wild Man*; and the works cited in them.

[56] See for example the editorial in the *Urwaldsbote*, 17 Oct. 1909; cf. Gernhard, *Dona Francisca, Hansa und Blumenau,* 251–54; Hemming, *Amazon Frontier*, 473.

[57] Davis, *Victims of the Miracle,* 1; Todd A. Diacon, *Millenarian Vision, Capitalist Reality: Brazil's Contestado Rebellion, 1912–1916* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), 14; Hemming, *Amazon Frontier,* 459; Stauffer, "The Origin and Establishment of Brazil's Indian Service," 46.

[58] Stauffer, "The Origin and Establishment of Brazil's Indian Service," 24, 77–80; Gernhard, *Dona Francisca, Hansa und Blumenau*, 254.

[59] Stauffer, "The Origin and Establishment of Brazil's Indian Service," 47.

lished account he—like the ethnologists who had come before him—graciously thanked the Governor of Paraná and other officials and academics who had assisted him.[60]

His eagerness, in fact, seemed boundless, and soon after returning from his first trip into the forests he set out on a second expedition in early 1907 among the Kamé Kaingang and Botocudo in Brazil during which he collected games, puppets, musical instruments, weapons and tools, and made notes on the mythology of different peoples in these areas—all of which received Thilenius' approval.[61] Indeed, Frič's initial, energetic correspondence with Thilenius convinced the museum director that he was off to a good start. But soon afterwards the hardships Frič encountered in the field began taking their toll. His inexperience and lack of any real understanding about what it meant to practice anthropology in the remote regions of South America quickly left him disheartened, and he soon became drawn into the Conradian world of colonialist politics in Southern Brazil.[62]

If Frič's early sympathies for the plight of Brazil's Indians and his anger over European abuses were already evidenced in his earliest publications,[63] the difficulties inherent in practicing anthropology as a free-lance collector in Brazil ultimately drove him into the arms of nativist dissidents and more vocal, political actions. Conditions in the jungles simply overwhelmed him. Claude Lévi-Strauss, for example, recorded with caustic amusement in his now seminal work, *Tristes Tropiques,* the logistical difficulties and cultural barriers he faced while trying to organize expeditions into the forests of Brazil in the 1930s. The rains, the mud, the challenge of gaining reliable porters, and his own inexperience filled each effort at cultural contact with misadventure.[64] Frič fared even worse two decades earlier. Reflecting ironically on his own inability, he wrote that his search for the Kamé Kaingang required him to traverse long distances on "narrow footpaths" with one or more "terribly overburdened mules" while he suffered from "swollen feet and fever." Although he hired Indians to assist him, he seldom felt in control. During a side-trip from a campsite, for example, Frič had one of those experiences so typical of colonial travel narratives. While examining a marking on a tree, one of his porters frightened his mule, which

[60] Frič, "Sambaqui-Forschungen im Hafen von Antonina (Paraná), *Globus* 41,8 (28 Feb. 1907):117–22. Similarly, the official report from von den Steinen's first expedition, for example, is dedicated to Emperor Pedro II. Karl von den Steinen, *Durch Central-Brasilien: Expedition zur Erforschung des Schingú im Jahre 1884* (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1886).

[61] Thilenius to Seler, 21 May 1907, in MfVH: D 2,36.

[62] Disillusion and self-destruction were not limited to scientists during the imperial period. It is worth bearing in mind the degree to which many Europeans fell short of the colonial ideal and cracked under the difficulties they faced when abroad. See, for example, Nicholas Thomas and Richard Eves, *Bad Colonists: The South Seas Letters of Vernon Lee Walker & Louis Becke* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999).

[63] Frič, "Sambaqui-Forschungen im Hafen von Antonina (Paraná)," 121.

[64] Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques*, John and Doreen Weightman, trans. (New York: Penguin Books, 1992).

bolted and ran crashing down the trail with Frič chasing after it, his "camera and poncho flying off of its back as the animal disappeared from view." Returning to his porters, who "sat cheerfully in a circle," and "without thinking of the consequences," he "lost his patience and temper," began to argue with them about the incident, and then suddenly found himself abandoned. Unable to convince them to at least bring his things to the next village, he was forced to leave his supplies behind and carry his instruments himself as he set off after his mule. The farther he walked, the bigger his load became, and the more his fatigue increased as he continued to find his gear in puddles and bushes along the trail, until the saddle itself lay in the grass in front of him. Near sunset, after finally abandoning his things in a pile, he found his mule "grazing in the trail ahead, unable to get past a fallen tree," and much to his joy, discovered that he was not far from his tent.[65]

As Frič quickly realized, simply finding the peoples he sought was a difficult task, one only complicated when he quickly contracted malaria and suffered repeated bouts of fever. According to the German Royal Consul in Paraná, the heat also affected Frič adversely, as did "his long isolation from civilization" and his attempts to "live in the interior in native style from roots and herbs." He was also ingesting "high quantities of arsenic and quinine," which the Consul felt may have contributed to undermining Frič's mental and physical condition.[66] Indeed, when Frič returned to Curitiba after his second excursion into the forests, his fever left him bedridden, too weak to even write his reports for several months.[67] Driven by his financial commitment to deliver artifacts to the museum, however, he attempted to itemize, pack, and send Thilenius a collection, which, much to the director's surprise and dismay, arrived in terrible condition.[68]

Moreover, Frič quickly ran out of money. His inexperience as well as his erratic character led him to quickly use up his initial funds, and no amount of pleading on his part could convince Thilenius to step up the museum's installments. Indeed, the director's hands were tied by the museum's own budget, which could not be increased to allow for oversights on the part of one collector.[69] Overwhelmed by his circumstances, Frič complained to Thilenius about his illness and his finances, questioned "how he was expected to survive" with no source of income, and even asked if Thilenius believed it would be fitting for "a representative of their museum" to "begin looking for odd jobs" with local workers or to go to the German Consuls "begging for money."[70] Shortly af-

[65] Frič to Thilenius, 4 Feb. 1907, in MfVH: D 2,36.

