

Letteratura

Oliver Twist or The Parish Boy's progress

Trascrizione

In Dicken's time, progress meant the Industrial Revolution. Great technological and social change. Also today's world is changing at an unprecedented pace. The Industrial Revolution and the Digital Revolution are taking place in our times simultaneously in China and India, as people leave the rural areas for industrial and high tech cities like Beijing, Shanghai, and Mumbai, creating problems of housing, overcrowding, health and work.

Oliver ran away from terrible living and working conditions and journeyed to London. Today people still travel, searching for a better place in which to live. This can mean the exploitation of people, including children. In Naples, the hit-men are children. The Camorra turns to teenagers to enforce its rule of organised crime.

Criminals, like Fagin and Bill Sykes, use children for their own ends.

In Victorian times, children worked down mines. Children still work down mines today, in some parts of the world, and in factories, called sweatshops.

As in Oliver Twist, many people are left to manage on their own but there are others like Mr Brownlow - including international organisations - who believe that it is not enough to have and act to help the have nots.

Oliver's progress is also a "rags to riches story" and people still dream of becoming rich. This is probably one reason why the story is still so popular. It has been televised as a tv series, more than once, many films have been made, the first as early as 1909, the last as recently as 2005, It was made into a musical, which was also filmed.

In the theatre the latest production was in the open air in London in 2017. The Nigerian singer and songwriter D'banji based his song Oliver Twist on the episode "Please, sir, I want some more".

Oliver remains with us even in the form of birthday cakes and "Please sir, I want some more" is instantly recognisable.

But at the same time Oliver personifies a vision of a better world. As in Michael Jackson and Lionel Richie's song "We Are The World", in which children are the protagonists, the theme is hope. The hope that progress, in the future, will see good conquer.