

<CN>Eight

<CT>Classroom Colonialism

<CST>Race, Pedagogy, and Patriotism in Imperial Germany

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<P1>As Germans struggled to define themselves as citizens of a recently unified nation-state after 1871, they did so with an eye toward a wider world being made ever smaller. The unprecedented expansion of global transportation, commercial, and communications networks, as well as the various scientific, military, and economic interventions they facilitated, were bringing the peoples of the world into ever closer contact. At the same time, the development of mass commercial culture, mass education, and mass politics provided new ways of mediating these encounters to ever-expanding publics at home. Of course, this global interaction around the turn of the twentieth century unfolded under the sign of empire. Accordingly, as distant and exotic lands progressively fell under the influence of Europeans and their descendants abroad, so did Germans, across lines of class, gender, region, and religion, come to see the world in colonial terms. There was a world that could be ordered according to hierarchies of civilization defined by the orderliness of spaces and the progressiveness of races. There was also a world in which collective progress and prosperity depended on the beneficent intervention of those higher on the scale in the affairs of those below.¹ Indeed, the ability to exercise such influence was the clearest manifestation of national vitality in an era defined by a Darwinian spirit of struggle. Seen in this context, empire, far from a matter of marginal interest, was rather a defining feature of how Germans understood themselves as a modern, civilized nation within a globalizing world.

Articulated in various confused, contradictory, and even conflicting forms throughout popular and official culture, a language of empire became a familiar part of everyday life over

the course of the *Kaiserreich*. This was not primarily the product of cynical efforts to indoctrinate the public in a particular political message but rather part of a broader cultural conversation about the workings of a rapidly changing world and Germans' place within it.² This chapter examines one critical site for working out the parameters of this relationship, namely, the classroom. Beginning in earnest in the 1880s, German elementary and secondary school students began to wrestle with the non-European world in a variety of disciplines. In German lessons, Ferdinand Freiligrath's poem "Lion Ride" ("Löwenritt") encouraged students to follow the "gruesome trail" (*grausenvolle Fährte*) of the "King of the Desert" as he rode on the back of a giraffe, teeth planted firmly in its neck.³ Natural history lessons familiarized students with markers of the colonial world ranging from elephants to ostriches and from coffee to coconuts, while history lessons by the late 1890s were beginning to include Germany's recent colonial acquisitions and, later, the wars in China and Southwest Africa. By the first decade of the twentieth century students were even grappling with the economic productivity of Germany's colonies and their country's overseas trade in their math assignments.⁴

However, for German students at all levels and in all types of preuniversity schools, the chief point of contact with the non-European world was within the discipline of geography. In geography lessons teachers brought students face to face with such "characteristic" subjects as the deserts of North Africa, the jungles of South America, and the typhoons of the South China Sea, not to mention the various racial "types" that populated the planet. Young Germans did not only learn about their own recently acquired colonial possessions and new "countrymen" (*Landsleute*) abroad, although these became more prominent as wars in China and Africa focused public attention on them. Students also studied those other areas of the world "colonized" by the German public imagination and by German economic interests, as well as

those regions under the sway of other European and North American powers. Their lessons presented them with a progressively exoticized “colonial” world portrayed in terms of its potential for exploitation by able colonizers. If successful, this education would convince students not only that the world could be understood in terms of empire but also that they, too, belonged among the colonizers and, as adults, could promote the cause of progress at home and abroad.

Perhaps surprisingly, this colonial education did not become institutionalized in German curricula as a result of efforts by colonialist activists or organizations.⁵ A body of reform-minded school geographers (*Schulgeographen*)⁶ were the driving force behind this development. Although some of them were indeed colonial enthusiasts, their motivations were primarily professional and pedagogical. They aimed first and foremost to shape their undervalued discipline in such a way that it appealed to education authorities and teachers updating curricula and instructional practices for the modern age. The opportunities and challenges that attended the introduction of mass education added urgency to these efforts. The new school geography conveyed useful information about the workings of the world as well as patriotic virtues; at the same time, lessons were used to encourage students’ interest in the subject through the obvious appeal of the unfamiliar and adventurous. Empire came to occupy and maintain a central place within German curricula by the turn of the century because school geographers employed it in ways that satisfied, on the one hand, teachers’ demands for engaging and illustrative material and, on the other, authorities’ demands for practical lessons for raising citizens who could promote Germany’s well-being around the globe and at home. Understanding the acceptance of colonial education in these terms, rather than as part of the pursuit of a relatively narrow political

agenda, helps us better appreciate the wider resonance of empire among the German public during the Imperial period.

