The Concept of Enculturation in a Multidisciplinary Approach

Philosophical, Educational, Cultural Anthropological and Ethnographic Aspects

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Abstract

The forms of early education for children have remained essentially unchanged for centuries. In examining this, the observations of ancient philosophers coincide with the findings of 20th century social science research. The present paper reviews the terminology, definitions and interpretations of this early phase of education. The main key concepts discussed are inculcation (cultural integration), enculturation and socialization.

Introduction

Since the dawn of human history and until the appearance of school education, the education of children within the family and community has been the only source of knowledge. There are records from ancient times of mothers and fathers passing on their own knowledge to their daughters and sons in the form of practical teaching and advice. This way they were able to influence and educate primarily by living example. In Ancient Rome, the mother of the family was primarily responsible for the education of young children, teaching them discipline, obedience, the customs of the ancestors and respect for religion and the gods. From the age of seven, the father took over the task of educating the children. He taught the childen how to read, write, count and the most important rules of practical life. Later in life, Roman sons accompanied their fathers to the Forum, where, like their fellow Greeks in the Agora, they gained their first impressions of political life. At first they were spectators learning the procedures

of lawmaking and voting on issues affecting the life of the community. Later, as a sign of their coming of age, they were able to participate in voting from the age of seventeen (Pukánszky, 2013).

There is evidence from both Greek and Roman cultures of primitive education. For example, in the dialogical process of the heuristic method associated with the name of Socrates, the student's knowledge is perfected with the help of the master that is a recollection of knowledge that was originally born with us and later forgotten. Platon (1984), on the other hand stresses the importance of the knowledge acquired in childhood, when, he argues, our whole character is formed by the power of habit. Aristotle (1994) divides the knowledge acquired in childhood into two types. He believes that moral virtues are formed through habituation and spiritual virtues through education. In the center of his view stands the practice of moral virtues: if we act virtuously repeatedly over and over again we develop a lasting spiritual quality, the moral habitus of the soul. All Greek thinkers therefore emphasise the unconscious involuntary nature of early family education which lays the foundations for learning in the later stages of life.

Pliny the Younger (1981) is the most noteworthy figure in Roman culture on the subject under discussion. The polymath describes the education of the Roman age this way: 'In the old days, it was the practice to learn from our elders - not only by ear but also by eye - what we should do soon and then in a similar way to pass on to those who were still younger. So the young men and women were immediately called up for military service, so that they could get used to obeying and following others and later giving them. Then they stood at the gates of the council chamber seeking office, first as spectators and later as participants in the public deliberations. The father was also the teacher of his children. In the case of an absent father one of the more respected and older senators took his place. They learnt what the orator's and voters choices were, what the powers of the officials were, what freedom the others had, where to give way, when to protest and when to remain silent, what rules the orator had to follow, how to distinguish opposing views, how to deal with those who comment on what has just been said - in short, they have learned all that is involved in being a senator, and by example, which is the most effective way of learning. " (Pliny, 1981). One of the most remarkable elements of Pliny' thought is that he also stresses the importance of passing on knowledge from generation to generation: the child or young person listens so that he can pass on to the next generation all that he experiences.

These sporadic data suggest that the forms of early childhood education remained essentially unchanged for centuries, until the development of book printing and

later the information revolution. With the appearance of ancient schooling the focus of scholarship has shifted towards organised, formal education. The 20th century saw a resurgence of interest in ethnography and cultural anthropology in relation to family education, which is largely informal. In ethnography, the study of the archaic customs of the peasantry, and in cultural anthropology in pre-industrial societies, with a methodology based on participant observation. The two related disciplines relate the transmission of basic knowledge from generation to generation to the process of transmission, since children's learning processes in peasant or even tribal societies were primarily based on the acquisition of traditions, the main medium being the family and the local community, and the method being observation, learning and inculcation (Vehrer, 2022). The concept of tradition here refers to the dynamic system of rules that organises the old and the new, the well-tried, the repeatedly practised and the experimental, the newly accepted and the customary into a workable cultural system that offers a guiding thread for action to all members of the community (Szilágyi, 2009). In the past, individuals belonging to the community had to learn this system of norms and rules in the course of their lives, as it ensured them effective social coexistence. Even today, however, these traditional forms of knowledge transmission play an important role in the early stages of childhood.

Basic concepts

The process of learning from one generation to the next through observation and imitation, is studied by several disciplines, each of which uses different terms to describe this phenomenon. The most common are inculcation, socialisation and enculturation. The present study highlights the concept of enculturation, as it is the one used by cultural anthropology, which is the most nuanced of all the theoretical writings on the subject. The relevant literature provides a differentiated view on the process of cultural integration itself both geographically and cross-culturally.

