SPECIAL REVIEWS

Elemente der Völkerpsychologie: Grundlinien einer psychologischen Entwicklung der Menschheit. WILHELM WUNDT. Leipzig: Kröner, 1912. Pp. xii + 523.

In the early years of his psychological activities, Wundt crossed swords with Steinthal and Lazarus over the conception of a folk-soul. Now, almost fifty years later, he has to defend his own conception of Völkerpsychologie against the assaults of Delbrück and Hermann Paul. He believes in a folk-soul, but in one devoid of all metaphysical attributes. As the actions and interactions of psychic processes in the individual mind constitute the content of the individual soul, in so far as it is of interest to psychology, so the psychic processes and products which are due to the interplay of many minds constitute the content of a social soul (see *Völkerpsychologie*, Vol. I, pp. 9-15). Wundt is opposed to the theory that socio-psychological changes start with an accidental variation in an individual mind which is reproduced by imitation and thus becomes part of the culture of the group. Both the origin and the fixation of such psychic changes, according to him, are socially conditioned. Here, perhaps, lies the weakness of his theory.

Folk psychology is in no sense to be regarded as an applied psychology. Its studies should rather furnish new material to be utilized by psychology. The main subdivisions of the field are given by Language, Art, Religion, Myth, and Custom. In the five volumes of his *Völkerpsychologie*, Wundt segregated these subdivisions, following, as it were, a longitudinal sectioning of the cultural process; in his *Elemente*, he attempts a series of cross-sections, his analysis being directed to cultural eras. Of such eras he distinguishes three: the Era of Primitive Man, the Totemic Era, and the Era of Heroes and Gods—besides the incipient Era of Humanity.

As true representatives of primitive man Wundt accepts the pygmies discovered by Scheinfurt among the African Monbutta, the negritos, and a few other existing groups. Primitive man lives in his shanty, hut or cave, with him the dog, which through community of interests in protection from enemies and success in the chase, becomes his constant companion. He hunts when prompted by the pangs of hunger, but there is as yet no organized chase. It is

woman, the plant gatherer, who first learns to save and provide for the future. The digging stick, with a point charred in the fire, is the only working utensil. The weapons are the bow and arrow (later the boomerang). Primitive man knows the use of poisons, and thus makes his wooden-pointed arrow a deadly weapon. Fire he produces by rubbing together two sticks, or by boring in wood. The exclusive use of the bow and arrow, weapons that cannot be effectively used in combat, indicates that primitive man, on the whole, lived in peace with his neighbors. His art is based on memory, the recollections of his daily impressions, which give rise to naturalistic drawings on the walls of his cave. Barter is carried on secretly, the parties preferring not to meet one another face to face. Marriage is monogamous, and the families are herded together in small local communities. Practically no remnants of a truly primitive language are left, but an analysis of some relatively primitive Sudanese dialects reveals a remarkable resemblance, in form of expression and order of words, to the natural language of the deaf. The thought of primitive man is characterized by concrete concepts with but slight indications of abstraction. Magical beliefs pervade his mental life. The phenomena of death and disease are far more important factors in his religious life than are the heavenly bodies and their movements. He is not inquisitive; only the strange and unusual evokes his emotional and intellectual reaction. His dominant art is dancing, his only musical instruments two wooden sticks rhythmically beaten together, the drum, the rattle. Decorative art consists of simple geometrical designs. While the intellectual horizon of the savage is limited, his mental powers, in their own sphere of activity, seem not markedly inferior to those of civilized man. In his natural state, primitive man is open and honest, does not lie or steal. There being no incentives to transgression in these directions, his ethical status may be characterized as one of "negative morality" (pp. 12-115).

The Totemic Era is the epoch of tribal and kinship organization. Chiefs arise, and the primitive peace yields to a state of continuous warfare of tribe with tribe. Exogamy, which belongs to this Era, takes the form of a dual exogamous division of the tribe, primarily occasioned by the natural increase of population. The dual division is followed by further bifurcations resulting in four and eight classes. Horror of incest is not a cause but a consequence of exogamy. Both polyandry and polygyny occur, the former preceding and laying the foundation for the latter, while

group marriage results from a combination of the two. Monogamy is, however, the foundation of all these later forms of marriage. This Era is characterized by a close association of man and animal, the latter belonging to a realm somewhat superior to man, and often appearing as an ancestor. The totem animal, at the close of a long evolutionary career, becomes the domesticated animal of later periods. Totemic taboo is the earliest form of taboo. Totemism in its further transformations leads to manism (ancestor worship) and fetichism. Totemic cults are based on direct emotional reactions, and must be rather regarded as an important source than as an expression of totemic beliefs. The characteristic arts of the period are tattooing and the decoration of pottery, the designs being based predominantly upon the totemic animal. The typical myth of this Era is the half human, half animal story which is believed to be true (pp. 116-278).

