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Satirically Psychotic

In Jonathan Swift's satirical essay, "A Modest Proposal," Swift offers a solution to Ireland's devastating food shortage: eat the babies. It is an ironically conceived attempt to "find out a fair, cheap, and easy method" for converting the starving children of Ireland into "sound [and] useful members of the commonwealth" (Swift, 1260). By his calculations, there are 120,000 children with poor parents. The author proposes that three-fourth (100,000 children) should be fattened up, slaughtered, and sold to Ireland's rich land-owners and people of high status. This solution would combat Ireland's overpopulation and unemployment while providing those now childless families with a "little extra income and [a way to] contribute to the overall economic well-being of the nation" (SparkNotes Editors). This is not an actual solution, it is a sick and twisted wake-up call for the people of Ireland. Swift's "Modest Proposal" sounds exactly like the Brothers Grimm fairy tale of "Hansel and Gretel". In essence, Jonathan Swift is telling everyone to become the witch and eat the Hansels and Gretels of the poor. His real message is that the people of Ireland do not consider overpopulation as a major problem. They continue to hit the snooze button until it is too late.

Works Cited

SparkNotes Editors. "SparkNote on A Modest Proposal." *SparkNotes.com*. SparkNotes LLC.

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Swift, Johnathan. "A Modest Proposal." *The Norton Anthology of English Literature: the Majors Authors*, edited by Stephen Greenblatt. 10th ed., vol. 1, W. W. Norton & Company, 2019, pp. 1260-1266.