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**‘BIG HISTORY’ OF EDUCATION: OUR PATH TO LISTENING SOCIETY.
PART ⅓: THE STONE AGE**

The *method* of ‘Big History’ [Christian, 2011] — an academic study of the past from a very broad perspective — may be the most *relevant* pedagogical initiative of our days. This paper *aims* to offer the ‘big history’ of education — to narrate the story of civilization in light of conditions it creates for the development of adult people. I *hypothesize*, provocatively, that every culture is essentially a cult, an ecology of practices that cultivates people into a worshipped ‘form of life’. And since the given society ‘worships’ exactly that ‘form of life’ which is most conducive to solving its key problems, as society ‘ages’, so do the worshipped forms of life ‘grow up’ to face more complex and abstract problems, sustained by the ecology of the complementary educational practices, the ‘feedback loop’ between science, law, and church: from the concrete knowing to the abstract, from the lawmaking by the strongest to the universal declaration of rights, and from the zero-sum competition of wills-to-power over limited possessions to the non-zero-sum communication of people which creates everything out of nothing. These ‘loops’ grow as the increasing abstraction of the common good requires people to comprehend and abide by the increasingly complex system of law — requires us to join increasingly abstract ‘language games’. If ‘ages’ of the progress of civilization indeed match ‘ages’ of the ethical maturation of a person, we ought to rethink and thence attend to what is most *relevant*: education that transforms numb wills-to-power who compete for private possession of finite goods by inviting them into increasingly abstract conversations between persons who communicate and cooperate for the sake of the common good. Thus, *relevance* of education lies in the fact that it is the primary means we have for transforming the hell of the Bronze Age Paganism, the strife of all against all, in which the artificial ‘scarcity mindset’ locks Late Capitalist society, into a relative utopia which Hanzi Freinacht calls *the Listening Society* — a term coined in his seminal and eponymous treatise [Freinacht, 2016]. If the educational project based on this account takes hold in schools and universities, our systems of learning shall come closer to vindicating the Hegelian definition of education as ‘the art of making man ethical’. In this first out of five papers, I will examine and idiosyncratically synthesize the *recent publications* on education of the Stone Age.

Keywords: stages of adult development, kinds of cognizing, metamodernism, ecology of transformative practices, Bildung, radical orthodoxy.

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‘ВЕЛИКА ІСТОРІЯ’ ОСВІТИ: ШЛЯХ ДО ‘СЛУХАЮЧОГО СУСПІЛЬСТВА’. ЧАСТИНА ½, КАМ’ЯНИЙ ВІК

Метод «Великої історії» [Christian, 2011] — академічного вивчення минулого з дуже широкої точки зору — є дуже актуальною педагогічною ініціативою. Ця стаття має на меті розроблення «великої історії» освіти — розповісти історію цивілізації у світлі умов, які вона створює для розвитку дорослих людей. Я провокаційно висувую гіпотезу, що кожна культура є культом, екологією практик, що виховує людей в ту «форму життя», якій це суспільство поклоняється. Суспільство «поклоняється» саме тій «формі життя», яка є найбільш сприятливою для вирішення його екзистенціальних проблем, і, оскільки суспільство розвивається, для вчасного протистояння більш складним і абстрактним проблемам також «виростають» і форми життя. Ці дедалі складніші форми життя підтримуються екологією взаємодоповнюючих «освітніх практик», зворотним зв'язком між наукою, законом та церквою: які ростуть від конкретного знання до абстрактного, від права найсильніших до загальної декларації прав, і від конкуренції нульової суми за володіння обмеженими ресурсами між волями-до-влади до комунікації ненульової суми, яка створює все з нічого, між *личностями*. Цей «зворотній зв'язок» зростає, оскільки зростаюча абстракція спільного блага вимагає від людей розуміння та дотримання дедалі складнішої системи законів — вимагає участі у все більш абстрактній «мовній грі». Якщо «віки» прогресу цивілізації справді відповідають «вікам» етичного дозрівання людини, нам слід переосмислити те, що є найбільш актуальним: освіту, яка перетворює німі волі-до-влади, що змагаються за володіння приватною власністю на *личностей*, які спілкуються та співпрацюють заради спільного блага. Таким чином, актуальність освіти полягає в її здатності рятувати людей з «мислення нестатку», повертаючого суспільство пізнього капіталізму в властиву для «бронзового віку» язичницької боротьбу-всіх-проти-всіх, та виховувати в них потенційних громадян «відносної утопії», яку Ганзі Фрайнахт називає «Товариством слухачів» — термін, введений в його однойменному трактаті [Freinacht, 2016]. Якщо освітній проект, що базується на цьому баченні, набуде популярності в школах та університетах, наші системи освіти наблизяться до виправдання гегелівського визначення освіти як «мистецтва робити людину етичною». У цій першій з п'яти статей я розглядаю і синтезую *останні публікації* щодо освіти Кам'яного віку.

