

presented on the radio — are used to illuminate the richness and complexity of ordinary people's lives.

The Challenge of Modernity is a valuable introduction to some significant themes in twentieth-century German social history and to the work of an important scholar. The translation (after a very shaky start) is serviceable if not distinguished. All in all, we should be grateful to the University of Michigan Press for making Saldern's work accessible to a broader audience, even if it is at a price that only libraries will be able to afford.

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Anthropology and Antihumanism in Imperial Germany. By Andrew Zimmerman. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 2001. Pp. 364. \$60.00. ISBN 0-226-98341-2.

Andrew Zimmerman has written a remarkable book that recasts our understanding of early German anthropology by showing how it emerged as a fundamentally antihumanist enterprise. Humanism is here understood as the study of peoples and cultures that share in a common humanity. Zimmerman powerfully argues that nineteenth-century German anthropology attempted to study *Naturvölker* as something less than, and different than, humans in the full sense. Central to this antihumanistic enterprise was the attempt to make anthropology a natural science emancipated from the subjectivities of nineteenth-century historicism and hermeneutics. By casting *Naturvölker* as other, anthropologists could claim to pursue an objective science.

The brilliance of this book lies partly in its arresting thesis, partly in the surprising evidence Zimmerman marshals in support of the thesis. The book is also beautifully written. In its clear, arresting presentation of the evidence, it will have a profound impact.

Naturvölker stood outside of history and culture; it was therefore unnecessary and indeed unscientific to study them within their own environments, which only clouded the data and precluded controlled experimentation. Instead, German anthropologists brought *Naturvölker* to Germany and observed them in *Völkerschauen* (ethnographic performances), which were commercially very successful. Zimmerman examines these *Völkerschauen* with considerable acuity. Although it seems evident that these shows represent the acme of a European objectification of native peoples, along with the concomitant silencing of the latter, Zimmerman argues that there was a great deal of native resistance to the scientific stage-managing undertaken in order to render the people more authentic. Partly in reaction to this resistance, anthropology became ever more

scientific, a discipline for collecting dead, measurable data: bones, skulls, hair, and other artifacts.

The antihumanist challenge also questioned prevalent notions of modernity, which, in the humanist tradition posited the present as the culmination of the past. Instead, modernity constituted a break. Anthropologists studied nature before the break, and this rendered their discipline scientific. But it also put German anthropology on a collision course with the mounting evidence of evolutionary theory. Leading German anthropologists, like Adolf Bastian, derided this theory as “monkey teachings” and likened the species transformations it entailed to alchemical attempts to transform lead into gold. The confrontation with evolutionary theory was played out in many arenas, most interestingly in the analysis of so-called freaks and monsters — people with abnormal protrusions, hair growth, or head size. Because freaks upset tight categories, German anthropologists were at pains to declare them to be mere curiosities. Similarly, Rudolf Virchow averred that recently discovered skulls in Belgium in 1886 and Java in 1891–1892, which were similar to those found in the Neander Valley in 1856, seemed to make it obvious that such skulls could not have represented an individual pathological deformation. Yet this is precisely what Virchow argued. In other areas, too, German anthropologists, rather than consider the fluidity of human evolution and types, focused their energies on classification. They worked out an agreement for the precise measurement of skulls and developed apparatuses, like the Lucaesian apparatus, which rendered skulls as geometric projections, thus diminishing the effect of subjective visual perception on measurement.

The consequences of the classifications of what must have seemed like a dismal science were felt beyond the halls of academia. In an extremely interesting chapter on the *Schulstatistik* of 1874, Zimmerman shows how the “objective” categories of German anthropology, derived from the study of non-Europeans, were used to measure race in Europe. Such experiments, he argues, led to the widespread dissemination of biological, as opposed to cultural notions, of national identity. Jews, for example, were considered separately, not from anti-Semitism per se, but because, as Virchow put it, they belonged “according to their origin, to a different nation” (p. 137). Perhaps more important than the results of the experiment was the ritual that thousands of German teachers and school children participated in: lining up, measuring, taking stock of themselves and their differences in terms of “objective” racial criteria.

German anthropologists were not all cast of one die, however, and by the turn of the century serious challenges arose to their antihumanist conception. The Leipzig geographer, Friedrich Ratzel, attempted to overcome the distinction between anthropology and history by considering that all human societies possess culture, which was then passed from one to another in a process of diffusion. Ratzel’s diffusionism entailed a historical understanding of culture as

something that happens over time and through contact. Ratzel also collapsed the absolute distinction between *Naturvölker* and *Kulturvölker* so central to German anthropology. Important in this shift was also the triumph in other fields of Darwinism as well as the death, in 1902, of Rudolf Virchow, the most important anti-Darwinist in the German-speaking world.

Zimmerman's work is pathbreaking because it places humanism and antihumanism in a rigorously specific dialectic, and shows how an antihumanism that could countenance genocide in the modern world — specifically in the massacres of Herero and Nama in Southwest Africa — arose not from base instincts for rule but from the imperatives of classificatory science. As such, this book also shows us a crucial chapter in the complicated history of the collapse of fellow feeling in modern man.

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Scholem, Arendt, Klemperer: Intimate Chronicles in Turbulent Times. By Steven E. Aschheim. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 2001. Pp. 134. \$27.95. ISBN 0-253-33891-3.

First delivered as the Efroymsen Lectures at the Hebrew Union College in 1999, this short book is devoted to three major German-Jewish intellectuals: Gershom Scholem, Hannah Arendt, and Victor Klemperer. Though a considerable body of scholarship has grown around these towering figures, this volume is distinctive for its attention to the extraordinary “intimate chronicles” they produced. Despite their very different temperaments, attitudes, philosophical commitments, and political orientations, all three were prodigious chroniclers of their own experience, leaving a voluminous correspondence (Scholem and Arendt) and remarkable diaries (Scholem and Klemperer). Arendt and Scholem were also intimates and the story of their friendship and its subsequent breach over her famous “report” on the Eichmann Trial is well-known. Though Klemperer achieved posthumous fame with the publication of his important diaries of his persecution under the Nazis, he also obsessively documented (Aschheim calls him “graphomaniac”) his youth and his Weimar years, as well as his life in the GDR after the war. Aschheim justifies his choice of this trio not so much because of their divergent political and philosophical stances but because these highly personal documents are “revealing of the most intimate aspects of the private self-responding creatively to the vicissitudes of public experience” (p. 3).

Aschheim is especially skilled at weaving together their personal reactions to a shared fate with shrewd comments on the diverse intellectual traditions they