

‘Social Scientist *par excellence*’: The Life and Work of Richard Thurnwald

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2020

POUR CITER CET ARTICLE

Stoll, Viktor, 2020. “‘Social Scientist *par excellence*’: The Life and Work of Richard Thurnwald”, in *Bérose - Encyclopédie internationale des histoires de l'anthropologie*, Paris.

URL Bérose : [article1947.html](https://www.berose.fr/article1947.html)

BEROSE Publisher: ISSN 2648-2770

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Visited on 23 April 2024 at 11:26

Publié dans le cadre du thème de recherche « Histoire de l'anthropologie et des ethnologies allemandes et autrichiennes », dirigé par Laurent Dedryvère (EILA, Université de Paris, site Paris-Diderot), Jean-Louis Georget (Sorbonne Nouvelle, Paris), Hélène Ivanoff (Institut Frobenius, recherches en anthropologie culturelle, Francfort-sur-le-Main), Isabelle Kalinowski (CNRS, Laboratoire Pays germaniques UMR 8547, Ecole Normale Supérieure, Paris) Richard Kuba (Institut Frobenius, recherches en anthropologie culturelle, Francfort-sur-le-Main) et Céline Trautmann-Waller (Université Sorbonne nouvelle-Paris 3/IUF).

In his 1935 review of the history of anthropology, Thomas K. Penniman (1895-1977), curator of the preeminent Pitt-Rivers Museum at the University of Oxford, could not neatly define Richard Thurnwald's anthropological method. Penniman ultimately found that the Austro-German ethnologist was 'cognizant of so many methods that he cannot be labeled'. [1] It was a view shared by many of Thurnwald's contemporaries. Robert Lowie (1883-1957) viewed Thurnwald, not simply as an anthropologist, but as a 'social scientist *par excellence*' [2] whose mind "has an encyclopedic range that carries it far beyond the ethnographer's purlieus." [3] For Leonhard Adam (1891-1960), a one-time student of Thurnwald, the anthropologist was "always a true functionalist", insisting that a comprehensive exploration of all facets of a culture is necessary to understand the causation of any singular aspect of that culture. [4] Indeed, Thurnwald's work ties together fields as varied as physical anthropology, ethnography, psychology, musicology, archaeology, economics, social organization, ancient history, linguistics and law – forming a complex of comparative analysis which takes the reader from Roman jurisprudence and Babylonian socioeconomic development to Papuan kinship systems, East African gender relations and the psychological aesthetic of primitive art in Melanesia. As Robert Heine-Geldern remarked, "Thurnwald's position in German

ethnology is unique.” [5]

Thurnwald’s theoretical and methodological nebulosity stands in sharp contrast to the structural delineation of other contemporary “fathers” of anthropology. While other anthropologists occupying prestigious departmental chairs meticulously constructed their own “schools” over decades, Thurnwald’s uniquely tumultuous career prevented the development of any wide-reaching systematic theory or method while simultaneously amplifying his interdisciplinarity. The global disruptions of the World Wars and the manifold implosions of the German economy between 1914 and 1950 forced Thurnwald to become an academic nomad, a leading member of a lost generation of German *Ethnologie* who became, in the words of Lowie, “one of the most productive ethnologists of his time.” [6]

Despite such praise from the likes of Lowie and Adam, Thurnwald was not without his detractors. Thurnwald, a “father” of the discipline in all but name and the first Westerner to scientifically examine and explore vast swaths of inland and insular New Guinea, was not one to mince words when critiquing the theoretical assumptions and methodological approaches of his contemporaries – particularly those threatening his academic authority within his Melanesian *marché*. Unsurprisingly, such public criticism often elicited strong responses and led to mutual hostility with other seminal figures – as much personal as professional. Thurnwald’s paternalistic admonishment of Margaret Mead’s (1901-1978) *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies* (1935), particularly her perceived Americanized moralizing and fieldwork methodologies, created lasting friction between the two. [7] No doubt, Thurnwald’s own efforts to remain the authority on New Guinea in the English-speaking world played some part in the spat.

These personal-professional conflicts also reflected larger geopolitical shifts. Following the wide-scale animosity between the Anglo-American and German worlds during the Second World War, Thurnwald’s theories and methods became a target for English-speaking academics. Thurnwald’s effort to identify historical sequences as part of his broader historical-functionalist approach was accosted by H. Ian Hogbin (1904-1989) in 1951. [8] No doubt Hogbin, an Anglo-Australian student of Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown, was seeking professional aggrandizement at Thurnwald’s expense. Hogbin attempted to position himself as both the functionalist successor of Malinowski and the Anglo-American world’s foremost expert on Melanesian ethnology. By the 1950s only Thurnwald’s towering edifice stood in the way of Hogbin’s professional ambition. Ironically, it was another Anglo-Australian and student of Radcliffe-Brown, A. P. Elkin who, as the long-serving chair of anthropology at the University of Sydney, director of the Papua and New Guinea cadet training school and long-time admirer of Thurnwald, thwarted Hogbin’s ambition to dominate the field.

Thurnwald’s rejection of major theoretical trends in anthropology did little to endear him to the mainstream, particularly in the German-speaking world. Thurnwald heavily criticized the *Kulturkreislehre* expounded by his former colleagues at the Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde in Berlin, Fritz Graebner (1877-1934) and Bernhard Ankermann (1859-1943), as

over-simplistic and dogmatically shackled to diffusionism. Thurnwald's later efforts to elucidate humanity-wide processes, as demonstrated in his *Die menschliche Gesellschaft in ihren ethno-soziologischen Grundlagen* (1931-1935) series, further removed him from the *Kulturkreislehre* "cult" which dominated interwar German-language anthropology. Thurnwald's efforts to combine anthropology and sociology further strained his relationship with broad swaths of academics in the highly stratified, and fiercely tribal, ivory tower of Austro-German academia.

