

The Past is Dust... With a Puff you Blow it Away

Historia Magistra Vitae Est – the ancient Latin motto says. Can History, however, really be considered a teacher of life? We carry over from childhood a reverential awe for past events, we learn about wars, revolutions, massacres and any sort of wickedness that man persists in passing down, and that he calls History. In reality mankind has never learned anything from this interminable succession of disasters. It is time to see the absurdity of relating to children a story of horrors, ruled by chance and criminality.

History – Teacher of life?

We carry over from childhood a reverential awe for history, and in general for olden times – the past. In all schools and colleges in the world, just like for the effect of a planetary conspiracy, curriculums require a mandatory subject which has the purpose of keeping alive the memory of all the wars, revolutions, massacres and any sort of wickedness committed by men against men, factions against each other, and nations against nations. These clashes are the effect of man's conflicted mind and predatory instinct and are attributed in history as a thirst for freedom, justice, peace, equality and too frequently, justified in the name of God.

I know that most people, in the attempt to save some shreds of the old vision, would object that without these reminders we could not avoid repeating the errors of the past. What should we think of a second world war that followed the world war one in only a few of years – in less than one generation.

In reality, man's history is the tale of a criminal vision, and the materialisation of its vilest part. Remembering this endless series of crimes, as all schools in the world insist on doing, can only pollute our minds – and especially the minds of young people.

A false future

There is a lowest impulse in man which wants to survive and to perpetuate the past, to the point that we could say that humanity does not have a real future, but only a past repeating itself and is positioned ahead of us like a false future. It is not the experience or memory of past errors that can transform humanity, or change its destiny. In reality mankind has never learned anything from reviewing this interminable succession of disasters. This incapacity to learn from history explains why, through the millennia, our civilisation has constantly been marked by such a terrible destiny and why there are no dreams. There is not one optimistic film or novel about the future of our species, but only dystopia, apocalyptic imagery and prophecies of doom and gloom. The themes explored by Aldous Huxley in *Brave New World*, of Orwell in *1984*, of Ayn Rand in *Anthem*, or in movies like *Blade Runners*, are prophecies of a totalitarian society and a loss of individualism. Our predictions are projections of our fears, of our nightmares of psychological tyrannies capable of counting out each of our breaths, and of a world governed by the oppressive power of the great manufacturing apparatuses and planetary monopolies.

Looking at historical events from a higher point of view, wars and revolutions, crusades and persecutions and the rise and fall of empires, are the material projection of our negative imagination, and self-fulfilling bleak prophecies. It is time to see them as dirt that has escaped from a cosmic broom.

We can change our destiny. We can even revisit our past and change our history. Masses cannot do it, however. Only the individual can do it, through his own transformation.

Our love and morbid attraction for dead and buried times bring us to teach our children to box together phenomena like literature, art and music into artificial currents of thought and periods with a supine devotion towards history as the representation of our criminal past.

Back to Old Stories and Fairy Tales

Turning over in my mind these thoughts, I understood the absurdity of relating to children the stories of horrors, and a history ruled by chance and criminality.

We have to cancel that criminal past, or at least be ashamed of it, and make sure to hide it from our children, and with it, the memory of all the criminals and “small-big men” which the old mankind has turned into legends and passed down as benefactors and heroes.

Wars, conflicts and all sort of wickedness, of which human history is so rich, have been accepted as natural and inevitable events, and no one has ever rebelled against the habit of passing them on to the kids. This is the result of a system of beliefs and expectations which have become universal.

How much better it would be to tell them that The Past is Dust and to teach them that with a puff it can be blown away.

We should go back to tell them the myths, legends and old fables which belong to the art of mysteries. The art of revealing while concealing. In my studies and search for an explanation of the desperate condition of mankind, I discovered that there is more truth in fables and parables than in history. In particular, I have found the most illuminating and inspiring ideas in some legends and stories for children like the following.

The Education of Buddha

There is a legend about the education of young Buddha that even today remains one of the most instructive stories that has ever been passed on. It could well inspire our educational system – starting from the elementary schools.