Before the founding of Germany's overseas colonial empire in 1884, there were obviously no German colonies in classroom instruction. But there was also relatively little instruction on the rest of the non-European world up to this time. Because relatively few resources were devoted to training geography teachers and because most curricular guidelines designated geography as a subset of history, the subject was largely taught by historians or philologists who had little training in the discipline. When these teachers used the dedicated class time for geography instruction, they taught primarily the geography of the Mediterranean and northern European worlds, along with their lessons on classical languages and Greek, Roman, and German histories.⁷ This geography instruction was, as a rule, a dry affair all across Germany. Teachers generally gave their lessons in the form of lectures, and students at both the elementary and secondary levels were expected to memorize and regurgitate extensive lists of names, facts, and figures. Given this emphasis, it is not surprising that most critics and commentators considered geography an “unuseful, intellectually killing, statistical memory cram” and thus the “most sterile” of school subjects.⁸

School geographers and other commentators frequently lamented the state of geography instruction and from the 1860s began to discuss in a more organized fashion how to make their discipline more effective.⁹ In correspondence, lectures, and articles they petitioned officials across Germany to dedicate more classroom time to geography instruction independent of that of history and other humanities and to devote more resources to training geography teachers. Most of the German states, particularly in the south, were not overly receptive to their suggestions, but geographers' appeals did not fall on deaf ears in Prussia.¹⁰ The Prussian Ministry of Culture, as

the largest and most reform-minded of the German education ministries, became the particular focus of school geographers' attentions as they reformed their discipline. Prussian officials were in the process of reforming the nature and goals of education to suit the practical needs of the state.¹¹ These administrators saw a particular need to produce a citizenry with a better awareness of the world around them, given the rapid expansion of German economic and military interests around the globe. In exchange for extra resources devoted to training geography teachers and some minor curriculum changes, Prussian officials called on geographers to create, as Minister of Culture Gustav von Gossler proclaimed to the Deutscher Geographentag (Conference of German Geographers) in 1889, a geography "suited to the needs of today."¹² Teachers needed lessons that provided practical information relevant to an expansive Germany, and they also required a more effective manner of instruction appropriate to an age of mass culture and spectacular entertainments.

How best to reshape the practice of classroom instruction to suit the modern age had become a topic of considerable interest, especially for an influential, international circle of educators collected under the umbrella of "reform pedagogy" (*Reformpädagogik*). In all their diversity these pedagogues were united in their critique of modern industrial society and its mechanistic teaching methods, which did not deal with students as individuals with unique interests and abilities and sought to suppress or overcome childish tendencies as quickly as possible. Reaching back to Rousseau and Pestalozzi, reformers called instead for a pedagogy "that begins with the child" (*vom Kinde aus*): teaching strategies must be tailored to each student, and they must embrace the unique qualities of childhood. These educators started from the premise that imagination was the most effective teaching tool and developing self-reliance its most important goal. While school geographers did not endorse the most progressive, even

utopian goals of leading reform pedagogues, many were captivated by the practical teaching strategies they encouraged. Through “illustrative” (*anschaulich*) teaching methods and practical applications, teachers could help students come to an understanding of the material at hand through their own efforts.¹³ Young Germans would learn more effectively, and, with their creative faculties engaged with enriching lessons, they would be less susceptible to the much-disparaged mass commercial culture coming into its own during this same period.¹⁴

The undeniable appeal of mass entertainments—more to the point, the degeneracy many presumed they inspired—lent special urgency to the quest for an engaging pedagogy, but it also inspired effective teaching tools that school geographers later turned to their advantage. As the Strasbourg geographer Rudolf Langenbeck noted during a discussion about the value of local studies (*Heimatkunde*) for introducing geographical concepts in the first years of elementary schooling, the young student was especially “thirsty for the new, his interest is directed far more at foreign lands and peoples than the narrow homeland.” To fellow school geographer Heinrich Matzat’s concern that this interest derived from sensationalized Indian stories and adventure tales, Langenbeck argued that teachers should use this interest to make their teaching more effective:

<EXT>It is certainly true to an extent, but who is keeping teachers of VI [approximately age 8] from livening up their stories by weaving in tales of individual exploits, from telling students—in appropriate places—about lion and elephant hunts, about battles between Europeans and natives, about travelers’ trials and tribulations while crossing Africa or on a polar journey? It is certainly also true that kids are more interested in getting to know the site of their heroes’ great deeds than to be chained for a whole year in

the narrow confines of their own neighborhood. . . . [Focusing only on the local] means fundamentally spoiling the joy of geography from the outset.¹⁵

Indeed, school geographers predicated their claim to be the very “science of illustration,” to use the eminent atlas maker Hermann Kropatschek’s description of his own discipline, on their ability to take students on imaginary journeys around the globe.¹⁶ Tapping into the appeal of the exoticized and unfamiliar without degenerating into the voyeurism of trashy entertainments, geography teachers could keep their students interested in illustrative lessons about how the contemporary world worked.