[66] Consul Heinz in Paraná to the German Ambassador von Reichenau in Petropolis, 18 June 1907, in the Bundesarchiv Potsdamn (BAP), AA, R 901, 37873:79–81. Arsenic and quinine were standards in tropical medicine at the time.

[67] Frič to Thilenius, 4 Feb. 1907, in MfVH: D 2,36.

[68] Thilenius to Seler, 23 Oct. 1907, in MfVH: M. B. 10 Band 3–4.

[69] Thilenius to Frič, 7 July 1906, in MfVH: D 2,36.

[70] Frič to Thilenius, 6 Feb. 1907, in MfVH: D 2,36. A series of similar letters are in this file.

ter mailing these letters, however, he found a new source of financial support as well as a platform to publicly voice his moral indignation by affiliating himself with the "patriotic league for the conversion of the Indians," or simply the "Liga," an organization pledged to fight for the protection of Brazilian Indians.

Initially, the directors of the German museums were unsure how to react to Frič's quick transformation from an eager collector to an advocate of Indian rights. Yet none of them condemned it. It was clear from Frič's letters that although he was seduced by his own feelings of self-importance, he was also acting out of genuine concern for the peoples he had been sent to study, which the ethnologists in Germany—at least on some level—lauded.[71] Seler even wrote to Frič how pleased he had been to learn that he had overcome his "urgent financial emergency" by finding an "influential position," and how happy he was that he had "taken up the cause of the poor Indians."[72] But then, neither Seler nor his counterparts expected Frič to condemn German colonists, enrage local dignitaries, or antagonize Brazilian officials. No one expected him to let his personal beliefs jeopardize his scientific obligations.

Soon after he joined the Liga, Frič's contempt for colonists' treatment of Indians led him to write a series of articles for South American newspapers condemning their actions. He accused the colonists of "exterminationist policies" and "acts from the middle ages," in which "night-time raids" were launched against local Indians for the express purpose of "collecting slaves" and "eliminating them" from the area. These protests echoed his earlier complaints in the German scientific journal *Globus*[73] against similar raids by soldiers and "private individuals." Frič had met some of these "Indian hunters." They were men who "decorated their Winchesters with Indian teeth," traded in "human ears," and while acknowledging that "the Indians could speak" and were "similar to people," insisted that they were no more than "forest animals." These hunters were supported by colonists who argued that they were simply trying to remove the danger of Indian raids. Frič denounced this form of "pacification," arguing that "peaceful pacification" was possible through other means, that "reservations could be created," and that colonists were only attacked by Indians "in retaliation for the butchery that has been visited on [the Indians] since the colonies were first founded." "The colonist forgets," he repeated in his denunciations, "that he lives in a land that belongs to the Indians, that it is only for this reason that he was able to buy it for a laughable price, and that the Indians' rage and revenge is justifiable." He warned as well that these acts "would bear fruit and consequences that would forever remain a disgrace for colonists who come

[71] Frič to Thilenius, 15 Mar. 1907 in MfVH: D 2,36.

[72] Seler to Frič, 14 May, 1907, in BAP, AA, R 901, 37874:30.

[73] "Pacificacao dos Botocudos," in *Odia* vol. VII, no. 1808, Florianopolis, 7 Mar. 1907; "Pobres Indios," *Diario Tarde* vol. X, no. 2449, Coritiba, 13 Mar. 1907; "Catechese em Blumenau," *Novidades* vol. III, no. 147, Santa Catharina, 24 Mar. 1907; "Pobres Indios," *O Livre Pensador* vol. IV, no. 158. São Paulo, 7 Apr. 1907; Frič, "Sambaqui-Forschungen."

Figure 1: Alberto Vojtěch Frič with a group of Bororo. Courtesy of the Náprstek Museum in Prague.

Figure 2: A band of “Indian hunters” near Blumenau with their captives. From: Hugo Gensch, “Die Erziehung eines Indianerkindes,” *Beilage: Internationaler Amerikanisten-Kongress* (Berlin, 1908).

Figure 3: The "Indian hunter" Martins threatening a group of captives. From: Hugo Gensch, "Die Erziehung eines Indianerkindes," *Beilage: Internationaler Amerikanisten-Kongress* (Berlin, 1908).

Figure 4: Dr. Hugo Gensch and his family. The girl to his left is his adopted daughter Korikra. From: Hugo Gensch, "Die Erziehung eines Indianerkindes," *Beilage: Internationaler Amerikanisten-Kongress* (Berlin, 1908).

from the most advanced nation in Europe, whose fathers were the representatives of a great culture, and in whose old homeland science and a love of humanity flowers." Shortly thereafter, Frič traveled directly to Blumenau in Santa Catarina and began openly and aggressively denouncing its citizens.

