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Primitive Art, Primitive Accumulation, and the Origin of the Work of Art in German New Guinea

Andrew Zimmerman

One of the most important ways that European artists created an identifiably modern art was by turning to the aesthetic productions of Africa, the Pacific, and elsewhere as “primitive” inspirations for their own painting and sculpture. The German expressionist painter Emil Nolde was unusual among these in that he, unlike Pablo Picasso, Paul Gauguin, and many other European enthusiasts for primitive art and life, involved himself in an official capacity in the European colonial enterprise.¹ In 1913–1914 Nolde took part in a major medical expedition sent by the German Colonial Office to study the causes of population decline in the colony of New Guinea. Nolde did not merely tag along with the expedition in order to pursue artistic interests indifferent to, or even at odds with, the routines of colonial governance and formations of colonial knowledge. Rather, he contributed to the German colonial project at a decisive moment, when expanding labor demands of German firms in New Guinea led to a crisis of colonial capitalism, anthropological knowledge, and racial representation. The art that Nolde produced in New Guinea, like the larger German colonial project in which he participated, produced the primitive as a space of modern aesthetic and economic production by positing this domain, paradoxically, as precapitalist and premodern.

Nolde held that those societies colonized by Europe represented something ancient and originary, signified by the German prefix *Ur-*, for example in *Urvölkerkunst*, the art of primitive peoples.² In recognizing the existence of *Urvölkerkunst*, Nolde, like many other artists, overturned a venerable aesthetic tradition that distinguished true art, an elite cultural product, from mere decoration, which included the aesthetic productions of non-Europeans. This separation of art and decoration found its greatest expression in Immanuel Kant’s 1790 *Critique of Judgment*. Nolde’s turn to the art of the colonized involved, as Arthur Danto has argued for the case of Picasso’s work

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in the Trocadéro that led to his 1907 *Demoiselles d'Avignon*, not simply an extension of an old and universal concept of art to hitherto unjustly excluded realms, but rather a transformation of European artistic practice such that it necessarily, and even retroactively, included productions of Africa and elsewhere, as art.³

Nolde's younger contemporary, Martin Heidegger, formulated a post-Kantian aesthetics that incorporates the primitive even while remaining resolutely Eurocentric. In his 1936 "Origin of the Work of Art" ("Ursprung des Kunstwerkes"), Heidegger argues that art itself has no historical origin but rather itself functions as an origin. The German term for origin, *Ursprung*, adds the prefix *Ur-* to the word for leap, and Heidegger, intensely conscious of such resonances, describes art as an *Ursprung* that is also a "grounding leap and advance" ("*gründende Sprung und Vorsprung*").⁴ For Heidegger, as we shall see, the originary character of art stands out from, but also grounds, the creativity of human labor. Nolde's own rendering of the primitive in German New Guinea was part of an expedition whose principal purpose was to extract more labor from the indigenous populations and thus presents a decidedly dystopian version of the connections that Heidegger posits between labor and the primitive in art. Nolde and Heidegger each invoke a mystified primitive in their understandings of art and in their implicit understandings of labor. Jacques Derrida's *Truth in Painting* and Karl Marx's theory of primitive accumulation (*ursprüngliche Akkumulation*), by contrast, each suggest that the primitive is not something mystical, prior to and outside of routines of capitalist labor, but rather is a necessary structural feature of capitalist labor and modernity. Reading Derrida and Marx alongside Kant and Heidegger helps explain the connection between Nolde's turn to primitive art and the colonial project of primitive accumulation.

Prior to his participation in the colonial expedition, Nolde described his interest in the German overseas empire as a source for his own artistic production in terms familiar from many of his contemporaries. Like other artists, Nolde sought in the colonial world a primitive spontaneity that would push his painting beyond an overly constrained European artistic tradition. At least three years before the expedition, Nolde began sketching objects displayed in the Berlin Museum of Ethnology, which also led to a number of paintings, the most famous of which is his 1911 *Mask Still Life III*, which depicts masks in a museum display case as expressive and fantastic faces

returning the gaze of the viewer.⁵ Nolde described his trips to the museum as a turn to the “*Urwüchsigen*,” literally to the “primitive-growing,” to find an alternative to the “overwrought [*überzüchtete*], pale, decadent works of art” of his European contemporaries.⁶

Such an interest in the “artistic expressions of the natural people” (“*Kunstäußerungen der Naturvölker*”), challenged not only European artistic practice but also contemporary anthropology and, more broadly, German understandings of the societies of Africa and the South Pacific. German anthropologists in the period before the First World War concluded that these societies were not simply primitive—standing at the beginning of a unitary path of historical development along which the societies of Europe had traveled considerably further. Rather, German anthropologists described the societies they studied as natural peoples, *Naturvölker*, people immediately part of nature, not with a primitive culture, but rather without any culture (*Kultur*) at all.⁷

The opposition between the *Naturvölker* and *Kulturvölker*, the people without culture and history and the people with culture and history, implied that the *Naturvölker* had no art. As Adolf Bastian, the most important German anthropological theorist of the later nineteenth century, explained, “natural peoples” were, in contrast to those societies with history, the “immediate imprint” of their environment.⁸ If the objects of the “natural people” were representations of nature, then the “natural peoples” themselves could not have been “immediate imprints” of nature. They would have been representers of nature rather than that part of the world which could be represented as nature. Because the German anthropology of the period before the First World War was primarily a museum science of artifacts and body parts collected by amateurs in the colonies, rather than a fieldwork science of ethnographic writing, the lack of art—the status of its objects as not-art—was not simply evidence of a common European ethnocentrism, but rather a founding assumption of anthropological practice.

Anthropologists categorized those objects or aspects of objects which they perceived to have an aesthetic value—whose existence might otherwise appear to invalidate the concept of *Naturvölker*—as decoration rather than as art. This understanding of decoration came likely from *Der Stil* (*Style*), a well-known 1860 work by the German architect Gottfried Semper. Semper argued that decoration originated not from aesthetic or representational

impulses but rather as the accidental results of the techniques employed to make useful objects. Thus, for example, a cross-hatched pattern emerged as a decorative form only after it had already appeared in the warp and weft of woven textiles, and patterns in ceramics were similarly no more than traces of the techniques used to produce them.⁹

The distinction, so important for Semper and for German anthropology, between decoration and art received its foundational treatment in Kant's *Critique of Judgment*. The distinction between art and decoration serves to illustrate Kant's larger point that aesthetic judgments are independent of the pleasure that a work arouses in a viewer. Art should have some "allure" (*Reiz*), in order to "interest" viewers in an otherwise "dry appreciation" of the work on purely formal grounds. Such "charms" thus encourage "taste and its cultivation." The charm of a work, however, though perhaps necessary for viewers to appreciate its beauty, should also, for Kant, be clearly distinguished from, and subordinated to, the true essence, dry though it might be, of art. Kant employs this distinction between true beauty and mere "allure" even within individual works. In a painting, for example, the drawing is art while the color in that painting belongs only to its "allure." As a particularly clear example of this distinction and this subordination, Kant cited the distinction between a painting and its frame. A frame marks the work inside it as art, thus adding "allure" to beauty, but could never itself count as art. Kant generalized his example of the distinction between the painting and the frame to a broader distinction between objects of art and the decorations placed on them to increase their charm. He employed the Greek term for decoration, *parerga*, literally that which is beside (*par*) the work (*erga*). Like the many distinctions mobilized in Kant's aesthetics, this one seeks to preserve a notion of pure beauty that exists apart from, but also in practical dependence on, less pure elements in a given work.¹⁰

The pedagogical purpose of decoration in attracting viewers to a formal beauty that they might not otherwise appreciate suggests broader social disciplinary functions. Kant makes this implication clear in his later discussion of genius, when taste, which has been cultivated by enticing people to appreciate beauty, then serves an explicitly disciplinary function in the production of art by genius:

Taste is, like judgment generally, the discipline (or training up [Zucht]) of genius. Taste severely clips the wings of genius, and makes it civilized [gesittet] and polished; at the

same time, taste gives genius the lead, directing it where and how far to spread itself in order to remain purposive. In bringing clarity and order to the fullness of thought, taste makes ideas susceptible to a lasting and general approval of those who follow and of an always progressing culture. If, in the conflict between these two properties, something in a product must be sacrificed, this should sooner happen on the side of genius.¹¹

Genius produces art, but taste, the function that apprehends beauty in art, constrains genius, even to the point where the demands of taste outweigh the energies of genius in the final production of art. Here taste functions as a kind of *parergon*, a frame, that contains the *ergon* of genius, but not so much in order to draw attention to, as to constrain the art it contains. Taste also allows the works produced by genius to foster “an always progressing culture” in the society for which the artist works. It serves to constrain producers to meet the social demands of their consumers, who themselves are also constrained by taste. The *parergon* of taste, like the *parergon* of the frame, of the allure of art, serves an educative and, particularly clearly in this discussion of production, a disciplining function.

