

forms — 'seq' and "e," what was regarded as the formative element."

It is evident from this that the root has been taken in a purely formal way and from the standpoint of the Science of Language, as dealing simply with the facts and laws of linguistic transformation. It is just what would be expected. There is no reason to suppose that the word forms which we are able to obtain from any known language are primitive and indivisible. It is the same here as in child language. The external forms may be divided and subdivided, until the external, formal root or generalized concept as expressed in language has disappeared into the crudest articulations. From the historical and formal standpoint it may be said that the death blow has been given to any system which would abstract any root and say that it was the primitive form.

But the matter ends here only from the purely formal and historical standpoint. The logical consideration of the formation of roots still remains, and there seems to be no doubt, even among philologists who emphasize the historical side, that a root period existed. What this root period stood for, and what its general nature and formation were, is a further and legitimate question. And, further, it is not to be supposed that it is our purpose to indicate what particular meaning primitive roots had. Rather, it must be our endeavor to find out whether it is more natural to suppose that the nominal and verbal stems are ultimate, and, therefore, the root purely ideal, or whether the root was the real unity out of which the nominal and verbal stems differentiated.

Even in Brugmann we find the conception that the root is a nucleus or kernel around which the thought in the nominal and verbal stem centers. Further, it is now agreed that as far back as we can go the two forms of stem begin to shade into one another. Now, if we carry this thought back far enough, we see that the nominal and verbal stems must gradually become less clearly differentiated from one another, until finally they disappear into an experience in which meaning is grasped in what we have called a situation or totality, as represented in the impersonal judgment. How many of these roots there were, and what their particular meaning was, we cannot say. Nor need we concern ourselves about it. All that interests us is the function which this root stage played in language.

Here we may make a quotation from Delbrück,¹ which deals directly

¹ Introduction to the Study of Languages, pp. 77 ff.