

Count Herman Keyserling Evaluates America

I. Introduction.

- A. Point out that no individual or race is able to justly evaluate itself.
 - 1. Perspective requisite for such valuation.
- B. James Brice performed this service for us and President Lowell of Harvard for England in the political sense.
- C. Equipment of Keyserling for this kind of service.
 - 1. A man of metaphysical insight.
 - 2. Of extraordinary empirical capacity.
 - 3. Made a world-figure through his trip around the world.
 - a. Proved he had extraordinary capacity to enter into understanding rapport with many peoples.
 - b. Influence of India
 - 4. A man of extra-ordinary intuitive capacity.
- D. Purpose of Keyserling not scientific accuracy but to stimulate his readers to awaken their own insight.

II. General statement re. America.

- A. That America affords promise of totally new development.
- B. Unfoldment with background of wealth.
- C. That American type is intuitive rather than thoughtful.
- D. Keyserling is profoundly sympathetic and hopeful.
 - 1. Unflattering things he says are from standpoint of a friend who wishes the best.

III. Weaknesses and strength of intuitive type.

- A. Intuition the shortest road to Truth if strong enough.
- B. Intuitive insight not necessarily true.
 - 1. Truth or falsity cannot be known before hand.
 - 2. Intuition not identity with truth but a method with characteristic strength and weakness.
- C. Headline thinking
 - 1. Truth measured by psychological rather than logical standards.
 - 2. Hence refutation on reflective level not effective.
 - 3. With man-on-street type effect means more than truth.
 - 4. This dominates sales and advertising technique.
 - 5. With intuitive man-on-street type thought development is shallow and mechanical.
 - 6. Headline thinking does not include possible developments of idea

IV. America as yet largely lacks soul.

- A. Transplanted people do not carry their soul (body of traditions) with them.
- B. Soul, in lower sense, developed through contact with soil.
 - 1. Americans as yet too nomadic.
- C. Negro has developed soul through his closer identification with the soil.
 - 1. This soul taken-on by his white brother.
 - a. Illustrated in popular music and dance.

V. Primitivism.

- A. One aspect of America very old.
 - 1. This the remanent of 18th cent. idealism.
 - 2. Exemplified in Woodrow Wilson.
- B. 3. Symbolized by Uncle Sam.

B. The new America exceedingly young.

1. Symbol found in Lindberg
2. Revolt of modern youth.
 - a. By removing mystery of sex becomes more primitive than any known savages.
 - b. As young as it can be since it has no cultured background.
3. Ideals of like-mindedness and "normalcy" are essentially primitive.
 - a. Full grown individuality or uniqueness is highest possible development of life.
4. Over simpleness and directness of woman leaves man without what he thinks best in her.
5. Intolerance of eccentricity in unusual men a mark of childishness.
6. Quantitative standard of valuation is childish.
7. Materialism a mark of old-age or babyhood.
8. a. Next stage of youth, however, radical idealism.
 - (1) This revealed in America also.
8. Attitude of American paper toward news is the curiosity of aboriginal tribesman.

VI. The Animal Ideal.

- A. Technical progress fundamentally a stage within animal development.
 1. Comparison of interest of dog in simple motion and human interest in a machine.
 2. Contrasted to spirit the essence of which is spontaneity.
- B. Man conceived as animal not as spiritual being.
 1. Hence emphasis of institutions rather than genius.
 2. Higher standard of living essentially an animal ideal.
 - a. This is good as far as it goes but is not more than animal.
 3. We place more stress upon facts than meaning of facts.
 - a. The typical human stresses the meaning.
 - b. The sage almost independent of outward events.
 - (1) I.e. Einstein.
- C. Predominance of Behaviourist point of view.
 1. Advertising and salesman ship.
 2. Accentuation of education and institutions.
 3. Everything can be effected from without.
 4. Use of instrument of suggestion.
 - a. Ready acceptance of suggestion leads to disindividualization.
 5. Americans trained to think spirit is effect and not cause.
 - a. Culture viewed as an effect upon a material basis.
 6. Meaning of Behaviourism.
 - a. Applies admirably to the kindergarden.
 - b. Denies spontaneous spirit and consciousness.
 - c. Man simply a compound of habit-patterns.

VII. America has a strong basis for a great future.

- A. But all hope lies in her transcending her present mode.
 1. Otherwise there would result merely a perpetual primitive with would be an abortion.