An uproar quickly followed and Frič was soon subjected to a variety of pressures and condemnations by non-scientists who recognized that he had violated ethnologists' normative codes, and called out for German ethnologists to discipline this representative of their institutions. A flood of questions, condemnations, and demands from private individuals, nationalist and colonialist organizations, and various government officials in Germany and Brazil were sent to the German Foreign Office, the director of the Royal Museums, Thilenius, and his counterparts in Berlin. These letters came from individuals with a financial or political stake in the colonies who were concerned with Germany's international reputation and the ways in which Frič's accusations might feed the anti-German rhetoric of Brazil's nativists. They consistently denied and even ridiculed Fric's accusations and questioned his intellectual abilities. Gustav Salinger, the German consul in Blumenau, for example, condemned Frič's revelations as "fairy tales," argued that any violent acts on the colonists' part were completely defensive, championed the character of the "Indian hunter" Martins whom Frič had vilified in South American newspapers, and claimed that the children captured during his raids were made into "useful members of society," not "playthings" as Frič accused.[74] These letters uniformly stressed that the problem was actually the "repeated predatory raids" by "wild Indians," which had already "claimed many lives." The solution was a series of "punitive expeditions" that succeeded in "returning the peace." The difficulty, however, came from the interference of the Liga, which was "more anti-German than pro-Indian." It was led by a Pole named Pedro Trompowski-Toulois who "compared Prussian Polish policy to the actions of German colonists against the Indians," and now it had the support of this "Czech" who was raising an alarm. The colonists and their supporters were angered that a representative of German scientific institutions would "be blowing in the same horn" as Brazilian nativists, and they demanded that he either be "muzzled" or quickly "let go."[75]

Perhaps the best example of the ways in which the colonists tried to undermine Frič's accusations, however, were the detailed letters from Dr. Hugo Gensch. Gensch, a resident of Blumenau who was concerned about his own reputation as much as the reputation of Germany abroad, attempted to weaken Frič's moral condemnations by questioning Frič's mental stability as well as his

[74] Salinger to Kaiserliche Gesandschaft Petropolis, 25 Mar. 1907, in BAP, AA, R901, 37874:37–38.

[75] F. Blohm, Wilhelm Nienstedt, W. Mummelthey, Fritz Neuhaus-Kohler, Max Haufe, and H. Brandes to the German Foreign Office, 7 Apr. 1907, in BAP, AA, R901, 37873:42–44; Adolf Saeftel and the *Ortsgruppe Blumenau des Alldeutschen Verband* to GVKM, 24 Apr. 1907, in MfVB: "Frič," 767/07.

morality. Gensch complained that Frič was worse than incompetent: he was erratic, perverse, and understood the normative codes of bourgeois sensibility no more than those of science. Insulted by the implication that he had set out to possess an abducted Indian girl as a "toy," Gensch argued that he had long opposed the abuses against the Indians in Brazil and had initially welcomed the Liga's decision to take on an "Indian researcher" to assist them.[76] But Gensch had been disappointed and even outraged by their choice of Frič, whom he described as "a somewhat shabby person who wore a loaded revolver on his belt and carried a small camera in his hand with great ostentation," and who, as he arrived in Blumenau, was filled with an "arrogant self-importance" because of his letters of introduction and a request from the governor that the city support his efforts at their own cost.[77]

Gensch explained that Frič had no understanding of the Indian problem and posited "fantasy plans" for relocating groups of Indians to reservations. He was easily excited by rumors of abductions, boasted of his earlier exploits and his willingness to use his revolver and, according to Gensch, when Frič met the twelve-tear old Indian girl he had taken into his home, Frič revealed a "certain perversity" that Gensch "as an old experienced doctor" had already sensed in the first moment he saw him. Gensch portrayed Frič's efforts to examine her as "indecent," and explained that he refused to bring her to Frič's room the next day so that Frič might examine her in private.

Gensch also denigrated Frič's language abilities[78] and related stories about how Frič "accosted" many citizens in the most "uncomfortable way." He explained how Frič was thrown out of the offices of the *Urwaldsbote*, the local German nationalist newspaper. He argued that nativist elements were using Frič as a foil against Germany and noted that Frič had been seen at an anarchist conference. And he described how Frič created a scandal by appearing before the "courts" and demanding that police accompany him to the local mission, spurring the "Superior of the Franciscan mission" to travel to the capital and lodge a personal complaint with the governor. In the end, as the "discord" in Blumenau turned particularly ugly, and Frič—according to Gensch—was in danger of "receiving a beating," he was placed in a "pitiful farm wagon" by the city government and essentially run out of town. Indeed, in Gensch's telling of the tale it was Frič, much more than the colonists or their Indian hunters, who was barbarous; it was his uncivilized behavior in the frontier zone that was dangerous and had to be stopped.

[76] Hugo Gensch, "Die Erziehung eines Indianerkindes," *Beilage: Internationaler Amerikanisten-Kongress* (Berlin, 1908).

[77] Gensch to Thilenius 24 Mar. 1907; and 31 May 1907, both in MfVH: D 2,36.

[78] Gensch's own claims to an understanding of these languages are at least partially confirmed by his publication, "Wörterverzeichnis der Bugres von Santa Catharina," in *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* (1908, H. 5):745–49. This piece was published with some corrections after he forwarded it to Seler. *Verhandlungen des XVI. Internationalen Amerikanisten-Kongresses, Wien 9. bis 14. September 1908* (Vienna: A. Hartleben's Verlag, 1910), LXI–LXII.

