



THE EDUCATION OF PRIMITIVE PEOPLEⁱ

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Abstract:

Civilized man's nostalgia for returning to a "primitive" age seems to be as old as his civilized capacity for introspection. If the tendency towards primitiveness, which begins in ancient times and reaches the beginning of our century, creates in civilized man a dilemma that is increasingly internalized and agonizing, then we can say that this tendency remains undiminished even today. Education is the basic characteristic of humanity; it is the manifestation and energy which best characterizes mankind; it is the phenomenon which has enabled man to carry out his spiritual evolution and to ensure through the centuries the transmission to future generations of all the advances and achievements of previous generations. Over the past century, researchers have turned their attention to various peoples who had only just been discovered, forgotten, and isolated on the margins of civilizations or completely unknown to the rest of the known world. These people lived a natural life, without the special features of superior technological civilization. These were the people who lived isolated in various regions of Africa, Asia, America (Eskimos), and the islands of the Pacific Ocean (Oceania, Melanesia). From the findings of these people who were called primitives and from the recording of their perceptions, various theories about the origin of religion emerged. It is true that the life of primitive peoples has received special attention from the civilized, and many studies have been done on them.

Keywords: ancient times, first man, education, culture

Περίληψη:

Η νοσταλγία του πολιτισμένου ανθρώπου για την επιστροφή σε μια "πρωτόγονη" εποχή φαίνεται να είναι τόσο παλιά όσο και η πολιτισμένη ικανότητά του για ενδοσκόπηση. Αν η τάση για το πρωτόγονο που ξεκινά από τους αρχαίους χρόνους και φτάνει ως τις αρχές του αιώνα μας, δημιουργεί στον πολιτισμένο άνθρωπο ένα δίλημμα ολοένα και περισσότερο εσωτερικευμένο και εναγώνιο, τότε μπορούμε να πούμε πως η τάση αυτή παραμένει αμείωτη ακόμα και σήμερα. Η αγωγή είναι το βασικό γνώρισμα της ανθρωπότητας· είναι η εκδήλωση και ενέργεια, η οποία

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χαρακτηρίζει καλύτερα το ανθρώπινο γένος· είναι το φαινόμενο το οποίο επέτρεψε στον άνθρωπο να πραγματοποιήσει την πνευματική εξέλιξή του και να εξασφαλίσει διαμέσου των αιώνων τη μετάδοση στις επερχόμενες γενιές όλων των προόδων και επιτευγμάτων των προηγούμενων γενεών. Τον περασμένο αιώνα, οι διάφοροι ερευνητές έστρεψαν την προσοχή τους προς διάφορους λαούς, που μόλις τότε είχαν ανακαλυφθεί, ξεχασμένοι και απομονωμένοι στο περιθώριο των πολιτισμών ή άγνωστοι παντελώς στον υπόλοιπο γνωστό κόσμο. Οι λαοί αυτοί ζούσαν μια φυσική ζωή, χωρίς ιδιαίτερα γνωρίσματα ανώτερου τεχνολογικού πολιτισμού. Επρόκειτο για τους λαούς που ζούσαν απομονωμένοι σε διάφορες περιοχές της Αφρικής, της Ασίας, της Αμερικής (Εσκιμώοι) και των νήσων του Ειρηνικού Ωκεανού (Ωκεανία, Μελανησία). Από την εξεύρεση αυτών των λαών που ονομάστηκαν πρωτόγονοι και από την καταγραφή των αντιλήψεών τους, ανέκυψαν διάφορες θεωρίες περί προέλευσης της θρησκείας. Είναι αλήθεια, ότι η ζωή των πρωτόγονων λαών έχει τύχει ιδιαίτερης προσοχής από τους πολιτισμένους και έχουν γίνει πολλές μελέτες για αυτούς.

Λέξεις-κλειδιά: αρχαίοι χρόνοι, πρώτος άνθρωπος, αγωγή, πολιτισμός

1. Introduction

The primitive era refers to universal human characteristics, the need for humans to survive through minimally organized social structures on the one hand, and to respond to their philosophical and metaphysical concerns on the other. Civilized man's nostalgia for a return to a "primitive" era seems to be as old as his civilized capacity for introspection.