In *The Truth in Painting*, Derrida elaborates these disciplinary and political and economic implications of Kant’s aesthetics. Derrida follows Kant in recognizing the mutually constitutive nature of *parergon* and *ergon*, writing that the *parergon* is “neither simply internal nor simply external, not falling to one side of the work.” Proceeding from the literal meaning of *ergon*, work, Derrida connects the *parergon* to the exploitation of labor in capitalism through the extraction of surplus value. The *parergon*, Derrida writes, is “indispensable to *energeia* in order to liberate surplus value by enclosing labor (any market . . . thus presupposes a process of framing . . .).” The *parergon* makes possible the *ergon*, whether this *ergon* is a work of art inside a frame or labor inside a capitalist enterprise. The *parergon*, Derrida explains, is a “place of labor, structurally bordered origin of surplus value.” Capitalist exploitation is a distinct form of economic appropriation in that it takes place through the labor process itself rather than through the purchase and sale of finished products in a market. The most important step here is placing productive labor under the temporary (as in wage or contract labor) or permanent (as in slavery) disciplinary control of managerial institutions whose primary function is to ensure that ownership of the products of labor lies with capital, not with workers. This is the process that, if the products are successfully sold in the market, retroactively renders specific labors as the fictional commodity abstract labor power. For Derrida, the *parergon* allows *energeia* to

become *ergon*, “not against free and full and pure and unfettered energy. . . but against what is *lacking* in it,” a lack, to put it more bluntly than Derrida does, of discipline.¹²

The work of the *parergon* in capitalist production is the framing that transforms various labors into sources of profit as abstract labor power by separating them from both laborer and product, much as the work of the *parergon* in art separates out and marks a work of beauty that would otherwise, as Kant worries, be of no interest to observers. The *parergon* in capitalist production also functions similarly to taste, in Kant’s rendering, which disciplines and channels genius—Derrida’s *energeia*—into making works of art “susceptible to a lasting and general approval of those who follow and of an always progressing culture.” These connections among art, discipline, and capitalist labor, implicit in Kantian aesthetics, would make notions of primitive art, which were so important to Nolde, retain a kind of parallel importance in the colonial projects of the twentieth century in which Nolde and so many others took part. Derrida alerts us to the implication in Kant that the *parergon*, in the form of decoration, frame, or even the taste that “clips the wings of genius,” is perhaps prior to the *ergon* that it seems to enframe.

Derrida refuses to reify art, labor, nature, or history, and thus his analysis reveals the historical coproduction of these elements, so essential to German anthropology and, in varying ways, to the colonial project. Derrida warns against seeking a “simple kernel,” a “one and naked” (“*un et nu*”) meaning, hidden in “the apparent polysemy of *tekhne*.” Derrida focuses on accounts that seek a monolithic definition of art, but his warning functions equally well against “one and naked” definitions of all forms of *tekhne*, including labor. The stable meaning of *tekhne* rests, for Derrida, on a refusal to interrogate its opposition to *physis*, to nature. “If,” writes Derrida, “one were to consider the *physis/tekhne* opposition to be irreducible, if one were to accredit so hastily its translation as nature/art or nature/technique, one would easily commit oneself to thinking that art, being no longer nature, is history.”¹³ Equating art with history would lead to an internalist account insensible to the historical coproduction of art, labor, and nature.

German anthropology followed the line of thinking that Derrida criticizes in dividing the world into *Naturvölker* and *Kulturvölker*, people without history and people with history, people without art and people with art. When the development of colonial capitalism began addressing the people without art

as people with a potential for labor, it necessarily undermined the nature/culture or *physis/tekhnê* opposition central to previous anthropology. Derrida makes clear that definitions of *tekhnê*, of art and labor, are arbitrary—that is, historical—and exist only in relation to some imagined other, nature (*physis*), or *Naturvölker*. The primitive, as a category prior to, and possibly grounding, a particular *physis/tekhnê* configuration, functioned in a reconfiguration of art and labor in Nolde's painting and in colonial New Guinea.

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The disciplinary project implicit in Kantian aesthetics became relevant to European colonial projects only after colonial thinkers began attributing art to the colonized and thus making the disciplining break between art and decoration internal to colonized societies rather than part of a boundary between *Naturvölker* and *Kulturvölker*. Those colonial thinkers who wished to effect this transformation could find support in Viennese art historian Alois Riegl's 1893 *Stilfragen (Problems of Style)*, the greatest challenge to the technological, materialist account of decoration given by Semper's *Der Stil*, the work so important to the anthropological postulate that there exist peoples lacking art, history, and culture.¹⁴ For Riegl, a basic human drive, which he called "*Kunstwollen*," a will to art, informed decoration as much as art. Riegl thus made it possible to consider even ornamentation as the result of a creative force that stood outside of nature. The sociologist Ernst Grosse was perhaps the first German to spell out the implications of Riegl's aesthetics for the assumption that the natural peoples of Africa and the Pacific Islands possessed only decoration but not art, although he did maintain a distinction between art and decoration, and held that decoration dominated the aesthetic lives of most non-European societies.¹⁵

The Navy physician Emil Stephan, serving in German New Guinea, offered the first thorough challenge to the division between the art produced by *Kulturvölker* and the mere decoration produced by *Naturvölker*.¹⁶ Stephan, whose duties also included collecting artifacts for the Berlin Museum of Ethnology, befriended two indigenous laborers working on his ship. He soon learned that one of them, named Pore, was an able woodcarver, and Stephan had him embellish many of the artifacts he had collected for the Berlin museum and also produce new objects. Pore explained his work to Stephan, showing him how what might appear to be decorations were in fact stylized representations of humans, plants, and animals.

As Stephan explained in a 1907 book devoted in large part to these objects, *Art of the South Seas*, Pore's creations were works of art because they represented nature in an individual aesthetic style. That the representations did not correspond in an obviously empirical way to reality meant, for Stephan, that they did not merely imitate nature but rather emerged from an "ancient culture." Stephan found, in fact, that the various artistic styles of the South Pacific were as "strongly marked as European art styles," which only further supported their status as works of art. Stephan remarked that the work of a "fashionable impressionist" also demonstrated how radically styles changed even within European art.¹⁷ Stephan dedicated his work to "the memory of Rembrandt," not only connecting the aesthetic works of Pacific Islanders to a widely admired European painter, but also invoking Julius Langbehn's sensational 1890 *Rembrandt als Erzieher*, a book so popular in Germany that it had gone through at least forty-six editions by the time Stephan set sail for German New Guinea in 1905. Stephan applied Langbehn's broader criticism of what he perceived as an excessively scientific approach to art in German museums to ethnology. "Only when the artistic, not the scientific, principle is given priority," wrote Langbehn, "do the museums serve the muses."¹⁸ Stephan similarly sought to eliminate from his own work what he termed "the camphor smell of dry museum science."¹⁹

Stephan had not turned against the German colonial project by criticizing anthropologists for neglecting the artistic and other capabilities of those they classified as natural peoples. In fact, German anthropology, a product of nineteenth-century colonial contacts, found itself increasingly irrelevant to a twentieth-century colonial project that it too had no wish to criticize. The colonial civilizing mission (*Kulturmission*) declared by the German state, while suggestively parallel with anthropologists' distinction between natural peoples and cultural peoples (*Kulturvölker*), proved contradictory with anthropological theory and practice. Colonial development demanded that natural peoples cease to be natural. The question of the artistic and cultural levels of colonized peoples became an issue in colonial circles, where many felt that the presentation of culture-less natural peoples in the Berlin Museum of Ethnology did little to stimulate enthusiasm for colonial expansion.²⁰ Stephan became an important colonial expert, despite the skepticism that German anthropologists expressed about his research.²¹ The *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, the official organ of the German Colonial Society, praised Stephan's book for fighting against the prejudice that the inhabitants of Ger-

many's Pacific colonies were "savages" (*Wilden*) and thus indicating that their capacities to develop under German tutelage were greater than the anthropological concept of natural peoples implied.²² The reviewer, echoing the connections between art and labor suggested by Kant's aesthetics, found the existence of art in the Bismarck Archipelago promising for colonial political economy. Because these colonial subjects had art (*ergon*) they also had framing (*parergon*); because they were subjected to the frame necessarily given by the existence of art, their labor could also be enframed as part of colonial political economy.

