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Bakalářská práce

Příběhy Roalda Dahla v kontextu dětské
literatury v porovnání s tvorbou pro dospělé
čtenáře

Roald Dahl's Children's Books and Short
Stories for Adults

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Poděkování

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Anotace

Předmětem zkoumání bakalářské práce je literární tvorba britského autora Roalda Dahla, který specifickým přístupem k literárnímu kánonu dětské literatury obohatil tvorbu určenou dětskému čtenáři nejen ve 20. století. Práce si klade za cíl porovnat autorův přínos v kontextu britské dětské literatury a literatury pro dospělé čtenáře. Jádrem práce bude srovnávací analýza Dahlovy tvorby, nalézání společných témat, motivů a morálního přesahu dětských příběhů a povídek a románů pro dospělé čtenáře. Práce v závěrečné kapitole porovná filmové adaptace příběhů pro dětské čtenáře a jejich originální literární předlohu.

Klíčová slova

Roald Dahl, humor, Karlík a továrna na čokoládu, dětská čtenářství, dospělí, násilí, morální výchova, rodičovství, rodina, groteskní smysl

Abstract

The subject of the bachelor's thesis is the literary work of the British author Roald Dahl, whose specific approach to the literary canon of children's literature enriched the work intended for child readers in the course of the 20th and 21st centuries. The thesis aims to compare the author's contribution in the context of British children's literature and literature for adult readers. The core of the thesis will be a comparative analysis of Dahl's work, finding common themes, motifs and moral overlap between children's stories and short stories and novels for adult readers. In the final chapter, the thesis compares the film adaptations of the stories for children's readers with their original literary counterparts.

Keywords

Roald Dahl, humour, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, child readers, adults, violence, moral education, parenthood, family, grotesque sense

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Introduction

My bachelor thesis will focus mainly on the children's stories of the British writer Roald Dahl. The literary analysis will concern two stories, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory and Fantastic Mr. Fox. Both stories will be analysed based on themes, motifs and symbols. Last but not least, I will also write about short stories for adults.

In the first chapter I will briefly summarise the life of the writer Roald Dahl, as his life story is very varied and his life experiences inspired him to write not only children's stories but also stories for adults.

In the second chapter, I will discuss the most popular story, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, which became the biggest success not only with children. I will present the story's plot, characters, themes, motifs and symbols along with a comparison of the work with the film version, which has perhaps become even more popular and many readers know the story only from the film.

In the next chapter I will discuss the story of Fantastic Mr. Fox. I will briefly summarize the content of the story and assess the moral values and overlaps of the main character. I will also focus on the irony that Roald Dahl uses very often in this story.

In the final chapter I will compare Dahl's children's work with his work for adult readers. Whether the books have anything in common and why the author focuses mostly on violence and not on more positive qualities. In particular, the story Switch Bitch intrigued me a lot as a representative work for adult readers.

1. Roald Dahl

During World War II, Roald Dahl was a pilot. However, he once crashed very badly and suffered serious injuries. He was lucky to survive at all. After he recovered, he wanted to fly again, he wanted to serve good things. He wrote many stories in magazines that became very popular. However, Roald Dahl is not only known for being a pilot and shooting down several enemy aircraft, or for writing in magazines. He is best known as the author of children's books. His stories have been translated into sixty-three languages and over three hundred million books have been sold. Probably his most famous work is *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, which is loved not only by children. Virtually everyone knows his 2005 film version with Johnny Depp today. What is not known, however, is Roald's opinion on this film version, although everyone would be interested in what he would say and whether he would like it. He used and invented new words in his books. For example, he created Oompa-Lompas characters or words like zippfizzing and frobscottle. Roald Dahl became the greatest and best writer of modern children's literature.¹

1. 1. Young Roald

Roald Dahl was born in Wales on September 13, 1916. His parents came from Norway. Their names were Sofia and Harald. They named their only son Roald after the famous Norwegian polar explorer Roald Amundsen. Amundsen was the first to reach the South Pole and was the first to pass through the northwest along North America. He became a pioneer of polar research in airships and aircraft. Roald Dahl's father Harald provided ships and supplies to ships in Wales. Thanks to this work, he got quite rich. When Harald was young, he lost his arm. However, he managed everything very well and Roald admired him for being able to tie a shoelace with one hand, for example, and he could not do it with both. Harald was once married before Sofia and had two children from a previous relationship, whom he had to take care of with his second wife because his first wife died very young. Sofia was very well educated and smart. She and Harald had four children, a son Roald and three daughters: Astri, Alfild, and Else. Since Roald was their only son, his sisters called him "the apple", which meant that he was his mother's favourite child. Sofia was also a great storyteller. She was telling her children stories about Norwegian trolls, monsters, and fairies. Roald probably inherited a lot from her. The whole family could speak English, but at home, they mostly spoke Norwegian. When Roald

¹ REVELL, Anna. *Roald Dahl: a biography*. USA: Independently Published, 2017. ISBN 978-1-705-85009-1.

was three years old, his sister Astri died at the age of seven of appendicitis. A few months later, his father also died of grief. Sofia was forced to take care of her three children, two stepchildren, and one she carried under her heart because she was pregnant. She had to take care of everything, and she was very brave. After Asta was born, they moved to a smaller house.²

1. 2. School Life

After kindergarten, Roald Dahl went to a boys' school. Unfortunately, he was not a very good student, and he did not even like school. He had big spelling problems. But despite these problems, he liked to write. When he was eight, he started writing a secret diary. He always sat on a branch and wrote. Then he hid the diary in a box that was hidden in a tree. What Roald always liked after school was going to the candy store with his friends. This shop belonged to an old and dirty woman Mrs. Pratchett. She always had dirty hands and she reached with those dirty hands to the sweets for the children. The children still loved the sweets, but as revenge, they put a mouse in one jar. The next day, when Mrs. Pratchett found out the mouse, she went to school and pointed to the children she knew they had done it. The teacher hit each of them several times with a cane. When his mother heard this, she was terribly angry that the teacher had hit them so many times. Preferably, she sent Roald to another school the next year. It was again a boys' (boarding) school called Peters's Preparatory School. The children there were also punished for any violation of the rules. Roald always cried at night before falling asleep. He wrote to his mother every week, which became a habit until she died. Roald wanted to go home, so he pretended to have appendicitis. However, his doctor knew he was simulating. Every summer, the whole family went to Norway for a holiday on an island. However, it was very difficult to get there. They travelled for a total of four days and used many means of transport, such as taxis, trains, ships, ferries and so on. But it was worth it. Their mother took them fishing on a small boat. The whole family moved to Bexley near London in the year 1927. They had new neighbours who thought Sofia was not strict enough. At the age of thirteen, Roald went to another school called Repton School. However, this school was in many cases worse than the previous one. There were more rules and punishments. Even old students were allowed, to beat younger boys. Roald felt lonely and frightened. However, Roald was very good at sports. He was great at squash, hockey, soccer, cricket, and swimming. He also won a boxing match. All he liked about Repton was that there was a company nearby that made Cadbury chocolate. The company often asked students to taste and rate the chocolate. Roald loved chocolate, so he

² KELLEY, True. Who Was Roald Dahl? USA: Penguin Workshop, 2012. ISBN 978-0-448-46146-5.

always liked to go there. It was also key to the creation of his most famous book: *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. Roald began photographing at Repton. He was very good and won many prizes. He dropped out of school in 1933 and decided to travel the world.³

1.3. Adventures

As a teenager, together with a group of fifty boys called the Public Schools Exploring Society, Roald Dahl travelled across the Atlantic Ocean to Newfoundland. They carried heavy backpacks, travelled in the rain, and slept in leaky tents. They had nothing to eat except berries and lichen. Everyone was hungry and all they could talk about was food. However, this experience made Roald a stronger person. After returning from a trip, he got a job at Shell Oil Company. He thought he would travel the world where the company has offices. But for the first three years, he worked only in London. He wore suits with an umbrella and looked like a middle-aged man. When he was twenty-one, he had the original idea to pull out his teeth and replace them with artificial ones. He thought there will be fewer worries with them, and he persuaded his mother to do the same. After three years, the company finally sent him abroad, namely to Africa. He travelled to Dar es Salaam, now known as Tanzania. He saw palm trees and tropical attractions for the first time. He befriended his co-worker, who taught him to speak Swahili. Roald first saw various animals, such as lions, giraffes, and elephants. There were also dangerous animals, such as poisonous snakes and crocodiles. He even killed a black mamba once with his hockey stick. However, there was a mad heat that Roald was not used to and got malaria. Eventually, however, he mentioned that life in Africa had taught him to take care of himself. This no doubt suited him during World War II, which was beginning.⁴

1.4. The Flying Hero

World War II began in London in 1940, when the city was bombed. Roald wanted his family to move away from London because he was worried about them. However, his mother refused. Roald decided to learn how to fly with the British Royal Air Force (RAF). However, he was very tall and had a big problem getting into the cockpit. He loved flying, after eight hours of training he could fly solo. In order to be a fighter pilot, Roald had to train for another six months. His first flight was to North Africa. However, his plane crashed, and he was seriously injured,

³ KELLEY, True. *Who Was Roald Dahl?* USA: Penguin Workshop, 2012. ISBN 978-0-448-46146-5.

