

**EDUCATION OF THE  
PUEBLO CHILD:  
A STUDY IN  
ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT**

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Education of the Pueblo Child: A Study in Arrested Development by Frank Clarence Spencer

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A STUDY OF ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT

BY

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## INTRODUCTION

A RETROSPECTIVE view of the evolution of culture as revealed in the history of ancient nations which have left written records, and the ethnical remains of others which have disappeared, show a constantly recurring struggle in the progress of the adjustment of the individual to a group or social unit. The tragedy of nations has been involved in this adjustment. States have flourished, decayed or disintegrated in accordance with their success in meeting and solving this problem of individual freedom and social welfare. Extreme emphasis either on one or the other of these factors has proved disastrous to progress. On the one hand, it has led to national disintegration, and on the other, to intellectual stagnation. The problem is not yet solved by the most enlightened nations, but it is in the lower stages of civilization that the crises are most marked. It appears that in the development of every people or nation emerging from barbarism there has been a time when these factors have been weighed in the balance, and the direction in which the beam has tipped has largely determined the destiny of that nation or people. In Greece it went in one direction, and in India, China and ancient Egypt in the other; and history has recorded the results. In the former is seen a comparatively short-lived but brilliant nation; in the latter, a stable, long-existing state, but at the expense of intellectual progress.

It is with the latter of these conditions that this study is chiefly concerned; for the forces which bring about this condition as elements in the history of culture must ever be

of vital interest to the educator who looks upon his field in its broader aspects.

Other sciences have sought the elements of their respective subjects in their simplest beginnings, in their earliest and elementary forms; because an organization can best be studied when reduced to its simplest elements. The essential elements in political and social institutions become much clearer when studied in their primitive beginnings and traced to their emergence in more complex forms. In the same way it would seem that valuable results may arise from a careful study of the primitive ideals of humanity and the means they consciously or unconsciously adopted to realize these ideals.

The Pueblo Indians of the south-west offer an interesting field from this point of view; as they exemplify a people which attained a civilization in advance of all the Indians surrounding them. Then, by conditions which it is the purpose of this dissertation to discuss, their development was arrested, and their civilization has since stood practically still. For three hundred and fifty years their history is known, and the record of their ruins carries us back much further. A careful study of their condition, their ideals and means of attaining them, may reasonably be expected to throw some light, not alone upon primitive aims and methods, but upon the question of the adjustment of the individual to the social whole and its relation to the larger problem of national progress.

The advantage of studying a type such as the Pueblos is that the forces and methods which tend to arrest progress may be studied in operation. They are living the conditions, so to speak, which are the object of our research.

It was with this point of view that the writer entered upon the investigation. A somewhat extended personal contact with these Indians, in which their customs—social, industrial

and religious—and their method of education were studied, forms the basis for this essay. The description of their mode of life is not intended to be complete, and only so much of their history, physical and social environment and customs, is given as is directly related to the subject in hand, and serves to illustrate the prevailing tendencies of their civilization.

The writer desires especially to acknowledge his indebtedness to Professor James E. Russell for many kindly suggestions and other assistance, and to Dr. Livingston Farrand for his helpful interest; but he holds himself entirely responsible for the subject matter of the dissertation.