What generally characterizes human nature is that everything that brings us closer to increased progress is accompanied by concerns and doubts about overall cultural development. If the tendency toward primitivism, which began in ancient times and continued into the early part of our century, created an increasingly internalized and agonizing dilemma for civilized man, then we can say that this tendency remains unabated even today.

2. Historical overview

Something new came into the world along with humans, a spiritual energy of life unlike any previous expression of it. The first humans, whose traces have been uncovered, are called Palaeolithic, which means that they made tools from stone, and although very few remains have been found, their presence has been proven by the discovery of their stone tools made of sharp schist. Human weapons and tools, starting from the most crude and clumsy, began to show more refined workmanship and attempts at decoration. At the same time, humans began to carve images on rocks.

The Palaeolithic period is divided into the primitive and secondary periods, with more refined stonework, where traces of human existence became more numerous and

widespread. The primitive sub-period is still known to scientists as the Palaeolithic, and those who study tribal groups have concluded that there were at least twenty groups that survived on our planet at this stage of civilization, although they lived under the domination of a superior tribal group (Montessori, 1980:77).

Humans have relatively little strength, with their bare skin, unarmed and physically disadvantaged compared to many mammals, but they were given the spirit because they are destined to perform an important creative task. Their new weapon was spiritual. Thus, he successfully fought the forces of nature and subjugated them to his own purposes. His new weapon proved to be more effective than all others, and in time, he gained superiority over all of them, not by acquiring stronger arms and legs, but by developing a more powerful mind and, above all, imagination.

There were three ice ages, with intervals between them. The first and second were longer in duration and reached farther south. Not long before the arrival of humans, the Himalayas and the Alps rose to their peaks, and the Pacific Ocean had formed, while large masses of land had sunk. Areas that were previously connected became isolated. In the third ice age, the Earth was again covered with ice, but now less so in the south. Between the Alps and the Caucasus stretched a corridor of low temperatures where humans settled.

During these turbulent times, people lived among the ice sheets, mostly in forests and beside streams, alongside huge mammoths, tigers, deer, and roe deer, but also small horses. These early humans were giants, with little intelligence, even though they used crude tools. After 50,000 BC, a smaller and more intelligent race appeared, which used pieces of stone as knives and shaped them with some ingenuity. These people's food consisted of wild strawberries, grass roots, snails, lizards, eggs, and frogs; in fact, they were omnivores. By storing food and using methods to preserve fish, primitive man planned for the future and avoided death from starvation during the lean season (Huntfield, 1979: 216).

During the third ice age, animals, like humans, lived in caves for protection, and a very dangerous neighbor was the large cave bear. As the ice receded, humans and animals began to return to the forests, and humans lived by hunting. Art began to appear, statues were made, and the heads of horses and other animals were carved into rocks. Necklaces and other ornaments, along with weapons and household tools, began to be buried with the dead, who are often found in a sitting position with their knees folded under their chin.

Migrant peoples traveled north from Africa, bringing lions with them, and west from Asia, bringing large horses. These people were no longer primitive, but worked with animal bones and horns instead of stone, using bone needles for sewing and harpoons and hooks for fishing. There was even a trade in such luxury items and artistic beauty, especially those made in Egypt. As usual, it was the useless things that satisfied people's spiritual and aesthetic needs, not the useful ones, which were bought and for which people risked even their lives to acquire.

Homo sapiens, the wise man, managed to survive and cultivate the rich and fertile soil, domesticating and keeping animals that could help him and using dogs to guard

them. Man was master of all, dressed in skins or woollen clothes made from sheep's wool, armed with bows and arrows, and adorned with jade stones, gold, and bronze, while making artistic pottery for domestic use. It was a progressive civilization, and man was thus divided into two types, the basic man and the cultivator of the land, who would clash with each other for many centuries (Montessori, 1980:81).

3. Education in primitive times

3.1 Meaning and form of primitive education

Education is the fundamental characteristic of humanity; it is the manifestation and action that best characterizes the human race; it is the phenomenon that has allowed humans to achieve spiritual evolution and ensure, throughout the centuries, the transmission to future generations of all the progress and achievements of previous generations.