⁴ *ibid*

completely blind for two months. He began to see again slowly, but he had terrible headaches. He later believed that the injury made him more creative, and as a result, he began writing. After recovery, his first mission was Greece, where he fought against the Nazis. He shot down several German planes who tried to bomb the Harbour. Every day he had to fly on a mission, he expected he would die. In April 1941, he fought against two hundred enemy aircraft. The RAF had only fifteen aircraft. Unfortunately, Roald's headaches returned, and he began to have outages. He could not fly anymore because it was too dangerous for him. He returned home and found that his home in Bexley had been bombed. Fortunately, nothing happened to his family because they had to a safer place. He had not seen his family for more than three years. Everyone considered him a hero and so was he. However, he could never return to flying.⁵

1.5. America

After the threat of war, Roald took a job at the British Embassy in Washington, DC. He went to many luxury parties where he met interesting people. He became friends with Ian Fleming, the author of books about James Bond. He even played poker with Harry Truman. Roald was ugly at the party. He had nasty arguments. One possible reason he acted like that was because he was very marked by the injuries he suffered. His headaches returned, and Roald had to lie in bed for several months. At this time, he began writing for the magazine. It happened by complete coincidence. A reporter from the magazine was supposed to interview Roald, but Roald wrote the interview about himself on his own and sent it to the reporter. His article appeared in the newspapers, and for the first time, Roald began making money through writing. He wrote several more stories for the magazine. These stories were later published as the book: *Over to You*. As soon as Walt Disney found out about his success, he invited him to Hollywood. They wanted to make a film together, which unfortunately did not work out in the end. But his first and very popular book, *Gremlins*, was published. President Roosevelt's wife Eleanor liked the book very much, so she invited Roald to the White House. In 1945, the war ended, and Roald wanted to go back to his family and become a writer. He was horrified to see what London looked like after the bombing, but he was still happy to be with his family.⁶

⁵ KELLEY, True. *Who Was Roald Dahl?* USA: Penguin Workshop, 2012. ISBN 978-0-448-46146-5.

⁶ *ibid*

1. 6. A Struggling Writer

Immediately after arriving in London, Roald began writing his first short story, which was to be for adults. However, Roald was not well at all at the time, he had a lot of pain and a lot of back surgery. His first novel, which he wrote about a world destroyed by nuclear war, was called *Sometimes Never*, and published in 1948. It was a very depressing story. Writing has never been easy for Roald. He could not write long stories. It was too hard for him. And so, he wrote only the short ones, but even so, it was not easy for him. It took him a very long time to write one story, sometimes he could not even write one page in a month. His stories had a surprising ending, but a black sense of humour. Gradually, Roald lost his money because he fell into gambling. He bought a greyhound and bet on it for greyhound races. However, he almost always lost. Slowly, he was beginning to prosper again. The *New Yorker* magazine bought one short story from Roald and they paid him well. Other of his stories began to appear in other magazines. Many of them won awards. Despite the fact that his first novel did not sell that much, Roald began writing another story: *Fifty Thousand Frog Skins*. Unfortunately, even this work was not a success for Agent of Roald, so he decided to try to succeed in America. However, he did not want to give up writing, even though he was already thirty-four years old and still lived with his mother.⁷

1. 7. Husband

In America in New York City, he met a young American actress, Patricia Neal. She has starred in many movies and on Broadway. They did not like each other at first, Roald ignored her, but over time they fell in love. They married and lived in America. In England, close to Roald's mother, however, they also bought a house and lived half in England and half in America. In 1955, their first daughter Olivia was born. Roald loved caring for her. Three years later, they had another daughter, Tessa, and in 1960, their only son, Theo, was born. Roald wanted to write a lot of stories for the children before they went to bed. He wanted to write books that the children enjoyed reading. He wanted to write exciting, funny, and imaginative stories. And so, one of his very popular works was created: *James and the Giant Peach*. Everything was great, then suddenly there was a nasty accident. The pram with Theo was hit by a taxi and Theo was in very poor health. He had high fevers and was temporarily blind. Over time, Theo's health

⁷ KELLEY, True. *Who Was Roald Dahl?* USA: Penguin Workshop, 2012. ISBN 978-0-448-46146-5.

improved, but he was operated on nine times before the age of three. After this accident, Roald and Patricia no longer liked New York City and moved permanently to England. For many years, Theo had a drain in his head. However, this drain clogged the arteries in his brain. Roald worked with doctors to develop a better drain, which later helped thousands of children. Roald was very pleased in England. In the garden, he grew vegetables, especially onions, and cared for roses. They had chickens and rabbits in the backyard. They also had a dog. Roald loved dogs, but he did not like cats, for example. The Dog was a terrier, and Roald loved him very much, feeding him with candy and caviar. He began writing another new book: *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, which he rewrote about four times. He originally wanted the main character Charlie to be black. It was inspired by his old friend from Africa. In the end, however, Roald was called a racist because he decided that Charlie would be white. But he was never a racist. Again, when all went well, another tragedy struck this family. Their eldest daughter Olivia died at the age of seven. This was a great emotional intervention for the whole family, and Roald collapsed as he remembered losing his sister at the same age. Slowly, their lives began to improve again. In 1964, Patricia won the Best Actress award in the movie *Hud*, and she and Roald had another daughter, Ophelia. Roald's book *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* was also published that year. The story was a great success for readers.⁸

1. 8. Ups and Downs

Roald wrote the screenplay for the film *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. Although he was not enthusiastic about the film that was made, it was still a success with the audience and made a lot of money. Unfortunately, another accident came directly to Patricia, who had a sudden stroke. She was in a coma for several weeks and after waking up she could not speak, read, or write at all. But Roald took good care of her. He paid doctors and therapists to go and practice walking and speech with her. He was very tough on Patricia, promising her that she would be feverish again within a year, and he wanted to keep that promise. She practiced for several hours every day (minimum six hours). Everyone thought he was crazy and hard on her. But her condition began to improve slowly, and doctors recognized that Roald's method worked and began practicing it in other patients. After a while, their last daughter, Lucy, was born. Roald needed more money because they lived with Patricia in a luxury house with a swimming pool. He wrote the screenplay for the story *You Only Live Twice*. This story was inspired by books about James Bond. Despite the fact, that he did not like writing screenplays, it was again a huge

⁸ KELLEY, True. *Who Was Roald Dahl?* USA: Penguin Workshop, 2012. ISBN 978-0-448-46146-5.

success, and the family again made a lot of money. In 1967, at the age of eighty-two, his beloved mother died.⁹

1 9. Roald's Hut

Roald always got on better with children than with adults. He worked on another screenplay for Chitty Chitty Bang Bang. However, Roald could not work much with others, it was very difficult to work with him. He also thought that television killed children's imagination. Despite this, he appeared on several television shows. He made a lot of money by writing. Children from all over the world sent him thanksgiving emails. Roald argued that writing a story for children is much more complicated than for adults. It is important to keep the children's attention and they must enjoy it. Roald wrote his works in a hut in the garden. He always sat there in his mother's chair. On the walls hung paintings and photos. He was writing on the board because he did not have a desk to write on. The only table he had there was for presents from fans, candy wrappers, and pottery. For Roald, the place was nice and comfortable. Roald's day usually began at 9:30, when he got up. As always, he read emails from his fans with his secretary. He always tried to answer all the children, he also tried to help them. Then he always wrote until lunch. After lunch, he wrote again until dinner. He was very picky about his writing and was not satisfied with anything. He rewrote his stories several times. He wrote with a yellow pen on yellow paper. Immediately upon completion, he sent his work to a secretary, who was very honoured to be the first to read it. In 1975, his next book was released: Danny the Champion of the World. It was about the dedication of his whole family. Everyone thought how happy and beautiful Dahl's family was. Nobody knew that Roald's and Patricia's marriage was beginning to fall apart.¹⁰

1. 10. The Death of Roald Dahl

Three years after the stroke, Patricia was able to work again and began appearing on television. She became friends with Felicity Crosland (Liccy), who chose clothes for actors. She was divorced and had three daughters. They spent most of their free time with the Dahl family, even going on holiday with them. However, Roald and Liccy fell in love, which Patricia did not know at all. She learned everything after ten years. In 1983, Roald and Patricia finally divorced.

