



CARIBOU AZORES

Caring for others (as well)

Several decades ago, the American anthropologist Margaret Mead was asked during a lecture at a university which object she considered to be the first sign of our civilization. The student had probably expected her to talk about a clay pot or a spearhead, or perhaps some form of technological achievement – something tangible, at least. But after a brief pause, Mead cryptically replied, 'A healed bone.' If an animal breaks something in nature, she argued, its chances of survival are zero. It would take several weeks for such a fracture to heal, during which time it could neither move to a water source nor hunt, so it would starve, die of thirst, or fall victim to other animals.

Bone findings that prove a person survived with a broken femur many millennia before Christ suggest that someone was there to take care of them. Someone who brought them food and water, who stayed with them, thus giving them the opportunity to heal in peace. The first sign of our civilization is therefore not weapons or other inventions, but our ability to care not only for ourselves, but also for others. – *Annabelle Hirsch*

Margaret Mead (1901-1978) was an American ethnologist (*researcher into the lifestyles of different peoples*) and held the view that social behaviour is malleable and culturally determined. She is considered one of the most prominent proponents of cultural relativism in the 20th century (the idea that cultures cannot be compared or judged from the perspective of another culture).



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