Frič, of course, adamantly denied Gensch's accusations about his moral character and the more bizarre aspects of his behavior—but none of this actually concerned Thilenius or his counterparts in Berlin. Frič's great ostentation and overbearing attitude, the grandiose statements about his revolver, even the stories about the photographs he carried of himself and Indian women together naked in the forests,[79] or Gensch's allusions about his perversity, were all part of the weird corruptness of these "contact zones" that museum directors had already acknowledged they could not control.[80] No eyebrows were raised, no shocked statements were released, and, in fact, these stories received almost no mention in the directors' correspondence with each other. They all simply agreed that they had never considered Frič to be "completely normal,"[81] and that his character was no more an issue than the fate of the Indians or even the fact that Frič's supposedly wild accusations about the savage abuse visited upon Indians by German colonists and Brazilian authorities, if mistaken in many of the particulars, were essentially true.

However, Frič's willingness to engage colonial politics while representing two German scientific institutions, and, indeed, his willingness to use his authority as an "Indian researcher" to allow him to become involved in these politics, was another matter. These actions threatened to undermine ethnologists' authority and reputations, and led to his almost immediate dismissal. Moreover, Frič's arguments that his trip to Blumenau had been necessary because he had felt morally obligated to try to stop what he regarded as heinous crimes by the German colonists, and his exclamations that "*I am above all a human being* [underline in the original]," that "I have the same duty that every person has to the weak," and that his position in the "service of German science" should not require him to let "criminals of German descent" simply "walk away" were not effective.[82] In fact, they were not even mentioned in the directors' correspondence with each other, and did nothing to dissuade Thilenius or Wilhelm von Bode, the director of the Royal Museums, from violating their own contracts and dropping Frič once he had compromised their museums.

[79] Gensch to Kaiserlich Deutschen Konsulat in Blumenau, 1 Aug. 1907, in BAP, AA, R 901, 37874:39–48.

[80] Indeed, von den Steinen had also been caught up in the midst of local politics during his second Xingú expedition in 1887. Von den Steinen, *Unter den Naturvölkern Zentral-Brasiliens: Reiseschilderung und Ergebnisse der Zweiten Schingú-Expedition, 1887–1888* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1894), 4, 8–10. For more general examples of the interactive and improvisational dimensions of encounters in such frontier zones, or "contact zones," see Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 1992).

[81] Thilenius to Seler, 23 Oct. 1907, in MfVH: M. B. 10 Band 3, "Kgl. Museen Berlin;" and Seler to Thilenius, 24 Oct. 1907, in MfVB: "Frič 1943/07.

[82] Frič to Thilenius, 19 July 1907, in MfVH: D 2,36. These moralistic arguments intensified in tone over time. Frič to GVKM, 1 July 1907, BAP, AA, R 901, 37874:11-14. Frič, "Offener Brief and die 'Vossische Zeitung,' Berlin," in *Argentinisches Tageblatt*, Buenos Aires, 6 July 1907. Salinger to AA, 7 Aug. 1907, in BAP, AA, R 901, 37874:37. Frič to GVKM, 12 Aug. 1907, BAP, AA, R 901, 37874:21–27.

Frič's actions in Blumenau and his willingness to condemn the abuses of German colonists enraged the German Foreign Office. The Foreign Minister was dismayed at the damage this might cause Germany's reputation abroad, which was already suffering from public revelations about Germans' brutal policies of extermination during the Herero wars,[83] and he demanded that Thilenius and von Bode terminate Frič's contracts. Several German scholars have regarded this communication as a "smoking gun" of sorts and used it as simply another example of ethnologists' willingness to do imperialists' bidding.[84] But the directors' decisions to cancel Frič's contracts were not simply a response to governmental demands or colonial interests. Something much larger was at stake than their relationship to the German government. Their decisions were a reaction to Frič's willingness to mix cosmopolitan science with colonial politics in ways that disrupted the intricate support networks they needed in the field and his inability to produce first-rate collections.

While demands from the Foreign Office provided a convenient excuse for action, Thilenius had no reservations about defending his collectors' tactless behavior and refusing official demands.[85] The German government could be easily ignored; but Frič's abilities as a collector were uncertain, even under suspicion, because the artifacts Frič sent Thilenius from Brazil arrived poorly packed and poorly organized, several of the pieces were broken, and the catalog was not in good order. Thilenius also had reason to believe that part of it had been purchased in Blumenau, and consequently he regarded it as having little scientific value.[86] Thus in spite of his desire to retain his collectors at all costs and to gain as many South American artifacts as possible, Thilenius had little reason to support Frič against the wave of accusations or to risk his own reputation on the chance that Frič's next collection might be better.

Moreover, the risks were significant. The rhetorical division between colonial politics and cosmopolitan science was one that ethnologists carefully guarded, despite their own understanding of the realities of collecting and the fact that many had come to accept the politicized nature of their actions while promoting the cosmopolitan character of their science.[87] This division was crit-

[83] Indeed, this comparison was quickly made in the Argentinean press: "Der Herrenstandpunkt des Weissen," *Argentinisches Tageblatt,* Buenos Aries, 4 July 1907. The Herero wars took place from 1904 to 1907 in German Southwest Africa and led to the near genocide of Nama and Herero in this territory. For further information on the Herero wars, see Jan-Bart Gewald, *Herero Heroes: A Socio-Political History of the Herero of Namibia, 1890–1923* (Oxford: James Currey, 1999).