Ключові слова: стадії розвитку дорослих, види пізнання, метамодернізм, екологія перетворювальних вправ, більдунг, радикальна ортодоксія.

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«БОЛЬШАЯ ИСТОРИЯ» ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ: ПУТЬ К «ОБЩЕСТВУ СЛЫШАЩЕМУ». ЧАСТЬ ½: КАМЕННЫЙ ВЕК.

Метод «Большой истории» [Christian, 2011] — академического изучения прошлого с очень широкой точки зрения — представляет из себя актуальную педагогическую инициативу. Цель этой статьи — разработка «большой истории» образования — раскрытие истории цивилизации в свете условий, которые она создает для развития взрослых людей. Я провокационно выдвигаю гипотезу, что каждая культура является культом, экологией практик, воспитывающей людей в ту «форму жизни», которой это общество поклоняется. Общество «поклоняется» именно той «форме жизни», которая является наиболее благоприятной для решения его главных проблем, и, поскольку общество развивается, для своевременного противостояния все более сложным и абстрактным проблемам также «вырастают» и формы жизни. Эти все более сложные формы жизни поддерживаются экологией взаимодополняющих «образовательных практик», обратной связью между наукой, законом и церковью: растущими от конкретного знания к абстрактному, от права сильнейших к общей декларации прав, и от игры-нулевой-суммы за обладание ограниченными ресурсами между волями-к-власти к общению и сотрудничеству ненулевой-суммы между

личностями, создающими, согласно тринитарному богословию, «все из ничего». Эта «обратная связь» растёт, поскольку растущее обобщение общего блага требует от людей понимания и соблюдения все более сложной системы законов — требует причастия ко все более абстрактной «языковой игре». Если «века» прогресса цивилизации действительно отвечают «возрастам» этического созревания человека, нам следует переосмыслить то, что необходимо считать наиболее актуальным: образование, превращающее бессловесные воли-к-власти, соревнующиеся за обладание частной собственностью, в личностей, которые общаются и сотрудничают ради общего блага. Таким образом, *актуальность* образования заключается в его уникальной способности поднимать людей из «мышления недостатка», возвращающего общество позднего капитализма в свойственную для «бронзового века» языческую борьбу-всех-против-всех, и воспитывать в них потенциальных граждан «относительной утопии», которую Ханзи Фрайнахт называет «Обществом слышащим» — понятие, введенное в его одноименной книге [Freinacht, 2016]. Если образовательный проект, основанный на этом видении, приобретет популярность в школах и университетах, наши системы образования приблизятся к оправданию гегелевского определения образования как «искусства делать человека нравственным». В этой первой из пяти статей я рассмотрю и обобщу некоторые *последние публикации*, связанные с вопросом образования в Каменном веке.

Ключевые слова: стадии развития взрослых, виды познания, метамодернизм, экология преобразовательных упражнений, бильдунг, радикальная ортодоксия.

Stone Age, the ‘Garden of Eden’.

This brief walkthrough will proceed by answering three questions: what kinds of science, law, and cult constitute the educational ecology that transforms into a ‘form of life’ which is fine-tuned to solve the existential problems of a given ‘age’ human society, its problems of ‘life and death’.