Despite these detractors and his strained relationship with Austro-German academia, Thurnwald was a leading figure of professional anthropology during the first half of the twentieth century. However, unlike other contemporary "fathers" of the discipline, able to dominate the field's development within their respective nation states, Thurnwald was a founder of a particular "international" or trans-imperial form of anthropology. From his graduation from the University of Vienna in the 1890s to the celebrations surrounding his 80th birthday in New York in 1949, Thurnwald was constantly on the move. Whether conducting fieldwork, lecturing in a university or researching at a museum, Thurnwald was never sedentary for more than a few years. While this prevented his ability to develop a systematic "national" school, Thurnwald's ubiquitous presence, both physical and literary (his bibliography includes over 350 publications), [9] led to his unique ability to influence and draw from dozens of major figures across national boundaries.

Franz Boas, Felix von Luschan, Bronisław Malinowski, Alfred Radcliffe-Brown, Robert Lowie, Edward Sapir, Herbert Baldus, Edward Gifford, A. P. Elkin, Diedrich Westermann, Rudolf Pöch, and Leonhard Adam were all colleagues in Thurnwald's personal and professional orbit. The ethnologist's work was also well known to leading government officials across the Western world: from German Colonial Secretary Wilhelm Solf (1862-1936) to British Foreign Secretary George Curzon (1859-1925) and Australian Prime Minister Stanley Bruce (1883-1967). Thus, while he failed to establish a distinct school, Thurnwald had a broadly profound influence across the development of early international anthropology – and particularly regarding the discipline's role as an applied science for colonial governance. To ultimately define Thurnwald's influence upon modern anthropology, then, requires an examination of his transnational "imperial careering" [10] from Austro-Hungarian Bosnia to American-occupied Berlin.

A Trans-Imperial Career in Colonial Ethnology

Richard Thurnwald was born in Vienna in 1869 to an established upper-middle class family (i.e. *Bildungsbürgertum*). Like many of his socioeconomic class, Thurnwald began his academic career by pursuing a Juris Doctorate at the University of Vienna in 1889, where the young barrister-in-training formed a lifelong friendship with medical student Rudolf Pöch (1870-1921) – later founder of the anthropology faculty at Vienna and a pioneer in phonographic recordings of threatened languages. [11] While at Vienna, Thurnwald took a substantial interest in comparative law and philology – ultimately accredited with varying proficiency in nine languages by the time of his graduation. [12] Thurnwald's ability to work

in many divergent languages permitted an extremely broad range of comparative ethnological analysis.

Following his graduation, Thurnwald held several bureaucratic positions, including prosecutor in the Viennese provincial court, before entering the Habsburg state service as an ethnological researcher in the Austro-Hungarian “colony” of Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1896. Under Benjamin von Kállay (1839-1903), Habsburg finance minister and *de facto* colonial administrator of Bosnia-Herzegovina since 1882, the Austro-Hungarian administration had pursued a major development scheme meant to uplift the native European population from centuries of perceived Ottoman mismanagement, abuse and neglect.

Kállay’s colonial development programme faced two major obstacles – implementing a controlled socioeconomic acculturation of the native population and the intellectual production of a distinct Bosnian Muslim identity (i.e. *Bosniaktum*). In both cases, Kállay viewed ethnological research as critical to informing his administration’s native policy and, consequently, generously funded the establishment of a research centre at the new ethnological museum in Sarajevo (1888-present). It was under this government-sponsored ethnological research programme that Thurnwald began his work in the discipline. Although Thurnwald would end his tour by 1898, his investigation into the socioeconomic acculturation of native populations in colonial states became instrumental to his later work. [13]

Following his tour in Bosnia, Thurnwald moved with Pösch to the centre of professional ethnological research in the German-speaking world – Berlin’s Museum für Völkerkunde (1873/1886-present). In 1901, under the directorship of Adolf Bastian (1826-1905), the “founder of ‘modern ethnology’ in Germany”, [14] Thurnwald began his career as a *wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter* (i.e. research assistant) within the museum’s Egyptology and Assyriology section. Thurnwald’s first study was a wide-ranging examination of the socioeconomic evolution of Pharaonic and Babylonian societies, [15] after which he transitioned to the museum’s Africa and Oceania Section in 1905.

During these early years in Berlin, Thurnwald came to embrace the idea of applying social scientific knowledge to the development of human society – an underlying premise of Bastian’s “psychic unity of mankind” (i.e. *Einheit des Menschengeschlechts*) concept. [16] In 1905, Thurnwald became a founder of the “racial hygiene” (i.e. eugenics) movement in Germany where he, along with physician Alfred Ploetz (1860-1940), a later advisor to the National Socialist government, [17] created the Gesellschaft für Rassenhygiene. [18] Although ‘he would later reject many of the principles of racial hygiene’, particularly the biological inferiority of certain groups, Thurnwald remained on the editorial board of the society’s *Archiv für Rassen- und Gesellschaftsbiologie* for most of his life. [19]

It was after his transfer to the museum’s Africa and Oceania department that Thurnwald’s ethnological career truly began. Under the sectional directorship of renowned anthropologist Felix von Luschan (1854-1924), Thurnwald was sent to German New Guinea on

an ethnographic collecting expedition 1906-1909 – part of Luschan’s “salvage anthropology” competition with other German ethnographic museums. [20] However, after meeting with Albert Hahl (1868-1945), New Guinea’s long-serving governor, Thurnwald’s material collecting mission quickly evolved. [21]

