

Notes on Culture and Primitive Man

Miron's Musings

May 01, 2022

Primitive humans, through their lived experience, lived lives that were wholly satisfying: they engaged in work that was meaningful and personal, they had constant challenges and mental stimulation, an unrestricted sense of autonomy, and a sense of adventure belying the entire thing. Humans had no choice but to derive meaning from a life that was exhilarating at every moment. Every choice was meaningful and required an unparalleled trust in one's ability to overcome the next obstacle. It was an enduring but highly satisfying test to see if you had what it took to have mastery over life.

And in our chase toward rapid industrialization, we have lost the personal touch of what it means to be human. Many of the activities we engage in are indeed surrogates for that which were once accomplished and deemed satisfying by primitive man. Take video games or movies, for example. One engages in adventurous, dramatic, action-packed, or otherwise exhilarating genres to induce pleasure in oneself. It allows one to feel that they are the active participant in such an exhilarating story, however it may be in part to account for a lack of such exhilaration in one's life. One did not need to consume a crafted adventure experience as a primitive human, as life was adventurous enough everyday. A constant struggle in life provided boundless obstacles to overcome, and cultivated a strength of will that seems absent today.

There was no absence of good feelings as a primitive human, and the myopic and regressive view that it was a "dark age" seems to propagate this idea that there was only misery to be found in primitive life. Make no mistake, the life was not easy in physical terms, but it was the least miserable existence from the perspective of satisfying the human condition. Every day truly was a victory to be celebrated and acknowledged in the mind. Meaning was created through engaging in natural life and actions, rather than through satisfying an expectation placed upon them by a limiting framework (such as the conventional "work until you retire" American culture). One was in complete control of his life and bowed to no master.

Even in our modern capitalist society we see remnants of these primitive desires. We encourage a self-starter type of person, who "takes control of their life and doesn't work for anybody." We encourage people to be "authentic" and "true to themselves." We tell people to follow this free and liberating path, but it comes with one glaring caveat: You can only do it if it helps contribute to our system. As Jean-Jacques Rousseau once said, "Man is born free but everywhere he is in chains." Humans cannot be truly made to create meaning for themselves in such a rigid world; a society that influences thought is by nature limiting a human in their ability to be free. Ideology immediately takes hold of the mind and removes the true and unaffected potential of man from birth. And again, a life that is truly liberating would allow its ends to be seen without the influence of established cultural paradigms serving as limiting factors.

The only way to be truly content and realized in this iteration of society, as someone who has truly broken free of its invisible chains, is to withdraw from it entirely. Because only then can you start acting outside of its grasp, in ways that don't reinforce it, but rather question it. What you demonstrate, in action, is an ability to truly be free. It is

in itself, a revolutionary act, and I'd argue a very powerful form of civil disobedience. But withdrawal is often derided by people because they see it as "running away." What they fail to realize is that only if a person decides to isolate themselves would they be running away — if the person establishes a community, however, they are creating the beginnings of a new consciousness, of a new society. They are running away from *your* society, but through that action creating something entirely new. They are acting outside of the framework provided to them at birth and instilled in them through years and years of cultural integration. And it appeals to the primitive nature of man: a desire to be free, a desire to be autonomous, and a desire to create meaning. It is a natural desire, so to speak.

Culture creates false meaning for us and obfuscates our natural desires. It makes it easy for individuals to think shallowly about their wants and needs and let an external entity decide that for them. Again, a mere surrogate for what was once the everyday experience. It's bizarre that our "impossible" goals, such as happy, fruitful, and meaningful lives for everyone, were possible at one point. They are only impossible now because we have made them so. We have gained much in material from our pursuit of industrialization, but we are losing far more that is intrinsically human.

The only man that was ever truly free was primitive man.

The Ted K Archive

A critique of his ideas & actions



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