In the Stone Age, the life and death of the tribe depended on its adaptedness to the environment, on whether it ‘succeeds’ in the ‘survival of the fittest’. Nature is the key power in the lives of primaeval humans because it is ‘she’ who ‘conducts’ natural selection, it is she who ‘selects’ who is fit to live and who is fit to die, and it is to ‘her’ that people have to adapt if they wish to survive. To escape the sense of powerlessness, humans always seek to get ‘in touch’ with the power that governs their lives. Thus, in the Stone Age, people were educated to get ‘in touch’ with nature. Since this is a task on which survival depends, it becomes a sacred duty of a special caste of priests who minister a cult that is *the* communication with what people perceive as the main source of power in their lives — thus, the whole society becomes an ecology of practices that educated its practitioners into a worshipped form of life. Thus, the first human religion was the ‘church’ of nature that cultivated people into *creatureliness*, into those who abide by the ‘law’ of nature, into being more natural, more creaturely. In other words, the Stone Age religion *adapted* the tribe to its environment. But if the ‘law of nature’ is the survival of the fittest, how should humans *know* in order to *fit* in the environment, in order to be *at one* with it? How does one communicate with nature? The shaman was at the centre of the Stone Age tribe — he was its scientist, lawmaker, and priest — because it was he who spoke the language of nature. Shaman’s task was to coax and cajole nature, to turn her from the worst foe into the best ally. But what kind of ‘science’ did a shaman use to *know* nature?

Science: Sensual Knowing. The proper vessel of communication with nature is what is most natural in humans — our bodies. And it is this sensual knowing which shamans used to ‘get in touch’ with nature — by dissolving in their five senses shamans entered into an intimate relationship with their material environment, by ‘becoming their bodies’, becoming *corporeal*, shamans were becoming incorporated into nature. So the task of the Stone Age knowing was to *sense*, to *feel*, to *intuit*: to become ‘all ears’ and ‘all eyes’ so as to be receptive to the subtle changes in the material environment. Their survival depends on whether they ‘come to senses’: whether they strain their eyes to notice the footprints of hunted game, strain their ears to hear the rustles of predators, strain their noses to smell the odour of the forest fire — whether they intensify their sensitivity to the extent of becoming ‘at one’ with nature, to an extent of the *atonement*. The better the tribe folk’s five senses functioned, the faster they adapted to what happens in the environment, the faster they settled into an evolutionary niche, the more chances they had to survive the natural selection. In short, if their bodies worked diligently — if they were *sensitive* to their material environment, to their feelings, to their instincts, they stayed ‘on the same page’ with nature, stayed adapted to ‘her’.

To do so, shamans were taught to let instincts and feelings prevail over the sprouts of their consciousness: they isolated themselves in the wilderness to shove off cultural constraints, they ate

psychedelic mushrooms to lose self-awareness and become nothing except their bodies, nothing but a part of nature. Their sacred task was to *attune* to nature, *re-member* nature, to restore the tribe to being harmonious members of nature because if the tribe wanted to prevail in the ‘game’ of natural selection, it had to become a mere part of the broader ecology, if the tribe wished to *match*, to *fit* their environment, it had to become more *natural*.

How did they transmit sensual knowledge? What was the Stone Age medium of informational exchange? Since primaeval humans had no literacy, their speech could only represent unmediated sense experience — an act, an event, a sensation, a visible thing — complexity of their communication never surpassed a single sentence like a magic spell or a taboo (which corresponds to the ‘sentential stage’ of Commons’ Model of Hierarchical Complexity). Hence the only medium of their speech, their only vessel of communication, their language, created feedback that returned them to the belief that only material, immediately present things are of the ultimate reality. Shamanic means of communication with nature were unmistakably *corporeal* — a shaman danced like flowing water thereby implying that nature owes us the rain. A shaman used magic spells that were not more complex than a single sentence that carried concrete, material meaning. And their laws — taboos — were meant to keep people in the ‘state of nature’ because they were the prohibitions of concrete bodily acts — ‘you shall not eat this berry’, ‘you shall not have sexual intercourse with your sister’. Point being, primaeval humans *named* things with the help of language, but it did not have much say on how to conduct their lives, they were much more reliant on the cues from nature, on what nature was saying than on what they themselves had to say — after all, they felt dwarfed by ‘her’ power. Nature *was* the language that was being spoken to them, and they were listening very intently. To ‘discern’ what she says, primaeval humans used the synesthetic knowing of five bodily senses. In this way, tribes conformed to the ‘law’ of nature.