Inculcation

In ethnography, the concept of inculcation is understood as a natural educational activity based on everyday experience not bound to educational institutions or social organisations. The medium of learning of an individual born into a folk community is the family, their current age group and the village community. It is during this process of integration that the child acquires the knowledge and skills necessary for work, learns the forms of everyday interaction and masters the

traditions of the community. This prepares them for adult life and helps them to acquire the norms of the community (Németh, 1977; Edelényi, 2009).

Socialisation

The concept of socialisation, associated with Durkheim (1980), is understood as a social and educational theory by which individuals acquire socially appropriate behaviour through interactions with other members of society. Ethnography and cultural anthropology use the concept of socialisation infrequently, but interpret it in a similar way. It is understood as the social process whereby an individual acquires the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to contribute to the maintenance of the society into which he or she is born, to be able to carry out the tasks that that society imposes on him or her, and thus to become a sustainer or even a shaper of the culture of that society. In the process of socialisation, according to the ethnographic interpretation two important media are involved, one is organised, institutionalised education, in which society consciously seeks to shape the individual, the other is nurture the spontaneous acquisition of social experience (Sárkány, 1982). This duality and broader interpretation distinguishes the concept from inculcation.

Enculturation

Enculturation in cultural anthropology is similar to the former concept. It is understood as a process of cultural learning, in other words cultural inculcation, the transmission of cultural habits, experiences and knowledge through education, consciously or unconsciously. An important condition is the closed nature of the culture but nowadays it also covers the whole life cycle, i.e. learning to respond to the effects of the environment. In this interpretation it is a set of lifelong interactions in which adaptation patterns learned in childhood play a dominant role. A related theory is that cultural inculcation is the relationship between a phenomenon and the cultural representation of the individual's habits, and therefore its stages are characterised by transitions of culture and the capacity to innovate (A. Gergely, 2010). According to Kirshner-Meng (2011), enculturation processes involve three factors: the transmission of parental norms to children, conscious imitation and unconscious adaptation.

Enculturation, the process by which an individual engages in the normative attainment of a native culture, emerged as a separate construct only in the late 1940s, thanks to the theory of Herskovits (1948). Herskovits (2003), the creator of the concept of enculturation, initially used the terms "culturalisation" and "socialisation" in his work. By culturalisation, he means the process of

unconscious cognition through one becomes the owner of his own culture and which distinguishes him from other living beings. The process by which the individual assimilates into society is what he calls socialisation. In this he emphasises the fundamental role of adaptation to the peer group, in the course of which the individual's role in the life of the community is established. Integration into society takes place in institutionalised forms. By interpreting this pair of concepts, we can identify culturalisation with nurturing and socialisation with education.

Cultural assimilation into tradition

In the traditional peasant society, the individual and the community lived together in a particular dialectic. The community set the norms, guided behaviour and everyday customs to which the individual had to adapt in order to fit into society. The strict norms also provided security for those who lived within them: the knowledge transmitted by tradition gave those living in peasant society a secure knowledge and a general education. Culture was transmitted through direct human contact, so learning by sight was also important (Tarján, 1991). Educating a child meant first of all teaching them the traditions of the adult society of the village. And as they grew up, they already understood all the work that adults did and knew everything they knew. So the way to learn the traditional culture of the village was through the family. As an adult, the individual became a member of the village or town community, which is the second most important medium for passing on traditions after the family. It was in these two contexts where the child learned the mother tongue, the rhymes of folk poetry, the norms of everyday life, festive customs and material culture (Andrásfalvy, 1990).

Vasas (1993), based on his fieldwork in Kalotaszeg, found that the child initially imitates the behavioural patterns of his grandparents, parents and siblings and then over time internalises the values behind the learned manifestations. The child thus becomes more and more attached to the community in which he or she was born. In this process they have the opportunity to learn „that they are only one member of a community in which they must often give up their individual desires and ideas for the benefit of the public, or his peers and that they must above all have the public interest at heart" (Vasas, 1993, p. 15).

