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George W. Jr.. Stocking, ed. *Volksgeist as Method and Ethic: Essays on Boasian Ethnography and the German Anthropological Tradition.* Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996. 358 pp. $27.50 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-299-14550-7; $24.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-299-14554-5.

Reviewed by Deborah J. Cahalen (Department of Anthropology, SUNY Binghamton)
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German Contexts and Legacies in Anthropological Theory and Practice

The subtitle of this edited volume suggests that Franz Boas is the central figure of concern here. This is rather misleading, as the focus of this (nevertheless excellent) book is more on the German anthropological tradition than on Boas. Most of the essays involve him tangentially at best, with only the chapters by Liss, Jacknis and Berman treating Boas directly. The rest of the text investigates German perspectives on culture and science in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

This is really no setback to the merit of the book if you are interested in knowing more about the anthropological tradition in Germany at the turn of the last century, as the book considerably advances our understanding of how German thinkers from the nineteenth century interacted with one another, and what currents of thought on culture and science influenced Boas as well. By extension, we can understand the contribution of German thought to American anthropology. Many of the authors also devote thoughtful attention to discussing the way ethnology/ethnography, archaeology, linguistic anthropology, biological anthropology, and other fields of study articulated during that time.

The collection opens with a brief introduction by George W. Stocking Jr., in which he outlines the debates surrounding the intellectual contribution of Franz Boas to American anthropology – did Boas play a formative role in anthropological theory, or was he merely a late arrival on the scene and an ahistorical particularist to boot? Exploring Boas's formative role, Stocking offers this collection as a kind of genealogical approach to understanding Boas and the shaping of American anthropology in relation to German traditions. Though Boas is not a major focus of every essay, each author contributes to an understanding of the practices of the time, the dominant and minority intellectual debates, histories of personalities and institutions, methodologies, and political, ideological, moral and ethical currents of German anthropology and science. The collection also includes a reprinting of an article which appeared in *Science* in 1887 on "The Study of Geography" by Boas (1887), in which Boas outlines his approach to knowledge production in science. He differentiates here between one object of science – the deduction of generalized laws – and another, which he wishes to defend, the investigation of phenomena in and of themselves. Though an early piece of his work, Boas himself maintained that he had set out foundational ideas there, and since many of the authors in this volume refer to the article, it is a useful addition to the text.

In the first chapter of the book, "Franz Boas and the Humboldtian Tradition: From Volksgeist and Nationalcharakter to an Anthropological Concept of Culture," Matti Bunzl sets out to explore the dichotomy between the law-generating sciences and the historicizing, particularizing sciences discussed by Boas in "The Study of Geography." Bunzl's essay is certainly one of the essays that ties the book together into a thematic whole, explicitly bringing together Boas' method and theory, the context of German anthropology, and the further implications for American anthropological practice. He focuses on the influence of the work of the brothers von Humboldt, Wilhelm and Alexander, on Boas. Bunzl documents their research in linguistic, ethnographic, and "naturalist" sciences at the turn of the century, as well as their influence on institutions, showing their, together, quite stunning effect on intellectual and political currents of the time. He then traces a detailed genealogy of the Humboldts' students through to Boas, highlighting the ways that Humboldtian traditions shaped his research and theoretical agendas. Bunzl deals with the development of Boas' views on museology, evolutionary theory, linguistics and shows how questions across these fields contributed to his theoretical views on culture. This essay is particularly useful in highlighting how themes and

debates within German traditions were carried through Boas into American anthropology across the subdisciplines. For the non-German speaker, it would be a bit hindered, as would many of the essays, by the fact that German words and phrases are rarely translated. Nevertheless it is usually possible to gather meaning from the context.

In Benoit Massin's "From Virchow to Fischer: Physical Anthropology and 'Modern Race Theories' in Wilhelmine Germany," Massin outlines the changes that led from late nineteenth century relatively liberal, anti-racist views within the academy through a seachange to early twentieth century racist stances. The essay stands against, or complicates, a number of themes in literatures on the development and role of "race hygiene" and "scientific racism" within biological sciences in Germany prior to the rise of Nazism: that racism had always existed in German intellectual thought, that racism entered German biological sciences through nineteenth century craniology, and that Nazism brought racism into German physical anthropology. In contrast, Massin particularly highlights debates between neo-Lamarkians and neo-Darwinians after 1900 as the critical period in which the link between politics and biological science took a turn for the worse. A particular strength of this essay is its exploration of the status of Darwinian evolutionary theory in Germany in this period. Massin thoroughly chronicles the widespread resistance in German biological sciences to attempts by a few scholars to promote "Darwinian" approaches that linked non-Europeans to apes. Debates developed between Neo-Lamarkians and neo-Darwinists, in which, Massin says, "'good politics' became linked with 'bad science' (and vice versa) - two fatal alliances which were to have far-reaching influence on the consolidation of a racial political line within the German bio-medical community (80)." Massin does treat the relationship of German physical anthropology to other subjects such as linguistics, prehistory and archaeology in race theorizing, though it would be useful in a volume on the history of anthropology to have discussed these connections in greater depth and to have included ethnology. The essay also has very loose links to Boas (he having received some early training by liberal theorists), and the subject matter clearly has implications for the way Boas went about investigating the relationship between culture and biology, but Massin stops short of concretely outlining the effects of these debates on Boasian anthropology.