The Era of Heroes and Gods is characterized from its very inception by vast migrations and mixtures of peoples. It is the age of domestication. To it belong the horse, the ox, the cow, the wheel, the wagon and the plow. Work becomes individualized, and division of labor is prominent. Private property develops. War consists of combats of individual champions accompanied by indefinite fights of the masses. The weapon of this period is the sword. The state consolidates, colonization begins. While in the Totemic Era the subdivisions of the tribe followed the dual principle, now the state is divided according to the number twelve, and later according to the number ten and its multiples. The characteristic family is the extended monogamous family, embracing three generations with a patriarch at its head. Social classes spring from conquests of one people by another; when the two cultures are very different, castes arise, when the contrast is less marked, social classes, differentiated in terms of property and power. The city and the state arise and grow together. Accumulated customary rules become consolidated into a fixed body of laws. God is the product of this era. Pure monotheism, however, must be regarded as a product of philosophical speculation, all natural religions recognizing many gods besides the one god. The cardinal distinction of a god from a demon or spirit consists in the definite personality of the former when compared with the vague and fleeting characteristics of the latter. The typical myth of this period is the hero-myth, which bears clear traces of its multiple derivation from the stories and myths of the preceding era. Art

is now characterized by the domination of grand concepts as embodied in architecture, together with the elaboration of detail in the realms of sculpture and painting. The drama arises as a highly complex product of literary and mythological sources belonging to the preceding period (pp. 279-464).

The incipient Era of Humanity is treated by Wundt in very general terms. May it suffice here to indicate the main subdivisions of the section: (1) *Der Begriff der Humanität*; (2) *Die Weltreiche*; (3) *Die Weltkultur*; (4) *Die Weltgeschichte*.

Wundt's conception of the three Eras is in no sense a contribution to the interpretation of history. It will be noted that their dominant characteristics are selected from different domains of culture: the first being on the whole characterized by its material achievements, the second by its social system, the third by its religion. The selection is obviously arbitrary and one-sided. Wundt himself seems to regard the eras rather as a frame for loosely embracing the mass of material than as a substantial contribution; and we should perhaps do better justice to his effort by disregarding them altogether.

Wundt's treatment of the culture of primitive man is, on the whole, admirable. We must endorse his insistence on original monogamy and his rejection of the hypothesis of promiscuity. His interpretation of group marriage is ingenious and, while speculative, certainly suggestive. The designation of the earliest period of human culture as the Age of Wood deserves serious consideration. His treatment of totemism, on the other hand, contains serious errors of fact and judgment. The formation of clans by successive bifurcations of a tribe is a process that cannot be substantiated by facts, and the entire "*Princip der Zweiteilung*" is distinctly "*aus der Luft gegriffen*." The alleged striking resemblance of the social systems of Australia and the Iroquois is largely imaginary; and the three forms of exogamy ascribed to the Australian system (pp. 145-147) are based on some amazing misconception. The assertion that the belief in animal ancestors *must* have preceded that in human ancestors (p. 229) is not supported by ethnological evidence and opinion. The characteristics of a mythical story, distinctive of Wundt's Totemic Era, may be identified one by one among the Eskimo whose culture could by no amount of ingenuity be squeezed into a totemic frame.

But Wundt's work is replete with fact and theory, and a full analysis would carry us far beyond the limits of this review. His

great contribution, moreover, does not lie in the masterly condensed exposition of a vast body of material, nor in the conceptual scheme which determined the formal structure of the work. Wundt's *Elemente* may be regarded as the first theoretical work of large scope in which the results of modern ethnological research have been systematically utilized. Thus, we find a deeply rooted appreciation of the importance of diffusion of culture and the mixture of peoples (p. 48), and a constant insistence on the multiplicity of psychic sources of cultural phenomena, and on the principle of the psychic transformation of cultural values. He dwells repeatedly on the circumstance that the ultimate sources of social change must be elemental and unconscious, as exemplified by the transition from the primitive to the totemic social organization (p. 151), by the formulation of law (pp. 325, 346), and by the semi-accidental character of inventions (pp. 24, 291). One of the leading thoughts of the entire book is the importance of emotion as a source of cultural phenomena. Wundt, perhaps the first among the historians of culture, has set an example for psychologists and anthropologists by drawing psychological and epistemological conclusions from an analysis of primitive languages (pp. 11-13, 15). Particularly significant, finally, in view of Wundt's prominence as an evolutionist, is his realization of the tremendous complexity of the historical process and the unique character of each historical happening (p. 346).

Thus, whatever may be said in criticism, the *Elemente der Völkerpsychologie* remains a contribution of consummate knowledge and wisdom, and its analysis of cultural processes stands, in its main conclusions, in close agreement with the findings of the modern Science of Man.

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The North American Indian of the Plains. CLARK WISSLER.
Popular Science Monthly, 1913, 83, 436-444.

In this paper Dr. Wissler briefly characterizes the trend of recent anthropological thinking, illustrating his points by the concrete example of the Plains culture area. Anthropology, as the science of culture, has become sharply separated from biology, and has been obliged to turn from theories of evolution generalizing the course of development to interpretations based on historical analysis. After sketching the main features of Plains culture, the