Hahl and Thurnwald agreed that the real value of ethnology was not in assembling artefacts destined for museum display cases but, rather, its application in the pursuit of colonial development. While Thurnwald collected a vast amount of material culture during the trip, it was his sustained fieldwork in New Britain (Baining Mountains) and Southern Bougainville (Buin) which made his career as a professional ethnologist. Thurnwald examined the socioeconomic acculturation of the native population on the frontier of Hahl’s “effective” colonial administration, advocating for a carefully managed policy of education and development needed to both preserve the native population and progressively transform it into an educated and skilled working class. By the time Thurnwald returned to Berlin, he was one of the world’s foremost experts on Melanesian ethnology and an outspoken advocate of employing anthropology to protect and develop colonial peoples. [22]

Thurnwald’s renown was enough that the leadership of the German Colonial Office and Royal Prussian Museums requested he serve as lead ethnologist for the Kaiserin Augusta-Fluss Expedition (1912-1913). The expedition along the Sepik River was the best-funded and most detailed colonial research project undertaken in Wilhelmine Germany. [23] Although Thurnwald would not join the expedition until early 1913, as he dutifully toiled to complete his Buin manuscript, [24] his multiple cross-country treks through the interior of Kaiser Wilhelmsland between 1913 and 1914 yielded valuable demographic, geographic and ethnographic results for the colonial administration. In light of his success, Colonial Secretary Wilhelm Solf offered to fund Thurnwald’s research in New Guinea indefinitely – even at the expense of other research projects in Germany’s African colonies. [25]

Thurnwald would continue his New Guinea research until January 1915. It was during this period that he conducted fieldwork among dozens of uncontacted tribes throughout mainland New Guinea, particularly along the tributaries of the Upper Sepik. In the Thurnwald Mountains along the Anglo-German-Dutch border, the ethnologist became the first European to discover the headwaters of the Sepik River. According to anthropologist Marion Melk-Koch, Thurnwald’s principle biographer, this experience was the “high point of his life”. [26]

Following his surrender to Australian forces in early 1915, after his base camp was ransacked and the ethnologist left to starve to death in the jungle, Thurnwald continued his research in New Guinea. The Australian military authorities found Thurnwald’s work to have significant value for their caretaker colonial administration. Within a few weeks, the Australian military administrator allowed Thurnwald to relocate to the Sepik’s Marienburg Mission Station. Thurnwald would spend nearly six months interviewing various “informants” from uncontacted tribes in the Lower Sepik basin. The result was a trove of ethnographic information on the law, culture and language of the Banaro tribal group of the Keram

River. [27] Thurnwald's working internment under Australian patronage was ultimately cut short in late 1915, thanks to the intervention of American colleagues.

In late 1915, Thurnwald was awarded a visiting fellowship in Alfred Kroeber's anthropology faculty at the University of California at Berkeley. Although forced to leave his world-class ethnographic collection in Madang, where it languished for years, [28] Thurnwald left New Guinea with his notes in December 1915. At the University of California, Thurnwald penned his *Banaro Society* [29] – a work acclaimed by Malinowski as “perhaps the best account of the social organization of a savage tribe extant.” [30] Leonhard Adam asserted that the work could “hardly be overrated in any historical survey of social anthropology.” [31]

Furthermore at Berkeley, Thurnwald joined Edward W. Giffords (1887-1959) and Robert Lowie in pioneering the study of the interrelationship of kinship, language and power relations, as well as the broader questions of totemism. [32] This was the first systematic comparative ethnological examination of Native American and Pacific Islander cultures. Despite this success, the end of American neutrality curtailed Thurnwald's burgeoning career at Berkeley. The ethnologist voluntarily returned to Germany in mid-1917, spending the remainder of the war as an infantry officer in the trenches of the Western Front.

Following the armistice, the fifty-year-old ethnologist remained in uniform throughout 1919 supporting the anti-marxist *Freikorps* suppression of the Spartacan revolt in Berlin. By the early 1920s, through a combination of post-war economic circumstances and a marital scandal, Thurnwald was denied a full professorship in anthropology in Germany. For a senior academic who reasonably expected to be a front runner for Felix von Luschan's chair at the University of Berlin, the appointment as an unsalaried *Privatdozent* at the University of Halle (1919-1924) and later as an *ausserordentlicher Professor* at the University of Berlin (after 1924) was particularly devastating. Although he would turn his *Banaro Society* into a major German-language manuscript in 1921, [33] originally envisioned to secure a chair in anthropology, the end of the golden age of *Ethnologie* meant that Thurnwald's academic opportunities in Germany were severely curtailed.

An Interregnum Thurnwaldian “School”?

It was during his Melanesian experience and fellowship at Berkeley that Thurnwald developed the theoretical foundations for what might have emerged as a distinct “school” – if the war had not disrupted it. Contemporaneously with Malinowski, Thurnwald pioneered the idea of reciprocity, [34] providing a basis for Marcel Mauss' acclaimed sociological treaty on gift exchange. [35] Thurnwald also postulated his *Siebungstheorie* on the distinctive social “sifting” of specific personalities into positions of authority during periods of acculturation. [36] Thurnwald further channelled Bastian with his embrace of mankind's common rationality by both rejecting direct comparisons of “primitive” and “civilized” man and searching for humanity-wide social processes.

His extensive fieldwork and empirical observations set Thurnwald in partial opposition to