Buddha’s father wanted to protect his son from every message of degradation, from the concept of limitation and from any tale, scenario or even news of crime or horror whether historically or from their current time period. He personally ensured that the young prince was constantly surrounded by joy, beauty and wealth. To this end, he continually changed the members of the court and carefully chose the servants who attended his son. They were instructed to filter out any worldly news and to never let one atom of negativity reach the prince. The father himself wore make-up and dyed his hair and beard to prevent the concepts of sickness, old-age and death from entering the young Buddha’s vision. His father understood the importance of conveying a higher description of the world to his son, and he knew the strength of effects that beliefs have on the body and mind.

He was able to conceive of a training in immortality, and of a school in which the young Buddha was trained to live forever. The king, having dreamed of a world where sickness and old-age were banished, and a world free of conflicts and any wickedness, and having made every effort to protect his son from these as long as he could, should be celebrated as one of the greatest fathers of mankind, and one of the most courageous pioneers in the entire history of human education.

It is not by chance that tradition made him a king, and a regal/real man. In the Olympus of great heroes, his myth deserves a place beside that of Prometheus.»

The Sleeping Beauty

There is a fable that everyone knows as ‘The Sleeping Beauty’, but whose original title is ‘La belle au bois dormant’: The Beauty in the Sleeping Wood. This difference in the title may appear as a trivial detail, but as in all the great fables that humanity has handed down for generations, there is a treasure of secret knowledge hidden in small difference. The sleeping wood is the symbol of the world as it has been described to us – plagued by poverty and conflicts, and sealed into a hypnotic sleep. The Beauty is the will. If the will is numbed, as it is the case in a mankind with neither individuality nor originality, we become a part of the sleeping wood – of the crowd. In the ordinary man, the will is not absent, but buried under layers and layers of mental and emotional ballast. He is carried away towards an unknown destination, and in his eyes we can read a reluctance to make any effort to come out of his condition, or to search for his uniqueness. From school and parents, from teachers of misfortune, from masters of doom and gloom, he has received a psychological uniform, as well as a detailed description of the world, which makes him like anybody else. Nobody has warned him that uniformity is mediocrity.

The story of the Sleeping Beauty is the declaration of a reawakening of the Self, and the 'dream'. It is the announcement of a new generation of young people capable of overthrowing the old paradigms and entering into a new vision of reality. The only help that a man can give to the others is to awaken himself from that sleep.

The Little Prince

Ordinary men as we know them are like the solitary inhabitants of the asteroids visited by the Little Prince. Each one of them is alone, locked in his own world, and a prisoner to his role. He is sealed in a bubble of vanity and egocentricity, and forever hypnotised by the concept of work. He does what he loves not, in places and with people whom he has not chosen.

In Saint-Exupéry's famous novel, there is, among others, a vivid, satirical portrait of human greed and cupidity driving business. When the Little Prince leaves his tiny planet to explore the universe, one of the asteroids he visits belongs to a businessman – one of the most emblematic characters ever created to depict the absurdity and ridiculousness of the human condition.

When the Little Prince finds him, the businessman is ceaselessly engaged in counting the stars he thinks that he owns. He wishes to capitalise on them in order to buy more stars. The prince tries to explain to him why he cannot own the stars: A man can only own what he is responsible for, and what he loves and cares for. Hence, the businessman could not own the stars.

Pinocchio

Although universal literature, from Aristofane to Beckett, is full of great novelists, perhaps there has never been one as intelligent, ironic or secluded as Carlo Lorenzini – better known by the pen name of Collodi. His book, "Pinocchio" is the most widely read book – after the Koran and the Bible. Lorenzini discovered a cruel and terrible truth: men are bio-chemical marionettes, and humanity is made up of millions of puppets pulled by invisible threads. Knowing how violent men can become towards anyone who reveals them some unpleasant truths to them, he prudently hid such an unspeakable discovery and awful secret under the surface of a nursery story which is in reality the biggest and most daring mystical text of all world literature – disguised as a fable.

Behind its ironic and easy-going tones and didacticisms, the story of this well-known puppet is actually the dark and pitiless parable of man's initiatory trip from puppet to a real man who is endowed with his own will. Pinocchio is the ferociously ironic caricature of an untruthful mankind, tyrannically moved by strings of negative emotions and the unhappiness of an inescapable fate.