[84] Volker Harms, "Das Historische Verhältnis der deutschen Ethnologie zum Kolonialismus," *Zeitschrift für Kulturaustausch* 4 (1984):401–16, here 407–8; and Ingeburg Winkelmann, "Die Bürgerliche Ethnographie im Dienste der Kolonialpolitik des Deutschen Reiches (1870–1918)" (Ph.D. diss., Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, 1966), 28.

[85] For an example, see Glenn Penny, "Fashioning Local Identities in an Age of Nation-Building: Museums, Cosmopolitan Traditions, and Intra-German Competition," *German History* 17, 4 (1999):488–504.

[86] Thilenius to Frau Baronin v. Malsen, 22 July 1907, in MfVH: D 2,36. Thilenius to Seler, 23 Oct. 1907, MfVH: M. B. 10, Band 3–4.

[87] Penny, *Objects of Culture*, chs. 2–3.

ical for maintaining their scientific authority, their professional identities, and their ability to gain support from a range of individuals both at home and abroad. Indeed it was the ostensibly apolitical nature of their interests and actions that allowed them to build up their acquisition networks in the first place and to cross as many borders as they did. But politics that dealt with the treatment of indigenous peoples were particularly sensitive, because they not only revealed the radical disjuncture between colonists' rhetoric and deeds and fed the growing flames of anti-Germanism in Brazil, they also had the potential to expose the disparity between German ethnologists' purported liberal humanism and the realities of collecting in an imperialist world. Frič's actions threatened to bring scrutiny to bear on ethnologists' roles and responsibilities in the contact zones of South America, and for this reason as much as the quality of his last collection or the demands of the Foreign Office, Berlin and Hamburg illegally terminated his contracts and left him penniless in Southern Brazil.[88]

POLICING THE DISCIPLINE FROM INSIDE AND OUT

When Frič revisited his charges against the Brazilian government and German colonists a year later at the Sixteenth International Congress of Americanists in Vienna, the division between colonial politics and the science of anthropology quickly became the center of debate in both the lecture halls in Vienna and the public newspapers in Berlin.[89] The immediate effort by all parties to salvage what was left of the veneer of their apolitical science in the face of Frič's accusations vividly illustrates the importance of this division for ethnologists in general, and it shows the ways in which actions affected discourse and led to the public codification of this scientific discipline's normative codes. According to the Neue Freie Presse, when Frič turned his presentation on Brazilian Indians into a forum for denouncing abuses against the Indians, a heated debate immediately ensued among members of the audience until Eduard Seler "firmly declared . . . that absolutely no political questions should be touched upon during the congress." Frič, however, responded that "if political questions spill over [into scientific areas], then they must also be discussed." At which point Karl von den Steinen called out that "political questions must be kept absolutely separate," and Professor Juan B. Ambrosetti from Buenos Aries, who was chairing the meeting, began "clanging the bell" and calling the session back to order.[90]

The official proceedings to the conference, however, told a somewhat different tale by focusing on the inaccuracies in Frič's statements (and especially his

[88] Calls by the Foreign Office for action remained the most convenient excuse for Frič's dismissal. See Seler to Herrn Jarosalv Brázda in Prague, 29 Dec. 1908, MfVB: "Frič," 2801/08. They were later forced to admit the illegality of this action. Bode to Minster of Culture, 15 Oct. 1908, in BAP, AA, R 901, 37875:53–54.

[89] Frič "Völkerwanderung, Ethnographie und Geschichte der Konquita in Südbrasilien."

[90] NFP, no. 15829, 15 Sept. 1908. This part of the NFP's coverage is confirmed by the general reports in other papers. See, among others, *Der Tag* 308, 15 Sept. 1908.

scientific observations) rather than the Berlin ethnologists' emotional outbursts.[91] In an effort to obfuscate the problems Frič raised and make them go away, the proceedings relate how Seler, drawing on a pamphlet produced by Hugo Gensch about his own success at "civilizing" an Indian girl,[92] argued that although Frič was indeed correct that the "border wars" in Santa Catarina and neighboring states had led to "things . . . that cannot be justified" and which "must make every human heart indignant," he had recently received information from Brazil that allowed him to "affirm" that these conditions had come to an end. Seler had been (perhaps willingly) misled. Violent interactions continued for some years, and the Xokléng tribe, for example, was not "tamed" until 1910.[93] Seler also presented Gensch's triumphant account of raising his adopted daughter as evidence that Frič's stories about the sale of Indian children were inaccurate, despite the fact that Gensch's own proclamation that his was an almost singular achievement seems to belie Seler's claims.[94] Moreover, the proceedings also emphasized that both Seler and ethnologist Paul Ehrenreich took direct issue with Frič's conclusions about Indian languages and about the tribal origins of Gensch's adopted daughter, attacking his scientific mistakes as a way of undermining his moralistic pronouncements. They leave the reader with the impression that the session concluded with a heated discussion of Indian languages and the relationship between the Bugres Indians in Santa Catarina and the Guayakis in Paraguay rather than the question of exterminating Indians and the volatile pronouncements about the relationship between politics and science.

Instead, the persistent reader learns that the question of this relationship between politics and science was cleared up more directly (and officially) by the president of the congress, Wilhelm Freiherr von Weckbecker, later that same evening. During the closing session, Weckbecker returned to two questions Frič had submitted to the association at the end of his talk. On the one hand, he regarded the first, "whether or not the savages should be considered and treated as people or as wild animals"[95] as "*res judicata*," a point on which they were already in agreement, and thus unworthy of "serious discussion." On the other hand, he noted that Frič's assertion that it did not dignify the "cultural level of our century" to allow this "modern form of *conquista* to continue," was "certainly" a point which raised "the sympathy of all educated people, and espe-

[91] *Verhandlungen des XVI. Internationalen Amerikanisten-Kongresses,* LXI–LXII.