the then-ascendant *Kulturkreislehre* of Fritz Graebner and Bernhard Ankermann in the German-speaking world. [37] The *Kulturkreislehre*, or cultural circle/area school, was a theoretical school of anthropology that emerged in *fin-de-siècle* Germany as a direct challenge to the primacy of Bastian's theory of *Elementargedanken* (i.e. elementary ideas) based on his notion of the psychic unity of mankind. [38] The school was an outgrowth of the *Anthropogeographie* concept [39] of the geographer Friedrich Ratzel (1844-1904) which stressed the primacy of diffusionism over Bastian's parallelism (i.e. independent cultural development). The school's conceptual parameters, as well as the term "*Kulturkreis*", [40] were established in 1898 by Ratzel's student and pioneer of African ethnology, Leo Frobenius (1873-1938). [41] However, it was Graebner's and Ankermann's joint presentation of papers at the 1905 meeting of the Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte, that heralded the arrival of the *Kulturkreis* "school". [42] Unlike the Bastian-Ratzel divide which, although stressing the primacy of either parallelism or diffusionism, allowed for the incorporation of the opposing theory, the *Kulturkreislehre* of Graebner and Ankermann maintained a particular neglect of, or even hostility towards, parallelism. In doing so, proponents of the school often went to extraordinarily speculative lengths to demonstrate the diffusion of a concept, linguistic trait or ethnographic object. Thurnwald, who approached the parallelism-diffusionism divide from a more balanced position, found Graebner's attempts to trace the global diffusion of "*Bogenkultur*" (i.e. bow culture), particularly on his Melanesian turf, too extreme. [43] Thurnwald's criticism of the *Kulturkreislehre*'s dubious equivalency of dispersed primitive ethnographia and the oversimplification of the psychological aspects of cultural transfer was in general opposition to Graebner's school.

Thurnwald became, in Adam's words, "the founder and the very centre of the functional approach to social anthropology in Germany... [and] one of the fathers of functionalism generally". [44] Thurnwald's ethnological method of comparative analysis was considered as "*kulturhistorisch-ethnologische Forschung*", [45] particularly for its embrace of the centrality of "*historische Momente*" (historical moments) as decisive points that herald and direct societal development. [46] Thurnwald's method draws from the influences of historical particularism, most fully developed by Boas, while seeking a more universal understanding of societal development, and simultaneously rejecting the *Kulturkreislehre*'s embrace of the primacy of diffusion as the sole catalyst for cultural evolution. Thurnwald's approach was, thus, "functionalistic even before the British functionalist school started", but was more balanced than the British school's obsession with social organization and structure at the expense of a broader understanding of culture *writ large*. [47]

Thurnwald, and his functionalist approach, became a *de facto* counterbalance to the hegemony of the *Kulturkreislehre* in German-speaking academia. This position earned him the antipathy of the influential *Kulturkreislehre* – directly hindering his efforts to secure an academic chair in the discipline during the interwar period. However, despite this failure, Thurnwald's intellectual positions did greatly influence many of his students at Halle and Berlin, as well as other German-trained contemporaries, during the interwar period.

Herbert Baldus (1899-1970), who later became a leading figure of Brazilian anthropology, studied under Thurnwald at Berlin while undertaking his PhD from 1928 to 1932. [48] Leonhard Adam worked closely with Thurnwald on developing the *Fragebogen* (questionnaire) for a major *Reichskolonialamt* survey of native law in 1907 – with Thurnwald contributing the major survey of Papuan and Melanesian Law in Adam’s renowned *Das Eingeborenenrecht* (Native law, 1930). [49]

Thurnwald’s most direct student was Wilhelm Emil Mühlmann (1904-1988). Mühlmann, who pursued his doctorate at Berlin from 1929 to 1931, took Thurnwald’s functionalist approach to heart. He served as managing editor for Thurnwald’s *Sociologus* during the 1930s, and later appropriated the social evolutionary aspects of Thurnwald’s *Siebungstheorie* to support racial anthropology, particularly within the concepts of *Volkstum* and *Lebensraum*. [50] During the latter 1930s and early 1940s, Mühlmann became, in the words of Andre Gingrich, “the most influential and most intelligent Nazi ideologist of academic *Völkerkunde*”. [51]

Mühlmann’s association with Thurnwald naturally blemished the reputation of the latter in the post-war years. Although Thurnwald did not openly break with Mühlmann during the war years, in large part because of Mühlmann’s close ties with Nazi officialdom, [52] he did emphatically deny Mühlmann’s position in private. The relationship between student and teacher degenerated rapidly as Mühlmann’s Nazi sympathies increased. The situation became so difficult that Mühlmann eventually “denounced” Thurnwald to the government, forcing the aged ethnologist to flee from Berlin to Holstein in late 1943 for his family’s safety. [53]

Establishing himself as a functionalist, a colonial New Guinea expert and cross-disciplinary social scientist did not bode well for Thurnwald’s career aspirations in interregnum Germany. With the loss of Germany’s colonial “laboratories” and the post-war economic crisis, Thurnwald struggled throughout the 1920s to impact the dwindling field of colonial ethnology in the Weimar Republic. During this period, the ethnologist continued to publish from his New Guinea data and founded the *Zeitschrift für Völkerpsychologie und Soziologie* in 1925 (i.e. *Sociologus* after 1951). It was the first periodical dedicated to an interdisciplinary approach to social anthropology as an applied science and the first attempt to truly meld *Ethnologie*, *Psychologie* and *Sociologie* in the German academic world.

However, Thurnwald’s admitted rejection of any differentiation between *Ethnologie*, *Soziologie* and *Psychologie* – he used the terms “*Ethnosozologie*” and “*Sozialpsychologie*” to describe his field and the term “*Sozialwissenschaftler*” to describe himself – did not play well in the highly stratified German academy. [54] Because of his interdisciplinary approach to social science, Thurnwald was never fully baptized into any of the influential academic circles in Germany which, in turn, hindered his career prospects and all but prevented his occupancy of a chair in any discipline. His inability to “fit” into any of the established disciplines, combined with the precipitous decline of colonial-centric *Ethnologie* in the Weimar Republic, explains Thurnwald’s near constant search for permanent academic positions in the Anglo-American world following the Great War. Although Thurnwald’s star

faded in Germany's post-war chaos, his expertise on native acculturation and primitive economics became increasingly appreciated internationally. [55]

With perhaps the most far-reaching professional network of any interwar anthropologist, Thurnwald utilized his connections to secure several major projects in the Anglo-American world. Thanks in no small part to the generous philanthropy of the American Rockefeller Foundation, whose interwar outreach was specifically focused on applied anthropology for the betterment of humankind, [56] Thurnwald reinvented himself as an international expert on acculturation in light of the native protectionist regime of the League of Nation's mandate system. From 1930-1931, Thurnwald and his wife Hilda travelled to the British mandate of German East Africa (Tanganyika) under the auspices of the International Institute for the Study of African Languages and Cultures (IIALC) to undertake fieldwork on native acculturation. Founded in 1926 by Frederick Lugard, former Nigerian governor and advocate of an Africa-wide policy of "indirect rule", the IIALC possessed a mandate to utilize ethnological knowledge for the betterment of colonial governance. The IIALC was also Malinowski's main organ to push his concepts of applied social anthropology, functionalism and acculturation [57].