In *Urvölkerkunst* (*The Art of Primitive Peoples*), a work Nolde planned in the period before he participated in the expedition to New Guinea but never completed, Nolde subscribed to the type of criticism that Stephan made of the ethnology museum, a criticism perhaps already implicit in Nolde's turn to the objects displayed by the museum as a source of ideas for his own art. In that work, Nolde criticized the curators of the Berlin Museum of Ethnology for "killing through their massive heaping" and warned that "a reaction against this over-heaping will soon register itself." "Why," he asked, "is Indian, Chinese, and Javanese art relegated to science and anthropology? And the art of the natural peoples as such not at all valued?"²³ While Nolde's principal interest in *Urvölkerkunst* was in its potential as an antidote to the "overwrought, pale, decadent works of art" of his European contemporaries, his interests also fit with the new image of the colonized, including their artistic capabilities, advocated by Emil Stephan and others interested in colonial development. That anthropologists rejected this view of art perhaps explains the seemingly odd choice of Nolde as chief anthropological researcher on the "Medical-Demographic German New Guinea Expedition," as it was officially known.

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The German government of New Guinea would only discuss options for mitigating the self-destructively genocidal nature of German capitalism in the Pacific through "medical-demographic" investigations of the sort pursued by Nolde's expedition.²⁴ The German protectorate, which covered northeastern mainland New Guinea, the Bismarck Archipelago, and a number of other islands, was ruled by the New Guinea Company until 1899, when it was taken over by the German government. The political economy of German New Guinea centered neither on German settlement nor on trade

with indigenous producers, but rather on German firms that employed indentured labor to produce plantation crops and mine phosphate (guano) for the world market. The approximately 85,000 Papuans recruited to work as indentured laborers between 1899 and 1914 did not meet the massive labor demands of German firms. This was in part because of the enormous death rates of indigenous laborers, which historian Stewart Firth has suggested were as high as 20%, significantly greater than those in neighboring colonies.

The exceptional brutality of the treatment of laborers by the New Guinea Company also limited the amount of labor that could be recruited from outside the colony. Germans in New Guinea thus had difficulty following firms and governments around the world in employing indentured workers (so-called "Coolies") from China. The New Guinea Company's labor regulations of 1888, for example, permitted managers to punish workers by withholding food or administering up to ten lashes a week. Both the Dutch government of Java and the British government of Singapore refused to allow agents to recruit labor for German New Guinea. When, in 1907, the Chinese government sent a representative to German New Guinea to investigate complaints of the mistreatment of Chinese nationals, the German government suspended flogging of Chinese laborers for two years.²⁵ Official Chinese concern for the welfare of Chinese contract laborers abroad threatened to ruin the capital investments of the New Guinea Company and a host of other German firms, which had set up enterprises with the expectation that they could employ Chinese workers and increase their output using violence and coercion.²⁶ The government and the New Guinea Company both realized that if German capital were to continue to profit from investments in New Guinea, it would have to turn to indigenous sources of labor.

Although the indigenous inhabitants of New Guinea were, from a diplomatic perspective, ideal workers, since no foreign government would intervene on their behalf, there simply were not enough of them. Even more alarming was the rapid population declines they suffered under German rule. About six hundred workers could be taken each year from the New Guinea mainland, so recruiters had to turn to the islands, especially in the Bismarck Archipelago, where Nolde's expedition would work. German companies working in New Guinea objected to government regulation of labor recruitment, even though these regulations were intended to ensure a steady supply of workers to these firms.²⁷ Many labor recruiters ignored even the

rudimentary legal protection afforded to indigenous inhabitants against violent impressment.²⁸ When one group of indigenous people sought to resist kidnapping by a recruiter with an appeal to the authority of a local official, known in Pidgin as “kiap,” and to the ultimate authority of the Governor of New Guinea, Albert Hahl, the recruiter responded, “Me no afraid belong kiap, kiap and Doctor Hahl shit nothing.”²⁹ Despite such instances where capitalist enterprises displayed open contempt for the legal authority of the state, the German government of New Guinea lent its full support to the New Guinea Company and to other companies whose profits essentially depended on working impressed laborers to death.

German officials in New Guinea and Berlin refused to consider any solution to the problems of labor in New Guinea that might interfere with the actions of labor recruiters or managers, which left issues of race and eugenics as the only permissible topics to consider as the causes for population decline. The anthropologist Richard Thurnwald, who broke with his museum colleagues to make a more practical study of colonialism for New Guinea, explained that detailed racial knowledge would allow colonial states to “use every racial type according to its ability. . . From the chaos of next-to-each-other [*Nebeneinander*] grows the order of over-each-other [*Übereinander*]. . . . That is the organization that the economy of the European brings to the muscles of the native. . . . Thus the distant South-Sea Islanders will become effective wheels in the household of humanity.”³⁰ Nolde, in fact, met Thurnwald while both were in New Guinea, and Nolde was prevented only by illness from accompanying the anthropologist on what would become a well-known expedition up the Sepik River.³¹ Nolde’s predecessor in the appreciation of the art of German New Guinea, the Navy physician Emil Stephan, also preceded him in racial and eugenic studies in the colony. A research expedition between 1907–1909 led Stephan to the conclusion that, while the population he studied was likely to disappear within three generations, this had nothing to do with the depredations of labor recruitment, but rather came about primarily through lower birthrates caused by incest.³² The governor of New Guinea indicated the limits on even such narrowly eugenic policies when he proposed a new labor code, which never went into effect, that would have required employers to provide laborers with protein and vegetables in addition to rice, and that prohibited labor recruiters from separating husbands and wives so that they might continue to produce

children.³³ The complaints of German companies in New Guinea were so vigorous that the German Colonial Office rejected the legislation and even suppressed publication of an article supporting the proposed law.³⁴

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The “Medical-Demographic German New Guinea Expedition” that brought Nolde to New Guinea represented what would be the final attempt to arrive at eugenic means to allow colonial plantations and mines to continue their brutal labor practices without wiping out the indigenous population. The purpose of the expedition, in Nolde’s words, “was the study of the medical conditions of the distant German colony; its special task was to determine the declining birthrate of the natives. This,” he continued, “was a serious problem for the prosperity of the colony, since the natives were the labor force of the planters and colonists.”³⁵ Ludwig Külz, a government physician who had conducted extensive research in Africa, and Alfred Leber, a professor of medicine from the University of Göttingen, led the expedition. Leber, an art enthusiast who had known Nolde and helped promote his work since at least 1910, secured Nolde’s participation. The expedition also included Gertrud Arnthal, a nurse, and Nolde’s wife, Ada.³⁶

Professor Leber, the Noldes, and Nurse Arnthal left Germany in October of 1913. In December, they arrived in Yap to pick up Dr. Külz, who had already begun the expedition with a study of health, hygiene, and population decline on the German-ruled island in the Western Carolines.³⁷ The expedition then proceeded to Rabaul, the capital of German New Guinea on the island of New Britain—then known as New Pomerania—in the Bismarck Archipelago, northeast of mainland New Guinea. The expedition focused on the Gazelle Peninsula of New Britain, and also conducted research in New Ireland, then known as New Mecklenburg, and the northeast part of mainland New Guinea ruled by Germany, then known as Kaiser-Wilhelmsland. For the most part, the members of the expedition stayed together, except for reasons of their own health, when Leber broke his collarbone and when Emil Nolde suffered from dysentery. Arnthal died during the expedition.³⁸ Külz and Leber concluded in a number of reports that the conditions of life for contract laborers on the plantations were among the causes of marked population declines in the region, but the Colonial Office refused to allow these findings to be published. After the reports were cleaned up, they left the expedition concluding that the population decline in the region, although

perhaps due in part to diseases introduced by Europeans, could be reversed by further colonial development.³⁹