Law: Survival of the Fittest. Stone Age humans were hunters of wild animals and gatherers of wild plants. This means that their life depended on the ‘will’ of nature — a natural disaster like a drastic drought would automatically mean their extinction. But on a more positive note, the herbs, fruits, and the hunted game were material resources that could have been shared only equally and could not have been a cause for war between tribes because food could have hardly been stored for a long time in the conditions of, say, a rainforest. Moreover, it is barely possible to *own* anything in the Stone Age circumstances because there were not many ‘things’ at all, and little that there were, were most often provided by the abundant environment. Therefore, there were not many reasons for the fighting for the possession of space or resources between groups of foragers — nature has hidden resources all around them, ‘out there in the wild’. And even if a certain *niche*, say, a mushroom meadow or an oasis with lots of animals, became a matter of conflict because of its foraging quality, the nomadic lifestyle of the tribes allowed them to avoid bloody escalation by simply packing little possessions that they had and leaving the territory to hunt and gather somewhere else — the expanse of nature seemed too immense to fight for the living space (Ger. *Lebensraum*). In short, our hunter-gatherer ancestors were very peaceful if we compare them to the societies that came later.

By following hunted fauna and foraged flora Stone Age humans followed the ‘law of nature’, they stayed ‘fitted’ to their environment and ‘passed the exam’ of natural selection. To win in the game of the ‘survival of the fittest’ is not to be the strongest, but to be the fastest to *attune* to the ecological niches, to be most *malleable* by the changes in material reality. This task was inherently *communal*, a tribe had to work cooperatively if it wished to fit in the environment — broader vicinities are seen by the two pairs of eyes than by one. Characteristically, to level the ‘social playing field’, to prevent the ablest hunters from an accumulation of hierarchical authority, tribesmen practiced mocking those who came back with the trophies from a wickedly successful hunt.

Primordial hunting was a reverend practice of participation in nature because humans considered the hunted game to be their family, and, characteristically, they considered animals to be closer related to God, to still live ‘in Paradise’. Now and then tribe folk would say things like this: ‘We do not know where God lives, but the eland does’ [Zournazi and Williams, 2021]. They realise that the eland still ‘walks with God’ in the Garden of Nature, whereas we humans were alienated from it.

The Cult of Environment.

But there must have been a time when people were still like elands, still a part of nature, still ‘her’ children. Since in the Paradise of the Stone Age people merely followed nature, that is, were acted upon by their natural drives, they merely carried out the will of the Creator of nature. They were not

responsible for their behaviour because they could not explain why they do what they do — they never *chose* what to do, they *sensed, felt, and intuited* what to do. They lived from their bodily senses, they were virtually *possessed* by the raw instincts and impulses, they were being created, they were fully *creatures*, flexible clay in the hands of Creator.

Back then, human beings had no self-consciousness, because they were only conscious of tending the Garden: they were called by God ‘to cultivate it and take care of it’ (Genesis 2:15). The Garden is a place where nature is transfigured by language, where plants and animals are *named*, that is, invited into increasingly intense communication, into intensified attention and care. The task of primaeval humans was to expand the Garden by the process of *naming* — until the whole Earth is ‘taken care of’. By attending to the forces of nature as if to the persons a shaman restored the tribe to this task. It is as if a shaman tried to make people stay in the Garden of Nature, tried to prevent the Fall from the intimate adaptedness to the environment, from kinship with nature.

At this point, we can see the essential features of education in the Stone Age societies. To ‘win’ the ‘game’ of natural selection, tribes had to be adaptive to their environment, had to abide by the ‘law of nature’. To know ‘her’ laws, to ‘get in touch’ with nature within — their instincts, impulses, feelings — and without — the ever-changing environment — humans had to ‘come to their senses’, had to know through dissolving in the undifferentiated synesthesia of the five senses. According to Saint Maximus the Confessor, in Paradise humans did not think ‘now I’m seeing’, ‘now I’m hearing’, but as it were ‘swam’ in the sensual fusion with their material environment.