As an "international" organization, the IIALC also had German and French co-directors. In the German case, it was Diedrich Westermann (1875-1956) – the African missionary-turned-ethnologist and close friend of Thurnwald at the University of Berlin. Based on Thurnwald's functionalist approach to acculturation, Westermann successfully lobbied for Thurnwald's place on the IIALC's executive council. [58] From this position, Thurnwald and Malinowski paralleled each other in the functionalist investigation of acculturation and its influence on colonial administration of native peoples.

As his IIALC research concluded, and with the support of his Boasian network, Thurnwald secured a visiting professorship at the Institute for Human Relations (Yale University) from 1932-1936. The institute, directed by Edward Sapir (1884-1939) and founded with a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, sought to employ ethnological knowledge to improve governance of "underdeveloped" peoples in both the colonial periphery and metropole. While participating on ongoing institute projects at Yale, Thurnwald put together his acclaimed *Black and White in East Africa: The Fabric of a New Civilization* (1935) – arguing that a new conglomerate African nation was arising from contact between native, German and British cultures which would require a major adjustment of colonial development policy. [59] A. P. Elkin (1891-1979) hailed the manuscript as an 'invaluable and almost indispensable 'hand-book' and guide book to the native problem in East Africa.' [60] With the support of the IIALC, the work was distributed across the British Colonial Service in Africa.

During his period at Yale, Thurnwald interrupted lecturing to conduct fieldwork for the Australian administration in the German New Guinea mandate (1933-1934). Part of a major overhaul of Australian colonial policy in the late 1920s, the Australian National Research Council applied Rockefeller Foundation funding to create a research endowment for Papua and New Guinea. The programme was established by Alfred Radcliffe-Brown (1881-1955), de

facto chair of anthropology at Sydney, to support the implementation of ethnologically-informed native administration in Australia's colonies. Radcliffe-Brown specifically sought out Thurnwald to be a leading participant in the grant programme.

A. P. Elkin, who replaced Radcliffe-Brown in 1932, expected Thurnwald's work in Buin to initiate a multi-year re-examination of native acculturation throughout the mandate of German New Guinea – forming a major comparative study of German and Australian colonial development policy and native responses. However, with the Great Depression in full swing, the Rockefeller Foundation significantly reduced its funding for applied anthropology across the Anglo-American world. Thurnwald's New Guinea project was cut short and the funding for his professorship at Yale soon ebbed.

Thurnwald's efforts during the early 1930s could be considered a second attempt to establish his own "school". Unlike his first attempt, this was aimed at tying ethnology to colonial development in the spirit of interwar scientific internationalism. It was in New Haven that Thurnwald reformed his *Zeitschrift* into the first English-German language periodical in applied social anthropology – renaming it *Sociologus*. Many of Thurnwald's publications during the period were in English and dealt particularly with native acculturation in the colonial context, no doubt a reflection of the sizable influence of the Rockefeller Foundation and his fieldwork in the Anglo-colonial world. It was during this time that Thurnwald also sought to formulate his findings into a five-volume theoretical treatise, *Die menschliche Gesellschaft in ihren ethno-soziologischen Grundlagen* (1931-1935).

Thurnwald further solidified his theory of the process of acculturation, laid out in his *Black and White in East Africa*, during this period. The ethnologist proposed that societies traverse four stages after contact with other, more dominating, cultures: "withdrawal, imitation, *Völkertod* (ethnic death) to rediscovery." [61] Thurnwald's acculturation theory proved central to Melville Herskovits' (1895-1963) pioneering work on African and African American studies in the United States. [62]

Twilight of a Totem

If the Great Depression had not interrupted Rockefeller funding, Thurnwald may very well have obtained a professorship in the Anglo-American world. By 1936, despite the intervention of his Anglo-American colleagues to secure him a permanent position, the ethnologist headed to the only country generously funding its anthropological discipline – Nazi Germany. Thurnwald was granted a salaried emeritus position at the University of Berlin and became an outspoken advocate for the success of Imperial Germany's ethnologically-informed colonial rule, and, by default, an apologist for Nazi efforts to reacquire Germany's lost colonies prior to 1940. [63] However, as with the previous war, World War II spelled disaster for what remained of Thurnwald's career. As German academia was pulled into the intellectual defence of the Third Reich, Thurnwald was drawn into government-funded research for Albert Speer's Armaments Ministry. Much of his New Guinea and African research notes and ethnographic collections were destroyed by Allied

bombing and in 1946 he, along with other anti-communist academics, fled the Soviet-controlled University of Berlin to the Allied Sector.

However, Thurnwald's professional network once again provided a lifeline to the aged ethnologist. Under the academic leadership of Robert Lowie, the American Office of War Information undertook a major ethnological examination of the German people in order to inform the American Occupation's "native policy". With Lowie's support, Thurnwald became a founding member of the American-funded Freie Universität Berlin and first director of its Institut für Ethnologie (now the Institut für Sozial- und Kulturanthropologie). *Sociologus*, which was discontinued during the war, was revived and the ethnologist, alongside his wife Hilda, returned to the field one last time to conduct a study on the acculturation of Berlin's children in light of war trauma and the subsequent American-occupation. [64] After nearly fifty-five working years in the field, Richard Thurnwald passed away in Berlin in 1954.