The expedition assigned Nolde the task of investigating, in his words, “the ‘demographic,’ the study of the racial characteristics of the population.”⁴⁰ To this end, he collected artifacts and painted watercolors of members of the indigenous populations he encountered. In his ethnographic collecting, Nolde continued the celebration of primitive art against European art and against ethnographic scientism that he had begun during his earlier work in the Museum of Ethnology. Nolde coauthored a report with a district official in New Britain criticizing the neglect shown by the German government for the art of the Pacific, which they described as “likely the last source of such primitive art.” Nolde and the official complained that the German government too often let foreign collectors take the artifacts of German New Guinea away to Japan, the United States, and elsewhere. The two also complained that German ethnology museums organized those objects that they did acquire from a “purely scientific standpoint,” although art museums needed these objects “more and more as a first example of primitive art.”⁴¹

The paintings that Nolde produced during his travels in New Guinea do not suggest that he spent his time there drawing inspiration from artists of the Pacific to incorporate into his own work. His paintings from the expedition are, for the most part, watercolors of individuals and small groups, as well as landscapes. They are not fantasias inspired by, or representing, indigenous art.

The watercolor portraits that Nolde painted challenged earlier German anthropological techniques for representing race that had, in a manner reminiscent of Kant’s aesthetics, privileged line, form, and measurement over color. As data about race, anthropologists had long favored skull measurements made either on living humans or, preferably, on skulls. Skull shape did not vary as did skin tone, which darkens when exposed to the sun, and anthropologists did not, in any case, possess instruments for specifying color that matched the precision of calipers and other measuring tools.⁴² The varying ways in which different natural peoples perceived color was, furthermore, a relatively common topic of anthropological investigation (generally carried out by collecting color vocabularies), and these studies may also have devalued color as a reliably measurable quality.⁴³ One anthropologist even echoed Kant’s understanding of color as fundamentally irrelevant, but nonetheless appealing, when he argued that museums should

display paintings of different racial types because, though less accurate than photography, such colorful images would appeal to a broad public.⁴⁴ For representations of living individuals, anthropologists took photographs or used specially designed drawing machines in order, in the words of the noted anthropological photographer Gustav Fritsch, to provide a “corrective” for the “artistic hand.”⁴⁵

Most anthropologists nonetheless recognized skin color as a significant, if secondary, racial feature, and so did occasionally discuss paintings, which were, at the time, the only means of representing color. When the noted linguist Wilhelm Bleek from Cape Colony sent a portrait of a Khoisan prisoner to the Berlin Anthropological Society, members noted that the painting showed, through its representation of the “reddish” skin tone, the significant racial difference between “Bushmen” (Khoisan) and “Negroes.” Even Fritsch, who was not only the anthropologist most skeptical of artistic representations but also an expert on South Africa, found valuable the clear difference suggested by the painting between “Bushman colors” and “Negro colors.”⁴⁶ Still, the anthropological aesthetics of the nineteenth century clearly subordinated skin tone to measurement, line, and form in ways that had significant parallels, if not direct connections, with Kant’s aesthetics. Nolde’s own anthropological aesthetics would emphasize skin tone in ways that, like Bleek’s painting, suggested the racial difference between the inhabitants of the South Pacific and “Negroes,” which by the turn of the century had become an important colonial political question. In his New Guinea paintings, as in his attitude toward primitive art, Nolde broke with an earlier anthropological aesthetics in ways that, far from challenging colonialism, actually better supported European colonial rule than anthropology had.

The subjects of Nolde’s paintings were, for the most part, indigenous laborers. This was not only because laborers were practically the only individuals who could be compelled to sit for Nolde’s paintings, but also because the intersection of race, labor, and population decline was, after all, the main topic investigated by the expedition. Painting in port at Yap, where the ship stopped to pick up Kütz, Nolde complained that the dockworkers loading and unloading the ship moved so quickly that he could not paint them accurately (fig. 1). A group of indentured laborers that the ship stopped to pick up at Madang, then Friedrich-Wilhelmshafen, a port on mainland New Guinea, appeared to Nolde terrified by the ship and understandably dismayed by their capture and abduction. This led Nolde to reflect, at least in his later account, on the

brutality of colonialism, noting that, “if a colonial history were ever written from the perspective of the colored natives, then we Europeans would crawl into holes with shame.” But this would never happen for the Pacific, since, Nolde speculated, Pacific Islanders would not survive the European “corrosive drive to exterminate [*Ausrottungstrieb*].” These captured workers did not all take kindly to the European painter scrutinizing them, and one later brandished a sharpened stick at Nolde. Nolde also recalled painting with a cocked revolver by his side and his wife guarding his back.⁴⁷ To persuade reluctant individuals to sit for him, Nolde would, he remembered, display a twenty-mark gold coin that had a picture of the Kaiser and announce: “This big fellow Kaiser wants to see what you look like and that is why you are being painted.” Nolde sought to capture what he thought of as typical representatives of the indigenous people. When one well-meaning white planter near Rabaul brought him “curiosities” from “his natives,” including “a dwarf, tattooed women, and the like,” Nolde declined and instead painted the planter’s “house girl,” whom he found to be a more typical representative of the population.⁴⁸

A significant number of the watercolors Nolde produced in New Guinea consist of rapidly painted, gestural portraits of individuals. While anthropometric measurements could not be taken from such paintings, the images did constitute knowledge important to the colonial project. The Colonial Office treated Nolde’s paintings with the same concern for their political implications as it did the medical reports of Leber and Külz, and Nolde had to obtain official permission to exhibit the images he made on the expedition.⁴⁹ In 1916, a private group of “Friends of the Colonial Office” purchased fifty of Nolde’s New Guinea watercolors to hang in a new official building planned for what many hoped would be an expanded empire, obtained through anticipated German victories in the First World War.⁵⁰ Nolde recalled that Albert Hahl, Governor of New Guinea during Nolde’s expedition, took part in the selection of the images for the Colonial Office. Examining Nolde’s watercolors, Hahl, in Nolde’s telling, remarked, “This man I know—this one also—this one lives on such and such an island, this one belongs to such and such a tribe—these are marvelous!”⁵¹ If Nolde’s report is to be trusted, Hahl valued the watercolors because he recognized the individual portrait sitters and could recount their origin—from “such and such an island”—and identify their racial and ethnic makeup—from “such and such a tribe.” While part of Hahl’s reaction is surely the delight that many feel at recognizing an individual in a painting, this recognition stems from the ordering of individu-

als into groups and locations, the sort of ordering that he and many other members of the colonial state hoped would help solve the labor problem of New Guinea to the satisfaction of colonial capitalists.

The racial knowledge that Nolde's paintings present focuses on color rather than line, shape, or dimension. It is clear that Nolde sought more realism in his representation of color in many of his New Guinea subjects than he generally did in his paintings for the European art market. Nolde even included complementary colors in some of his paintings to emphasize some aspect of the skin tone. Thus the green background in *Young Woman (with Earrings and Necklace)* serves to highlight the reddish tones in the subject's skin (fig. 2). Nolde makes a similar point in *Male Head (Red-brown) with Green Head Ornament* (fig. 3). *Two Carriers*, one of the images Nolde made while watching the dock workers in Yap, employs a similar color scheme, although in this case the skin is green and the reddish tone is in the garment of the male figure on the left (fig. 1). Red-green is the most common complementary pair in the watercolors, but Nolde also employed the nearly complementary, and less directly realistic, purple-orange combination, for example in *Native with Red Hair* (fig. 4).