⁹ KELLEY, True. Who Was Roald Dahl? USA: Penguin Workshop, 2012. ISBN 978-0-448-46146-5.

¹⁰ *ibid*

Patricia devoted herself more to acting, appeared in several well-known films, and won many awards. Her story about the disease was also filmed. She helped people with brain injuries like her. She built a rehab centre in Tennessee. She died in 2010 at the age of eighty-four of lung cancer. After the divorce, Roald married Licky, who was twenty-two years younger. Roald was also very productive in writing at that time. He also began working with Quentin Blake, who illustrated stories for him. He illustrated, for example, *The Enormous Crocodile*, *The Twits*, *The Witches*, and *George's Marvellous Medicine*. His illustrations were mostly lively, funny, and according to Roald, they were perfect. While working together on the book *Big Friendly Giant*, even Roald adapted his story to Quentin's illustrations. The cartoon giant was very similar to Roald. Roald was a man of more ability. He enjoyed a lot of things, especially photography, collecting art, and sports. He also wrote two books, *Boy* and *Going Solo*, which were about his life from childhood to adventure in war. Since Roald was a storyteller, not all of his stories in these two books are true. One of the last books was *Matilda*. However, when it was released in 1988, it was a great success and became a bestseller. Roald died in 1990 at the age of seventy-four. His family buried him with chocolate, wine, and pencils. Some of his works remained unfinished.¹¹

1. 11. The Roald Dahl Foundation

Roald wanted to use his earned money for good purposes. When he was alive, he helped charities and hospitals. After his death, Licky started to organize the foundation, now known as Roald Dahl's Marvellous Children's Charity. This charity gave money directly to the neurology department because Roald's family suffered from many neurological problems. Today, the foundation makes money from every book that is sold. Ten percent of the total amount goes for a good cause. In England in Great Missenden, we can now find the museum and story centre of Roald Dahl.¹²

1. 12. Legacy

Despite the fact that some of his works are unfinished, Roald Dahl wrote many works that are now enjoyed not only by children around the world. He even wrote a story about a man suffering from dyslexia. The story is humorously constructed because the protagonist named things

¹¹ KELLEY, True. *Who Was Roald Dahl? USA*: Penguin Workshop, 2012. ISBN 978-0-448-46146-5.

¹² *ibid*

differently. For example, instead of god, he says dog. This book is called *The Vicar of Nibbleswicke*. In the last years of his life, Dahl devoted himself constantly to writing. He wrote about everything he could think of. He also wrote many cookbooks with his second wife, Licky, which contained pictures, illustrations, and most importantly, family recipes. His books still sell very well and make a lot of money. Many books are also filmed. For fans and lovers of his stories, Roald Dahl Day was established, which is celebrated on September thirteen every year, always at his anniversary. However, this day is not listed as a public holiday. People celebrate this day by reading a story from the author themselves, or reading to children, or watching a film based on his story. His stories are timeless and still live on. His most famous works include *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *Matilda*, *James and the Giant Peach*, *The Witches*, *Fantastic Mr Fox*, *The BFG*, *The Twits*, *George's Marvellous Medicine*, *Danny, the Champion of the World*, *Charlie and the Great Glass Elevator* (for children), and *The Princess and the Poacher* (for adults).¹³

¹³ REVELL, Anna. *Roald Dahl: a biography*. USA: Independently Published, 2017. ISBN 978-1-705-85009-1.

2. Charlie and the Chocolate Factory

The core of my literary analysis will be based on the reading and interpretation of Dahl's most famous work for children, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory published in 1964.

2. 1. Plot

Charlie lives with his parents and grandparents in a small wooden house on the outskirts of town. A total of seven people live there, and the house is not big enough for such a large family. There are only two bedrooms that were left to the grandparents because they are old. Charlie and his parents sleep on mattresses, which are terrible because it freezes in the winter. They are very poor. Only Dad (Mr Bucket), who works in a company that makes toothpastes, has a job. Unfortunately, they do not make that much money, so they mostly eat cabbage. Every year for Charlie's birthday, he receives one chocolate. Charlie loves chocolate, but he couldn't afford to buy it. And in the town is a huge chocolate factory. This factory is famous all over the world and is called Wonka's Factory after the owner Mr Willy Wonka. After dinner, Charlie always goes to see his grandparents and listens to the stories they tell him. One evening, he wanted to hear about Wonka's factory, and Grandpa Joe began to tell him about it. He said that what Wonka produces is fascinating, and no one understands how he makes it. It seems impossible for a normal person. For example, he can make chewing gum that never loses its taste. Grandpa Joe also told Charlie the story of how Prince Pondicherry wrote a letter to Mr Willy Wonka asking him to build him a chocolate palace. Wonka agreed and built him an entire chocolate palace, including a toilet, bed, windows. Even hot chocolate flowed from the tub. However, Mr Wonka warned the prince that it was very hot weather, and the chocolate would not last long, so he should eat it. But the prince did not listen to him, he wanted to live in it. Soon, however, the palace began to melt. Interesting on Wonka's factory is that no one knows who works in the factory because no one has ever seen people come and go. There used to be a lot of people working there, but among them were spies who were just trying to find instructions for making all the sweets. It did not take long, and the same sweets soon began to appear in other candies factories. Mr Wonka was very upset and fired all the employees. The factory was closed for several months. One day it began to smoke from the chimneys again, and people thought the factory had reopened and waited in front of the factory gates before letting them in. But nothing happened, no one had seen Wonka for a long time. Deliveries always arrived at the factory and delivered the goods to the shops. Suddenly, Charlie's dad came home and told them the news that Willy Wonka would allow a few people to see the factory. There are five golden tickets

hidden in the chocolates. They can be anywhere in shops, countries, and whoever finds them will look into the factory. Charlie's parents believe it's hopeless to be able to find the golden ticket, because they can buy only one chocolate a year. The first finder of the golden ticket is nine-year-old Augustus Gloop. He is very obese. His mother is proud of him and said it was clear to her that Augustus would find the ticket because he eats chocolate every day. The second finder is a little girl Veruca Salt. She is very spoiled. Dad owns a peanut factory, and bought hundreds of thousands of chocolates, and the women working for his company were tasked with unpacking them. They found the ticket on the 4th day of unpacking. It's Charlie's birthday. As every year, he received chocolate. This year, however, it is different in that everyone hopes that there will be a golden ticket inside. But everyone tells Charlie that the chance of finding one of the other three is little and he cannot be sad if it is not there. Charlie slowly unwraps the chocolate, but as his parents and grandparents had predicted, there is nothing except the chocolate. The next day has two golden tickets holders. The third owner is Violet Beauregarde. Violet is the best at chewing gum. She has been chewing hers current chewing gum for the third month. The fourth owner is Mike Teavee, who is addicted to television. Charlie's grandfather doesn't lose hope that they could win a ticket, so he sends Charlie to the store with his savings to buy the first chocolate he sees and bring it to him. Unfortunately, there is no golden ticket in this chocolate either. The factory where Mr. Bucket works went bankrupt and closed, causing everyone to lose their jobs. The family begin to starve slowly. Mr. Bucket has found a job that is not well paid, so they can afford to buy even less and less food. Charlie begins to look like a skeleton. On the way home he sees money lying in the snow. He takes them and goes to the store to buy food. Charlie bought a chocolate, which he ate right at the shop, and then asked the shopkeeper for another chocolate. He found a Golden ticket in it. A lot of people gathered around him because they wanted to see who got the last one and how it looks like. Some also offered Charlie to buy a ticket from him. However, the shopkeeper told Charlie to run home quickly and not lose it anywhere. Charlie ran home and told everyone, that he is going to Mr Wonka's factory. No one could believe it at first, and everyone was thrilled. Charlie read a letter from Mr Wonka, along with instructions. He has to take one person with him to supervise him. Joe's grandfather said he would go with him. A tour of the factory was to be made available to Golden ticket holders on February one from ten a.m. Already before ten o'clock everyone was standing impatiently at the factory gates, wondering what would happen. At exactly ten o'clock the gates opened, and everyone could see Mr. Willy Wonka. Willy Wonka welcomed everyone, checked the Golden tickets, and let everyone in. The first stop of the tour was where chocolate was made and mixed. Inside were the most beautiful chocolate waterfalls. Everything in that

