

Reading

I discovered the world of letters when I was a kindergarten child. The kindergarten teacher, however, didn't want to send me to school (for which I haven't forgiven her yet). Reason: dreamily, as I had been, it would be a pity if I had to leave the playground paradise. Unfortunately, the kindergarten teacher did not understand that reading and dreaming goes hand in hand. To me, anyway. As a child, reading opened up numerous dream worlds for me. How many figures did I encounter in my books! And what places have I seen! And all the time I was just lying on the bed, reading, reading, reading... until, at some point, I was expelled from Paradise. The calamity of all readers: the book is finished, and from one minute to the next a whole universe disappears with the last letter. How well do I understand that my children's generation has become engrossed in the Harry Potter world.

If I had to describe the value of reading, it would always benchmark itself against the reading experiences of my childhood. And this is a high benchmark. This was pure reading pleasure. Anyone who now believes that I had preferred classical children's and youth literature is in fact wrong. This kind of breaking down to a children's level was not my cup of tea at all. I soon turned to adult literature instead. It was the adult world that interested me, especially its trial and tribulations about relationships, love and family.

Basically, I simply read what was available. This was the range of a small village library – open every Thursday. I was fortunate enough to have a mother who let me read everything, no matter which shelf I had taken it from.

And today? After studying philosophy and German studies, after I made reading my profession? Today, for me, there is nothing more beautiful than a book that translates philosophical thoughts into literature. In the end, reading is always about the existential things. Otherwise a story would not fascinate us – whether I am shivering with fear along with Hansel and Gretel in the forest, whether I want to plunge into daredevil adventures around the world with beautiful Angélique or want to escape from my life with Anatol Stiller – only to find that this is impossible.

As far as literature is concerned, I've never become a theoretician. I tried, but it deprived me of the most important thing about reading: the joy and the experience. For learning and working there are other books, factual and specialized books, which I like very much, too. They have something in common with literature: they supply a curious and inquisitive person with (reading) material.

For a person who works with books, the personal expectations on a literary text are extremely simple: the decisive criterion is the pleasure I experience when reading... and extremely high: isn't that the high art of a work: to please its readers?

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