By emphasizing red in the skin tone on his subjects, Nolde made perhaps the most politically significant point that could be made about race in the German colonial empire of the early twentieth century. The reddish skin tones in Nolde's portraits suggested, like the reds in the Khoisan painting discussed at the Berlin Anthropological Society, that the subjects of the paintings were unlike "Negroes." The resemblance of colonial subjects to "Negroes" was at the heart of turn-of-the-century colonial reform, when the German colonial state led its European counterparts in turning to the American New South, the South of segregation, sharecropping, and the "Negro question," as a model for German colonial policy in Africa. The German colonial state in Togo even worked with Booker T. Washington, principal of the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, to make German Africa like the American South. This policy depended on the racial identity of Africans and African Americans as "Negroes."⁵² Emil Stephan, Nolde's predecessor as a eugenic art enthusiast in New Guinea, had suggested bringing "female Negroes" from Africa to "freshen the blood" of the declining populations of New Guinea.⁵³ While his idea was never implemented, it was taken seriously by the government of New Guinea.⁵⁴ The relation of Pacific Islanders to blacks was an important question of colonial population policy, and Nolde's use of green to

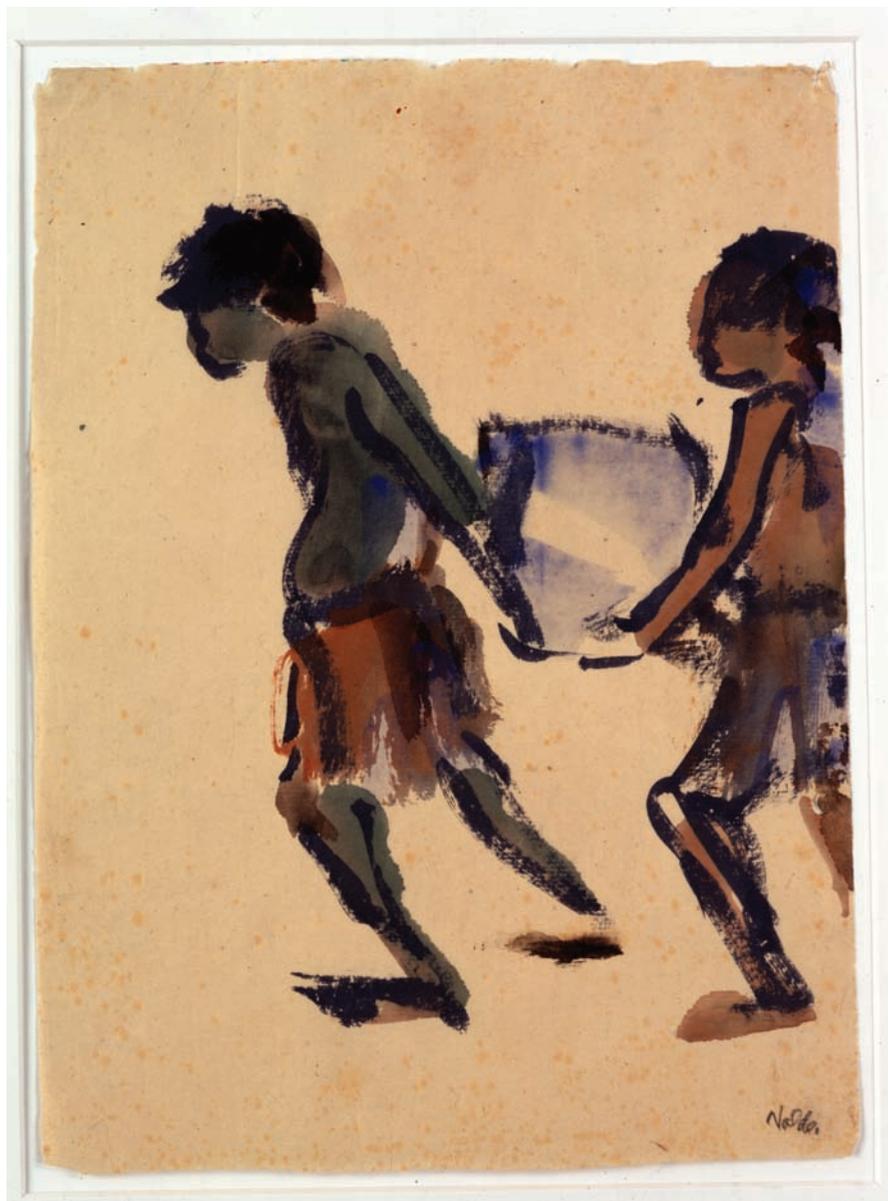


Figure 1: *Two Carriers*. Sammlung der Nolde Stiftung Seebüll, Neukirchen, Germany. Inventar-Nr. A. Süd.116. © Nolde Stiftung Seebüll.



Figure 2: *Young Woman with Earrings and Necklace.* Sammlung der Nolde Stiftung Seebüll, Neukirchen, Germany. Inventar-Nr. A. Süd.80. © Nolde Stiftung Seebüll.



Figure 3: *Male Head (Red-Brown) with Green Head Ornament.* Sammlung der Nolde Stiftung Seebüll, Neukirchen, Germany. Inventar-Nr. A. Süd.10. © Nolde Stiftung Seebüll.

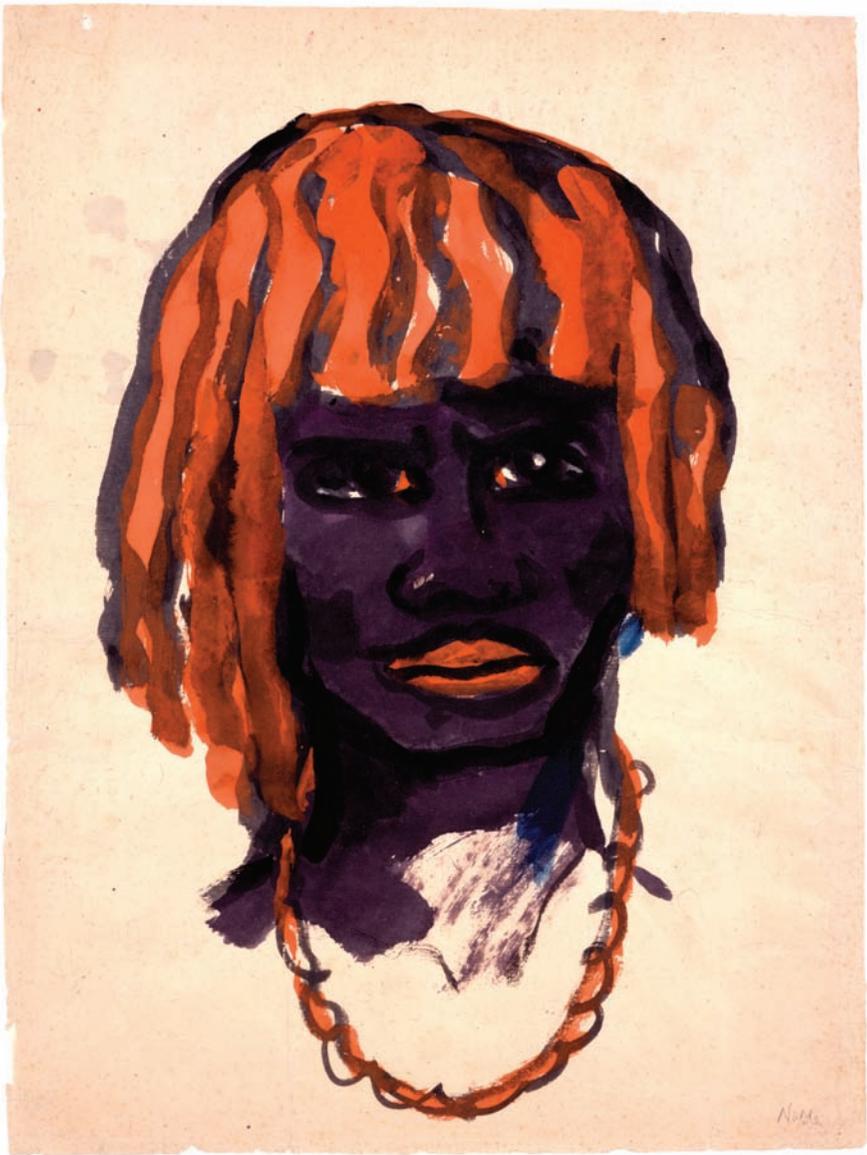


Figure 4: *Native with Red Hair*. Sammlung der Nolde Stiftung Seebüll, Neukirchen, Germany. Inventar-Nr. A. Süd.11. © Nolde Stiftung Seebüll.

emphasize the reddish tones in the skin of his subjects thus had significant political implications.

