

Vergänglichkeit

Sigmund Freud

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Vergänglichkeit

Vor einiger Zeit machte ich in Gesellschaft eines schweigsamen Freundes und eines jungen, bereits rühmlich bekannten Dichters einen Spaziergang durch eine blühende Sommerlandschaft. Der Dichter bewunderte die Schönheit der Natur um uns, aber ohne sich ihrer zu erfreuen. Ihn störte der Gedanke, daß all diese Schönheit dem Vergehen geweiht war, daß sie im Winter dahingeschwunden sein werde, aber ebenso jede menschliche Schönheit und alles Schöne und Edle, was Menschen geschaffen haben und schaffen könnten. Alles, was er sonst geliebt und bewundert hätte, schien ihm entwertet durch das Schicksal der Vergänglichkeit, zu dem es bestimmt war.

Wir wissen, daß von solcher Versenkung in die Hinfälligkeit alles Schönen und Vollkommenen zwei verschiedene seelische Regungen ausgehen können. Die eine führt zu dem schmerzlichen Weltüberdruß des jungen Dichters, die andere zur Auflehnung gegen die behauptete Tatsächlichkeit. Nein, es ist unmöglich, daß all diese Herrlichkeiten der Natur und der Kunst, unserer Empfindungswelt und der Welt draußen, wirklich in Nichts zergehen sollten. Es wäre zu unsinnig, und zu frevelhaft daran zu glauben. Sie müssen in irgend einer Weise fortbestehen können, allen zerstörenden Einflüssen entrückt.

Allein diese Ewigkeitsforderung ist zu deutlich ein Erfolg unseres Wunschlebens, als daß sie auf einen Realitätswert Anspruch erheben könnte. Auch das Schmerzliche kann wahr sein. Ich konnte mich weder entschließen, die allgemeine Vergänglichkeit zu bestreiten, noch für das Schöne und Vollkommene eine Ausnahme zu erzwingen. Aber ich bestritt dem pessimistischen Dichter, daß die Vergänglichkeit des Schönen eine Entwertung desselben mit sich bringe.

Im Gegenteil, eine Wertsteigerung! Der Vergänglichkeitswert ist ein Seltenheitswert in der Zeit. Die Beschränkung in der Möglichkeit des

Genusses erhöht dessen Kostbarkeit. Ich erklärte es für unverständlich, wie der Gedanke an die Vergänglichkeit des Schönen uns die Freude an demselben trüben sollte. Was die Schönheit der Natur betrifft, so kommt sie nach jeder Zerstörung durch den Winter im nächsten Jahre wieder, und diese Wiederkehr darf im Verhältnis zu unserer Lebensdauer als eine ewige bezeichnet werden. Die Schönheit des menschlichen Körpers und Angesichts sehen wir innerhalb unseres eigenen Lebens für immer schwinden, aber diese Kurzlebigkeit fügt zu ihren Reizen einen neuen hinzu. Wenn es eine Blume giebt, welche nur eine einzige Nacht blüht, so erscheint uns ihre Blüte darum nicht minder prächtig. Wie die Schönheit und Vollkommenheit des Kunstwerks und der intellektuellen Leistung durch deren zeitliche Beschränkung entwertet werden sollte, vermochte ich ebensowenig einzusehen. Mag eine Zeit kommen, wenn die Bilder und Statuen, die wir heute bewundern, zerfallen sind, oder ein Menschengeschlecht nach uns, welches die Werke unserer Dichter und Denker nicht mehr versteht, oder selbst eine geologische Epoche, in der alles Lebende auf der Erde verstummt ist, der Wert all dieses Schönen und Vollkommenen wird nur durch seine Bedeutung für unser Empfindungsleben bestimmt, braucht dieses selbst nicht zu überdauern und ist darum von der absoluten Zeitdauer unabhängig.

Ich hielt diese Erwägungen für unanfechtbar, bemerkte aber, daß ich dem Dichter und dem Freunde keinen Eindruck gemacht hatte. Ich schloß aus diesem Mißerfolg auf die Einmischung eines starken affektiven Moments, welches ihr Urteil trübte, und glaubte dies auch später gefunden zu haben. Es muß die seelische Auflehnung gegen die Trauer gewesen sein, welche ihnen den Genuß des Schönen entwertete. Die Vorstellung, daß dies Schöne vergänglich sei, gab den beiden Empfindsamen einen Vorgesmack der Trauer um seinen Untergang, und da die Seele von allem Schmerzlichen instinktiv zurückweicht, fühlten sie ihren Genuß am Schönen durch den Gedanken an dessen Vergänglichkeit beeinträchtigt.