By elevating their material environment into a cult, people were turning the most formidable agent in their lives into something they can communicate and negotiate with, they were turning a ruthless judge into a nurturing Mother. Primaeval people think with their bodies, follow their instincts, and pray to elemental forces, their science is sensual, their lawmaker is nature, their cult is that of nature. Since the Stone Age humans depend on their fittedness to the environment, the ‘feedback loop’ of its culture is bent on educating people to reproduce nature’s ‘form of life’ — it is bent on *adapting* humans to Mother Nature and Mother Nature is bent on *adopting* humans as ‘children’ over and over again. And if this sounds like a nice feedback loop, we should not be surprised why the Bible describes it as Paradise.

The Book of Genesis, the Fall from the Garden.

To comprehend the structure of transition from one stage to another, we have to realise that these crucial shifts are most prominently *revealed* in religious revelations. This is because religions are most sensitive to the radical alterations of values at the heart of social life, they document a story of how certain ‘forms of life’ come to be understood as most important, as sacred. On that note, to fathom the essence of Fall from Stone Age to Bronze Age, from nature to hell, we have to read the very beginning of the Bible. The Book of Genesis begins in the Garden of Eden and ends with the descent of the Jews to Egyptian slavery. This is the text that records the Fall from being one with material environment, from atonement *with and by* nature, to the state of revolt against it in consequence of the self-deceptive dream of immortality.

The Fall from the ‘feedback loop’ of Paradise begins with becoming aware and beware of death.

Adam could not have been the first to grapple with death because the most precious thing in the lives of primaeval men was their own life — and once they were dead, they could not reflect upon it, they could not be burdened with the weight of the tragedy. Males also did not care for the death of infants since, because of the promiscuity, they often had no idea and could never be totally sure who their children were, and even if they were sure, they could not develop affection for children because they did not nurse them. But this is precisely what a mother does — she develops an intimate connection with her child. It was the snake who opened the eyes of Eve because snakes and people co-developed within a tight evolutionary niche, ‘squeezed’ through a shared evolutionary bottleneck. When people lived on trees, snakes were the only predators capable of silently crawling to climb a tree and kill humans, especially human babies.

Imagine this: your infant, the single thing you were supposed to take care of, is murdered by a snake.

It is you, the mother, who is awakened to the terror of death. It is you who now has to ‘come to terms’ with this loss, who has to become conscious of death.

It is you who has to recall all the *choices* that made this catastrophe visit upon you. Thus, you are awakened into *responsibility* for the selection of a father who failed to provide security for your offspring, who failed to assure the continuation of your genetic code.

As a result of this evolutionary pattern, women became more *selective*, they began to *choose* who to mate with more carefully, picking those partners who would make reliable fathers for their precious progeny. A woman no longer relied on her natural instincts and desires — they had failed her. On the contrary, she began exercising willpower to inhibit her sexual drives. Once Eve ate the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, she passed it to Adam — he found himself under the watch of selective pressure that was not merely natural, but conscious, Adam has found himself under the unnaturally picky sight of the *arbitre* who thirsts to be provided with security because it is awakened to the perspective of death.

Once ‘their eyes were opened and they knew that they were naked’ [Genesis 3:7], humans ceased being conscious of the Garden and became *self-conscious*.

Once humans became conscious of the perspective of impending death, they started to feel insecure, ashamed and hence began to hide their vulnerability from the sight of truth, from the eyes of God. Instead of attending to the whole ecology of creation, they began to focus on their private life. Humans began to make active decisions that bend the world to their will-to-security, to their will-to-avoid-death. Thus, the *will* became their new lawmaker — they started to feel that they were created by their own choices.

The meaning one reads into this news may vary. On a positive note, humans grew out of being mere creatures because they have begun to create their own environments, to construct artificial niches. On a negative note, humans stopped being natural because instead of the bodily feelings the centre of their life became occupied by their willpower.

And on a still more negative note, it is once humans began to *choose*, to select the partners that were useful for them and to act so as to *be chosen* by others, in other words, to follow their own will instead of innate instincts, that they started to *sin*. The natural selection that ‘adopted’ people to material reality was substituted by the arbitrary selection that ‘orphaned’ people into self-deceptive isolation from reality.