Ultimately, Thurnwald's nomadic career prevented the establishment of a distinct "school", but the ethnologist's international influence, particularly on the practical problems of acculturation, was prolific. In this, Thurnwald, like Malinowski, secured anthropology's central role in advising socioeconomic development in the global periphery. While Thurnwald's influence on professional anthropology, and his very name, long-ago evaporated into obscurity in the Anglo-American world, his belief that societal acculturation in international "development" can only succeed through the application of ethnological expertise abides.

A cursory examination of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (2000-2015), [65] an international effort by the developed world to acculturate its former colonial periphery into its own political, social and economic image, mirrors the anthropologically-informed colonial governance discourse common at the high tide of Thurnwald's academic influence. Conversely, in the metropole, the application of acculturation theory informs and directs current governmental policies towards the direction and expectation of cultural integration of non-Western migrant populations in the Western world. [66] Thus, Thurnwald's socio-psychological problem of acculturation, first identified in the colonial periphery, continues to inform and influence modern power relations between the global North and South and broader labour discourse within international development theory.

[1] T. K. Penniman, *A Hundred Years of Anthropology* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co., Ltd., 1935), p. 330.

[2] Robert Lowie, "Richard Thurnwald 1869-1954", *American Anthropologist*, New Series, Vol. 56, No. 5, Pt. 1 (October 1954), pp. 863-867.

- [3] Robert Lowie, *The History of Ethnological Theory* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., 1937), p. 243.
- [4] Leonhard Adam, "In Memoriam: Richard Thurnwald", *Oceania*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (March 1955), pp. 145-155.
- [5] Robert Heine-Geldern, "One Hundred Years of Ethnological Theory in the German-Speaking Countries: Some Milestones", *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 5, No. 5 (December 1964), pp. 407-418.
- [6] Lowie, "Richard Thurnwald 1869-1954". For biographical information on Thurnwald, see: Marion Melk-Koch, *Auf der Suche nach der menschlichen Gesellschaft: Richard Thurnwald* (Berlin: Museum fuer Voelkerkunde, 1989); pp. 145-155; Herbert Baldus, "Richard Thurnwald 1869-1954", *Revista de Antropologia*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Junho 1954), pp. 47-52; Hilda Thurnwald, "Richard Thurnwald – Lebensweg und Werk", in *Beitraege zur Gessellungs- und Voelkerwissenschaft*, (ed.) Else Toennies (Berlin: Verlag Gebr. Mann, 1950), pp. 9-19.
- [7] Richard C. Thurnwald, "Review of Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies by Margaret Mead", *American Anthropologist*, New Series, Vol 38, No. 4 (October-December 1936), pp. 663-667; Margaret Mead, "A Reply to a Review of 'Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies'", *American Anthropologist*, New Series, Vol. 39, No. 3, Part 1 (July-September 1937), pp. 558-561.
- [8] Richard Thurnwald, "Historical Sequences on Bougainville", *American Anthropologist*, New Series, Vol. 53, No. 1 (January-March 1951), pp. 137-139.
- [9] [Else Toennies, "Bibliographie Richard Thurnwald", *Beitraege zur Gesellungs- und Voelkerwissenschaft*, Else Toennies (ed.) (Berlin: Verlag Gebr. Mann, 1950), pp. 469-477.
- [10] David Lambert and Alan Lester (eds.), *Colonial Lives across the British Empire: Imperial Career in the Long Nineteenth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).
- [11] A. A. Abbie, "Rudolf Pösch", *Oceania*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (December, 1962), pp. 128-130.
- [12] During his long career, Thurnwald would gain varying proficiency in dozens of languages from Cuneiform Akkadian to Buin (Papuan) and from Bosniak Turkish to the Banaro (Ramu) isolate of the lower Sepik River. Melk-Koch, *Auf der Suche*, pp. 17-18.
- [13] Richard Thurnwald, 'Gewerbe und Handel', *Die Österreichisch-ungarische Monarchie in Wort und Bild: Bosnia und Herzegovina* (Wien: Verlag der kaiserlich-königlichen Hof-und Staatsdruckerei, 1901), pp. 487-499; Richard Thurnwald, 'Wirtschaftliche und Sozial Skizzen aus Bosnien', *Neue Revue*, Band II, No. 30, Wien (23 July 1897), pp. 92-96, 271-276 and 306-312.
- [14] Han F. Vermeulen, "Von der Empire zur Theorie: deutschsprachige Ethnographie und Ethnologie von Gerhard Müller bis Adolf Bastian", *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, Bd. 134, H. 2 (2009), s. 253-266.
- [15] Thurnwald spent 1901-1905 working with Adolf Erman, Professor of Egyptology (1885-1937), and Friedrich Delitzsch, Professor of Assyriology (1900-1922). Thurnwald, 'Richard Thurnwald – Lebensweg und Werk'.

[16] Adolf Bastian, *Europäische Colonien in Afrika und Deutschlands Interessen sonst und jetzt* (Berlin, Ferdinand Duemmlers Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1884); Karl von den Steinen, 'Gedächtnisrede auf Adolf Bastian', *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, Bd. 37, H. 2/3 (1905), pp. 236-249; Klaus-Peter Koepping, *Adolf Bastian and the psychic unity of mankind. The foundations of anthropology in nineteenth-century Germany* (University of Queensland Press, London, 1984), p. 21; Lowie, *The History of Ethnological Theory*, p. 37.

[17] Anahid S. Rickmann, 'Rassenpflege im völkischen Staat': *Vom Verhältnis der Rassenhygiene zur nationalsozialistischen Politik*, unpublished PhD dissertation, Rheinischen Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität zu Bonn, Bonn, 2002, p. 158.

[18] Robert Proctor, *Racial Hygiene. Medicine under the Nazis* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 17.