As school geographers reshaped their discipline to meet “the needs of today,” they devoted considerable energy to positioning geography as the subject best suited to prepare students to succeed in the contemporary world. After intensive discussions amongst themselves and in consultation with Prussian officials, they rallied around the so-called land-and-people (*Land-und-Leute*) approach, which encouraged reflection on the reciprocal influence between an environment and its inhabitants. More than simply pointing out geographic formations on a map, reformist school geographers argued for a methodology that started with understanding the features of a landscape before moving on to the ways that humans had developed that landscape and then addressing the political structures that humans developed to manage the resulting societies. In an intellectual climate in which the relative value of the humanities vis-à-vis the sciences was an explosive issue among education officials and competing interest groups, geographers claimed they could bridge the gap between the two by approaching human civilization as a form of adaptation to given natural conditions.¹⁷

Attention to geographical relationships not only promoted the illustrative lessons the most modern pedagogy demanded; it also allowed teachers to address what one teacher in

training described as the “ethical side of instruction.” Teaching students that “the features of the earth’s surface exist in particular dependent relationships” necessarily required directing them “to the fact that under the same natural conditions the same is not always achieved.” Thinking in terms of the hierarchies of race and civilization that were one of the first topics covered in the geography curriculum, he continued: “Because man is not unconditionally subject to the rule of nature it is left to his free will to decide whether to take advantage of the benefits of a territory or not.”¹⁸ By the 1890s, the object of geography instruction had become not only how the environment conditioned human development but also the extent to which humans successfully exploited available natural resources. School geographers intended this instruction to frame the very narrative of world history, illustrating the conditions under which nations rise and fall. Those nations that chose to successfully utilize their resources succeeded, and those that did not were destined to decline or fall under the influence of more innovative and efficient peoples.

The practical uses of such knowledge were clear. As early as 1879 one commentator on the controversial question of secondary school reform included among the “characteristics of every educated man” a familiarity with “the newest discoveries in the field, so important nowadays, of non-European geography.” In an age when industry and commerce constituted the world’s “main arteries” (*Hauptpulsadern*), the writer continued, educated Germans could not do without a “pretty comprehensive familiarity with the geographic and ethnographic relations of our earth, some familiarity with the production strength of countries, and the trading relationships of nations.”¹⁹ Indeed, as school geographers made the case for their discipline’s practical value, they increasingly made economic production, the exploitation of available natural resources, and commercial relations—as the primary measures of a nation’s strength—the focus of their teaching recommendations. In an environment of increasing competition over

lucrative markets and limited but necessary resources beyond the boundaries of the civilized world, school geographers increasingly presented the non-European world in terms of its potential for economic exploitation and thus for strengthening Germany's trade relations vis-à-vis the rest of the world. This colonial world, including but not limited to Germany's young colonial empire, had become "so important nowadays" because it was the site where national strength would be tested.

With the land-and-people approach school geographers explicitly put their discipline in the service of German expansion. School geography became a matter of surveying, explaining, and thereby facilitating the expansion of colonial influence around the globe. Richard Lehmann, speaking at the eleventh Deutscher Geographentag in Bremen in 1895, insisted that the importance of geography was "greater than ever before." At the end of the nineteenth century European civilization was spreading over the entire earth "and indeed in ever growing expansion and strength." Germans, Lehmann continued, did not live in some isolated corner where it was possible to hide from the world around them. On the contrary, "our country is the central country of the most powerfully civilized continent," and Germany's expanding world trade, which was of such importance for their way of life, could only grow more in the next century. Lehmann pointed specifically to the recent entry of Germany into the family of colonizing peoples, noting that even if "the development [*Nutzbarmachung*] of the [colonies] is still small at first and everything there is still in the process of becoming, much can develop out of them in the course of time." The coming twentieth century would require students to look beyond Europe and familiarize themselves with the United States, the "colossus" China, and an already modernizing Japan. Given all of this, Lehmann asked rhetorically, should an awareness of the wider world and

its inhabitants not be something that “must belong in the required kit of every educated person?”²⁰