room was beautiful and especially edible. Even the grass on which everyone stood was edible. Suddenly, some young men emerged. They were Oompa-Loompas. Little men who like to sing and dance. Willy Wonka tells where they met and that they preferred to eat cocoa beans. But they did not have that many. So, he offered them a job at his factory. In return, they will have as much cocoa beans as they want and lots of chocolate for them. Oompa-Loompas gladly accepted it and that is why they now work in the factory. Augustus leaned toward the river because he still did not have enough chocolate. Willy Wonka warned him that no one should touch the chocolate river, but Augustus disobeyed. Suddenly he was pulled in by a pipe that was picking up chocolate for another process. But in one part he cut because the tube was too narrow. Eventually, the pressure of the chocolate pushed him up. Mr. Wonka sent Oompa-Loompa and his parents to find and take care of Augustus. After the parents left, another Oompa-Loompas began singing a song about Augustus. They all boarded a ship that was very large and sailed nowhere. The ship was piloted by Oompa-Loompas, but they basically did not know where they were going. Mr Wonka took some chocolate and handed it to Charlie and his grandfather, because they seemed very thin to him, which was true. Eventually, they sailed to a place where chocolate flavours were made. The next part of the tour was the room where new products are invented. Mr Wonka warned everyone not to touch anything. There was an interesting sphere that Violet thought was chewing gum. But it was not gum. It was similar, however, the difference was that it was huge and did not lose its shape. Oompa-Loompas were always working on and testing themselves on experiments. One of them had even been testing this candy for over a year and in that year, it had not lost its flavour. A tour of the chewing gum factory followed, which naturally Violet was most interested in, given that she is a champion chewer. Mr Wonka was in the process of creating a new chewing gum to replace breakfast, lunch and dinner and make cooking easier. Violet, of course, could not resist trying it out right away to be the first. Willy warned her that not all the details were finely tuned, and something would always go wrong. Before he could finish, however, Violet had gum in her mouth. At first, she thought it was great and delicious. She could smell the beef and blueberry pie that had become her undoing. She began to slowly turn blue and puff up. Soon she was just a giant ball with little feet and hands peeking out. There was nothing to do but let the juice out of her. Everyone was worried about what would happen to Violet. Then they all calmed down a bit when they were told that she would be fine, just probably purple. Mr Wonka said that there were only three of the five children left and that they better move on so they would not lose another one. The corridors they walked through were very large and long. There were constant right turns, left turns and right and left turns again. Charlie and his grandfather were afraid of

getting lost. Finally, they came to the squirrel room. Everyone was surprised why the job the squirrels were doing (separating the nuts from the shell) was not being done by Oompa-Loompas. The answer was very simple. The Oompa-Loompas never crack the whole nut but cut it into multiple pieces. They never manage to make it whole. Plus, they cannot tell if the nut inside is good or bad. When Veruca saw the squirrels, she immediately wanted one. Her mother tried to talk her out of it, saying she would get one at home, but she wanted a trained one. But Mr. Wonka told her that squirrels were not for sale. Veruca did not care, though, and went to get one herself. The squirrel, however, was not to be caught and instead the others pounced on it and examined whether she had a good nut in her head or not. Unfortunately, they found out that she was not good and threw her in the garbage. Her mother and father were terribly shocked and afraid of what would happen to her. Her mother went to see if she was stuck somewhere so she could rescue her. Unfortunately, she was so fat that she could not keep her balance and one of the squirrels pushed her and she fell into the hole like Veruca. Mike Teavee was very tired and wanted to rest, so Mr. Wonka suggested that they take the elevator. But it was not just any elevator. It was made of glass. Mike could choose where they served now. But there were so many rooms. He finally chose the room with the television. The elevator lowered and sped at an incredible speed. Mike's parents wanted him to stop immediately, they were not feeling well. But the elevator could not stop. Once it is directed to its destination, it can no longer stop. Mr. Wonka was only afraid of colliding with another elevator. There were in fact two elevators on the same route, one going there and one coming back. But he has always been lucky and there has never been a collision. When they arrived in the TV room, Mr. Wonka explained what they were inventing there. He explained how the television worked and that he had invented sending chocolate from one place to another using the television. Mike claimed it was impossible, but a little demonstration proved to everyone that it was possible. However, they always have to send bigger chocolate because it gets a little smaller when they move it. But the taste remains the same. Charlie tasted the chocolate and could not believe it tasted exactly the same. Mike, a lover of television, wanted to see if it would be possible to move himself to television. It had never been tried to move things other than chocolate, but Mike wanted to be the first to be sent that way. Before the others could stop him, he pressed the button and was gone. It took a moment for the parts of Mike to be transported to the television and reassembled. Then Charlie saw that something was starting to move on the other side. Mike, however, was so shrunken that he could fit in the palm of his hand. Mr. Wonka said he would try to make him bigger, he would be taller, but he would not return to his original form. Out of all five children only Charlie was left and became the winner of the prize. Mr Wonka wanted to tell him what he actually

won and so he used the glass elevator again to get everything done. What no one knew was that the elevator would break the roof, fly out and fly like a helicopter. First, they went to check on the four kids to see if they were okay. Violet's face remained purple, Veruca and her parents were covered in garbage, but the biggest surprise was that Augustus was suddenly skinny. Mike was very thin and very tall. But it was safe to say that except for a few minor things, everyone was fine. For stating that Charlie liked the factory, Mr Wonka announced that he would give the factory to him, and he will run it. Willy himself has no children and no family and is getting older, so he wanted to pass it onto a child whom he can teach, give advice and ensure the safe running of the factory. They set out to tell Charlie's family, who were as shocked as Charlie himself, but they all ended up getting in the elevator and going with Willy to live and help at the factory.¹⁴

2. 2. Main Characters

The main characters are mainly Mr Willy Wonka, Charlie Bucket, Grandpa Joe, Augustus Gloop, Violet Beauregarde, Veruca Salt, Mike Teavee and Oompa-Loompas. Supporting characters include the children's parents. Except Charlie, the other children are spoilt, mean, aggressive, greedy or immoral. Mr Willy Wonka has no family, living basically alone in the factory with Oompa-Loompas. He is, however, kind, hardworking, and above all, resourceful. He invents different recipes for sweets. He thinks he is old, even though he does not look it. He represents capitalism, the notion of original inventions and playfulness, is also authoritative, strict but fair, a bit childish, mysterious and idealized by the public.¹⁵ Charlie is the main character of the story. He finds a golden ticket and gets a tour of the factory, which he eventually wins. He is excitable, studious, reliable, selfless, humble, but he comes from a poor family. It is his modesty and selflessness that helps him to win the factory and hope for a better life. He is an ideal protagonist, a moral example for the kids, readers feel sympathy with him, he represents a counterpoint in comparison with the other kids and their parents. Grandpa Joe is very old, but very kind. He decides to accompany Charlie on his tour of the factory because he

¹⁴ DAHL, Roald. *Charlie And The Chocolate Factory*. London: Penguin Random House Children's UK, 2016. ISBN 978-0-141-36537-4

¹⁵ SCHOBER, Adrian: "Wonka, Freud, and the child within: (re)constructing lost childhood in Tim Burton's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*." In (pp. 67-93) Olson, Debbie; Scahill, Andrew (eds.). *Lost and othered children in contemporary cinema*. Lexington: Kentucky UP, 2012. pp. xiv, 340. [2013:18444]. (2012)

used to work there too. He supports Charlie and tells him different stories in the evenings. The other children represent allegories of human sins, immorality, they are grotesque characters, their behaviour is exaggerated and the situations they find themselves in are morbid. They disobey adults who had spoiled them in their upbringing. The parents are rich, almost corrupted and offer bad examples of behaviour that should be avoided. This is Dahl's indirect criticism of capitalism and commercialism that goes hand in hand with immorality. Augustus Gloop is a fat and scraggly child at first. He wants to eat all the time, especially sweets. During the tour he cannot hold himself up and falls into the river despite the strict prohibition against eating. By the end, he is skinny. Violet Beauregarde has won many chewing competitions. She wants to break records, so she starts chewing gum that has not been one hundred percent yet and has side effects. She turns into a purple ball. But at the end, all she has left with is a purple face. Veruca Salt is a very spoiled little girl. Her parents buy her everything she can think of. She does not value anything. Eventually, she ends up in a dumpster with her parents, where the squirrels drop her. Mike Teavee is addicted to television and cannot imagine life without it. He is completely lost in reality. After wanting to relocate himself to the television, he comes out of the factory taller than anyone else and thin. The basketball team will probably fight over him, though, because he is sure to be great at it. Oompa-Loompas are little red men who look exactly the same. They do not talk, they just work for Willy in the factory. They sing beautifully. 21st century critics point out their association with colonialism, Dahl was harshly criticized for placing little workers in the factory where they in fact live, they had been uprooted from their homeland.¹⁶

2.3. Dahl's Use of Language and Humour

The first fact is that Charlie's grandparents had the same initial name. Charlie's father and mother on his dad's side are named Joe and Josephine. And Charlie's father and mother on his mother's side are named George and Georgina. The author may have been inspired by some characters in his own life, if not, it is still very funny. Dahl's language is very playful, innovative

¹⁶ BURGER, Peter. "Contemporary Legends in the Short Stories of Roald Dahl." *Contemporary Legend* (ns 5). The Netherlands: Leiden University, 2002. ISSN 0963-8334, p. 136-158

and entertaining. He works with alliteration of proper names, allegorical names that characterize the person.¹⁷

Second thing was that all the kids who found the tickets were nine years old. Of course, the character Willy Wonka wanted a child to win the grand prize, but actually anyone could find the tickets and it does not matter what age they are. A kid as young as eleven could have found it, or even eight, but they were all nine years old.