This phenomenon was not only observed in European folk culture, but also in tribal societies. The cultural anthropologist Franz Boas writes: 'There is one feature of social life, however, that tends to keep the conservative attachment to

customary actions before the minds of the people. This is the education ofthe young. The child in whom the habitual behavior of his surroundings has not yet developed will acquire muchof it by unconscious imitation. In many cases, however,it will act in a way different from the customary manner,and will be corrected by its elders. Any one familiar withprimitive life will know that the children are constantlyexhorted to follow the example of their elders, and everycollection of carefully recorded traditions contains numerous references to advice given by parents to children, impressing them with the duty to observe the customs of thetribe. The greater the emotional value of a custom, thestronger will be the desire to inculcate it in the minds ofthe young. Thus ample opportunity is given to bring theresistance against infractions into consciousness.' (Boas, 1939, p. 237).

On the basis of the same numerous descriptions, Jávor (2000) explains that in village communities, individual initiative and curiosity played a very minor role, and that people's lives - from an early age - were governed by strict village life principles, rules of coexistence and the bonds of religious life. Among other things the community taught the child honesty, truth-telling, religious morals, responsibility towards the family, respect for the parents and elders. Education took place primarily within the family but the whole village community was responsible for ensuring that the child's whole life was adapted to the local community, so they could lecture the, use physical means of punishment, make them work and feed them. Parents were always afraid of the judgment of the community, so they took great care to ensure that their children appeared well behaved. Morality and appearance were inextricably intertwined in peasant society. Parents constantly made their children aware of the community's judgement in the event of failure, for example by telling them parables from the stories of the villagers. Among the ideals of peasant education, a central category was the teaching of obedience and dependence, the ideal of mediocrity and respect for the elderly.

Burke (1991) describes how in the Mediterranean region of Europe in rural communities where the majority of families live in the same house and cultivated the same land for generations, it is reasonable to assume a degree of cultural continuity. In such communities oral traditions have changed less and are therefore a more reliable source of the past. In these inward-looking communities the store of knowledge about the past has changed almost nothing from one generation to the next. Similarly, Gazda (1980) notes that the child learns about older and newer cultural elements through his or her educators of different generations. The grandparent who had more time to spend with the child within

the family passed on the model of life and intellectual assets of a quarter of a century earlier, while parents or older siblings could transmit a culture enriched with folk art brought from abroad, but also diluted and enriched with civilian elements.

In addition to the unconscious cultural mediation of parents, grandparents, siblings, the role of the peer group should also be mentioned. Children are put in a group of peers at a very early age, when they are only a few years old and from then on belonging to a particular age group determines the rules of social behaviour. As they grew up these rules were constantly changing in the process of socialisation partly within the family and partly within the age group. One of the most important functions of the changing rules of social behaviour was to prepare individuals of the same or approximately the same age, but from different sex groups for entry into adult society (Niedermüller, 1981).

In the course of growing up, the individual is always moving into a new age group. In most cases, the children learn the children's folklore, songs and games from each other, the younger ones from the older ones. Playing is a typical example of the folk dialectic since it was not only entertainment but also a way of preparing for adult life: the objects of play varied from gender to gender and were linked to adult activities. Girls' play with rag dolls was a preparation for motherhood which is the most important task of an adult woman, while boys played with miniature replicas of household tools. During playing the children imitated the adult's work processes. In addition, from an early age, the children helped the adults with age-appropriate tasks (Kresz, 1949). Laczkovits (1995) gives a precise description of the work processes that determined the children's integration process by gender as they grew older, but in general it can be said that the child became a full member of the family, regardless of gender through their integration into work on the basis of their participation in the family's productive work.

Inculturation took place in different ways in different regions, as the landscape, nature and lifestyle conditions were different. The culture of a village was generally uniform despite the fact that the people living there were of different classes and ranks, had different financial status and mostly different occupations. The inhabitants of a village were alike in many ways, such as their principles and tools of farming, building system, motifs of folk costumes and decorative arts, and their knowledge of stories and songs. They observed all this from birth and by adulthood they had learned what the community expected of them in terms of keeping traditions alive. Most of this knowledge was not written down, it was

passed on by oral tradition, but it was still known by the members of the community (Németh, 1977). For centuries mankind has lived and worked in various smaller and larger kinships and territorial units: in families, clans, villages, towns and cities, in a traditional way. In this order, each person had their place, task and work, defined by unwritten rules (Kósa-Szemerkényi, 1973). The socialisation of children is closely linked to their culturalisation and was made easier by their continuous participation in children's communities, which were reorganised according to life cycle and age group (Gazda, 1980).