It was as the object of both exotic entertainment and potential economic exploitation that the non-European world found its way into German secondary and elementary school curricula beginning in the 1880s and 1890s. As more material became available on Germany’s colonies specifically, the *Schutzgebiete* took on ever more importance as the exotic sites where Germans’ competence was most directly tested and proven. This process was by no means uniform or consistent across Germany. School geographers praised certain states (Prussia, Saxony, Bremen) rather than others (Baden, Württemberg, Bavaria) for their willingness to promote the teaching of geography.²¹ While elementary schools did not vary significantly in their teaching emphases, at the secondary level the humanist *Gymnasien* and girls’ schools took up school geographers’ suggestions far less readily than did the more practically oriented *Realschulen*, *Oberrealschulen*, and continuation schools (*Fortbildungsschulen*).²² It also took time to marshal the resources needed to properly train teachers. Nevertheless, by the turn of the century state and school officials and teachers generally accepted that Germany’s relationship with the wider world was worthy of attention, even if they disagreed on precisely how much in relation to other subjects.²³ While important for establishing the outlines of geography instruction, general curricular suggestions did not represent school geographers’ greatest impact on the teaching of their discipline. Rather, they hoped to intervene directly in the classroom through the teaching materials they produced. Because teachers all across Germany and in all types of schools tended to rely on the same basic materials, it is worth taking a closer look at teaching resources to illustrate how school geographers employed empire to shape instructional practice.

Despite differences in form, style, and content, the materials produced by the 1890s maintained a striking uniformity in the narrative they presented to teachers and students, and editors developed increasingly more sophisticated textual and visual techniques to effectively “illustrate” their lessons in the sense encouraged by reform pedagogy. There were three basic types of geography resources in use by the turn of the century. Textual materials, readers chief among them, provided intensive and engaging discussions on a variety of subjects, while increasingly sophisticated collections of images (drawings and later photographs) or products provided visual and tactile resources for students to interpret in the classroom. Textbooks, although meant chiefly as references to be used by teachers to construct lessons and by students to review at home, served as the crucial backbone of instruction. Their factual details and narrative surveys provided the interpretive context within which world relations could be understood. A survey of the three most widely used textbook series in Prussia by the turn of the century—those originally founded by H. A. Daniel, Ernst von Seydlitz, and Alfred Kirchhoff—illustrates the common narrative, drawn from Ritter’s land-and-people approach with its emphasis on the interaction between environment and humans.²⁴ All human development was bound together in a history of ever-expanding contact among the world’s peoples driven by advances in commerce and transportation. Interaction offered opportunities for nations that successfully exploited their own wealth to prove their strength by exploiting and assisting those unable to do so on their own. All people were part of a grand quest to settle and develop the entire world, a quest whose end goal was “the economic satisfaction of humanity.”²⁵

Students learned most explicitly about Europe’s position of leadership among the world’s races, in this process of “mutual” development, through lessons on the racial divisions of humanity.²⁶ Although the specific information contained in these sections changed to suit new

research and although the textbooks sometimes disagreed about such things as the number of races on the planet and the most important defining characteristics, they all nonetheless agreed on how ethnology contributed to an understanding of the interaction of humanity and nature. The standard overviews of skin color, skull shapes, and facial features of the races usually led readers to discussions of the diverse ways of life associated with them and, necessarily, their ranking according to contemporary standards of civilization. As the 1891 edition of Daniel's *Leitfaden für den Unterricht in der Geographie* explained, physiological characteristics were intimately intertwined with sociocultural habits determined in part by environment. After asking readers to name the races that live in Africa, the review questions at the end of the introduction asked about those races' ways of life: "Why do herding and hunting peoples not carry out agriculture? And what disadvantages do they derive from this?" The answer to these leading questions can be found on the previous page:

<EXT> Only the necessity of life forced these [peoples] to their nomad lifestyle or to their hunting and fishing life and holds them firmly to it. Their life represents a step backwards from agriculture. By contrast, agriculture offers a peaceful, quiet life, without the exhausting concerns about acquiring sustenance, rich in sociability and leisure. Crafts, arts, trades, commerce easily develop out of this: in this way it [agriculture] leads man to higher development [*Bildung*], to civilization [*Civilisation*].²⁷ </EXT>

All agreed that the "caucasian," or "white," race was the most "important" of the world's races, and this was reflected both in the sophistication of its sedentary civilization and its "beautiful physical build [*Gliederbau*] and noble facial features."²⁸ As the twentieth edition of Seydlitz's *Kleine Schul-Geographie* explained to readers, "The Europeans—best enabled by the climate to lasting exertions of strength, developed by the diverse topography of their continent in

the most varied ways, further blessed by the location of [the continent] in the middle of the three largest continents—has known, since the beginning of historical time, how to win and maintain first place among the populations of the earth.”²⁹ Thus not only through geographic advantage but, in Kirchhoff’s words, “through diligent work in the intellectual and economic realms Europe became the most powerful and wealthy of the continents.”³⁰ The potential for civilization was determined only in part by given natural conditions; the rest was a matter of choice and dedicated effort.