It is true that education, as an organised institution, does not exist among primitive peoples (Xekalou & Papageorgiou, 1969:10). Organized and planned education is an achievement of humanity, an activity that presupposes comfort, freedom, and independence for humans in relation to their basic needs. Indeed, as long as humans remain bound by the daily cares of their lives, as long as their entire vitality is absorbed by the effort to secure food, safety, and defense against dangers, they cannot think beyond these immediate needs and take care of their education.

In this sense, education did not appear from the outset as a separate institution, but only when humans managed to rise to a certain level of civilization and secure a more peaceful, comfortable, and secure life. Among primitive peoples, tradition governs their lives. The family has a significant influence on children and completely controls their fate. The children of primitive people are educated within the family. The reason for this education is the primitive man's effort to defend himself against his various enemies and the threats of nature, and his effort to satisfy his needs. He uses example and imitation as means of education.

In their efforts to satisfy their basic needs and serve their family and tribe, children imitate the actions of adults, hunting, running, climbing, engaging in whatever they observe adults doing, dancing, and later cooperating and participating in their parents' work. climb, engage in whatever they observe adults doing, dance, and later cooperate and participate in their parents' work. In this way, the young people of the primitive peoples of Africa, Australia, and Indonesia—through imitation and participation in the work of adults—learn to throw the javelin, use stone tools, the shield, nets, and all kinds of traps for catching animals, and climb trees. On the other hand, young women learn to perform women's and other tasks by following and observing their mothers.

At the same time, young people participate in community life and the customs and habits of adults, which helps them to become familiar with the ideas, beliefs, behavior, and religious beliefs of the people around them. The rights and duties, prohibitions, respect, and taboos that young people observe and learn teach them in practice, through

their participation in common religious ceremonies, what they must observe and what they must avoid.

Finally, at a certain age, which varies from tribe to tribe, a special ceremony is held to initiate young people into adult life, marking the end of adolescence and their entry into the group of mature adults.

2.2 Purpose and characteristics of primitive education

The purpose of primitive education is the direct adaptation of the individual to the social group in which he lives, the practical exercise of life, through which natural physical powers are developed and strengthened (Xekalou & Papageorgiou, 1969:14).

Indeed, it is only during early childhood that primitive man is free. After this period, he is completely absorbed by the adult group. The child of primitive people, who is relatively free during the first years of life, becomes dependent on the group in which he lives until he is completely adapted and absorbed into it. In primitive societies, individuals always conform directly to the group's way of life and social behavior, and there is no possibility of evasion. The tradition of the tribe absorbs and assimilates them, while at the same time, this tradition is absorbed by the individual and becomes their own.

If we delve deeper into how education was carried out among primitive peoples, we can highlight the following characteristics:

- The education of primitive peoples is energetic and active. Although it is not organized or systematic, it is nevertheless much more energetic and active than any other form of education, because the child participates in the activities and work of his parents, his elders, and his tribe as soon as he is able to do so. They follow and imitate their parents in all their activities, adapt early to their work, and learn to live the life of adults. So, the children of primitive people do not have a school, but action and life are their real school.
- But the education of primitive peoples is also spontaneous and almost unconscious. It is a kind of spontaneous taming of the child, because it does not use any violence or coercion. It introduces them to the works, customs, traditions, and beliefs of adults through direct contact and participation in them. Thus, the child lives the common life and learns everything that makes them capable of it without realizing it, almost unconsciously.
- The education of primitive peoples is primarily practical. It aims to introduce children directly to practical life and teach them how to effectively meet their needs. We can even say that this education fully implements the view of Decroly and Dewey: "In life, through life".
- The education of primitive peoples is more complete and natural than modern education, which takes place in schools far removed from real life. It is natural because it does not use artificial means of education, but also because it is based entirely on the natural tendencies and needs of the child. The child's needs compel him to accept the influence of adults, whom he imitates. Moreover, this influence

is exercised in a natural and playful way through example and participation in the activities of adults (Xekalou & Papageorgiou, 1969:13).

2.3 Criticism of the education of primitive peoples

The upbringing of primitive peoples is a kind of perfect taming, adaptation, and subjugation of the child to the environment in which he lives. This type of upbringing manages to adapt and identify the young person so much with their group (tribe or race) that, for them, the whole world exists only in relation to the whole within which they live.