Mária Kresz (1949) also observed areal differences in these cultural transmission processes during her research in a village called Nyárszó. As far as the educational aims were concerned, she saw a significant difference between civilian and peasant education. In urban families the aim was to make the child stand out from the community, to make them 'different', whatever their social class, in rural families the aim was to make the child fit in as perfectly as possible and the desire to 'excel', to 'master', to rise through education was almost considered a vice. (Kresz, 1949, p. 64)

Tradition and enculturation versus socialisation

The most common definitions of enculturation can be: in the most general sense, the acquisition of one's own culture (Kron, 2003); the conscious adoption of cultural goods and techniques (Wurzbacher, 1974); the cultural shaping of the individual, the transmission of cultural knowledge to the next generation through social inculcation. In the process of enculturation, the elderly provide the growing generation with a personal and social identity - through primary educators, which is always the family - and on the other hand, we internalize elements of culture through involuntary learning, pattern following, and partly conscious learning (Hollós, 1995).

However, Tomory (2004) argues that a more nuanced definition of the concept is needed given its processual, personal, interactive and experiential nature. Indeed, the encoding and decoding of information accompanies a person from birth and consists of constant signals sent back and forth throughout life. According to Tomory, specific channels of communication are opened up between the older members of the family and the child which are not necessarily specific to other communities, individuals or cultures, and the content transmitted is also local or even personal. Verbal and non-verbal communication processes surround the child, by which they are integrated into something that is the culture as a whole (Tomory, 2004).

The concept of enculturation, associated with Herskovits (1948), later became part of the academic community and was discussed by many even in connection with the concept of socialisation. Hammond (1975) defines it as a process of integration into a specific culture i.e. adaptation and Nahodil (1986) defines it as integration into a cultural complex. Initially the concept is interpreted as referring to assimilation to one's own culture, and in terms of age, to early childhood. In recent decades however, anthropology has broadened the definition of the lifespan even extending it to adulthood considering increased mobility and the lifelong need to adapt (e.g. McMillan, 1995). Other researchers include the fetal period when a harmonious relationship with the mother and her well-being has an emotional impact on the future member of the community even before birth (Tomory, 2004).

Thus, according to Tomory (2004), enculturation encompasses the broadest categories of learning including all the content that makes a person human, a being with culture and capable of culture. In this sense culture can be understood as a specific tool that enables the child to become an adult. It is always a question of the specific culture of particular people, a community or group, their way of thinking and the attitudes, external manifestations and integration of internal content associated with it, and therefore takes place differently in each culture. Enculturation is therefore a basic process that encompasses all cultural contents and their acquisition, with its roots in the family.

The role of cultural patterns

When discussing this topic it is important to mention Ruth Benedict's Patterns of Culture (1934), because the theory she developed in this work has had a significant influence on later research. Benedict defined the cultural patterns that affect individuals through socialisation. She argued that the same cultural phenomena - such as growing up, tests and proofs of manhood, warfare, marriage - in a similar economic situation and political system are associated with very different and often contradictory customs in the lives of different people. By interpreting this differentiation, she emphasised the social impact on the assumption that each culture can only be understood in its own system as a coherent whole of its elements. Benedict identified culture with tradition, which takes different forms from person to person, and which includes the means of human life, the way in which they are used, the customs of living together and their spiritual values. All cultures, she argued, develop a more or less uniform but prefabricated system of thought and action, a system of patterns of thought and action ready-made for the recipient, which permeates everyday actions as well as the rites of celebration. In other words the culture creates a certain style which can

be characterised and becomes the pattern to which the individual adapts. According to her, each culture is an integrated whole with its own form, each individual within a cultural form bears the traits of that culture and behaves according to its pattern (Bohannan-Glazer, 1997). The pioneering research of the American anthropologist E. T. Hall (1966), who was the first to study the spatial needs of a human should also be mentioned in this context and his observations were used as the basis for dividing the distances used by individuals into zones. It was in connection to the processes of enculturation that Hall identified culture-specific norms in different ethnic groups, while at the same time observing the unconscious nature of the application of these cultural patterns within and outside the community. He found that the existence of proxemic enculturation only becomes apparent as a result of different norms across cultures.

In cultural anthropology, social learning is the adaptation of behaviours (Peoples-Bailey, 1991). Whiting (1991) describes many forms of social behaviour in his studies based on observations of several cultures. He talks about universal traits, similar character traits all over the world, justified by universal needs and desires. There are also universal traits in mother-child interaction, as the mother is the primary emotional source for the child. Whiting confirms that in addition to the fact that each culture has its own specific norms of behaviour, there are also differences in children's learning which are related to the their gender, age, social organisation, etc. Whiting, using the example of the lap and knee children highlights the role of the older child as a supervisor in the education of the younger ones, and the importance of rehearsal and imitation. Enculturation, therefore tends to provide and ground cultural content within the family, while socialisation refers to the whole of society with shared activities: holidays, rituals, dances, songs, listening to stories, acting them out, etc. Imitation plays an important role in the adoption of all patterns (Cole & Cole, 1997; Boglár, 1998).

