

**THE IDEA OF
FERTILIZATION IN
THE CULTURE OF
THE PUEBLO INDIANS**

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The idea of fertilization in the culture of the Pueblo Indians by Herman Karl Haeberlin

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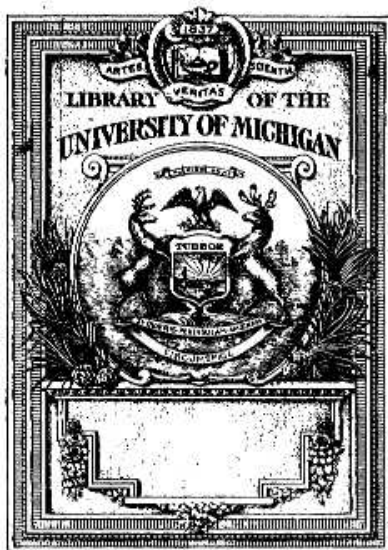
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BY
HERMAN KARL HAEBERLIN

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THE IDEA OF FERTILIZATION IN THE CULTURE OF THE PUEBLO INDIANS

BY H. K. HAEBERLIN

OF late Graebner and his school have given momentum to discussions on scientific method in ethnology. In a well-meant attempt to do away with unmethodological work in this science, Graebner has written a book on "the Method of Ethnology" (*Die Methode der Ethnologie*, Heidelberg, 1911). Since this treatise is obviously not merely intended to be an exposition of the method peculiar to Graebner himself we must infer that he gives himself the credit of expounding "the" method κατ' ἐξοχήν of ethnological research. This sweeping claim is brought out in the title of the book, as well as in its contents.

It is but fair to apply to the method of ethnology the same logical requirements that are applicable to scientific method in general. I take it for granted that Graebner does not wish to exempt ethnological method from these requirements. According to the general principles of logic, the method of a given science is the "way" or mode of reasoning by which we draw logical inferences from the empirical raw material of the given line of research. It must be no more. Wundt says:—

Empirisch soll natürlich die Methodik der Geisteswissenschaften ebensogut wie die der Naturforschung in dem Sinne sein, dass sie in erster Linie auf eine Feststellung der Erfahrungstatsachen und in zweiter auf eine Verknüpfung derselben untereinander ausgeht, wobei die letztere unserem logischen Erklärungsbedürfnisse genügen soll ohne dass etwas zu den Tatsachen hinzugefügt wird, was in diesem Bedürfnis keine zureichende Rechtfertigung findet (*Logik* Bd. 3, S. 52).

Is it really possible that Graebner considers his method to fulfill this requirement? The clearest expression of the facts seems to me to be given by Foy in the preface to Graebner's treatise:—

Dass es sich bei dieser kulturgeschichtlichen Methode . . . um eine konsequente Durchführung ganz bestimmter Grundsätze (handelt) wird der vorliegende Band beweisen (p. xvi).

The principles that are usually termed the theory of the "*Kulturkreislehre*" have been expounded by Graebner as "the method" of ethnology. If Graebner's book claimed to be nothing more than what it really is, namely, a consistent elaboration of subjective principles, it would have a theoretical value of its own; but, since Graebner has attempted to lay down "the" method of ethnology, he is subject to criticism on a broader basis.

Being conscious of the near relation of ethnology to history and at the same time of the admirable qualities of Bernheim's work on historical method (*Lehrbuch der historischen Methode*), Graebner employs a scheme of treating his subject that is in many respects parallel to that of Bernheim. Nevertheless, Graebner is under the impression that the book of Bernheim has a great gap (*eine grosse Lücke*, p. 3) and attempts to supplement this shortcoming by accessory considerations. At this point, however, he introduces into Bernheim's mold of objective considerations on method those subjective principles on which the life and death of the "*Kulturkreistheorie*" depends. The proclamation of these principles is obviously the *raison d'être* of Graebner's treatise on the method of ethnology.

If this treatise is characterized as a "konsequente Durchführung ganz bestimmter Grundsätze," the question arises just what these principles are. As far as I can see, there are two fundamental dogmas on which the "*Kulturkreistheorie*" is constructed. The first is that truly objective criteria can be found to determine cultural relations and the second that cultural strata are real and can be objectively specified.

The alleged objective criteria of cultural relations are, according to Graebner:—

das Kriterium der Form, d.h. der Übereinstimmung in Eigenschaften, die sich nicht mit Notwendigkeit aus dem Wesen des Objektes ergeben, und das Kriterium der quantitativen Übereinstimmung (p. 108).