The name Veruca has also become very special. Roald Dahl basically created the name. It comes from Latin and it means wart. This name started to be given to babies at birth, but it is not one of the most popular names, nor one of the one hundred most popular names.¹⁸

2. 4. Facts about the Book

As it is already known, the book is illustrated by Quentin Blake, who illustrated most of Roald Dahl's books. The pictures are black and white, but very descriptive for that. Before the contents of the book there is a dedication to Theo, Roald's son, who suffered a serious accident in a pram. At the end of the story there is a short quiz about how well we read the book and how much the child readers remember.

2. 5. Comparison with the Film Version

The comparison of the book *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* is with the 2005 film, made in the USA by the director Tim Burton. The lead role of Mr Wonka is played by Johnny Depp. Another notable role as Violet was played by Anna Sophia Robb, who later became popular at the age of eighteen also due to her starring role in *Surfer* as Bethany Hamilton.

¹⁷ DUGGAN, Robert: "The grotesque in contemporary British fiction." Manchester; New York: Manchester UP, 2013. pp. 276. (2013)

¹⁸ Roald Dahl: Official Website [online]. [cit. 2022-02-21]. Dostupné z: <https://www.roalddahl.com>

This is the second attempt to film this story. The first was made in 1971 and is called Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory. However, the recent version became more popular, probably thanks to Johnny Depp. I would say the film is very different from the book.

The first difference from the movie is right at the beginning of the book, when Charlie puts the chocolate he got for his birthday from his family in a box. To make it last longer, he ate it in small pieces for a month. He wanted to share it with the others, but they would not, so he kept all the chocolate. In the film, however, Charlie shared with everyone, and the others accepted a piece of chocolate from him. In the film version, he did not put anything in the box.

The book goes on to say that the winner will receive a lot of candy for the rest of the life, but the movie states that the winner will receive a secret prize, and no one knows what it is.

In the movie, Augustus said how he found the ticket that he bit and bit and suddenly bit off one ticket and found out he won. But the book did not mention how he found the ticket:

The very next day, the first Golden Ticket was found. The finder was a boy called Augustus Gloop, and Mr Bucket's evening newspaper carried a large picture of him on the front page. "I just knew Augustus would find a Golden Ticket," his mother had told the newspapermen. "He eats so many bars of chocolate a day that it was almost impossible for him not to find one." (Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, p.26)¹⁹

In the film, Charlie found money lying in the street, bought one chocolate bar with it, and found a Golden Ticket in it. However, in the book it says that Charlie bought two chocolates. And it was not until the second one that he found his Golden Ticket.

Since the film is American and the book is written by a British author, there is some difference in the currency. The ten dollar bill is used in the film, which is mainly what Charlie used when he found the money on the ground. The banknote is greenish-grey in colour. In the book, however, Charlie finds a fifty-pence coin under the snow.

¹⁹ DAHL, Roald. Charlie And The Chocolate Factory. London: Penguin Random House Children's UK, 2016. ISBN 978-0-141-36537-4

The book says that Mr. Bucket lost his job because the whole company collapsed. But in the movie, he was replaced by a machine that did the work for him. However, at the end of the movie, he was taken back so that he could repair the machine that replaced him.

The most important difference between the book and the film is the number of parents who accompany their children to the factory. In the movie, each of the children was only supposed to take one person as an escort. Violet and Augustus had their moms there. Mike and Veruca had their dads and Charlie had his grandfather. In the book, however, everyone could have both parents. So, for example, Veruca had both her dad and her mom there. This is also why there are several scenes that differ between the book and the movie, such as when Veruca wanted to own one of the trained squirrels, but Mr. Wonka would not give it to her or sell it. First her mother went to rescue her, and her father did so only later.

The ending is also very different between the book and the movie. Especially in the movie there are scenes that are not in the book at all. At the end, Mr. Wonka wanted to reconcile with his father, who was a dentist. The story of why Mr Wonka set up his factory, how he quarrelled with his father and the subsequent reconciliation is expressed. However, there is no mention of his father in the book. The story in the book ends with the arrival of a great glass elevator at Charlie's house. They all boarded the elevator and went to the factory. Which Charlie did not do at the factory either. Mr Wonka said in the film that only he could go, not his parents and grandparents, so Charlie did not accept the factory. There are also small discrepancies at the end about what the children looked like when they left the factory. Especially Augustus, who supposedly came out skinny in the book. In the film, however, the character remains fat. I think graphically it could have definitely been done as well, since Mike graphically and technically altered as well.²⁰

²⁰ PULLIAM, June: "Charlie's evolving moral universe: filmic interpretations of Roald Dahl's Charlie and the Chocolate Factory." In (pp. 103-14) Stratyner, Leslie; Keller, James R. (eds.). *Fantasy fiction into film: essays*, Jefferson, NC; London: McFarland, 2007. pp. vi, 19. [2007:12584]. (2007)

2. 6. Symbols

2. 6. 1. The Chocolate Factory

Among the main symbols we would include the chocolate factory. The chocolate factory represents the difference between poverty and wealth, where Willy Wonka who owns the factory is very rich, but on the contrary, Charlie who lives with his family in a small old house in the shadow of the factory is poor in comparison. However, this is only material wealth. We can say that Charlie is very rich with his abilities and his personality. This factory can be seen as something that cannot be fairly judged from an outside perspective because we cannot see what is inside. The factory may look like anything from the outside, but what the factory looks like on the inside, what goes on inside, nobody knows. And those who do not see it will not believe it. The main point here is the fantastic world that is hidden inside of the factory, it is a mystery that is revealed only to the children (and the parents) who go inside as a reward for winning the golden tickets.

2. 6. 2. The Golden Ticket

Another symbol is the golden ticket, which represents hope. For Charlie it was the first time he saw and could touch something golden, he had not seen anything like it before. Charlie's dream since childhood was to go to the gorgeous chocolate factory and meet Willy Wonka, which this ticket allowed him to manage. It fulfilled a long-held dream of Charlie's. And I do not think it is just Charlie's. His grandfather's inner dream of revisiting the factory must have come true too. Charlie's dream is also in contrast to the other kids. They just wanted to be famous and simply because they wanted it. But Charlie did not want to become famous. The golden ticket can also represent the chance that everyone has an equal chance of founding it. It could also be said that Charlie found it because it was meant for him, whereas the other children's parents bought as many chocolates as possible to increase their chances.

2. 6. 3. The Great Glass Elevator

The great glass elevator allows Charlie to see the world from a different perspective and completely changes his view of the world. Before that can happen, Charlie must put a great deal of trust in the elevator. He cannot be afraid to get on the elevator, which travels at insane speeds, shreds rooftops, and has a lot of turbulence. But Charlie certainly does not lack courage, he is used to standing on shaky ground. Eventually, he gains clarity and gets what he deserves.

2. 7. Themes

2. 7. 1. Step by step

The main theme is likely to be that big things come little by little. First, we need to be a level from which we can rise higher and higher and not fall lower. The emphasis in Dahl's novels is on the difference between good and evil. Good, according to him, is small, which is why he invented the character of Charlie, who is small and underfed, and Mr. Wonka is also small. Both are symbols of goodness. I would also focus on the chocolate in which the golden tickets are hidden. Such a small chocolate and how it can bring success and change into Charlie's whole life. A small piece of chocolate and the big thing that happened after that. After unwrapping this chocolate, Charlie realized how something so small can become so powerful.