[92] Seler made copies of this pamphlet available to participants and it was later included as an appendix to the proceedings. Ibid., LXI.

[93] For a short listing of when particular tribes were subdued, see Ribeiro, "Brazil's Indian Frontier." For more graphic and detailed accounts of their elimination, see Hemming, *Amazon Frontier,* 459.

[94] *Verhandlungen des XVI Internationalen Amerikanisten-Kongresses,* LXII; Gensch, "Die Erziehung eines Indianerkindes." For the disheartening account of Maria Korikrč Gensch's reunification with her family, see Hemming, *Amazon Frontier*, 462.

[95] Frič, "Volkerwanderung, Ethnographie und Geschichte der Konquista in Südbrasilien."

cially Americanists, for the side of the Indians." But it was primarily a question of "humanity" and of the "inner politics of these particular states," rather than a "scientific question," and therefore its consideration was "outside the competence of this congress." Frič's urgings that they call for an end to such abuses had to be declined—a point that gained ready agreement from the participants.[96]

Yet Frič's outburst in Vienna clearly struck a more sensitive chord than these proceedings would have us believe. They received considerable coverage in Berlin's most important dailies,[97] which vehemently denied his accusations about the mistreatment of Indians and issued repeated attacks on Frič, his actions, and his abilities. Frič was denounced as a "Czech nationalist," explained away as a "fanciful idealist," and criticized for "meddling in things that absolutely did not concern him."[98] The most favorable reports pointed to his "idealism," "youth," and "inexperience" as the reasons for his mistaken actions. But no one supported his argument that scientists must address political or humanitarian issues when confronted with them while abroad, or his insistence that ethnologists, as the people in Europe with the best knowledge of South American Indians, should take it upon themselves to publicly protest such abuses. Rather, there was an overwhelming denial that such brutal conditions existed and a general agreement in all the dailies that, as von den Steinen argued, "the colonial-political absolutely does not belong in the forum of [the Americanist] congress,"[99] and that even during the public discussions in Berlin, "two aspects must be kept separate: Herr Frič's relationship to the Berlin museum and the Indian question in Santa Catarina, which for their part are to be divided into scientific and colonial or ethical questions."[100] Frič's transgression, in other words, led to a conscious construction, or at least general reaffirmation, of the border between the "scientific" and the "political."

Indeed, the *Berliner Tageblatt* responded by issuing an editorial that explained what they assumed was common knowledge: there were boundaries of behavior within which ethnologists, as scientists, had to remain. Ethnologists could, like everyone else, have political opinions that were critical of a state's actions, but because of their association with the international scientific community, which drew its authority from its cosmopolitan character, these opinions could only be expressed in certain ways: "If [Frič] wanted to accuse the German settlers of inhumane acts against the indigenous peoples, [he] should

[96] *Verhandlungen des XVI. Internationalen Amerikanisten-Kongresses*, LXIV.

[97] Indeed, as von den Steinen later lamented, it gained far more public attention than the conference proceedings themselves. Von den Steinen, "Frič und kein Ende," BT, Erste Beiblatt, no. 511, 7 Oct. 1908.

[98] VZ, Abend Ausgabe, no. 434, 15 Sept. 1908; BLA, Abendblatt, no. 471, 15 Sept. 1908; BT, no. 471, 15 Sept. 1908.

[99] Von den Steinen, "Frič und kein Ende." Cf. Eduard Seler, "Ein letztes Wort zur Frič-Sache," BT, no. 535, 20 Oct. 1908.

[100] Ibid.

have taken these charges to the Brazilian government, or included his assertions objectively in the report over his research trip."[101] His link to claims of scientific objectivity, they made clear, should have guaranteed his political neutrality. Scientists could certainly voice political or moral opinions, but not in public. Rather, they should be expressed in private letters to local governments, or in travel reports, as Frič had written earlier in his *Globus* publications, but which very few people had ever read.[102]

The critical subtext to all of these discussions, accusations, and slurs is that when Frič blurred the border between colonial politics and anthropology, he threatened the moral economy of this science. Indeed, he jeopardized the authority of "science" on which so much of ethnologists' professional identities were based. For this reason, von den Steinen strongly emphasized that the division between politics and science must be maintained (this despite his own references to experiencing a kind of "paradise" among the Indians of South America and his epithet as a "warm-hearted friend of the Indians").[103] Any breach of this tenet was threatening to the entire science of anthropology, because if one collector became an outspoken political critic, then the willingness of local authorities to allow other collectors in their midst or to support scientific efforts in an attempt to enhance their own reputations would, in many cases, disappear. Similarly, if a scientific conference became a political forum where non-scientific questions could be fielded and entertained, then these forums would be opened up to non-specialists, and the privileged spaces of science invaded, as the public interventions into this debate made clear. Scientists would lose control over their own meetings and their authority over their fields of knowledge if they did not dictate the topics and the means of discussion during their meetings.[104] Consequently, because the division between science and politics preserved as much as it limited their authority, it was in the scientists' best interest to respect and reinforce this division. The politics of their science made it clear that maintaining these rules of separation worked to everyone's advantage, as confirmed by the reactions from colonists, colonial officials, colonial associations, the Foreign Office, museum directors, the Americanists, and the many voices in Berlin's dailies. Everyone with a stake in this division seemed to understand its merits—everyone except Frič.