Humans ‘had got the choice’, but were immediately enslaved by their will-to-avoid-death which corrupted and limited their view of the world. Their choices became inclined towards evil because their vision succumbed to a short-term and ego-centric perspective. They have started to ‘know good and evil’, but their knowledge was distorted by their egocentric perspective — they started to see the world as it relates to their selfish goals, not as it relates to God, they started to see the world through the narrow lens of ‘what’s good in it for *me*’, not as it really is. Humans became habituated to evil to the degree of ‘total depravity’ — because, according to the definition of Saint Maximus the Confessor, evil is the ‘demonic vision’ that sees the world from the short-term and self-serving perspective of the will, in contrast to the ‘angelic vision’ that sees everything as it really is, as it relates to God who is not yet another will in competition with others. Because of the Fall, human vision is bound to oscillate between the two.

To see why it is the will that distorts reality we have to understand that a child begins to lie precisely when he accumulates enough willpower to inhibit and surmount his natural instinct to represent reality truthfully. To rebel against reality, to accept not the reality as it is but to choose a different kind of reality that will be more comfortable to live in, to make this choice and stand by it, a child has to have willpower. And the fact that the faculty that affords heroic strive and the faculty that affords *lying* is the same faculty ought to raise questions about the essence of heroism. It is not a coincidence that Sam Harris, a prolific critic of free will [2012], is also a ruthless opponent of all forms of lying [2013] — these two go together and both enslave their practitioners to the particular ways in which their supposedly ‘free’ choices deviate from the truth.

In the Stone Age, by communicating with forces of nature as if they were persons, people themselves were growing into personhood, into ‘knots’ in truthful exchange of sensual information. In the Bronze Age, the opposite of communication took precedence — instead of recognising nature as their collocutor, humans began to violently impose their *choices* on it. Once nature stopped being a partner in dialogue, once it stopped being a ‘she’ and became an ‘it’, the corporeal environment became a raw resource for the manipulations of our numb will. From this we can infer that the opposite of communication that creates the world from nothing, the violent coercion, is the consequence of *willing* — because the will by definition refuses to participate in conversations where its choices would have to be articulated and thus dangerously exposed to examination by others but silently imposes its own choices whose sovereignty stays unadulterated by concern for the common good, reason, or truth. The will is the

faculty that commands and coerces the environment to carry out its arbitrary decisions. Generally, a man goes on such 'power trips' because he thinks that only the arbitrariness of his decisions can prove the extent of his freedom — prove that there was nothing that caused and conditioned his decisions — prove that they are totally independent, totally free and voluntary, totally of his own will; prove that he is not a 'trembling creature' but self-made self-legislator, a product of own creation. To cut the long story short, 'power trips' happen when a man forgets he is not a god.

What is it that gives us the power to impose our will on others and the environment? What kind of knowledge gives me the power to manipulate? When humans severed their family ties with nature and became orphans, no longer adopted by nature, but adapting nature to themselves, they did so with the help of various manipulative skills — not isolated bodily movements, not instinctive reflexes, but the sequences of deliberate acts, series of procedures. It was the procedural knowing of skills and techniques (Greek *techne*) that empowered humans to impose their will on the environment.

Once the Bronze Age encouraged bending the world to one's will, the shaman has lost his social authority — nature was no longer to be communicated with, it was to be manipulated, subjugated, enslaved — wild animals were to be enslaved as livestock, wild plants enslaved as crops — all with the help of procedural skills like cattle breeding and agriculture. In the Stone Age, hunters and foragers 'walked with God' because they viewed their environment as a provident gift to which they had to attend and adapt with due reverence. In the Bronze Age, herdsmen and farmers began to adapt the environment to themselves — manipulating nature with the aim of shaping 'her' into secure niches, to grind 'her' into conformity with man's will.

A critical caveat is that 'worlds of difference' separate the natural instinct of self-preservation from the imposition of will. Animals do fight for their lives but they do not systematically and deliberately manipulate the lives of other animals with an intention to enslave them into subservience. Yet this is precisely what we humans began to do. This violent oppression was not dictated by any instinct or natural necessity, it was unnatural because it was *willed*, it was a voluntary exercise of arbitrary choice — and it is this arbitrariness that constitutes and implicates humans in the 'original sin'.