2. 7. 2. Poverty

The main example is a family of seven living in a small, dilapidated house. They have no beds to sleep on, only mattresses. They have no money for food, Charlie only gets 1 chocolate bar a year. They are extremely poor. However, money in Charlie's story can be dangerous and has a negative influence. Veruca's father has all the negative aspects of wealth because he buys his daughter everything she can think of and point to. Charlie, however, becomes a beloved person because he can deal with poverty in his dignity. Despite not desiring wealth, wanting only to be well off and have just enough money, Charlie is eventually blessed with great wealth in the form of a factory, something he never dreamed of. Veruca is punished for the ill treatment of her parent's wealth and her father realizes that he has raised her to be a "spoiled brat", the moral of the story, that children should appreciate what they have.

2. 7. 3. Everyone Gets What They Deserve

What is good and what is bad comes out in the story. Good people get rewards, while bad and evil people get punishments. This is the case, for example, with the child characters Augustus, Veruca, Violet and Mike. All the children are eventually punished for their behaviour. Violet ends up covered in garbage, the squirrels consider her as a bad nut, and she does not get what she wanted. Augustus gets sucked in by a big pipe that scoops up chocolate. He kept overeating and overeating until the tube flattened him. Violet who could not resist chewing gum to prove she was the best at what she did ended up as a giant blue ball that resembled a blueberry. Mike, who is obsessed with watching TV and playing computer games, is the only one of all the kids permanently changed. What he looks like at the end of the story cannot be fixed, whereas

Veruca and Augustus and Violet have suffered no big harm. Charlie as a good person is rewarded.

2. 8. Motifs

The motifs in the children's story Charlie and the Chocolate Factory are related to the characterization of the child hero (a poor, modest boy with the best character traits), the kindness of his poor parents and the emotional attachment to the family (the importance of family, moral qualities) contrasted with the rich, spoiled and variously warped children and the bizarre behaviour of the other children (and their parents), including Wonka.

2. 8. 1. Vice

Dahl describes in his stories that every child who has a vice is bad. Thus, he tells the story of Veruca, who is spoiled, and it is spoiling that belongs to many vices. Augustus is greedy and Violet and Mike are obsessed, each with something different. Obsession, greed, and spoiling are bad qualities according to Dahl. But can we take spoiling as a bad trait? We would certainly include it there, but we need to remember that this trait is mostly the fault of those who spoil their child. In this case, it is Veruca's parents, if they did not buy her everything she could think of and show their wealth, Veruca would not be the way she is. Violet's obsession with chewing is not a bad trait either, but fame has gone over her head. Anyway, it is certainly good to have something we like to do and are good at. The important thing is not to overdo it, like Mike and Violet did. I would define greed as a very bad trait. But it is not as bad in children as it is in an adult. A child learns what and how much he can do. Augustus, however, his mother was very supportive doing this, so she did not set him any boundaries on when to stop. Charlie is the only one who comes out of the story as a good person who has no vices and is therefore the hero of the story.

2. 8. 2. Punishment

Punishments are necessary to reform bad children. Dahl also takes advantage of this and gradually corrects the behaviour of all children, even though the punishment may seem violent or excessive and permanent. In doing so, he emphasizes the moral code. Although the children in the story of Charlie and the Chocolate Factory do not seem to have significantly corrected their behaviour. Augustus ends up looking thin, which may mean another chance for him. However, a lot of people would like to be squeezed and skinny. Violet liked her flexibility, though she was blue, but she did not seem to be reformed for the good. There has been a drastic

change in Mike, but he may now be the best player in basketball. And Veruca, she immediately wanted the flying elevator she saw after leaving the factory. The only ones who have reformed are probably the parents of the kids, who have already seen that they made a lot of mistakes in raising their kids. The opposite of punishments are rewards, which only good people get, in this case it is mainly the hero of the story, Charlie.

2. 8. 3. Absurdity

The element that Dahl uses in his stories is absurdity. For example, candy that makes hair grow quickly, or grass that is edible, a river made of chocolate, and so on. None of this is real. So, the reader should suspend his disbelief and believe that it is real and can happen. By being able to believe we can identify with Mr. Wonka and Charlie. Young readers love these absurdist planks and push their intellectual abilities.

2. 9. Linguistic and Other Elements of Dahl's Stories

Roald Dahl continues to use elements of the grotesque, hyperbole and allegory in his work. His language is original. He plays with names and language. In his stories for children, the confrontation of good and evil with moral values is the main theme. Whereby good always wins and evil is punished.

2. 10. Charlie and the Great Glass Elevator

The sequel to Charlie and the Chocolate Factory is Charlie and the Great Glass Elevator. This book, however, did not become as popular as the first part and was not even made into a movie. The story no longer takes place in the chocolate factory at all, but in space. New monsters appear and Charlie, his grandparents and Mr Wonka become enemies of the President of America. In the end, Mr Wonka gives the three grandparents an aging drug to make them younger. However, instead of taking one capsule, they took three at once, and so Grandma Georgina disappeared because she was minus two years old. Charlie and Mr Wonka try to remedy the situation and search for Georgina's ghost. With a miraculous aging spray, they bring her back among the living. But Georgina was already 358 years old.

This story is already completely out of touch with reality. Dahl focused mainly on the genre of fantastic fiction for children. However, Charlie and the Glass Elevator reflects the genre of science fiction, and the genre is not quite as popular with the author as his books of fantasy.

3. Fantastic Mr Fox

The children's story *Fantastic Mr. Fox* by Roald Dahl, written in 1968, is full of personified animals. The main character of the story is Mr. Fox, who tries to outwit a farmer. This story was also made into a movie in 2009 starring George Clooney and Meryl Streep. The film is animated and has been nominated for several awards. Roald Dahl even narrated the audiobook for the story.²¹

3.1. Plot

There was once a farm that was owned by three rich, unpleasant and greedy farmers. The first one's name was Boggis. Boggis raised chickens and was very fat because he only ate chicken and dumplings all day. The second was called Bunce, who looked after the ducks and geese. He looked like a little dwarf who would have water up to his chin if he was in a shallow pool. He ate mostly goose meat and donuts. However, this diet gave him a lot of stomach pain and irritation. The last of these was named Bean, who took care of turkeys and grew apples. He was very tall and thin because he did not eat much. Mostly he drank the juice of the apples he grew. Of the three farmers, Bean was the smartest. All three were very different in appearance. Mr. Fox, Mrs. Fox and their four children live in a hole under the tree, which was the largest in the forest. Every night Mr. Fox goes to Boggis, Bunce and Bean's to steal food. He always asks his wife what she is in the mood for and heads out. But the three farmers know that someone is coming to steal from them and they do not like it. They also know it is Mr. Fox, but they never catch him, even though they take turns on patrol. Mr. Fox was too smart to get caught. But now Boggis, Bunce and Bean have taken a more radical solution, they want to wait for Mr. Fox to come out of the hole he lives in and shoot him immediately. When Mr Fox was tasked with bringing in the two ducks, he had no idea that such a trap was being set for him. When he came out of the hole, he did not smell the three farmers, so he slowly walked on to the farm. Then suddenly in the moonlight he saw the guns and realized they were going to kill him so he quickly returned to the tree house. Only his tail was found and so Bounce, Boggis and Bean said they had fired too late. So they wanted to destroy his home. Mrs. Fox was trying to stop the bleeding from Mr. Fox's severed tail. Mr. Fox understood that the three farmers had found where they were staying and needed to move as soon as possible. As soon as he finished he heard the sound

²¹ DEWEY, Donald: "Fantastic Mr Dahl" *Scandinavian Review* (New York) (99:1) Spring 2012, pp. 24-35. (2012)