Their leading position in the world had driven Europeans to spread beyond the boundaries of their continent. Not only did they become the “most capable emigrants, who now have begun to make Europe’s culture into that of the world, Christianity to the religion of the world”; European explorers were the agents who brought the world’s distant regions into ever closer contact.³¹ Textbooks related the deeds of explorers like Marco Polo, Christopher Columbus, Ferdinand Magellan, and James Cook, who had done so much to expand European knowledge of the distant world in centuries past. In a transparent effort to grab students’ interest, they included more recent celebrities—such internationally renowned names as Henry Morton Stanley, David Livingstone, and Sven Hedin—but also devoted themselves to introducing students and teachers to the Germans who belonged in the pantheon of great explorers. Men such as Heinrich Barths, Gerhard Rohlfs, and Gustav Nachtigal had also played an important role, at great personal risk, in the “entirely new epoch in the illumination of inner Africa.”³²

By the 1890s, with the growing official interest in a practical education centered on world commerce, textbook series inserted these explorers into an appropriate narrative. From the ancient Phoenicians who first spread their culture across the Mediterranean, to the Italian and German city-states who dominated trade in the Middle Ages, to the great European sea powers

who established colonies around world, economic competition and advances in transportation promoted world trade and brought civilization to those areas that lacked it.³³ Atlases and wall maps, such as in Figure 8.1, made visible the growing interconnectedness via world commerce.³⁴ Where they had previously provided only political boundaries and topographical features, over the course of the 1890s they began to include important transportation and communications networks. The presentation of railroads, steamer routes, and telegraph lines enclosed the world in a net whose strings were tightened in Europe.

These networks bound Europe to a colonial world in need of assistance, a world defined, in all its diversity, as fundamentally chaotic, backwards, and, as a result, underdeveloped. Locals' inability—in the case of the *Naturvölker* of the “dark continent”—or stubborn unwillingness—in the case of the ancient but declining *Kulturvölker* of India and China—to develop the wealth of their lands not only bred disorder and stagnation in their own lands but also limited the economic progress of all peoples around the globe. For the mutual benefit of all concerned, then, capable colonizers had to overcome this backwardness; empire, as the antidote for the ills of the colonial world, was not only a reflection of the vitality of a nation but also the expression of a humanitarian imperative.

<Figure 8.1 here>

To buttress this perspective and to keep students' attention, textbooks and other teaching materials pursued a twin strategy in their portrayals of the colonial world, emphasizing chaos and underdevelopment and the potential for future exploitation. Students learned in particular about the raw materials necessary to produce the industrial and consumer goods recognizable from advertising or their household pantries.³⁵ Where they had previously focused on matters of historical or religious interest, textbooks increasingly focused their summary overviews on

listing mineral resources and “usable plants” (*Nutzpflanzen*). Representational drawings, photographs, and product collections allowed students to see or handle such mundane items as rice, cotton, rubber, tea, and coffee in their raw form, while readers provided longer readings on their cultivation and processing. Such materials gave students a “grasp,” both literal and figurative, of the available wealth outside Europe and of their own intimate connections with distant lands.³⁶ At the same time, they established a distance between the colonial world that provided raw materials and the civilized world that processed and consumed them.

Material surveying the colonial world’s landscapes and fauna fulfilled the purpose of livening up instruction by constructing a titillatingly uncivilized colonial world. In image collections, quaintly idyllic pastoral scenes or bustling urban scenes defined images of Europe’s “characteristic” landscapes, while common markers of underdevelopment, such as the untamed jungles, deserts, and animals that made adventure novels so exciting, became more prevalent and more pronounced in images of the colonial world.³⁷ Textbooks always listed game animals along with the various other natural resources, and readers, especially those used in elementary schools, emphasized danger and excitement in the colonial world by describing how lions, elephants, and other wild creatures interacted with humans in the still untamed areas they inhabited. Such descriptions did not shy away from providing gruesome accounts of the perils and thrills that such encounters could provide. To wit, an instructional essay on lions in an 1890 edition of Ferdinand Hirt’s *Lesebuch für Volksschulen* described in detail the discomfort a traveling party experienced when a lion with a taste for human flesh slipped into camp one night, dragged a traveler away by the throat, and proceeded to crunch his bones within clear hearing distance of the camp. The article assuaged sensitive readers’ fears by assuring them that a single

pistol shot will drive away such a beast and by advising that the best time to hunt such creatures is when they sleep around midday.³⁸