Die Trauer über den Verlust von etwas, das wir geliebt oder bewundert haben, erscheint dem Laien so natürlich, daß er sie für selbstverständlich erklärt. Dem Psychologen aber ist die Trauer ein großes Rätsel, eines jener Phänomene, die man selbst nicht klärt, auf die man aber anderes Dunkle zurückführt. Wir stellen uns vor, daß wir ein gewisses Maß von Liebesfähigkeit, genannt Libido, besitzen, welches sich in den Anfängen der Entwicklung dem eigenen Ich zugewendet hatte. Später, aber eigentlich von sehr frühe an, wendet es sich vom Ich ab und den Objekten zu, die wir solcher Art gewissermaßen in unser Ich hineinnehmen. Werden die Objekte zerstört oder gehen sie uns verloren, so wird unsere Liebesfähigkeit (Libido) wieder frei. Sie kann sich andere Objekte zum Ersatz nehmen oder zeitweise zum Ich zurückkehren. Warum aber diese Ablösung der Libido von ihren Objekten ein so schmerzhafter Vorgang sein sollte, das verstehen wir nicht und können es derzeit aus keiner Annahme ableiten. Wir sehen nur, daß sich die Libido an ihre Objekte klammert und die verlorenen auch dann nicht aufgeben will, wenn der Ersatz bereit liegt. Das also ist die Trauer.

Die Unterhaltung mit dem Dichter fand im Sommer vor dem Krieg statt. Ein Jahr später brach der Krieg herein und raubte der Welt ihre Schönheiten. Er zerstörte nicht nur die Schönheit der Landschaften, die er durchzog, und die Kunstwerke, an die er auf seinem Wege streifte, er brach auch unseren Stolz auf die Errungenschaften unserer Kultur, unseren Respekt vor so vielen Denkern und Künstlern, unsere Hoffnungen auf eine endliche Überwindung der Verschiedenheiten unter Völkern und Rassen. Er beschmutzte die erhabene Unparteilichkeit unserer Wissenschaft, stellte unser Triebleben in seiner Nacktheit bloß, entfesselte die bösen Geister in uns, die wir durch die Jahrhunderte währende Erziehung von Seiten unserer Edelsten dauernd gebändigt glaubten. Er machte unser Vaterland wieder klein und die andere Erde wieder fern und weit. Er raubte uns sovieles, was wir geliebt hatten, und zeigte uns die Hinfälligkeit von

manchem, was wir für beständig gehalten hatten.

Es ist nicht zu verwundern, daß unsere an Objekten so verarmte Libido mit umso größerer Intensität besetzt hat, was uns verblieben ist, daß die Liebe zum Vaterland, die Zärtlichkeit für unsern Nächsten und der Stolz auf unsere Gemeinsamkeiten jäh verstärkt worden sind. Aber jene anderen, jetzt verlorenen Güter, sind sie uns wirklich entwertet worden, weil sie sich als so hinfällig und widerstandsunfähig erwiesen haben? Vielen unter uns scheint es so, aber ich meine wiederum, mit Unrecht. Ich glaube, die so denken und zu einem dauernden Verzicht bereit scheinen, weil das Kostbare sich nicht als haltbar bewährt hat, befinden sich nur in der Trauer über den Verlust. Wir wissen, die Trauer, so schmerzhaft sie sein mag, läuft spontan ab. Wenn sie auf alles Verlorene verzichtet hat, hat sie sich auch selbst aufgezehrt, und dann wird unsere Libido wiederum frei, um sich, insoferne wir noch jung und lebenskräftig sind, die verlorenen Objekte durch möglichst gleich kostbare oder kostbarere neue zu ersetzen. Es steht zu hoffen, daß es mit den Verlusten dieses Krieges nicht anders gehen wird. Wenn erst die Trauer überwunden ist, wird es sich zeigen, daß unsere Hochschätzung der Kulturgüter unter der Erfahrung von ihrer Gebrechlichkeit nicht gelitten hat. Wir werden alles wieder aufbauen, was der Krieg zerstört hat, vielleicht auf festerem Grund und dauerhafter als vorher.

W i e n, November 1915.

Sigm. Freud

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