While Nolde rejected the Kantian preference for line over color that had also characterized previous anthropological representations of race, his authority as a painter to represent race does have a Kantian precedent. Kant, in discussing representations of the human figure, claimed that artists arrived at beautiful forms by intuiting the average dimensions, not of humanity in general, but of specific racial groups. But where anthropologists sought to arrive at these types through massive projects of data collection—akin to what Nolde had decried as “killing through their massive heaping” in ethnology museums—Nolde used artistic intuition to create such racial knowledge.⁵⁵

Nolde presented the people he painted, like the aesthetic objects of Africa and the Pacific, as a kind of artistic good, one that was also being lost to European art. Nolde speculated that “*Urmenschen*” (primitive/primal people) might be “still real people, while we are something like sophisticated mannequins.” So different were these *Urmenschen* from Europeans that Nolde thought the watercolors depicting them too “authentic and harsh” to “hang in perfumed salons.” Here Nolde identified with Gauguin, writing to a friend that he and the French painter of Polynesian life were the only two artists “who brought something lasting out of the inexhaustible richness of primitive natural life.”⁵⁶ Nolde not only offered racial knowledge to the German Colonial Office but also represented his own kind of primitive art, based on the supposedly primitive nature of the people he painted.

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While Emil Nolde saw in the primitive a set of perspectives and proper subjects for art, Martin Heidegger identified art itself with the primitive, with the origin, or *Ursprung*. In his 1936 “Origin of the Work of Art,” Heidegger wrote not of the historical origins of works of art, but rather of works of art as themselves the origins of historical worlds. Works of art, for Heidegger, both create and reveal uniquely human worlds, worlds which give things, in relation to their humans inhabitants, their “tarrying and their hurrying, their distance and their proximity, their breadth and their constriction.” The worlds both originated and revealed in works of art are worlds in which truth appears historically, in the real obscurity and indeterminacy in which it takes place, not as a set of falsely decontextualized and thus ahistorical facts torn from their essential concealedness. Art, for Heidegger, is just one example

of an act of historical origination. Other examples include, according to Heidegger, his own type of ontological philosophy, “the deed that founds a state,” and “the essential sacrifice.” Heidegger echoed conventional German anthropology in regarding art as an analogue of history, so that the presence or absence of art served as a kind of differential diagnosis for determining the historicity of a society. Art, however, not only functions as a historical originary act like the others, but also is unique in that it allows such originary acts to reveal their true nature. Unlike Nolde or the German colonial authorities for whom Nolde worked in New Guinea, Heidegger followed conventional anthropological distinctions between *Naturvölker*, trapped immediately in nature and thus without art, and *Kulturvölker*, which can create authentic and originary works, for example of art, politics, or philosophy. For Heidegger “primitives” (for which he employed the German term *Primitiven* rather than Nolde’s *Urvölker*) can produce no art because the primitive is “without the giving, grounding leap” and thus “contains nothing other than that in which it is trapped.”⁵⁷

In an analysis of a Van Gogh still life of shoes, Heidegger elaborates a fundamental connection between art and labor. Heidegger passes almost immediately from Van Gogh’s painting to an analysis of the shoes it depicts and of the labor process of which they, as equipment, are a part.⁵⁸ Humans, for Heidegger, engage with the world opened and revealed by art through work, and thus a painting of equipment, such as peasant shoes, has a double relation to the world. In considering this double relation, Heidegger draws a distinction between equipment, or the tool (*Zeug*), and the work (of art). The tool, for Heidegger, facilitates engagement with the world, whereas the work of art is one of the things that originates worlds in which labor, for example, might occur. While Heidegger was no colonial policymaker, he did, through his analysis of the primitive in art, explicate a relation of labor and art also at work in Nolde’s New Guinea painting, namely that art could found a historical world, one in which new forms of labor might take place. Equally true, though contrary to Heidegger’s analysis, is that labor can also found a historical world in which new forms of art might take place. Neither Nolde nor Heidegger could explain the origin of the primitive; both use the primitive instead as a mystical attribute of art itself. This makes the connection of art and labor appear coincidental in Nolde’s own account and as a digression in an analysis of a Van Gogh painting in Heidegger’s essay.

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Nolde could not understand the primitive because, like many Europeans, he took the poverty and abjection caused by colonialism for the remnants of a precolonial condition. In choosing subjects for his New Guinea watercolors, he rejected those with “European affectations [*Zutaten*—hat and parasol and trousers” as “repulsive, servile, and false.” Those wearing only whatever garments survived their impressment or were provided by their employers seemed to Nolde to be authentically primitive.⁵⁹ Nolde’s subjects were workers, many of whom had been kidnapped and essentially enslaved, in modern plantations, mines, docks, and other enterprises. The workers that Nolde painted were, arguably, far more modern than he or any other European in New Guinea. While Nolde, his fellow expedition members, and German state officials labored to sustain a moribund form of direct colonial rule, the workers Nolde represented were the pioneers of a global working class even more prevalent now than in Nolde’s time: dislocated; mobile; subject to multiple forms of political, economic, and racial oppression; and unprotected by any sovereign national entity. These New Guinea workers represented the future of a far larger portion of humanity than did colonial bureaucrats or artists like Emil Nolde who collaborated with them.

Nolde’s misunderstanding of the effects of colonialism as a condition that preexisted European rule suggests ways in which the primitive is a structural aspect of colonial capitalism. Marx expresses the connection between capitalism and the primitive in a manner more accurate than Nolde and less mystical than Heidegger. In his chapter, “The Secret of Primitive Accumulation” (“*Das Geheimnis der ursprünglichen Akkumulation*”), in the first volume of *Capital*, Marx rejects the view of capitalism as an encounter between “two sorts of people,” a “diligent, intelligent, and, above all, frugal elite” and “lazy rascals.” Capitalism, Marx argues, emerges not through some essential difference between “sorts of people” but rather through an act of framing prior to that by which, Derrida suggested, employers extract surplus value. These first framings were the acts of enclosure that transformed—and continue to transform—commons into private property. The “primitive,” for Marx, does not characterize any encounter between superior and inferior “sorts of people,” but rather emerges from acts of enclosure—of expropriation and oppression—that transform entire populations into a “‘free’ and outlawed

(*Vogelfrei*) proletariat.” The “primitive” act is carried out by, or on behalf of, ruling classes, not by those incorporated as workers into processes of capital accumulation.⁶⁰ Rosa Luxemburg, in an analysis of imperialism, reinterpreted Marx’s notion of primitive accumulation to make it a necessary component of present capitalism rather than a feature of a (retroactively posited) pre-capitalist past. Capitalism, Luxemburg found, could not sustain itself without constantly incorporating noncapitalist social forms and wealth. Luxemburg, writing in 1913, predicted that capitalism would gradually encompass the globe and thus destroy the external inputs it needed to continue.⁶¹ Dependency and world systems theorists have pushed Luxemburg’s analysis a step further, showing how capitalism continually produces its own outside, its own “underdeveloped” regions that, if Luxemburg’s analysis is correct, it needs to continue to develop.⁶² What Nolde and many others identified as the primitive is, in fact, a permanent aspect of capitalism.

The notion of a primitive in art and labor—whether in Nolde’s *Urvölkerkunst*, Heidegger’s *Ursprung des Kunstwerkes* or Marx’s *ursprüngliche Akkumulation*—simultaneously allows and results from a historical break in, respectively, the history of art, the history of human worlds, and the history of modes of production. Marx, whose account of the primitive in relation to labor reveals far more about the political and economic function of the primitive than the mystifications of Nolde and Heidegger, also had the least to say about art. In notebooks later published as the *Grundrisse*, Marx’s discomfort with art is palpable: “*The uneven relationship of the development of material production to, for example, artistic production. The concept of progress cannot at all be conceived in the usual abstraction.*”⁶³ Marx might have been relieved by Derrida’s skepticism about a transcendent meaning behind “the apparent polysemy of *tekhne*,” of art or of labor: there is no production in general, whether material or artistic, behind its spatially and temporally varying modes. Art, for Nolde, was a way to think about, and to contribute to, the historical transformations of the world as European imperialism incorporated the inhabitants of the regions over which it exercised sovereignty as indentured laborers for capitalist concerns. Kant suggested as much in his understanding of the disciplinary function of art, an understanding developed by Derrida. Like Heidegger, Nolde imagined art as related fundamentally to a primitive that capitalist labor was doing away with. In fact, as Marx showed, the exploitation of labor by capital produced the primitive that imperialism only seemed to be doing away with.