However much school geographers hoped to draw lessons from the world of popular culture, they always tempered their portrayals of the colonial world with an interest in taming the wilderness and ordering the chaos through development and integration into global trading networks. We can see in Figure 8.2, which portrays “Papuas” from the German colony of Kaiser-Wilhelms-Land (on New Guinea), how school geographers situated all the necessary ethnographic and economic details within the colonial narrative of the new school geography.³⁹ Here we see “natives” (*Eingeborene*) taking proper advantage of their tropical paradise. The accompanying text by Alfred Kirchhoff takes time to outline for teachers the exotic physiognomic and cultural features of the Papua “race” that students should note, from their facial features and skin color to their skimpy skirts and colorful jewelry. Their appearance, superstitions, and characteristic wooden pole houses—“as were also common on the inland shores of prehistoric Europe”—mark them as a *Naturvolk* on a lower stage of development than readers (but “not at all so low”), but the Papuas are nevertheless “clever little people.”

<Figure 8.2 here>

They obviously live off the abundant fruits of their local environment, and they have also become linked into the global economy. Women and men hand the result of a successful day’s fishing to the pilots of outriggers, and others prepare yams, coconuts, and a spitted Papua pig. While one woman brings a pot of tuna, another man directs a girl to gather a bunch of bananas. In the background towers that ubiquitous marker of tropical bounty, the palm tree. The man at the very center of the image explains all the activity by pointing to the German steamer that has appeared on the horizon, their link to the world economy.⁴⁰ Overcoming their initial fears when

they first encountered white men, the Papuas have distinguished themselves as a people willing to take advantage of the connection their German colonial rulers have provided to a wider world of which they formerly knew little. In Kirchhoff's estimation, this interaction represents a "promising beginning to establishing peace and order among these tribes, to putting our trade and our industry to use, to blessing the cultural development of the natives."⁴¹

In their various teaching materials, school geographers hoped to fix in students' minds the relationship between the local and global in a world defined by empire. This project entailed making students aware of connections and opportunities all around the globe, but Germany's overseas empire became a focal point of lessons on the colonial world soon after the founding of the first colonies in the mid-1880s. Even before the newly acquired territories became a required subject of instruction, textbooks provided what limited and inconsistent details they could gather.⁴² Their formal inclusion in the Prussian secondary school curricular revisions of 1892 spurred the introduction of more detailed surveys in textbooks, as well as the production of various supplementary aids focused exclusively on the colonies.⁴³ As more information and materials became available over the course of the 1890s and thereafter, the *Schutzgebiete* took an ever more central role within instruction on the colonial world. By the turn of the century, only India and China received equal attention in textbooks, and thereafter students increasingly found their lessons focused around such readings as "An Ostrich Hunt in Southwest Africa," "Our Togo Negroes as Farmers," and "A Coffee Plantation in East Africa."⁴⁴ For school geographers, lessons on Germany's efforts to civilize their own colonies most directly illustrated Germany's positive contributions to world development, but they also reflected the rising strength of a nation divided until 1871.⁴⁵ Indeed, given school geographers' basic assumptions about the rise and fall of nations in the modern era, these were intimately intertwined.

As they tried to familiarize German students with the workings of the world around them, school geographers pursued a project at once pedagogical, political, and practical. They claimed for their discipline a unique ability both to effectively engage students drawn to the charms of spectacular mass culture and to effectively prepare them to promote their nation's interests in a world being drawn ever closer together. They responded to the demands of education authorities, pedagogical reformers, and their own professional self-interest with their vision of a world defined by empire, a world in which vigorous peoples expanded their influence while decline awaited those that did not. Given contemporary concerns over the possible degeneracy that attended industrial modernity, this vision, in turn, lent urgency to school geographers' claims. Although they never achieved quite the expansion of their subject they desired, they did succeed in convincing officials and teachers across Germany that their instruction was a valuable tool for preparing young Germans to succeed as adults. By the turn of the century, lessons on the colonial world, especially Germany's overseas empire, had become institutionalized, and suitable teaching materials were both readily available and widely used. Increasingly over the course of the Imperial period, when teachers told their students stories about the wider world, they did so in the language of empire.