These criteria according to Graebner have the advantage of general applicability ("*allgemeine Anwendbarkeit*," p. 109). This seems to me to be the crucial illusion. These criteria are neither generally applicable, nor is there any objective means of specifying in each case their degree of applicability.

Let us for the present confine our attention to the criterion of form. There are three reasons why this is not objectively applicable. Firstly, the different elements of a culture, for instance the material culture, social organization, myth motives, emotional values, which by the way, are as objectively real as are bows and arrows, cannot be reduced to a common denominator of comparison on account of their essential qualitative heterogeneity. Secondly, the range of cultural possibilities varies in the case of each specific cultural phenomenon.¹ Thirdly, cultural phenomena may be transformed qualitatively according to the specific nature of psychic actuality. For the first reason stated, for example, the objective forms of geometric ornaments and the interpretations that may be found associated with them show an absolute disparity of the applicability of the form criterion. For the second reason,—the varying range of possibilities,—languages and forms of descent, for instance, are of extreme inequality in the degree of applicability of the criterion of form; languages on the one hand being infinitely variable; form of descent on the other being necessarily limited in its possibilities. The same point is brought out when forms of philosophic speculation are compared with such heterogeneous phenomena as those of material culture. The monism of Laotse and that of Parmenides show a marked degree of identity or similarity. From what we know of the development of abstract thinking the probability is that a monistic system of speculation is almost essentially developed in every higher form of culture. But even when one disregards this fact and takes the position of Graebner's postulate of cultural relations, is the necessarily vague applicability of the form criterion to these monistic philosophies in any way at all comparable to its applicability to the pitch of musical instruments,² for example?

Since the applicability of the criterion of form varies infinitely within a continuous range of degrees and since we have no third criterion to determine in each specific case the absolute degree of its

¹ See Goldenweiser: "The Principle of Limited Possibilities in the Development of Culture" (*Journ. Am. Folk-Lore*, Vol. 26).

² v. Hornbostel, "Über ein akustisches Kriterium für Kulturzusammenhänge" (*Zeitsch. f. Ethn.*, 1911).

applicability, the use of this criterion is not feasible, because it involves an undeterminable variable.

The criterion of quantity consists in the quantitative coincidence of forms. Since this coincidence of forms must be ascertained by the criterion of form and this criterion of form involves, as we have just seen, an undeterminable variable, the criterion of quantity must likewise partake of this undeterminability in its applications. Both criteria are, therefore, equally useless in the ascertainment of objective cultural relations.

As if obscurely conscious of the incongruity of his deductions, Graebner, in spite of the "objectivity" of his criteria and his usual alleged disdain of subjective procedure, makes at times a rather sweeping appeal to scientific tact. He writes:—

Freilich ist mit der Auffindung objektiver und sachlich einwandfreier Kriterien nur ein Teil der Arbeit geleistet. Auch das beste Gerät tut seine Dienste nicht von selbst, sondern bedarf der richtigen Anwendung. Allgemeine Regeln werden sich dafür kaum aufstellen lassen; sie ist zum grossen Teil eine Sache des Taktes, des Feingefühls, vor allem wieder der Selbstkritik (p. 125).

This appeal may seem rather surprising when advanced by an investigator who promptly characterizes the somewhat finer scientific tact and the more searching self-criticism of other scientists, when opposed to his axioms, as a horror of space and time ("eine Scheu vor dem Raume und der Zeit," p. 115).

The second fundamental principle of the "*Kulturkreislehre*" and of "the method" of ethnology is, as already stated, that of the reality and determinability of cultural strata (*Kulturschichten*), which implies *per se* the secondary axiom of the diffusion of a culture as a whole. This *a priori* assumption determines the conception that Graebner has of the problems of ethnology.

Aus welchen Kulturschichten setzt sich die einzelne Kultureinheit zusammen; welcher Kulturschicht gehört das einzelne Kulturelement, die einzelne Kulturform an, und wie sind diese Kulturschichten, Kulturelemente und Kulturformen aufeinander gefolgt? (p. xvi).

This ethnological method is statistical, as well as geological. In his summary of Graebner's treatise Ankermann says:—

Die gesammte Geschichte einer Kultur muss sich schliesslich in ihrer Zusammensetzung abspiegeln. Wenn wir also gewissermassen einen Querschnitt durch