of shovels trying to get into their home. Mrs. Fox was afraid they were all going to be killed. But Mr. Fox had a fantastic idea. Foxes dig faster than anyone else, especially humans, so they all started digging and got as deep as they could. Bounce, Boggis and Bean were tired of digging so they arrived with two tractors to make it easier. Also, yes, suddenly the Foxes could see daylight and had to start digging again to get deeper. Although they kept digging and digging, it was not enough, the hole started to get bigger, the farmers were tireless, they did not stop even for lunch. Eventually it became a crater, and other people came to see it. The Foxes were successfully escaping, but the tractors slowly caught up. But so far they had not been able to catch them, they did not know how to proceed, but they vowed never to give up. Finally, they decided to let the foxes starve. They asked the other villagers to bring them food, drink and tents and they would wait and wait until Mr. Fox came out. The whole family was slowly starving. They were all hungry, and the three farmers were just teasing them as they ate. However, there was no way out. There were about one hundred and eighty people working for the entire farm of Boggis, Bunce and Bean, who had surrounded the entire crater, guns in hand, watching to see if Mr. Fox would come out anywhere. The whole family had not eaten or drunk water for three days. Mr. Fox did not talk any more, but suddenly he had an idea how to get out of there. But it would require more digging, which they did not have the strength to do. But Mr. Fox's children bravely declared that they still had the strength and would help him. This time they went about it differently. They did not go deeper, they went straight somewhere else and dug a tunnel. But no one knew where they were going to dig, Mr. Fox did not tell them, so they would not be disappointed if it did not work out. They dug slowly, but eventually they got to the chicken farm. They all drank some water and stole some chickens to bring to Mrs. Fox to cook. When the children brought the chickens to Mrs. Fox, she could not believe her eyes and was happy that they would not starve. Mr. Fox got another idea and started digging again with his children until they reached Badger. He and his whole family were starving, too, because he could not get out without being killed. Mr. Fox, however, invited everyone to his house for a meal so that they could be refreshed and start digging again. They dug down to the geese and ducks. Mr. Fox took charge of the selection, as he had already had a great deal of experience. They took some geese, ducks and also carrots for the rabbits. He told his children to take the food and run with him to their mother's, they would have guests at the meal. Mr. Fox wanted to continue digging and everyone knew that to the last Farmer Bean. But Badger stopped and thought about whether what they were doing was right. He said he did not think it was right to steal and he did not want to be like the three farmers who were trying to kill them. He did not want to lower himself to their level and kill too. However, Mr. Fox assured him that he does

not and will not kill anyone. He is only stealing food for his children so they do not die. He stated that there is nothing wrong with that. After this clarification, they continued digging until they came across something solid. They probably discovered the hidden room underground that Mr. Fox had hoped to discover. There was a rat in that room trying to chase them away, saying that this was its lair. There was real apple cider in the room. But not the kind that is sold freely in stores, this was real, honest, homemade cider. They all tasted it and were about to take this drink home for the feast that was about to take place. Suddenly they heard a voice approaching the room. It was a lady who had gone to get drinks for the farmers who were keeping watch in their tents. They were all hiding behind one bottle of cider, hoping the lady would not see them. They were lucky no one saw them. The maid, who had only gone to get cider for Mr. Bean, heard a rat, so she called out that it would be necessary to put rat poison in the bowl. That way the foxes could escape with their drinks to the feast. Everything was already prepared. They returned to the big table where twenty-nine animals were sitting. They all made a speech and toasted Mr. Fox. Mrs. Fox had no speech prepared, but only said that her husband was a fantastic fox. They all agreed that they were not going to move anywhere, on the contrary, they would make tunnels all over the lot and visit each other and Mr. Fox would go shopping for them. They realized that they belonged underground and there was much more danger on the ground. They were all rejoicing and toasting Mr. Fox, who outsmarted the farmer. Meanwhile, Boggins, Bunce and Bean are still sitting outside the hole they dug, waiting for Mr. Fox to come out. It had begun to rain, but even that did not encourage them to return to the farm. They are probably still sitting there.²²

3. 2. Themes

3. 2. 1. Violation of Moral Values

Dahl describes in the story that sometimes violating moral values is necessary. For example, Mr. Fox's stealing, while immoral, is necessary for him and his family's livelihood. Mr. Badger then stated that everything the farmers did (digging a hole, destroying the environment they live in, and hunting them) was his fault because he kept coming to steal from them. Mr. Fox argues that sometimes you have to do something immoral for moral reasons.

²² DAHL, Roald. *Fantastic Mr Fox*. London: Penguin Random House Children's UK, 2016. ISBN 978-0-141-36544-2.

3. 2. 2. The Importance of Family

Mr. Fox shows how important his family is to him. He demonstrates this by making it his goal to ensure that his family is safe and has enough to eat and drink. He wants his wife and children to be happy. They all work together to resist the farmers. Mr. Fox eventually joins with all the other animals and they begin to work together to form a family of sorts. Together they are better and stronger. Mr. Fox proves this by throwing a big feast for everyone.

3. 2. 3. Pride

Mr. Fox possesses enormous pride and thinks that the farmers will never discover him, which unfortunately happened and the farmers took action against Mr. Fox. They did not like the fact that he kept stealing from them and wanted to kill him and his family. When Mr. Fox realized that his family was starving and slowly dying, he showed some humility. But only a little. It made him devise a plan to defend himself against the farmers, which he called a cunning plan. That is why he has been called the fantastic Mr. Fox ever since, because he figured out how to rob and outwit the farmers. The farmers, on the other hand, remain proud because they stand up for what they said and do not give up.

3. 2. 4. Position in Society

This theme appears in the book from the very beginnings in the first sentences where Dahl describes where the farm is located and who farms it. He says right away that these are the rich, nasty, and evil people one can meet. The wealth is contrasted with the animals who live in poverty and have to steal. Stealing is justified in the book as necessary and righteous. However, it is not a good example for children to cite stealing as necessary and righteous; there are always other options. The highlight of the book is the feast that the poor animals are hosting.

3. 2. 5. Hypocrisy

Many of the animals in the story are hypocritical, especially when it comes to moral values. The first example is the rat who tells Mr. Fox that he is going to steal the farmer's cider, while she steals it too and in large quantities. This scene is expressed with humour in the book. Mr. Fox also seems to have character defects. He claims that killing is wrong, yet he steals animals (chickens and geese) and then kills and eats them without remorse. In doing so, he claims how terrible it is that farmers want to kill them, but he kills too.

3. 2. 6. Intelligence

Intelligence is one trait that appears in two characters in the story. Mr. Fox, in particular, is called fantastic by his wife because he devises brilliant plans and ways to outwit the farmers and get them out of all their problems. He is very clever and has lots of ideas. The other character who seems intelligent is Bean, who orders the other farmers around and comes up with ideas. All but one were good. No one else but him can take his place and therefore he too becomes intelligent.

3. 2. 7. Children

It is impossible not to notice that in the book the animals are not named or divided to identify them. No children have names; Mr. Fox's children are called little foxes. They are identified based on size, animal type, not gender. The children are also not allowed to make their own decisions and are not informed by their parents. For example, when Mr. Fox devises a plan to get to safety and eat, he does not inform his children of what will happen. He only tells them to dig, but no one knows why.

3. 2. 8. Environmental Destruction

The environment or damage to it is present almost all the time in the book, especially when the farmers decide to dig a big hole through the forest just so they can kill Mr. Fox who is stealing from them. They destroy quite a bit of the forest in this way, and none of the humans can stop it. It represents the conflict between man and nature. The farmers symbolize humanity, who cultivate the fields, breed animals, use modern technology, and all this just to get rich. The animals try to steal a few foodstuffs to survive. However, farmers are not as intelligent as animals, so Mr. Fox wins with his thinking.

3. 3. Motifs

3. 3. 1. Limericks

There are many poems for children in the story *Fantastic Mr. Fox* that are called limericks. These poems appeared as early as the 18th century in England and it is evident here that Dahl was influenced by this, especially in his British upbringing. The poems are mostly humorous, have five lines and are rhythmic.

“Boggis and Bunce and Bean

One fat, one short, one lean.

These horrible crooks

So different in looks

Were none the less equally mean.” (Fantastic Mr Fox, p. 5)²³

3. 3. 2. Food

Food represents a necessity and as extremely important for all animals and humans. It is a subject of conflict because Mr. Fox hates the farmers, mainly because Mr. Fox steals their food and the farmers do not like it. Stealing is shown as necessary for Mr. Fox's livelihood. It may also depict revenge on those who kill animals without feeling guilty. Which is perceived negatively. Descriptions of the smell of food when animals are starving also appear in the story. This motif is very topical because everyone has dealt with hunger or envy of others' food at some point.

3. 4. Symbols

3. 4. 1. Modern Technology

The digging machines symbolize the use of modern technology to destroy the environment. These machines are mostly used in agriculture. These machines are much faster and more powerful than humans and thus simplify work, but the impact on the environment is catastrophic. These machines were introduced by farmers because they thought they could beat the foxes. But they were useless, they just destroyed a large chunk of nature. So there is a resistance to modern technology.

3. 4. 2. The Farmers in Contrast to Animals

All animals are expressed as intelligent, moral and capable, as opposed to farmers who are greedy and do not mind killing animals and destroying the environment. Farmers Boggis, Bunce and Bean symbolize greedy human nature. They are therefore in contrast to all the other animals except the rat, who lives with the farmers and has thus also become evil and greedy.

²³ DAHL, Roald. *Fantastic Mr Fox*. London: Penguin Random House Children's UK, 2016. ISBN 978-0-141-36544-2.