As historians Hans-Dietrich Schultz and Heinz Peter Brogatio point out with regard to the professionalization of geography at the university level, we make an important mistake if we reduce this development to "an organized form of colonial agitation."⁴⁶ On the one hand, this is a matter of chronology. Colonialist activists and organizations in general did play an important role in producing, promoting, and facilitating access to a wide range of teaching materials in high demand among officials and teachers, but they only began to do so from the turn of the century. They expanded and refined what school geographers had already achieved. On the other hand,

this is a matter of context. The vision of the world that school geographers created and disseminated was only one contributor to a much broader societal engagement with empire that extended far beyond the sphere of education, although it did play an important role in setting the context and providing the terms for encounters in other spheres. By recognizing this fact—that school geographers actively responded to and engaged with other, more popular forms of colonial knowledge—we make it possible to distinguish the many competing, confused, and conflicting manifestations of empire that ran throughout German culture during the Imperial era and beyond.

<A>Notes

<NO>¹ In the context of European hegemony, the position of colonial cultivator was a generally understood metaphor for progress and power; contemporary Germans found it useful for framing relationships that extended beyond those traditionally understood as “colonial”—for example, between Germans and Poles in the East or between social reformers and the marginalized subjects of their zeal. See, for example, Ketelsen, “Der koloniale Diskurs”; Kopp, *Germany’s Wild East*; Kopp and Müller-Richter, eds., *Die “Großstadt” und das “Primitive.”*

² For further discussion of the uses of colonialism in media aimed at youth during the imperial period, see my *Raising Germans in the Age of Empire*.

³ See Freiligrath, “Löwenritt.”

⁴ *Schwelmer’s Rechenbuch* asked students to compare the size and population of the colonies with those of the metropole and assess the increasing profitability of the colonies. See Barth, *Unsere Kolonien im Schulunterricht*, 17–18.

⁵ For a comprehensive survey of educational efforts by the organized colonial movement that nevertheless overemphasizes their role and identifies colonial enthusiasm too narrowly with *Kolonialpolitik*, see Holston, “<HR>‘A Measure of the Nation.’<HR>”

⁶ The term refers specifically to those geographers whose focus was on the teaching of the subject at the pre-university level, to differentiate them from university faculty or various other researchers.

⁷ Sperling, “Zur Darstellung der deutschen Kolonien,” 388.

⁸ “Der geographische Unterricht auf der höheren Schulen,” *Die Post*, Nr. 230 (August 21, 1888); Kühne to Falk (February 8, 1874), Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz [GStA PK] I. HA Rep. 76 Kultusministerium VI Sekt. I z Nr. 32 Bd. IV Bl. 247.

⁹ Schultz, *Die Geographie als Bildungsfach*, 64–72.

¹⁰ Kropatschek, *Zur geschichtlichen Entwicklung*, 18; Naumann, “Geographische Tagesfragen”; Kirchhoff, “Über die Vorbereitung der Geographielehrer,” 127.

¹¹ Nipperdey, *Arbeitswelt und Bürgergeist*, 537–540, 549–554.

¹² “Deutscher Geographentag,” *Volkszeitung* (April 25, 1889).

¹³ Herrmann, “Pädagogisches Denken und Anfänge der Reformpädagogik,” 161–171.

¹⁴ For a good introduction to the development of mass culture in Germany and its attendant anxieties, see Maase and Kaschuba, eds., *Schund und Schönheit*.

¹⁵ Langenbeck, “Der Erdkundliche Unterricht nach den neuen Lehrpläne.” 196–207.

¹⁶ Kropatschek, *Zur geschichtlichen Entwicklung*, 161–172.

¹⁷ For a more detailed survey of the complicated debates and competing positions among school geographers during this period of transition, see Schultz, *Die Geographie als Bildungsfach*, esp. 111–124, 267–298.

¹⁸ Maurer, “Seminararbeit” (January 7, 1887), 1, Hessisches Staatsarchiv Darmstadt Best. G 53 Gießen-LLG Nr. 375.

¹⁹ E.S., *Zur Reorganisation der höheren Schulanstalten*, GStA PK I. HA Rep. 76, Kultusministerium VI Sekt. I z Nr. 20 Bd. V Bl. 18.

²⁰ Lehmann, “Der Bildungswert der Erdkunde,” 192, 195–198.

