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"Kinder des Grabes"

It is known that prior to the eighteenth century, children were considered little adults, and only in the Romantic era the concept of childhood as we know it nowadays was actually conceived, in part thanks to the poets that wrote about it.

When it comes to William Wordsworth, the figure of the child, embodies innocence, immediacy, and the naiveness of the man in front of nature, it is an idealized construction. But this figure, did not only represent what I just wrote, but it was also a way to express how the qualities that those kids had were under constant threat because of that commercial and urban society that was (and still is) forgetting values such as the intimacy with nature or the unmitigated capacity for wonder and joy.

The poet shares the same thoughts as Rousseau when it comes to the goodness of nature and the excellence of the child, he trusts the good that man can get by cultivating his senses and feelings.

Wordsworthian poetry gives us an analysis of the interaction between man and nature, and how it influences our emotions and our sensations. He was also influenced by the philosopher David Hartley, because he believed that our moral character starts developing during childhood and it is a result of our physical experiences, whether they were pleasing or painful, sensations lead to simple thoughts that later get combined into more complex and organised ideas.

There is one specific poem by William Wordsworth that actually shows how much he believed in the development of the children: *My heart's leaps up*, from *Poems in Two Volumes* (1802).

One of the most important quotes in the poem is "The Child is the father of the Man". It expresses at its finest how our childhood is extremely linked with our adulthood, they are not two separate worlds, it is something to be seen as revolutionary, because of the social ideas of the time. Even though other people before Wordsworth shared the same ideas when it came to protecting children's innocence, such as William Blake, only in the Romantic Era some changes regarding adults' attitude towards children were made.

The whole piece of poetry is based on the sight of an ordinary incident: the sight of a rainbow. The poet is the speaking voice in the poem and he describes the excitement of seeing the natural phenomenon, it also highlights the importance of memory since William Wordsworth remembers that specific incident.

Still, the situation didn't really get much better in the Victorian Era, and the description of this directly comes from the greatest British novelist: Charles Dickens.

Dickens had a very difficult childhood: since his father was sent to jail due to debt, he was sent to a workhouse, and only later when his father was released and the family's financial situation got better he was able to attend school in London.

This author experienced everything he wrote about: the bad workhouse conditions, the exploitation and child labour.

Because of his childhood experience, Charles Dickens was very much aware of the vulnerability of childhood, and how little kids were forced into adulthood way too early. Just like Wordsworth, he believed that childhood was not only a moment of life to acquire an education, but it was also a time to play and exercise imagination.

In his novel *Oliver Twist*, Charles Dickens writes about a fictional version of what he experienced in first person while in the workhouse: economic insecurity and humiliation. The surname "Twist" is symbolic: it shows how the main character Oliver will be kissed by luck by discovering that he actually has noble origins. The book perfectly describes the situations that children in the workhouses had to live, it was considered disrespectful to ask for some more food, they were forced into hard jobs and they were taken advantage of, many times they were sold for some pounds, just like Oliver who got sold to a cruel master and escaped. The description of how the young Londoner pickpockets lived is brutally honest.

Another book where he criticizes the way children were treated is *Hard Times*, which is about Thomas Grandgrind who founded a school where he taught what he believed in: facts and statistics. He brings up his kids Louisa and Tom in the same way, so he was basically repressing their thoughts and feelings. Thomas even made his daughter marry a rich banker that was thirty years older than her. Louisa helps her brother get a job at the bank, but then he robs his employer. In the end, Mr Grandgrind understands the damage he caused to his kids. This work is a way to protest kids' education, since they were almost always treated in a cold and unempathic way.

In *David Copperfield*, we can see some elements of a typical Bildungsroman (a novel that follows the hero's developments from childhood to adulthood), and it

is divided in three parts: childhood and early youth, later youth to manhood and maturity. Dickens again criticizes the cruelty to children, the struggle of the weak in society, and the strict Victorian education given to young people.

The author was often criticized because he was able to view the world from a child's perspective, full of desires and fears, and he really wanted adults to remember to sometimes feel like a child and to have feelings about childhood. Charles Dickens was one of the greatest advocates for children of his time, he did more than any other author to raise public awareness of the plight of children, laying the groundwork for a variety of social reforms. All of the health professionals and concerned citizens seeking an understanding of what poverty and exploitation look like from a child's point of view could hardly find richer sources of insight than such Dickens novels.

The Victorian Era is particularly known because of the conditions under which young kids had to work in production factories or in mines, working for long hours, and in fatal working conditions. Children often worked as errand boys, crossing sweepers, shoe blacks, or as selling matches, flowers and other cheap goods. Many kids had to work twelve-hours shifts and they were not protected in any way, and the wages were often, if not always, very low.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, child labour rate began to decline in the societies that were industrialised due to regulations and economic factors. And, because technology started becoming more and more present in the everyday life, there was a greater need for educated employees, so this increased schooling and then it lead to the introduction to compulsory schooling, the technology improved and child labour became redundant.

But all those kids that had to work in factories, all those kids that were exploited in every possible way, they cannot, and will never have, their childhood back.

This is still happening nowadays, especially in Third World countries where kids have to work an enormous amount of hours, either in factories, or even as prostitutes, or in mines, many things haven't changed, and they are not protected.

