



Review: [untitled]

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usually survive except in connection with doctrinaire radicalism (see pp. 142, 188, 201, 284). Yet Professor Giddings is no radical. He speaks of the shallowness of Marxian theory (p. 276) and is inclined to think that manual labor is not always productive enough to be self-sufficient (p. 237), and he might be interpreted as holding that modern slavery (if there is to be such) will be due more to inequalities of intelligence rather than to accidents of power (pp. 236, 243-45). Many radicals might be impatient with his theory that continuous progress prevents the abolition of poverty (pp. 235, 243-45), or at least that this is, comparatively speaking, a very significant cause. He may, on the whole, be classified as an environmentalist (p. 147), in spite of the fact that he makes considerable use of instinct. Apparently he has less use for the economic interpretation than formerly. He places considerable stress upon the rôle of great men (pp. 219-20). Many will wonder why sociology may deal with folkways, taboos, social selection, organization and morale, but must leave to the economist matters of housing, cost of living, family budgets, wages, hours and conditions of labor, insurance and pensions (p. 299). Perhaps it is because of the anthropological tradition which survives in Professor Giddings, or it may be that he still classifies the social sciences on the basis of subject-matter rather than of problems to be solved. He says of William Graham Sumner that "We are beginning to recognize [him] as perhaps the most consistently sociological if not the greatest of sociologists" (p. 293). And this may be for the same reason. He also says, "The survey has its place and its value, but it can never give us the laws of social change" (p. 300). This volume represents a valuable fusion of the evolutionary and cross-section methods in sociology.

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Public Opinion. By WALTER LIPPMANN. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1922. Pp. iii+427. \$2.25.

In his little volume *Liberty and the News*, published in 1920, Walter Lippmann ventured to defend the thesis that political liberty, under modern conditions, is no longer guaranteed by the mere freedom of speech, i.e., the freedom to express opinion and criticize the government, but by the completeness, the accuracy, the fidelity with which the newspapers report the news. Of that volume the present volume is a sequel.

Public Opinion takes the problem at the point where *Liberty and the News* left it.

The right of free speech grew up at a time and under conditions in which government was not as responsive to public opinion as it is today. When authority rested on tradition, public opinion took form in the struggle to change traditional institutions. Political issues, under these circumstances, turned mainly upon constitutional questions.

Since then public opinion has triumphed over tradition and governments, with their ears to the ground, act when they act at all, only as they hear and interpret the voice of the people. Under these circumstances it is important not merely that there should be public opinion, but that it should be intelligent. Opinion that is ill-informed, misinformed, and not based on fact becomes a menace just in proportion as public opinion has become the dominant power in the state.

This suggests the problem of the present volume. Mr. Lippmann has discovered, what newspaper men learned long ago, that the news columns exercise a more direct and subtle influence upon what we are pleased to call "the public mind" than the editorial page. The editorial writer may find formulas for public opinion, but it is the reporter and the correspondent who provide the vicarious experience that gives the editorial formula substance and meaning.

It turns out, then, that the study of public opinion is mainly a study of the news, news being the interpretation which the newspaper gives to the current events of our common life.

. . . . To anyone not immersed in the routine interests of political science, it is almost inexplicable that no American student of government, no American sociologist, has ever written a book on news-gathering. There are occasional references to the press, and statements that it is not, or that it ought to be, "free" and "truthful." But I can find almost nothing else. And this disdain of the professionals finds its counterpart in public opinions. Universally it is admitted that the press is the chief means of contact with the unseen environment. And practically everywhere it is assumed that the press should do spontaneously for us what primitive democracy imagined each of us could do spontaneously for himself, that every day and twice a day it will present us with a true picture of all the outer world in which we are interested [p. 320].

It is as a political scientist, rather than as a sociologist, that Mr. Lippmann writes about the news. For him the newspaper is primarily a political institution. He is interested, ultimately, in practical questions. He would like to reform the newspaper if he could. But there is an enormous amount of human nature involved, and it is his stimulating

and suggestive discussion of this aspect of the problem which gives the volume its peculiar value. No other book thus far printed comes so near to providing a text for the social psychological interpretation of politics.

There is much that is new, much that is striking and interesting merely from the manner in which it is stated in Mr. Lippmann's discussion of public opinion. It is, however, in the concluding chapters in which he describes the nature of news that he has made his most important contribution. In these chapters he tells us he has arrived at the conclusion that "news and the truth are not the same thing, and must be clearly distinguished."

Mr. Lippmann is still absolutist enough to assume that there is, somewhere, a Fact with a capital *F*, a fact in other words that can be so completely and accurately stated as to have for every individual, at any time and under all circumstances, one and only one meaning. He is willing to admit, however, that such a fact would never be news. News is simply fact as it appears at first blush and before it is interpreted. "The function of news is to signalize an event, the function of truth is to bring to light the hidden facts, to set them in their right relation with each, and make a picture of reality on which men can act."

What "the picture of reality upon which men can act" is likely to be, in any given situation, will depend upon two things: first, the amount of accurate information that is readily accessible to newspaper men and newspaper readers. "Only at those points where social conditions take recognizable and measurable shape do the body of truth and the body of news coincide." This means that greater accuracy in the news depends upon the advancement of social science.

But there is a second condition, namely, a fact to be news must be interesting. How to make facts that are important interesting is a problem which the newspaper faces every morning. One reason that facts are not interesting is that they are not intelligible. It is the task of the common school to make the facts about our common life intelligible to the ordinary man.

The news will be nearer to the truth just in proportion as our students of social life discover more of the fundamental facts of social life, and our teachers in public schools present them to their pupils in such a form that they can use them in reading the daily paper.

ROBERT E. PARK