²¹ “Bericht über den Verlauf,” x–xi; Rößger, “Die Pflege der Erdkunde”; Schultz, *Die Geographie als Bildungsfach*, 160–169.

²² This was a frequent complaint that had more to do with the politics of school reform than any negative value ascribed to instruction on the colonial world. See the discussion in “Bericht über die Hauptversammlung,” Bundesarchiv [BArch] R 8023/952 Bl. 113.

²³ See the results of surveys carried out by the Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft in 1900 and 1911. BArch R 8023/941 Bl. 129; BArch R 8023/952 Bl. 194.

²⁴ After Seydlitz’s death in 1849 and Daniel’s in 1871, their august series were continued by different editors. After editing Daniel’s series for a number of years, Kirchhoff decided to create his own textbook. His was an explicit and successful attempt to create a new series appropriate to the new ideas in school geography, ideas he did more than anyone to promote.

²⁵ Oehlmann, ed., *E. v. Seydlitz’sche Geographie*, 315.

²⁶ These sections simplified the most contemporary research for students. See Zimmerman, *Anthropology and Antihumanism in Imperial Germany*; Penny, *Objects of Culture*.

²⁷ Volz, *Leitfaden für den Unterricht*, 176th ed., 29–30.

²⁸ Kirchhoff, ed. *Leitfaden für den Unterricht*, 21; *Kleine Schul-Geographie*, 31.

²⁹ Simon and Oehlmann, eds., *E. v. Seydlitz’sche Geographie*, 78–79.

³⁰ Kirchhoff, *Erdkunde für Schulen*, 10.

³¹ Kirchhoff, *Erdkunde für Schulen*, 9–10. For a concise, schematic model of this narrative and its fundamental axioms that nonetheless relies on an overly simplistic model of top-down manipulation by a vaguely defined “European elite” to explain its construction, see Blaut, *The Colonizer’s Model of the World*, 1–30.

³² Kirchhoff, ed., *Lehrbuch der Geographie*, 98–99.

³³ See, for example, Volz, ed., *Leitfaden für den Unterricht*, 210th ed., 212–220; Oehlmann, ed., *E. v. Seydlitz’sche Geographie*, 314–326; Kirchhoff, *Erdkunde für Schulen*, 224–236.

³⁴ Diercke and Gaebler, *Schul-Atlas für höhere Lehranstalten*.

³⁵ Ciarlo, *Advertising Empire*.

³⁶ Badenberg, “Zwischen Kairo und Alt-Berlin,” 355.

³⁷ This was the case even in the earliest collections of images found in textbooks. See Simon, ed., *E. v. Seydlitz’sche Geographie*, 169–183.

³⁸ Anon. “Der Löwe,” in *Ferdinand Hirts Lesebuch für Volksschulen*, 301–302.

³⁹ Photographs were not widely used as a teaching resource until after the turn of the century. Before this, narrative or pictorial overviews of a region, called *Charakterbilder*, provided teachers the best tool for illustrating their geography lessons. Each *Charakterbild* was meant to provide a single coherent “picture” that illustrated the interactions between land and people and, thus, the essential “character” of the region. Besides the best-known works, those edited by Hölzel, Leutemann, and Lehmann, there were also less expensive collections, like Hirt’s, that, while not as acclaimed, served the same basic purpose. For a discussion of different *Charakterbilder* series available around the turn of the century, see Nowack et al., eds., *Der Unterricht in den Realien*, 43–44.

⁴⁰ Although the illustration identifies it only as a “European” steamship, the text is more specific about its provenance.

⁴¹ “Papuas,” in Leutemann, ed., *Bilder aus dem Völkerleben*.

⁴² Volz, ed., *Lehrbuch der Geographie*, 64th ed., 113; Simon and Oehlmann, eds., *E. v. Seydlitz’sche Geographie*, 171.

⁴³ See, for example, Kirchhoff, *Die Schutzgebiete des deutschen Reiches*, and Partsch, *Die Schutzgebiete des Deutschen Reiches*. Partsch’s booklet was the textual accompaniment to his friend Richard Kiepert’s *Deutscher Kolonialatlas*.

⁴⁴ Jenetzky and Hellmuth, eds., *R. u. W. Dietleins Deutsches Lesebuch*.

⁴⁵ Volz, ed., *Leitfaden für den Unterricht*, 210th ed., 212–220; Oehlmann, ed., *E. v. Seydlitz’sche Geographie*, 314–326; Kirchhoff, *Erdkunde für Schulen*, 224–236.

⁴⁶ Schultz and Brogatio, “Gesellschaft für Erdkunde zu Berlin,” 87.