[101] BT, no. 471, 15 Sept. 1908.

[102] Frič had already done this in both of his 1906 publications (as had von den Steinen in his report on the second Xingú expedition) with no complaint from the museums, the Foreign Office, or German colonists, indicating the degree to which such action might have an effect. Frič, "Eine Pilcomayo-Reise in den Chaco Central;" Alberto Vojtěch Frič and Paul Radin, "Contribution to the Study of the Bororo Indians," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 36:382–406.

[103] Anita Hermannstädter, "Karl von den Steinen und die Zingu-Bevölkerung. Zur Wahrnehmung und Darstellung Fremder Kulturen in der Ethnographie des 19. Jahrhunderts," *Baessler-Archiv,* N. F. Bd. XLIV/2 (1996):1–26.

[104] For more general discussion of this point see Daston, "The Moral Economy of Science."

ON BIOGRAPHIES AND DISCIPLINARY HISTORY

It is tempting to see the case of Frič as simply one in which a strange, erratic, and poorly trained individual behaved badly and was quickly censored for his actions. But this overlooks the political and social meaning of anthropologists' inaction and the moral limitations that professionalization placed on these individuals even as they promoted, at least rhetorically, a self-conscious cultural pluralism. It also allows the peculiarities of this individual's biography to distract us from the importance of this historical moment. If we were to pursue biography, it might also be tempting to paint Frič as a hero, important less for his intellectual contributions to the discipline than his willingness to challenge the immorality of imperial conquest. The precedents are already there. Much like Joseph Conrad, who lived as a Pole under Russian imperialism, Frič too could be termed "a hyphenated white man."[105] He was a Czech nationalist working for German science in southern Brazil and, not unlike the Irish nationalist Roger Casement, whose Putumayo report and revelations about the Congo caused such a stir in civilized circles, he was unwilling to tolerate the violence that others rationalized because of its link to "progress."[106] Frič's own ambiguous relationship to empire, we might argue, made him particularly critical of the ambiguities he exposed in the heart of anthropology, and that makes him an interesting footnote in the history of empire.

But in terms of the history of anthropology as a discipline, and European history in general, it is the reactions to this incident more than Frič's actions themselves that are ultimately the most suggestive. The great irony in the case of Alberto Vojtěch Frič is that this one misguided, eccentric, and controversial adventurer did more for the plight of Brazilian Indians than the combined efforts of all the professional ethnologists who frequented Brazil around the turn of the century.[107] The emphasis of the Americanist Conference in Vienna had been strongly geared toward Brazil. Franz Heger, the director of Vienna's large ethnographic museum had set up an exhibition of singular artifacts collected some seventy years earlier by Johann Natterer during his eighteen-year trip through South America, as well as an extensive collection Heger had just purchased from Baroeza de Loreto in Brazil. Four Brazilian learned societies were also represented at the congress, including the Centro de Ciências, Letras e Artes de Campinas, São Paulo, which later took on a prominent role in the fight for the protection of Brazilian Indians. For Brazilian delegates, the contrast between the exhibits—which Heger stressed during an opening presentation were much more complete than anything that might be assembled from the devas-

[105] Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 213.

[106] Michael Taussig, "Culture of Terror—Space of Death. Roger Casement's Putumayo Report and the Explanation of Torture," *Comparative Studies of Society and History* (1984):467–97.

[107] Speaking out against abuses could be more effective when it was done by less erratic individuals. Roger Casement's willingness to detail the atrocities committed by companies harvesting rubber in South America is one example. Ibid., 473.

tated groups of Indians still in Brazil—and the discussions generated by Frič, made the degradation of indigenous cultures at the hands of European "progress" vividly clear.[108]

Moreover, Frič's pronouncements in Vienna quickly made their way into the Brazilian press, which initiated a public debate on the Indian question. Nativist elements seized the Frič incident as an effective means to pit themselves against the German colonists, and they gained considerable emotional support for their political agendas by defending "their Indians" against the colonists and denouncing Frič's treatment at the hands of "the Germans." The nativists' efforts were also facilitated by the fact that Frič's biggest critic within Brazil's scientific circles was the director of the Paulista Museum in São Paulo, Hermann von Ihering, a German immigrant who called for the support of the "Indian hunters" and justified the colonists' efforts at extermination during heated public debates by pointing to North American policies and the actions of the German military during the Herero wars. The nativists were able to portray Ihering as "too coldly scientific in his reasoning to see the moral implications" of the colonists' actions and to use this as a means to juxtapose their warm, Brazilian culture with the coldness of the German scientists, who only regarded the Indians as subjects to be classified and nuisances to be eliminated. Thus, in many ways, Frič's actions opened up a space for contestation and unleashed a debate in which Brazilians increasingly argued that the treatment of indigenous peoples needed to be governed by moral principles rather than simple expediency and, according to David Stauffer, this debate led directly to the establishment of Brazil's Indian Service in 1910.[109] So the Frič incident turns out to have been an important footnote in the history of Brazil as well.

