

mortal blow to the grand old doctrine of the indivisible, inalienable sovereignty of the mathematically reckoned people and had substituted for the state of sovereign power a state justified by its public services. In Germany, orthodox Marxism which had proclaimed the coming indivisible sovereignty of the proletariat was tottering to its fall. I read Bernstein during my wander days at Heidelberg nearly twenty years ago and lived to see him come into his own. In England, never very doctrinaire, wits like Chesterton, Belloc, and Shaw and the guild socialists had sent the Blackstone-Austinian theory of parliamentary sovereignty reeling to the ropes. In the New World many signs were on the horizon. Professor Goodnow had written his splendid book on Social Reform and the Constitution which, by the way, shut him out of the Ruggles Professorship of Constitutional Law in Columbia University and led to the appointment of a perfectly "safe" Wall Street lawyer to that honorable post. Mr. Bentley had already tolled his bell in his trenchant Process of Government. Mr. Lippman in his Preface to Politics had shot more than one barbed shaft through the academic hide. Mr. Croly had found The Promise of American Life outside of the American traditions personified in Mr. Barnes, Mr. Penrose, and Mr. Butler. Henry Jones Ford had long before jettisoned a huge cargo of American delusion in his Rise and Growth of American Politics. Representative government of the good old kind was having a sorry time of it in the United States (as Mr. Weyl demonstrated in his New Democracy) and Benoist, the French advocate of pluralism in representation was about come into his own.

To speak more concretely, there were abundant reasons for believing that the political science of constitutions, statutes, and judicial decisions—of immortal principles (namely our own)—was about to be deserted by its children and that we were ready to return to our Aristotle, to view society as a complex of many social and economic interests, and to regard the problems of political science—national and international—as problems of power, not of mere head counting or judging counting in accordance with duly constituted rules of law. Young men and old men, complacent among their law books, may have been unaware of it, but the legalistic lawyer's spiritual dominion over the American mind was broken. Law was not discarded but relegated to its proper place in the scheme of human arrangements.

Then came down the war like thunder and everybody outside of the Teutonic world began to abuse the Germans for their "materialism" as if Charles Darwin lay at rest in the great cathedral at Cologne instead of Westminster Abbey! Then we began to hear once more a vociferous clamor about democratic ideals. Those who had been least concerned about genuine popular battles in America elbowed their way to the front in shining armor to champion the "war for democracy." The echoes of the guns at Chapultepec and Spion Kop died away, amid much chatter about liberty and rights of nationalities. But in the realm of plain fact we beheld England driven to form a cabinet, not of "all talents" but of all *interests* in order that the government might be strong in administration and represent the effective sovereignties of capital, labor, shipping, transportation, and retailing. And in the United States we beheld a similar integration of power at Washington in the Council of National Defense—not so effective because the way had not been well prepared for it by political science. But still if one has doubts about the seats of sovereignty in this country, let him read the Council's roll of "servants."

As William James has pertinently said, the worlds of

matter and mind have evolved together. So the streams of political fact and of political thinking have rolled over the same wheel. It is not to be doubted that political science, economics, social economy, and sociology are now in the crucible of circumstance. It is of course too soon for the war to have produced any comprehensive treatise on politics, but all about us are the materials out of which it is to be constructed. The books too numerous to mention which emphasize the place of economic rivalry in international relations will make their impress upon our thinking in diplomacy. A group of young historians in the service of the government are emphasizing the unheard-of idea that historiography is not dead but liveth. In the new writings of Commons, Hoxie, and others we have the first worthy history of labor in the United States. The economists are doing the neglected work of the historians. In Mr. George W. Perkins's writings we find an experienced business leader reading a funeral oration over the good, old individualism of our fathers for which Mr. Root thinks we are fighting! In a hundred war books and pamphlets we see microscopic analyses of racial, economic and geographic factors (honor to Ratzel) which are to be substantial elements in the coming days of reconstruction. Mr. James Mavor presents to us an economic Russia and we learn that the Great Bear lives not by non-resistance alone. Kawakami (weirdly bearing the name of "Karl" after the author of *Das Kapital*) reminds us that in making the world safe for democracy we cannot forget the East and the doings of England, France, Germany, Russia, and the United States there. There may be new sorrows under the light of Asia. Mr. Veblen with characteristic thoroughness applies his scalpel to the cuticle of our national vanity and then invites us to consider more truth than we can endure. Finally does anyone in his right mind and possessed of any vision suppose that women are not to emerge as political people or that having emerged they will permit men to do their thinking for them in the manner of the grand old patrons? The prophet of the smooth and easy who was unworthy to unloose anybody's shoe strings is dead. Pluralism, disconcerting and elusive, is here to remain. It is as disastrous to the system of orthodox socialism as to the system which Mr. Wickersham adores with uncritical and reverential awe. Political science is to be the greatest of all sciences. Physics and politics are to be united, but the former is to be the bondsman.

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The Universalist Fallacy

IN the latest issue of that excellent British quarterly, Science Progress, there is a strangely anachronistic eulogy of Herbert Spencer, recalling the days when John Fiske hailed the Synthetic Philosophy as the work of a greater Newton. We need not quarrel with the anonymous author for attempting to rehabilitate Spencer against the onslaughts of an irreverently skeptical generation; though his cause is little helped by sophomoric prating about "the greatest achievement of its kind to which the human mind has ever attained." The main trouble with the panegyric lies not in its exuberance of superlatives but in the prime motive for its laudatory flight. What appeals to the essayist first and foremost is that Spencer developed a "single vast generalization," a single formula of the universe. This is why, like Fiske, he couples Spencer with the author of the Principio; and it is also why he raises an *a priori* suspicion against his cause.