While in First World countries, kids are exploited in a different way, most of the times their parents put pictures and videos of them on the internet and they gain money using their children and violating their privacy, making them easy targets for pedophiles and, more in general, the internet, full of people commenting inappropriate things and people that are way too bitter.

Viele Welten, kein Zuhause. Dies ist der beste Satz, um Franz Kafka zu beschreiben: Deutscher, aber in Prag geboren, kam aus der Tschechischen Republik, sprach aber zu Hause Deutsch, war Jude, hatte aber keinen Kontakt zum Ghetto.

Die Familie Kafka war eine jüdische Familie der Mittelklasse (tatsächlich hatte der Vater ein Geschäft), und der Vater wurde offensichtlich als die Hauptfigur ihrer Familieneinheit angesehen.

"Brief an den Vater" ist ein Brief von Franz Kafka an seinen Vater, der 1919 geschrieben, aber nie verschickt wurde. Darin sehen wir eine detaillierte Beschreibung der Beziehung des Autors zu seinem Vater, und man kann auch eine starke Kritik an der Erziehung sehen, die sein Vater ihm gegeben hat.

Die Beziehung zwischen Franz Kafka und seinem Vater ist äußerst klaustrophobisch. Wir sehen einen Sohn, der seine Vaterfigur fürchtet, und einen Vater, der gelinde gesagt eine tyrannische Haltung hat und immer glaubt, er habe Recht. Hermann Kafka kritisiert alles, von den Interessen seines Sohnes bis zu seinen Vorstellungen von Ehe, er ist nicht liebevoll, und das tut dem Autor zutiefst weh, der nur in der Lage sein wollte, eine echte Beziehung zu seinem Vater aufzubauen.

Eines der Dinge, die Kafka am meisten Probleme bereiteten, war, dass er sich nicht als "echter Kafka" fühlte, und dies führte dazu, dass er ein starkes Gefühl der Unzulänglichkeit verspürte. Sein ganzes Leben lang stammelte Franz Kafka jedes Mal, wenn er mit seinem Vater sprach, dass er alles vermieden hatte, was ihn an seinen Vater erinnerte (genau aus diesem Grund gab er das Geschäft auf). Er glaubte nicht, dass er es wert war, seinen Nachnamen zu tragen.

Franz Kafkas Mutter hingegen versuchte immer, das Verhalten ihres Mannes zu rechtfertigen, und behinderte ihn nicht und stellte nichts in Frage, was sie sagte. Sogar ihre Schwester Ottla (Otilie) war in ständigem Konflikt mit ihrem Vater, tatsächlich wird Franz Kafka sein ganzes Leben lang eine besondere Beziehung zu ihr haben, man kann von Freundschaft und voller Vertraulichkeit sagen, aufgrund ihrer Ähnlichkeiten werden die beiden Willen Gehen Sie immer zustimmen und die Schwester ist die Person, die der Schriftsteller wahrscheinlich am meisten geliebt hat.

Die einzige in der Familie, die von Kafka als eine angesehen wird, die es geschafft hat, sich von Familienketten zu befreien, ist ihre Schwester Elli, die geheiratet hat, das Haus verlassen hat und so eine Familie gegründet hat.

Sicherlich musste Kafka keine schwere Arbeit leisten, oder auf jeden Fall wurde er in der Arbeitswelt nicht ausgebeutet, aber der Mangel an Zuneigung führte zum Tod seiner Begeisterung für das Leben. Es fällt ihm schwer, sich das Konzept der Unabhängigkeit, der Heirat und der Gründung einer Familie vorzustellen.

Hermann Kafka gab seinem Sohn viele Regeln, aber er war der erste, der nicht respektierte, obwohl er ein Beispiel geben musste.

Außerdem fehlte Hermann Kafka die Religiosität völlig und seine Beziehung zum Judentum bestand nicht.

Der Brief endet mit einer imaginären Antwort des Vaters an Franz, in der Sie alle möglichen Anschuldigungen sehen können, die der Vater ihm vorwerfen könnte und die eindeutig nur die Frucht des Verstandes des Autors sind.

Trotz allem drückt Kafka in dem Brief aus, wie er hofft, dass eines Tages die Beziehung in Einklang gebracht und die Dinge geregelt werden können, und er sagt, dass er dazu bereit ist.

In all diesem psychologischen Gewirr verstehen wir, dass der Brief vielleicht mehr für den Autor selbst war. Kafka wählt Literatur als seinen persönlichen Platz, eines der wenigen Dinge, die sein Vater angesichts des mangelnden Interesses daran nicht vollständig kritisieren konnte.

Kafka heiratete jedoch nie und hatte keine Kinder, was zeigt, wie wahr seine Qual war und wie er es trotz hoher Wertschätzung für Ehe und familiäres Engagement nie geschafft hat, sie auszuführen.

Der Vater hat seinen Sohn moralisch ruiniert und ihn davon überzeugt, dass er, was auch immer er getan hätte, gescheitert wäre, genau aus diesem Grund identifiziert sich der Autor mit dem "Dreck".

Es ist erstaunlich, wie eine schlechte Beziehung zu einem Elternteil ein Kind fürs Leben ruinieren kann.