[19] Kevin S. Amidon, "Diesmal fehlt di Biologie!" Max Horkheimer, Richard Thurnwald, and the Biological Prehistory of German Sozialforschung', *New German Critique*, No. 104 (Summer 2008), pp. 103-137.

[20] Rainer F. Buschmann, 'Oceanic Carvings and Germanic Cravings: German Ethnographic Frontiers and Imperial Visions in the Pacific, 1870-1914', *Journal of Pacific History*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (December 2007), pp. 299-315; Rainer Buschmann, 'Colonizing Anthropology: Albert Hahl and the Ethnographic Frontier in German New Guinea', in *Worldly Provincialism: German Anthropology in the Age of Empire*, (eds.) H. Glenn Penny and Matti Bunzl (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), pp. 230-255.

[21] For the definitive treatment of Thurnwald's New Guinea expeditions, see: Melk-Koch, *Auf der Suche*.

[22] Richard Thurnwald, 'Ermittlungen über Eingeborenenrechte der Südsee', *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Rechtswissenschaft*, Vol. 23 (1910), s. 309-364; Richard Thurnwald, 'Die eingeborenen Arbeitskräfte im Südseeschutzgebiet', *Koloniale Rundschau*, Vol. 10 (1910), s. 607-632; Richard Thurnwald, 'Stufen der Staatsbildung bei den Urzeitvölkern', *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Rechtswissenschaft*, Bd. 25 (1911), s. 417-432; Richard Thurnwald, *Forschungen auf dem Salomon-Inseln und dem Bismarck-Archipel* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1912).

[23] Markus Schlindlbeck, 'Deutsche wissenschaftliche Expeditionen und Forschungen in der Südsee bis 1914', in *Die Deutsche Südsee, 1884-1914: Ein Handbuch*, Hermann Hiery (ed.) (Paderborn: Verlag Ferdinand Schöningh, 2001), pp. 132-155.

[24] Richard Thurnwald, *Forschungen auf den Salomo-Inseln und dem Bismarck-Archipel*, Bd. I (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 1912).

[25] Melk-Koch, *Auf der Suche*, pp. 180-189.

[26] Melk-Koch, *Auf der Suche*, p. 216.

[27] French anthropologist Bernard Juillerat, who explored the Lower Sepik region in 1989, questioned if the Banaro really existed or if Thurnwald's depiction was a conglomerate of various groups. Bernard Juillerat, "Do the Banaro Really Exist? Going Back after Richard Thurnwald", *Oceania*, Vol. 71, No. 1

(September 2000), pp. 46-66.

[28] Barry Craig, "The Fate of Thurnwald's Sepik Ethnographic Collections", *Baessler-Archiv*, Neue Folge, Bd. XLV (1997), pp. 387-408.

[29] Richard Thurnwald, "Banaro Society. Social Organization and Kinship System of a Tribe in the Interior of New Guinea", *Memoirs of the American Anthropological Association* (1916), Vol. 3, pp. 251-391.

[30] Bronislaw Malinowski, *Crime and Custom in Savage Society* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., Inc., 1926), p. 24.

[31] Adam, 'In Memoriam: Richard Thurnwald'.

[32] Paul Radin, "Robert H. Lowie, 1883-1957", *American Anthropologist*, New Series, Vol. 60, No. 2 (April 1958), pp. 358-375.

[33] Richard Thurnwald, *Die Gemeinde der Banaro: Ehe, Verwandtschaft und Gesellschaftsbau eines Stammes im Innern von Neu-Guinea : aus den Ergebnissen einer Forschungsreise 1913-25 : ein Beitrag zur Entstehungsgeschichte von Familie und Staat* (Stuttgart: Verlag von Ferdinand Enke, 1921).

[34] Harry Liebersohn, *The Return of the Gift: European History of a Global Idea* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

[35] Marcel Mauss, "Essai sur le don. Forme et raison de l'échange dans les sociétés archaïques", *L'Année Sociologique* (1925), pp. 30-186.

[36] Marion Melk-Koch, "Richard Thurnwald und die Siebungstheorie", *Anthropologischer Anzeiger*, Vol. 54, No. 1 (März 1996), s. 71-81.

[37] The *Kulturkreislehre* formed the theoretical foundations of the "Wiener Schule" of Fr. Wilhelm Schmidt (1868-1954) and the basis for his widely-acclaimed linguistic work. Wilhelm Koppers, "Professor Pater Wilhelm Schmidt S. v. D.: Eine Würdigung seines Lebenswerkes", *Anthropos*, Bd. 51, H. 1/2 (1956), pp. 61-80; Robert Heine-Geldern, "One Hundred Years of Ethnological Theory in the German-speaking Countries: Some Milestones", *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 5, No. 5 (December 1964), pp. 407-418.

[38] Hermann Trimborn, "Die Entwicklung der wissenschaftlichen Fragestellung in der Völkerkunde seit Friedrich Ratzel und Adolf Bastian", *Erdkunde*, Bd. 13, H. 4 (Dezember 1959), pp. 372-381.

[39] See: Friedrich Ratzel, *Anthropogeographie* (Stuttgart: Verlag von J. Engelhorn, 1899).

[40] Frobenius established the parameters of the *Kulturkreislehre* in his 1898 *Der Ursprung der afrikanischen Kulturen*. Leo Frobenius, *Der Ursprung der afrikanischen Kulturen* (Berlin: Verlag von Gebrüder Borntraeger, 1898).

[41] Frobenius' place within the emerging diffusionist school is considered by Renée Sylvain as a "brief

dalliance”, as he eventually moved on to develop his, arguably less scientific, concept of *Kulturmorphologie*. Renée Sylvain, “Leo Frobenius. From ‘Kulturkreis to Kulturmorphologie’”, *Anthropos*, Bd. 91, H. 4/6 (1996), pp. 483-494.