Julia Liss' chapter, "German Culture and German Science in the Bildung of Franz Boas," explores the family background and education of Franz Boas from his childhood until he left for the Baffin Island expedition, his growing aspirations as a young man, and his tensions in the field of American anthropology. Liss is especially insightful as she considers Boas' view of his own *Bildung* (education, formation of character), the goals of his education and research, which she illuminates through his papers and his letters to family members, especially to his sister Antoinette. The chapter also considers his reception by the German emigre community in New York, and the role of his wife Marie in inspiring his drive to establish himself in the field of American academics. It places "The Study of Geography" as written in his early, optimistic phase of arrival on the American scene, before his conflicts within the field began.

The next two chapters, "The Ethnographic Object and the Object of Ethnology in the Early Career of Franz Boas" by Ira Jacknis, and Judith Berman's "'The Culture as It Appears to the Indian Himself': Boas, George Hunt, and the Methods of Ethnography," both deal with Boas' approach to texts and contextualization. Jacknis investigates Boas' ideas about how material culture should be handled, and his contentious relations with other museum curators in the United States. He discusses how Boas's insistence on contextualizing objects within cultures conflicted with the approach to objects as representative of stages of development that was current in American museums of the time, and the debates between Boas and Otis Mason of the U.S. National Museum. But beyond that, Jacknis shows that Boas thought of texts generated from fieldwork (oral histories and other interviews) as linguistic and cultural objects as well – as "things" which needed to be placed in historical context rather than simply compared with other texts cross-culturally.

Likewise, Judith Berman discusses Boas' treatment of texts as entry points into the native mind, and the importance Boas placed on contextualization of knowledge and practices. Ironically, she also shows that Boas failed to fully contextualize much of the information gathered by his translator, informant and data collector George Hunt, by neglecting to state that Hunt was not a member of the tribe among whom he was living and about whom he was writing. Though Hunt co-authored "The Kwakiutl" with Boas, he was not given credit for much of the work he did on Boas's behalf. This chapter, together with the one that follows (Thomas Buckley's "'The Little History of Pitiful Events': The Epistemological and Moral Contexts of Kroeber's Californian Ethnology"), takes on the ways that ethnographies are created, and the relationship between ethnographers and informants, issues at the heart of anthropology today as well.

Buckley focuses primarily on Boas's student Kroeber, touching on Kroeber's alterations and explications of Boas's vision of anthropology, as well as Kroeber's relations with Native Americans, including the famous informant Ishi. A principle difference between Boas and Kroeber, of course, is that Kroeber believed that culture and experience could be separated out in order to abstract the patterns of cultures - similar to the law-generating object of science described (but eschewed) by Boas. Nevertheless, argues Buckley, Kroeber's vision of anthropology, and especially of culture as *Volksgeist*, was firmly rooted in German thought and much of Boasian tradition. Buckley also sheds light on the problematic vision Kroeber had of Native American cultures in California as being essentially part of the past, and his unwillingness (and/or inability) due to political and career concerns to discuss the recent history of slaughter and abuse of the people he wished to study. The chapter shows how Boas's ideas continued to influence the direction of theory in American anthropology through his students, even those who are widely seen as rebels against him.

The last piece in this collection, Suzanne Marchand's "Orientalism as Kulturpolitik: German Archaeology and Cultural Imperialism in Asia Minor," is a discussion of the political and institutional context, and ideological uses, of historical archaeology in turn of the century Germany. This piece is rather awkwardly situated at the end of the text, when it might be more fruitfully contrasted with Massin's chapter. Marchand shows the relationship between German historical archaeology in the Ottoman Empire, the sense of German scholars that they had a mission to bring culture (enlightenment) to the Turks, and the German idea of *Kulturpolitik* – that scholarship and philanthropy abroad would increase national prestige. She also shows how objects acquired by archaeologists began to enter into the sense of *Bildung* in Germany during this period, whereas previously literatures had dominated over material objects. Marchand's article is the least linked to concerns of Boasian anthropology and ethnology, but still provides some context for the scholarly tradition in which Boas was trained before he left Germany.

Overall the collection follows in the footsteps of previous volumes in the History of Anthropology series by usefully bringing together anthropologists and historians to consider the shaping of the discipline. Published at the end of the century in which Boas has been lionized as the father of American anthropology as well as downplayed as incidental theoretically and important only in an institutional sense, this volume is well-placed to reflect on his legacy and brings a rich depth to understanding both the person and the scholar. The volume is also strong in its consideration of German anthropological traditions in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, with representation across several subdisciplines of anthropology. The two goals of the book do not flow together entirely smoothly, with some articles focusing almost entirely on Boas and other articles primarily interested in the context of German anthropological scholarship, and the transition from one style and theme to another may be an impediment to using this book for undergraduate teaching. The book does demonstrate, however, the great variety of political, ideological, and intellectual currents of German thought that are relevant to the practices and theories of anthropologists over the past century, and the format of presenting a number of related but rather unintegrated essays remains, as with the previous volumes in the series, an interesting approach to understanding the topic(s) at hand.

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