An excessive socio-morphism therefore reigns supreme at this primitive stage. Only after a long period of development, when human security was somewhat better assured, did a somewhat conscious education emerge, initially in the form of specialization in social functions and even professions. This is the starting point of systematic education, which appeared when humans reached higher levels of civilization, and were no longer burdened by the exclusive oppression of their daily needs and managed to achieve relative comfort, which allowed them to take care of their education and training.

If we attempt to classify primitive education within one of the branches of modern pedagogy, we must accept that this form of education belongs to its social branch. Education among primitive peoples is dominated by the concern to satisfy social requirements. Of course, we can argue that education generally means the socialization of the individual and his preparation to become a useful member of society. This concept of education finds its full application in the education of primitive peoples. The individual becomes a member of the community, adopting its mentality, feeling that he or she belongs inseparably to it and is willing to defend it.

This form of education still exists today and is more widespread than we might imagine. Today, children are socialized in the family, at school, in the village or town where they live. However, at the same time, we also take care of the education of the individual as an individual. Primitive peoples, however, only provide social education, caring only for the interests of the community and not of the individual.

2.4 The emotional life of primitive people

We use the term "primitive emotion" when referring to the recreation of the essential characteristics of pre-civilized emotion and pre-civilized thought. Perhaps the most important aspect of the anthropological analysis of primitive man is that the perception of the mythical element refers to a way of feeling and thinking rather than to specific ideas or mental objects (Bell, 1976:20).

A key feature of primitive emotion is the absence of a stable and logical distinction between the inner world of emotions and external living conditions. Ernst Cassirer, summarizing some central trends in anthropological thought, points out that primitive man actually projects the needs and desires of his own nature as objective properties of the external world (Bell, 1976:22).

When primitive man encountered the various aspects of the natural world, such as the weather, animals, or plants, he saw them as manifestations of a will and intelligence similar to his own. Although the environment often seemed hostile, primitive man felt that his relationship with it was kinship-based and not transcendent or alien to him.

This relationship with the natural environment, which encompasses all emotions from grateful worship to superstitious awe, can be summarized as natural or cosmic piety; and with regard to this term, we must bear in mind two observations. First, the forces of nature cannot be considered morally "good" or beneficial in the Christian sense of the word, nor do they correspond to the Christian concept of the supernatural. Primitive awe is as closely linked to fear as it is to worship, and the natural deities it creates are as little subject to moral pressures as Nature itself.

The second observation follows on from the first. Since natural piety does not essentially represent a moral concept, it does not oppose murder, or even cannibalism, as our civilized moral systems do—even though these often do not have satisfactory results. And while we perceive behavior in a personal and creative way, as moral responsibility or an effort at free will, primitive man perceives it as a prohibition that expresses superstitious awe of the forces of the outside world. Natural piety is a complex of emotions that cannot be interpreted in religious or moral terms familiar to our culture. It is a way of feeling and thinking that is closely connected to the world of Nature, which accepts that human life is part of this world (Bell, 1976:26).

3. Conclusions

In the last century, various researchers turned their attention to different peoples who had only just been discovered, forgotten and isolated on the margins of civilization or completely unknown to the rest of the known world. These people lived a natural life, without any particular characteristics of advanced technological civilization. These were people who lived in isolation in various regions of Africa, Asia, America (Eskimos), and the islands of the Pacific Ocean (Oceania, Melanesia). The discovery of these peoples, who were called primitive, and the recording of their beliefs gave rise to various theories about the origin of religion.

If the study of contemporary forms of religion among civilized peoples presents many difficulties, this is even more true for the religions of primitive peoples. It is true that the lives of primitive peoples have received special attention from civilized peoples and have been the subject of many studies. And it could even be observed in general that religion was and is a universal phenomenon that permeates the whole of human life. No one could find a people without some form of religion, either in the past or in the present. Today, primitive societies show relative progress compared to prehistoric primitive societies. It took many millennia for modern primitive peoples to reach the stage they are at today. It took hard struggles against nature, hunger, cold, the threat of animals or other humans, as well as several material advances that increased the power and security of modern primitive peoples compared to the primitive peoples of the past.

Nevertheless, modern primitive peoples still provide us with the image of social groups within which there is no specific institution for the education of young people. Education among modern primitive peoples is provided through imitation, example, the participation of children in the work of adults, and the customs, traditions, and religious rituals of their environment.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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