Whereas the Stone Age people who thought with the senses of their bodies were bound to accept the immediately present reality, bound to adapt to the material environment 'here and now', in the Bronze Age, people began to think in seasonal terms, to think in terms of 'how can I sacrifice effort 'here and now' with an eye to make the future my debtor and harvest bountiful crops at the end of the year?' As the old saying goes, 'you reap what you sow'. Once we thwarted our gracious acceptance of the present environmental reality on its own terms, we heard something like this: 'Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food...' (Genesis 3:17-19).

Humans began to invest hard labour into the manipulation of their natural environment — cutting down forests and digging irrigation canals — so as to create artificial niches, pastures and arable land. Gradually, as humans were becoming dependent on the ploughed fields and domesticated livestock, as our nomadic ways gave way to the settled lifestyle, we started to think that our success is our creation, is the result of our free choices. This egomaniacal myth of self-made heroes who deserved what they have because they exercised their willpower, provided humans with a justification for a new kind of economy — one where we began to *own* land, cattle, and, soon enough, other humans.

Bronze Age humans managed to impose their will on nature with the knowledge of procedural skills, with the help of *techne*.

After the empowerment that the Bronze Age techniques gave them to successfully subjugate their main foe, nature, humans applied 'Bronze' logic to the other domains of life, they began to frame every problem as such that should be addressed with the problem-solving toolkit of the Bronze Age. As the saying goes, 'if I carry a hammer, everything looks like a nail'. But the 'Bronze' framework turned out to be more toxic and contagious than humans might have predicted. As nature was becoming enslaved, the logic of enslavement overflowed into relations between humans. And as soon as it happened, the honourable place of nature as an existential threat to humanity was 'stolen' by fellow *homo sapiens*, by the 'others'.

Since it was no longer nature on 'whom' survival depended but human willpower, the shaman's task of worshipping nature became redundant. The chieftain (German *Fuhrer*) became the preeminent object of worship because, from now on, those began to be admired and emulated who were able to *coerce* their environment into subservience. And who is better at coercing than those who are in power?

Accordingly, in almost all of the Bronze Age societies, their rulers, their pharaohs and emperors, come to be worshipped as divine because Bronze Age people cannot help but pray to those who have their will imposed, cannot help but idolise the ‘powers that be’.

The ‘feedback loop’ of hoarding privately owned property and accumulating power led to such an unprecedented degree of inequality that those on top of the dominance hierarchy came to be deified — smallfolk could not tell their rulers from gods because they thought in terms of power and success. As claims Sapolsky, ‘Humans committed themselves to a unique trajectory when we invented socioeconomic status. In terms of a caustic, scarring impact on minds and bodies, nothing in the history of animals being crappy to one another about status differences comes within light-years of our invention of poverty’ [Sapolsky, 2017].

Conclusions

In the Stone Age, the tribe’s self-preservation was the communal task of adaptation to nature. In the Bronze Age, with nature tamed, people’s self-preservation began to depend on their adaptation to the will of the ruler. Once the communal task of attunement to the truth was undermined by the fact that society became hostage to the whimsical and arbitrary choices of its ruler, human connection to reality as such was corrupted. Bronze Age societies began to suffer from the self-deceptive illusion of the ruler that he can achieve omnipotence and immortality, that his power makes him a god. And, from the Scriptural perspective, as soon as societies began to worship their own power, they began to ‘...sweep past like the wind and go on — guilty people, whose own strength is their god’ (Habakkuk 1:11).

The Bronze Age ‘educated’ people to exercise their willpower in an attempt to *choose* their way into socio-economic dominance, they were taught procedural knowledge of skills that empowered them to impose their will on the environment. Since people always aim to communicate with the most formidable power in their lives, once selection ceased to be natural, people began to communicate not with nature but with willpower. But how does one ‘communicate’ with willpower, with what by definition refuses to communicate? One does so through *corrupting* the social fabric, through flatter and graft. As a result, the vices of sycophancy and bribery — leper’s bells of the Pagan mindset — continue to curse even our modern societies into repeating the patterns of life that should have been buried in our Bronze Age past.

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