[42] Graebner’s “Kulturkreise und Kulturschichten in Ozeanien” and Ankermann’s “Kulturkreise und Kulturschichten in Afrika” were seminal papers for the approach. Heine-Geldern, “One Hundred Years of Ethnological Theory”.

[43] Richard Thurnwald, “Die Krisis in der Ethnologie. Zur Entwicklungs- und Kulturkreislehre”, *Vierteljahrsschrift fuer Sozialwissenschaft*, Bd. 3 (1923), s. 34-41; Lowie, “Richard Thurnwald, 1869-1954”. For Graebner’s initial ideas on *Bogenkultur*, see: Fritz Graebner, “Die melanesische Bogenkultur und ihre Verwandten”, *Anthropos*, Bd. 4, H. 4 (1909), pp. 998-1032. For more on Graeber’s shifting stance on the subject, see: Heine-Geldern, “One Hundred Years of Ethnological Theory”.

[44] Adam, “In Memoriam: Richard Thurnwald.”

[45] Wilhelm Koppers, “Review of *Die menschliche Gesellschaft in ihren ethno-sociologischen Grundlagen*”, *Anthropos*, Bd. 27, H. 1 / 2 (January-April 1932), pp. 327-333.

[46] Josef Haeckel, “Review of *Die menschliche Gesellschaft in ihren ethno-sociologischen Grundlagen*”, *Anthropos*, Bd. 31, H. 3 / 4 (May – August 1936), p. 609.

[47] Heine-Geldern, “One Hundred Years of Ethnological Theory”.

[48] Juan Comas, “Herbert Baldus (1899-1970)”, *Boletín Bibliográfico de Antropología Americana*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (1972), pp. 97-109.

[49] Richard Thurnwald, “Papuanisches und melanesisches Gebiet südlich des Äquators einschliesslich Neuguinea”, in *Das Eingeborenerecht*, (Hgs.) E. Schultz-Ewerth und L. Adam, Bd. II (Stuttgart: Streck u. Schröder, 1930) pp. 543-657.

[50] Andre Gingrich, “German Anthropology during the Nazi Period: Complex Scenarios of Collaboration, Persecution, and Competition”, in *One Discipline, Four Ways: British, German, French, and American Anthropology*, (eds.) Fredrik Barth, Andre Gingrich, Robert Parkin and Sydel Silverman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), pp. 111-136.

[51] Gingrich, “German Anthropology during the Nazi Period.”

[52] Mühlmann served in the Nazi *Sturmabteilung* (SA) and later became a party member in 1935.

[53] Richard Thurnwald to Robert Lowie, 15 October 1946, Lowie Papers, Bancroft Library, UC Berkeley; Richard Thurnwald to Robert Lowie, 01 February 1947, Lowie Papers, Bancroft Library, UC Berkeley.

[54] Roland Girtler, “Kulturanthropologie und Soziologie (Versuch einer Identifizierung)”, *Zeitschrift für*

Ethnologie, Bd. 102, H. 1 (1977), pp. 1-8.

[55] Lowie considered Thurnwald, alongside Malinowski and Durkheim, one of the “leading students of primitive economics”. Lowie, *The History of Ethnological Theory*, p. 216.

[56] Donald Fisher, “Rockefeller Philanthropy: And the Rise of Social Anthropology”, *Anthropology Today*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (February 1986), pp. 5-8.

[57] Adam Kuper, “Social Anthropology”, *The History of the Social Sciences since 1945*, (eds.) Roger E. Backhouse and Philippe Fontaine (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 136-154.

[58] Peter Probst, “Betwixt and between: An Anthropologist’s Perspectives on the History of African Studies in Germany”, *Africa Spectrum*, Vol. 40, No. 3 (2005), pp. 403-427.

[59] Richard Thurnwald, *Black and White in East Africa: The Fabric of a New Civilization* (London: Routledge, 1935).

[60] A. P. Elkin, ‘Review of Black and White in East Africa by Richard Thurnwald’, *Oceania*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (December 1936), pp. 270-271.

[61] Probst, “Betwixt and between: An Anthropologist’s Perspectives on the History of African Studies in Germany”.

[62] Ibid.

[63] George Steinmetz, “Neo-Bourdieuian Theory and the Question of Scientific Autonomy: German Sociologists and Empire, 1890s-1940s”, in *Postcolonial Sociologies: A Reader*, (ed.) Julian Go (Bingley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing Limited, 2016), pp. 145-206; Klaus Timm, “Richard Thurnwald: ‘Kolonial Gestaltung’ - ein ‘Apartheids-Projekt’ fuer die koloniale Expansion des deutschen Faschismus in Afrika”, *Ethnographisch-Archaeologische Zeitschrift*, Bd. 79 (1977), s. 617-649.

[64] Hilda Thurnwald, *Gegenwarts-Probleme Berliner Familien; eine soziologische Untersuchung an 498 Familien* (Berlin: Weidmannsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1948).

[65] United Nations, *The Millennium Development Goals Report of 2015* (New York: United Nations Press, 2015).

[66] For example, see: Rajiv George Aricat and Rich Ling, *Mobile Communication and Low-Skilled Migrant’s Acculturation to Cosmopolitan Singapore* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2018); Jennifer E. Lansford and Prerna Banati (eds.), *Handbook of Adolescent Development Research and Its Impact on Global Policy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018); Giuseppe Carrus, Sabine Pichio and Stefano Mastandrea, “Social-Cultural Processes and Urban Affordances for Healthy and Sustainable Food Consumption”, *Frontiers in Psychology*, Vol. 9, No. 2407 (December 2018), pp. 1-9.; Sunil Bhatia and Anjali Ram, “Rethinking ‘Acculturation’ in Relation to Diasporic Cultures and Postcolonial Identities”, *Human Development*, Vol. 44 (2001), pp. 1-18.