Emil Nolde participated in the transformation of German colonial political economy and colonial discourse that destroyed the concept of the *Naturvölker*, the people without history, culture, or art, and created instead the primitive as a space of production characterized by multiple framing limits, or *parerga*. As a space of economic production, the primitive functioned as a space traversed by racial and ethnic divisions, both between the colonizer and the colonized and among the groups who labored in the colonies, including captured Papuans, Chinese “Coolies,” and other groups. Because of the centrality of race in the colonies—in part because race was the only way that colonial government, at least in New Guinea, discussed labor—the primitive also functioned as a biopolitical space of (re)production. Equally important were the boundaries of discipline, further *parerga* that, following Derrida, allowed for human activity (*energeia*) to produce profits for another in the form of surplus value (rather than, for example, as tribute). The primitive also functioned as a space of artistic production for Nolde, as well as for many other identifiably modern painters, because the very boundaries that made possible colonial capitalism as a form of controlling and exploiting labor also made possible the *parerga* that separates out specific products as art. Nolde was perhaps unique in that, as an artist and as a member of an official colonial expedition, he participated in the primitive as a space of both artistic and economic production. The mistake made by Nolde and virtually every contemporary who employed the terminology of the primitive was to regard it as something chronologically prior to a specific colonial and capitalist modernity. The primitive, in fact, was a uniquely modern space of production, both of art and of commodities.

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Notes

1. The most important interpretation of Emil Nolde is Jill Lloyd, *German Expressionism: Primitivism and Modernity* (1991). In contrast to Lloyd, I find Nolde's practical collaboration with colonialism more significant than the discomfort he expressed

about some of its brutality, a discomfort common to all but the most pathological colonial officials. See also L.D. Ettlinger, "German Expressionism and Primitive Art," *Burlington Magazine* (1968): 191–201. There is an enormous literature on art and colonialism in the Pacific and elsewhere. See the now classic Bernard Smith, *European Vision and the South Pacific, 1768–1850* (1960) and also the volume of essays commemorating Smith's work, Nicholas Thomas, Diane Losche, and Jennifer Newell, eds., *Double Vision: Art Histories and Colonial Histories in the Pacific* (1999). The present article takes a different approach to art and colonialism than those taken by these and many other works, asking not how painters represented colonial encounters but how paintings emerged from, and contributed to, colonial encounters. Especially helpful for me has been the emphasis on coproduction rather than reflection in the work of Wendy A. Grossman, "Modernist Gambits and Primitivist Discourses: Reframing Man Ray's Photographs of African and Oceanic Art" (PhD diss., University of Maryland, College Park, 2002); Grossman recently curated a fascinating exhibit at the Phillips Collection in Washington, DC. See the catalogue, Wendy A. Grossman, *Man Ray, African Art, and the Modernist Lens* (2009). See also Cordula Grewe, ed., *Die Schau des Fremden: Ausstellungskonzepte zwischen Kunst, Kommerz und Wissenschaft* (2006).

2. Heryun Kim, *Exotische Stilleben Emil Nolde: Versuch einer Deutung aus seinem Hang zum "Ur"* (2001).

3. Arthur C. Danto, "Artifact and Art," in *Art/Artifact: African Art in Anthropology Collections* (1988), 18–32.

4. Martin Heidegger, "Ursprung des Kunstwerkes," in *Holzwege*, 4th ed. (1950; repr., 1963), 63. Unless otherwise noted, all translations in this article are my own.

5. For especially useful interpretations of *Mask Still Life III*, see Lloyd, *German Expressionism*, 161–183 and Donald E. Gordon, "German Expressionism," in William S. Rubin, ed., *"Primitivism" in Twentieth-Century Art* (1984), 2:369–403. I have written on this painting in "From Natural Science to Primitive Art: German New Guinea in Emil Nolde," in Grewe, *Die Schau des Fremden*, 279–300. On Nolde's museum sketches, see Andreas Fluck, "'Absolute Ursprünglichkeit' Emil Noldes Studienzeichnungen im Berliner Völkerkunde Museum," in *Emil Nolde und die Südsee*, ed. Ingrid Brugger, Johann Georg Prinz von Hohenzollern, and Manfred Reuther (2001), 27–33.

6. Emil Nolde, *Jahre der Kämpfe, 1902–1914*, 2nd ed. (1967), 178.

7. Andrew Zimmerman, *Anthropology and Antihumanism in Imperial Germany* (2001). On German anthropology in the Pacific, see Rainer F. Buschmann, *Anthropology's Global Histories: The Ethnographic Frontier in German New Guinea, 1870–1935* (2009).

8. Adolf Bastian, "Das natürliche System in der Ethologie," *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 1 (1869): 6.

9. Gottfried Semper, *Der Stil in den technischen und tektonischen Künsten oder praktische Aesthetik*, 2nd ed. (1878). For examples of anthropologists making similar arguments about decoration, see Leo Frobenius, "Die Kunst der Naturvölker," *Westermanns Monatshefte* 79 (1895–96): 329–40, 593–606; and Johannes Ranke, *Anfänge der Kunst: Anthropologische Beiträge zur Geschichte des Ornaments* (1879).

10. Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (1790), §14.

11. Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, §50. For a discussion of Kant and discipline, see Mark A. Cheetham, *Kant, Art, and Art History: Moments of Discipline* (2001).
12. Jacques Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod (1987), 71, 75, 81.
13. *Ibid.*, 20–22.
14. Alois Riegl, *Stilfragen: Grundlegung zu einer Geschichte der Ornamentik* (1893). On Riegl and Semper see especially Matthew Rampley, “The Ethnographic Sublime,” *RES* 47 (2005): 251–63 and Diana Reynolds, “Alois Riegl and the Politics of Art History: Intellectual Traditions and Austrian Identity in Fin-de-Siècle Austria” (PhD diss., University of California, San Diego, 1997).
15. Ernst Grosse, *Die Anfänge der Kunst* (1894).
16. On Stephan and collecting, see Zimmerman, *Anthropology and Antihumanism*, chap. 10.
17. Emil Stephan, *Südseekunst: Beiträge zur Kunst des Bismarck-Archipels und zur Urgeschichte der Kunst überhaupt* (1907), 119, 74, 103.
18. Julius Langbehn, *Rembrandt als Erzieher*, 45th ed. (1900), 18.
19. Emil Stephan, “Beiträge zur Psychologie der Bewohner von Neupommern,” *Globus* 88 (1905): 205.
20. See, for example, August Köhler, German Governor of Togo, to the Colonial Section of the German Foreign Office, 4 August 1899, Bundesarchiv Berlin (hereafter BArch) R1001 (Colonial Office Files)/6360, Bl. 53.
21. Zimmerman, *Anthropology and Antihumanism*, 224–31.
22. Review of Emil Stephan, *Südseekunst* (1907), *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, 10 April 1907.
23. Nolde, *Jahre der Kämpfe, 1902–1914*, 176–177.
24. On German New Guinea see especially Stewart Firth, *New Guinea Under the Germans* (1982). See also Peter J. Hemenstall, *Pacific Islanders Under German Rule: A Study in the Meaning of Colonial Resistance* (1978) and Hermann Hiery, *Das Deutsche Reich in der Südsee (1900–1921)* (1995). On labor in German New Guinea, see especially Peter Biskup, “Foreign Coloured Labour in German New Guinea: A Study in Economic Development,” *Journal of Pacific History* 5 (1970): 85–107; Stewart Firth, “The Transformation of the Labour Trade in German New Guinea, 1899–1914,” *Pacific History* 11 (1976): 51–65; and J.A. Moses, “The Coolie Labour Question and German Colonial Policy in Samoa, 1900–1914,” *Journal of Pacific History* 8 (1973): 111–17.
25. Herr Burt (Shanghai) to Reichskanzler Bernhard von Bülow, 3 May 1907 (copy), BArch R1001/2310, Bl. 21–23. On the Chinese representative, see German Colonial Office to the German Foreign Office, 22 June 1908, BArch R1001/2310, Bl. 168–173. See also Stewart Firth, “Governors versus Settlers: The Dispute over Chinese Labour in German Samoa,” *New Zealand Journal of History* 11 (1977): 155–79.
26. See, for example, the concern about Samoan phosphate mining losing its access to Chinese indentured laborers expressed in German Colonial Office to the German Foreign Office, 22 June 1908, BArch R1001/2310, Bl. 168–73.
27. See the memorandum by Forsayth and seven other firms, BArch R1001/2313,

Bl. 208–225 and New Guinea Company, “Denkschrift über den Entwurf zu der Arbeiterverordnung für Neu Guinea,” 28 May 1914, BArch R1001/2314, Bl. 7–28. For the response of the government, see Governor Albert Hahl to the German Colonial Office, 16 October 1913, BArch R1001/2313, Bl. 199–205.