Of course there is nothing intrinsically nefarious about grand attempts at generalization; but they have so persistently proved complete failures in the past that a Missourian shrug of the shoulder must greet the candidate for super-Newtonian honors. Certainly the entire trend of modern thinking is anti-universalist. This is true in logic, where Windelband and his followers imperiously demand a methodology for the historical sciences that shall be distinctive and independent of the logic of the natural sciences. It is true in philosophy, where James's example has given a new impetus to a pluralistic world-view. It is so emphatically true of the special sciences that there is something almost pathetically belated about Bergson's recent joust against a purely mechanistic interpretation of reality. The readers of Mach, Pearson, Poincaré and Ostwald hardly required a warning against mid-Victorian universalism.

Yet the old preconceptions are not dead. The notion of a hierarchy of learning and of ideas, of sciences graded one above the other, with the principles of one merged in the wider principles of another, will not down. The monistic ogre is ever casting about for new victims. Hardly is psychology wrested from the grasp of his talons when he marks for his legitimate quarry those twin sucklings, ethnology and sociology. Fortunately these infants are of Gargantuan precocity and by their lusty kicks bid fair to rout the hardened cradle-snatcher.

Metaphors aside, it is the old moot question of universalism that is stirring ethnological circles at the present day, leading one eminent student after another to issue a declaration of independence against the older and "more general" sciences of biology and psychology. No wonder ethnologists are solicitous about the sovereignty of their science, for with them it is a life and death struggle. What warrant would there be for a science of biology if the phenomena of living organisms could be directly interpreted in terms of chemical affinity? And what justification can be pleaded for ethnology if the data of culture are amenable to explanation by the laws of psychology? Accordingly we find a growing insistence on the unique character of ethnological phenomena. In his book on Kinship and Social Organization, Dr. Rivers vigorously contends that the ethnologist's task is not a reduction of social effects to mental causes but the tracing of *social* antecedents of *social* events. He has been ably seconded by a fellow-Briton, Mr. Hocart, while two doughty champions of the same viewpoint, Drs. Kroeber and Wissler, have arisen from the ranks of American workers. In a quite recent publication on Sociology and Psychology, Rivers returns to the fray and neatly turns the tables on the psychologist by arguing that it is rather sociology that can lend succor to the psychologist than vice versa.

It is not through sheer wantonness or adolescent self-assertiveness that ethnologists reject so emphatically the guardianship of their elders. They have merely discovered by sad experience that the guidance of psychology or biology, however valuable it may be for other purposes, does not help them along the paths *they* have chosen for travel. The point is really one of extraordinary simplicity. Whether the arts and industries, the customs and beliefs that constitute the subject matter of ethnology appear trivial to the biologist and psychologist or not, they exist; and as part of reality Science must somehow catalogue them and wrestle with the questions they suggest. Now either this can be done by the older sciences, in which case ethnology is superfluous, or new methods are required, in which case ethnology is indispensable. That is

the essence of the moot problem in its present form.

A test case or two shows why the principles of the older sciences are inadequate. Westermarck explains the Melanesian practice of head-hunting by the psychological motive of revenge. But Rivers's analysis of the facts shows that no such motive applies. The Melanesians hunt heads because they need them for definite religious ends, and communities are attacked not for reasons of hostility but because it is safer and easier to attack them than others. Of course the religious activity that calls for human heads involves, like all human activities, mental processes. But these processes are not of the simple generalized type of those dealt with by psychology; they are deeply tinged by the social medium in which the native minds work. No abstract formulation of psychology helps us one jot in the comprehension of the Melanesian usage: the social practice of seeking heads is explicable only by an intensive study of the social conditions involved.

What applies to head-hunting holds for every other cultural manifestation. Take that ever fascinating rule of savage society by which a man and his mother-in-law are forbidden to hold converse or so much as look at each other. Surely this is a custom charged with psychological elements. But what interpretation has psychology to offer? Psychology knows of no instinct that causes a man to avoid his wife's mother, nor is such a practice a necessary corollary to the laws of the association of ideas or to Weber's rule or to Wundt's principle of apperception. If we wish for an explanation of the phenomenon, we must look in another direction: we must connect the cultural facts not with psychological facts but with other cultural facts. Psychological laws no more account for cultural phenomena than the law of gravitation accounts for evolution. In either case far more specific series of conditions must be demonstrated to satisfy our instinct of causality. It may be, indeed it always happens, as it always does happen in scientific inquiry, that we cannot push our interpretations beyond a given point. But in so far as we can give any satisfactory explanation at all it must be an explanation in cultural terms.

Taking the very usage cited, we are indeed unable to give an ultimate reason for its origin. For one thing, however, we can connect its occurrence in one place with its occurrence in another, thus tracing the history of its spread from tribe to tribe. But we can go further. Following the lead of the late illustrious dean of English-speaking anthropologists, Edward B. Tylor, we can inquire whether there is not a functional relation between mother-in-law taboo and some other social phenomenon. Tylor's statistical investigations led to the result that such a correlation did exist—that the rule of mother-in-law avoidance was connected with the custom of residence with the wife's parents: because the husband was a stranger to the inmates of the new dwelling the difference in family affiliation was expressed by mutual "cutting." It is not important for the present purpose whether Tylor's hypothesis meets all the difficulties presented by the empirical facts. What concerns us here is that it undoubtedly conforms to the type of all sound ethnological theories since it adds to our insight into cultural phenomena by coordinating one set of cultural facts with another set on the cultural level—by furnishing in other words that specific explanation which psychological principles from their very generality are precluded from supplying.

As soon as one realizes the impotence of "more generalized" accounts of cultural data, the autonomy of ethnology stands assured against the dogmatic universalism