Most important, however, is the way in which these debates in Brazil make the absence of similar debates in Europe all the more striking. Instead of public arguments among the Americanists, Frič's revelations provoked a unanimous refusal—both from the scientists at the Vienna conference and the general public in Berlin—to even participate in a discussion of the fate of Brazil's Indians or their treatment at the hands of German colonists. That absence is critical; it reveals one aspect of the politics of anthropology in the age of empire: silence was an important part of the Faustian bargain anthropologists made with their society. Moreover, the debates that did take place among Germans about Frič's improprieties illustrate another aspect of those same politics: German anthropologists believed that creating and enforcing pointedly ambiguous relationships with their subjects was politically necessary and publicly sanctioned—and in this case they were right. The rhetoric harnessed by a range of participants in these public discussions confirms that this ambiguity was reinforced, and indeed demanded, by other scientists and the more general public

[108] Stauffer, "The Origin and Establishment of Brazil's Indian Service," 50.
[109] Ibid., 64, 77.

who, like so many Europeans around the turn of the century, were torn between their romantic moral standards and their material goals.[110] Allaying that tension and securing ethnologists' professional positions not only required that Frič be policed but that the boundaries delimiting ethnologists' behavior be reaffirmed and made clear, and that is essentially what took place at the conference and in the press.

There were, of course, solid intellectual reasons for German ethnologists' conscious detachment from their subjects. These scientists were driven by the conviction that "the homogenizing power of civilization" could not be stopped, and by their desire to preserve as much information as possible about what they termed "the multiplicity of humanity" before European expansion destroyed it completely.[111] They believed that these scientific goals had to take precedence over any others, and they recognized that a moralistic defense of any group of indigenous people would ultimately undermine these efforts.[112] Their rationalization remained, in other words, that one small moralistic gain might easily lead to a tremendous scientific loss.[113]

What makes this incident most distressing, however, is that the German ethnologists who so adamantly refused to allow colonialist politics to disrupt their scientific pursuits in 1908 drew on a strong, liberal-humanist tradition running back through Alexander von Humboldt to at least Johann Gottfried Herder. Their liberal politics directly effected the ways in which they pursued their science, pushing them away from racial models and cultural hierarchies as they built their ethnological theories as well as their ethnographic museums.[114] But while this intellectual trajectory may have encouraged them to ponder cultural

[110] On this tension of empire see Antoinette Burton, "From Child Bride to 'Hindoo Lady': Rukhmabai and the Debate on Sexual Respectability in Imperial Britain," *American Historical Review,* 103, 4 (1998):1119–46; cf. Cooper and Stoler, "Between Metropole and Colony."

[111] It is worth noting that this desire to collect information from such "primitives," as well as the willingness to disregard their fate once it is collected, can still be seen. See, for example, Ricardo Ventura Santos, "Indigenous Peoples, Postcolonial Contexts and Genomic Research in the Late 20th Century: A View from Amazon (1960–2000)," *Critique of Anthropology* 22, 1 (2002):81–104.

[112] They could, however, condemn the treatment of colonized subjects for economic reasons and in favor of geopolitical concerns, which they often did in an attempt to gain more support for their efforts. See, for example, Georg Thilenius, "Die Arbeiterfrage in der Südsee," *Globus* LXXVII, 5 (1900):69–72.

[113] This rationalization was not limited to Germans in Brazil but was shared by many anthropologists across Europe and the United States. It is also worth noting that it was only in 1998 that the American Anthropological Association issued a statement in their code of ethics that "Anthropological researchers have primary ethical obligations to the people, species, and materials they study and the people with whom they work. These goals can supersede the goal of seeking new knowledge." For reflections on this move, see David Hurst Thomas, *Skull Wars: Kennewick Man, Archeology, and the Battle for Native Identity* (New York: Basic Books, 2000).

[114] See *inter alia* Benoit Massin, "From Virchow to Fischer: Physical Anthropology and 'Modern Race Theories' in Wilhelmine Germany," in G. Stocking, ed., *Volksgeist as Method and Ethic*, 79–154; and Woodruff D. Smith, *Politics and the Sciences of Culture in Germany 1840–1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

pluralism and to search empathetically for themselves in the lives and goals of the peoples they studied,[115] it made them no more pluralistic in practice. The politics of professionalizing their science and themselves and thus gaining the international authority they desired (which was built on another long intellectual tradition of distancing oneself from the inevitability of world history)[116] silenced them politically and left their successors with an overwhelming conviction that they were unable to act.[117] And this was critical—ethnologists' professional success required them to remain aloof from the brutalities they witnessed in the Conradian universe of frontier zones and listen to the public for the directions they should turn. It demanded that their relationships with their subjects remain fundamentally ambiguous, and because of these self-imposed limitations, it fell on an individual who was marginal to the profession to speak out and affect change. The open secret about German anthropology was that this apolitical science served a variety of political agendas. Indeed, this political relationship explains why the maintenance of German anthropology's normative codes went well beyond the disciplinary community.

[115] See *inter alia* Ivan Kalmar, "The Völkerpsychologie of Lazarus and Steinthal and the Modern Concept of Culture," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 48 (1987):671–90.

[116] While it comes as no surprise that Charles Darwin would pronounce the inevitability of "primitive" people's demise, we should also bear in mind that such attitudes were shared by men like Alexander von Humboldt as well. See, for example, Harry Liebersohn, "Images of Monarchy: Kamehameha I and the Art of Louis Choris," in *Double Vision: Art Histories and Colonial Histories in the Pacific*, Nicholas Thomas and Diane Losche, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 44–64, here 47.

[117] Consider, for example, the fate of John Wesley Powell as discussed in Joan Vincent, *Anthropology and Politics: Visions, Traditions, and Trends* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1990), 45–56.