28. On widespread kidnapping in New Britain, see Imperial Government in New Guinea, Rabaul, to the German Colonial Office, 28 September 1912, BArch R1001/2313, Bl. 8, as well as the numerous local reports supporting that document contained in that volume, including the testimony of Tahit, taken by Alfred Stübel and District Officer and Police Chief Wiesner, Käwieng, 13 May 1913, BArch, R1001/2313, Bl. 194. See also the chilling oral history presented in Richard Scaglione, “Multiple Voices, Multiple Truths: Labour Recruitment in the Sepik Foothills of German New Guinea,” *Journal of Pacific History* 42 (2007): 355–57.

29. District Officer Klug, Rabaul, “Eingeborenenverhältnisse in Südneupommern,” 23 August 1912, BArch R1001/2313, Bl. 8–12.

30. Richard Thurnwald, “Die eingeborenen Arbeitskräfte im Südseeschutzgebiet,” *Koloniale Rundschau* 2 (1909): 632.

31. Emil Nolde, *Welt und Heimat. Die Südseereise 1913–1918, Geschrieben 1936* (1965).

32. A copy of Stephan’s report, “Ursachen des Volksrückganges und Vorschläge zu seiner Erhaltung auf Grund von Untersuchungen über die Bevölkerung von Muliama,” 1908, is in the archive of the Museum für Völkerkunde, Berlin, IB71, vol. 2, 995/08.

33. For the text of the proposed labor code, see BArch R1001/2313, Bl. 269–89.

34. The proposed article was by the New Guinea government physician Wick, “Arbeiterfürsorge in Deutsch-Neuguinea,” BArch R1001/5773, Bl. 28–53. For the suppression of the article, see Hahl to the German Colonial Office, 10 April 1914 and the response of the Colonial Office, 24 June 1914, BArch R1001/5773, Bl. 26, 54.

35. Emil Nolde, *Welt und Heimat*, 14. See also the draft contract for the expedition, BArch R1001/6047, Bl. 19–25, 31–32.

36. Manfred Reuther, “‘Zu der unbeschreiblich schönen, wilden Südsee’ Noldes Beweggründe und die Bedeutung für sein Werk,” in *Emil Nolde und die Südsee*, 18–19, 21–22. Alfred Leber suggested Nolde as a member of the expedition directly to the German Colonial Office. See Leber to the German Colonial Office, 23 August 1913, BArch R1001/6047, Bl. 38.

37. See the report of this study by Külz, “Zur Pathologie und Demographie der Insel Jap, unter besonderer Berücksichtigung ihres Bevölkerungsrückganges,” *Deutsches Kolonialblatt* 25 (1914): 561–76.

38. Külz and Leber, “Bericht der medizinisch-demographischen Südsee-Expedition über die Gazellehalbinsel,” *Deutsches Kolonialblatt* 15 (1914): 782–89.

39. Compare the manuscript sent to the Colonial Office and the published version of Ludwig Külz, “Zur Pathologie und Demographie der Insel Jap, unter besonderer Berücksichtigung ihres Bevölkerungsrückganges” in BArch R1001/6047, Bl. 133–75 and in *Deutsches Kolonialblatt* 25 (1914): 561–76. See also the passages marked out in red, which typically meant they would be excluded from any public version, in

the report by Külz and Leber, n.d., and Leber, "Vorläufiger Bericht der Medizinisch-Demographischen Deutsch-Neuguinea Expedition des Reichskolonialamtes," BArch R1001/6047, Bl. 201–216, 263–80.

40. Nolde, *Welt und Heimat*, 15.

41. Emil Nolde and Alfred Stübel to the German Colonial Office, copied in Emil Nolde to Max Sauerlandt, 14 April 1914, in Max Sauerlandt, ed., *Emil Nolde, Briefe aus den Jahren 1894–1926* (1927), 101–103.

42. When anthropologist Rudolph Virchow oversaw a study of the skin-, hair-, and eye color of all German school children in the 1870s, he focused on color primarily as a proxy for skull form that could be more easily measured by untrained teachers. See *Anthropology and Antihumanism*, 135–37.

43. Richard Andree, "Ueber den Farbsinn der Naturvölker," *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 10 (1878): 323–34.

44. Oswald Richter, "Über die Idealen und Praktischen Aufgaben der Ethnographischen Museen," part 9 *Museumskunde* 6 (1910): 52.

45. Gustav Fritsch, Review of *Anthropologisch-ethnologisches Album in Photographien* by C. Dammann, *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 6 (1874): 67–69. See "Measuring Skulls: The Social Role of the Antihumanist," chap. 4 of *Anthropology and Antihumanism*.

46. *Verhandlungen der Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte* 5 (1873): 62–65.

47. Nolde to Sauerlandt, 14 April 1914, in Sauerlandt, *Emil Nolde*, 104–105.

48. Nolde, *Welt und Heimat*, 56–58, 69.

49. See Ada Nolde to Geheimrat Kraus, German Colonial Office, 11 October 1914, and the draft response of the German Colonial Office to Ada Nolde, 22 October 1914, BArch, R1001/6047, Bl. 237–38, 239. The Colonial Office granted permission on the condition that Nolde did not raise political questions in the exhibition.

50. When, in 1919, the Treaty of Versailles transferred the German colonial possessions to the victors of the First World War, these watercolors were transferred to the National Gallery in Berlin and are today in the Berlin Kupferstichkabinett. See *Emil Nolde und die Südsee*, 361; Nolde, *Welt und Heimat*, 145.

51. Nolde, *Welt und Heimat*, 145–46.

52. Andrew Zimmerman, *Alabama in Africa: Booker T. Washington, the German Empire, and the Globalization of the New South* (2010).

53. Emil Stephan, "Ursachen des Volksrückganges und Vorschläge zu seiner Erhaltung auf Grund von Untersuchungen über die Bevölkerung von Muliama."

54. Karl Sapper, "Bevölkerungsabnahme und Arbeiteranwerbung auf Neumecklenburg," *Amtsblatt für das Schutzgebiet Deutsch-Neuguinea* 1 (1909): 176–78.

55. Zimmerman, *Anthropology and Antihumanism*, 63–65.

56. Nolde to a friend, March 1914, quoted in *Welt und Heimat*, 88–89.

57. Martin Heidegger, "Ursprung des Kunstwerkes," 50, 63.

58. Derrida is surely correct that it makes no difference who owns the shoes depicted in Van Gogh's painting. Meyer Shapiro famously suggested that they were

Van Gogh's shoes, not peasant shoes. Heidegger's point is not about possession, however, but about the differences between the way tools and art interact with the world in different manners.

59. Nolde, *Welt und Heimat*, 93.

60. Karl Marx, *Capital*, trans. Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling (1967), 1:668–85.

61. Rosa Luxemburg, *The Accumulation of Capital*, trans. Agnes Schwarzschild (2003).

62. There is a vast literature on dependency and world systems theory. For a good introduction, see Andre Gunder Frank, "The Development of Underdevelopment," *Monthly Review* 18 (1966): 17–31; see also the important critique of underdevelopment and world systems theory, Robert Brenner, "The Origins of Capitalist Development: A Critique of Neo-Smithian Marxism," *New Left Review* 1, no. 104 (July–August 1977): 25–92.

63. Karl Marx, *Ökonomische Manuskripte 1857/58*, *Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe*, II/1.1 and 1.2 (2006), 44.