Cultural integration into society

Durkheim's social anthropology played a major role in the subject under study both in social and educational terms (Durkheim, 1980). Today, the term is used primarily in psychology and educational science, and refers to the totality of the social environmental effects of child development (Falus-Báthory, 1997). Socialisation is primarily the acquisition of rules and norms which are indispensable for individual integration into society and effective participation in social life (Bábosik, 1997). According to Bourdieu (2022), socialisation is the result of ritual and practical activities in the family the aim of which is to create in each

member of the community lasting feelings that ensure integration as a condition for the existence and survival of the community.

Pedagogy distinguishes between primary and secondary socialisation, the primary taking place in the family and the secondary in the school (Atkinson, 1997). This division is in line with the division used by Herskovits (2003) between culturalisation and socialisation. The family environment has a significant influence on the individual's social behaviour and attitudes towards formal education, and in this sense it is a lifelong influence and therefore its importance is more dominant than that of secondary socialisation. Much of the literature on the subject emphasises the role of the mother in the socialisation process, while others consider the role of both parents to be dominant (Mead, 1930). As they write, sibling play is one of the most important socialization media but the younger sibling also has much to do with how conflict situations are approached by parents and how the different needs of siblings due to their different ages are managed (Cole & Cole, 1997).

The cultural anthropologist Le Vine (1988), studying different cultures concluded that there are basically three types of socialization goals in early raising of children: the most important is the survival goal where parents take care of the child's health and safety to ensure their survival. The second is economic, where the child is encouraged to acquire the skills that are essential for becoming an economically productive and successful adult. Thirdly, the cultural objective is identified, whereby the values of the cultural life of the community are passed on to the next generation. These goals are arranged in a hierarchy according to Le Vine, although the order of economic and cultural transmission can easily be disputed if we consider that the importance of the third goal is manifested in early childhood, while the second goal becomes vital only later in life. A similar view is expressed by Lips (1962), who, referring to pre-industrial societies points out that all members of the community are obliged to acquire traditional knowledge. Everyone has an equal opportunity to do so, since all children grow up under the constant supervision of their parents. The growing child is initiated step by step into the wisdom of ancient times, since from infancy they are always carried by their mother and thus participates in their parent's every movement and action. Lips considers that the most important knowledge is the knowledge of subsistence: 'Education always has a twofold aim: on the one hand, to impart the technical knowledge necessary for subsistence, in accordance with the culture of the time, and on the other - which is much more important - to make the child, the adolescent, the young man and the young girl aware of the essence of the ethical, spiritual and social values which form the basis of community life. [...] The

belief that the negligence of even one individual is violating the sacred laws of the tribe endangers the safety of the whole community makes the duty of education a vitally important task for the whole tribe among natural people." (Lips, 1962, p. 262).

Conclusions

In summary, every culture has norms that we can learn by learning and imitating. As we have seen, an important element at the heart of socialisation is tha it approaches the influence of education and the incorporation of the expectations of the environment. Both processes aim for social integration and may involve conscious and unconscious mediating elements. While enculturation tends to take place within the family, the immediate community. At the same time, the family and community are part of a cultural system, passing on its patterns.

If we look at the phenomenon of enculturation, we can observe that it is an unchanging process that has been going on for centuries, whatever culture we are talking about. However, in recent decades there has been a break in well-established practices as the role of each generation in transmitting traditions, values and norms has undergone a major transformation. These changes have been influenced by a number of factors but most of all by the information revolution that is unfolding in the new millennium. Social change now governs relations between people in a different way. In folk culture the sole holders and connoisseurs of customs were adults and the elderly and elements of culture were passed down in an unchanging static form, whereas today, the creators and holders of customs are often contemporary groups, and these changes mean that they take dynamic forms in the everyday lives of younger generations. The former continuity of generations and the process of handing down traditions has been replaced by the discontinuity of generations. The world has opened up for the younger generation but their situation has also become more difficult, as the former safety net of traditional communities has disappeared. Their patterns now carry few traditional values compared to their parents' and grandparents' generation. The early childhood environment continues to influence our adult lives and values, and the importance of intergenerational dialogue and rethinking has come to the fore in academic thinking in recent years in a number of disciplines.

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