3. 4. 3. The Smallest Fox

The smallest fox, not the youngest of Mr. and Mrs. Fox's children, was the only one who thought of animals other than himself and his family. The other foxes did not show any signs, but the smallest fox also wanted to steal vegetables (carrots) from the farmers for the animals that do not eat meat. At first Mr. Fox did not understand what his child wanted to do, but then he understood what compassion his child had and that he could surpass the intelligence of adults.

3. 4. 4. Chicken

The chickens symbolize victory and hope, as they become the staple food at the feast that takes place at the end of the story. Boggis raises a lot of chickens and Mr. Fox goes to steal a few from him through an underground tunnel he builds with help. He steals three chickens.

3. 4. 5. Geese

Geese are the main symbol of survival for the entire Fox family, not just for her. For example, Bunce makes a paste out of the goose livers to spread on his doughnuts. From the farm where the geese are kept by farmer Bunce, Mr. Fox steals several geese so that everyone can eat. Because of stealing a few geese, Mr. Fox has to find a way to get underground to the farm.

3. 4. 6. Cider

Cider is a symbol of victory for all animals and a reward for the digging they had to undergo in order not to die.

3. 5. Dahl's Irony in The Fantastic Mr. Fox

3. 5. 1. The Feast and the Farmers Waiting for Foxes

Dahl shows great irony to his readers when the farmers sit by the hole waiting for the foxes to give up, hoping to see them. The farmers wanted to prevent further thefts. The irony is that while the farmers and their servants were sitting up on the hill waiting in discomfort and rain for the foxes to give up, the animals were having a feast and bragging about how they had been robbed again and were doing well. The farmers still sat ignorantly outside in the rain, still waiting in vain.

3. 5. 2. Luck in the Basement Theft

Dahl creates dramatic irony when he and the other animals are in Bean's basement and steal his cider. When they are suddenly interrupted by a worker in the house who has gone to get a few glasses of cider. If she had taken three bottles instead of two, she would have discovered them all hiding behind the jars. The worker also chats with Mrs. Bean and Mr. Fox, who just overhears everything and witnesses the exchange as they discuss his tail.

3. 5. 3. Moral Values When Killing Animals

The other irony is basically the hypocrisy and how the animals are portrayed as conscious and moral versus the farmers who are presented negatively for killing, hunting and destroying the environment. In this story, Dahl tries to show that this is not right and that animals have complex thoughts and feelings too. In doing so, the chickens in the story cannot speak or look intelligent and Mr. Fox is supposed to kill these animals. The badger then questions Mr. Fox's morality towards the end of the story when he does the same thing as the farmers.

3. 5. 4. Animal Cleverness Versus Human Cleverness

The biggest irony that appears in the book is that most people think that humans are more intelligent than animals. However, this story shows that it is often the other way around. Mr. Fox thus beats the farmer at his own game. The farmers basically lose to Mr. Fox as well, because they never caught him and greatly underestimated him.

4. Short Stories and Novels for Adults

Dahl's stories became bestsellers at the turn of the 1940s and 1950s. These stories are mainly *Someone Like You*, *Kiss, Kiss* (1960) and *Switch Bitch* (1974). The works have been translated several times into many languages around the world. Dahl was thus able to become a worldwide celebrity. He was so successful that he was awarded three prestigious Edgar Allan Poe awards. Even the critics themselves have acknowledged Roald Dahl's stories, which have rightly earned him the status of a canonical writer in literary history. Despite the fact that Dahl is now an author known primarily for writing children's stories, where there is considerable disagreement about the overall quality, he continues to be recognized for his adult stories. However, some of the adult stories remain misunderstood by readers. The reader may struggle to see the meaning of the work and their social interest. Ernest Hemingway, who was asked by Treglown for his opinion of the stories, replied that he did not fully understand. But Roald Dahl never admitted or said why he was so interested in violence and wrote about it. Henceforth, it remains as his secret. In Dahl's stories, there is a selfishness and self-centredness that makes the characters lose their moral value. No one knows why Roald Dahl writes such stories. His behaviour may thus appear sadistic and antisocial. Suneel Mehmi claims in his article *"Understanding the significance and purpose of violence in the short stories of Roald Dahl"*: „*The short story Switch Bitch can be perceived by the reader as a fantasy that is violent, and there are unadulterated pornographic fantasies about women who act as moral beings.*"²⁴ It is clear that Dahl is not concerned with morality in his adult stories. Violence is usually seen as a confluence of events that happened to the author. Specifically, from the English private school the author attended as a pupil. It was one school of sanctioned brutality. As the author Suneel Mehmi says in his article *"Understanding the significance and purpose of violence in the short stories of Roald Dahl"*: „*There he experienced floggings and sadomasochistic relationships.*"²⁵ It is from these horrific experiences that one is able to see the violence in the stories. It is highly likely that these horrific experiences greatly influenced Dahl's writing. Not surprisingly, his stories are bizarre, fantastic and also grotesque. Violence usually occurs between a man and a woman when revenge is involved. It can be carried out by a man on a woman as well as by a woman on a man. Dahl said he was strongly influenced by Ambrose Bierce's short story "The Death of

²⁴ MEHMI, Suneel S.: *Understanding the significance and purpose of violence in the short stories of Roald Dahl*. PsyArt 2014. (2014)

²⁵ *ibid*

Halpin Frayser". This story tells of a couple where the wife is murdered one day (someone slits her throat) and her husband decides to take revenge and then wanders through life as a drifter. This story is about incestuous behaviour between a mother and a son prone to violence.²⁶

4. 1. Switch Bitch

Switch Bitch is one of the short stories for adults written by British author Roald Dahl. There are a total of four stories in the book. All the adult books written by the author contain themes of sexuality, cruelty and hedonism. The word "switch" itself is a term for a move in the game of chess. In this book, however, it takes on the meaning of exchange. At the time in which Dahl wrote his stories (the twentieth century) he did not use any archaisms or bookish terms in his writing. He occasionally uses transitions and Roman numerals to indicate the chapter numbers of Uncle Oswald's diary. Although the book's title may suggest a titillating subject, Dahl, on the other hand, uses no vulgarisms. If a swear word should follow, the book uses periods instead.²⁷

The character of Uncle Oswald is prominent in the book, appearing in the first and last short story and then as the main character in Dahl's later novel, My Uncle Oswald. His adventures are recorded in a diary narrated by his nephew, who inherited them all. Although the stories may seem dark, Oswald's diaries are humorous and comical.²⁸

4. 1. 1. Violence in Switch Bitch

There is also violence in the novel Switch Bitch, but it is completely different from the short stories Someone Like You and Kiss, Kiss. Some of the short stories were also first published in Playboy magazine. Violence appears in this book especially in the chapter "The Last Act". The body of the mother and son is punished with violence. Anna's father has died and she is thus freed from his possession, but she cannot bear this loss. She begins to show a desire to commit suicide and be with her father again. However, she is able to get out of this depression and begins to return to her normal routine, but only because of her children. However, her children gradually grow up, get married and move out of the house. When her last son moves

²⁶ MEHMI, Suneel S.: Understanding the significance and purpose of violence in the short stories of Roald Dahl. PsyArt 2014. (2014)

²⁷ ibid

²⁸ ibid

out, Anna becomes depressed again. It gets her through working at an adoption agency, where she handles the paperwork of children who have been abandoned by their mothers. Anna thus becomes a rejecting mother as she rejects all of her children and also her son who was the last to leave her. Anna goes on a business trip to Dallas because an abandoned child who was given to an adoptive family must be returned to the agency. In Dallas, Anna meets her old flame Conrad. Dahl describes him as a dangerous child. Conrad and Anna broke up when he was eighteen years old because he was rejected by Anna due to her sexually dominant father. We further learn from the story that Anna looks her age (around forty), but Conrad has not aged a day and thus a new imaginary mother-son physical relationship occurs. Conrad hypocritically, caringly and enviously shows concern for Anna. However, she wants to break up with Conrad again because she still loves her father, to whom she is devoted. Anna begins to drink alcohol. Conrad is a constant intruder in the area where Anna's father Ed lived. Conrad quickly turns into an angry father, not a son, and so the power of Anna's mother is eroded and gradually taken away by Conrad. Conrad now owns her entire body as well and refuses to let go. The father became powerful, domineering and divine. There is a clear suppression of violence. The mother is punished at the end of the story. Dahl thus emphasizes that the suppression of violence is the suppression of the future and punishment is also morally punishable. Therefore, suicide by cutting oneself with razor blades, which are symbols of bodily power, is implied in the story of Anne, where the pattern after Christ, who was crucified as punishment for our sins, is found.²⁹

According to Suneel Mehmi in the article "*Understanding the significance and purpose of violence in the short stories of Roald Dahl*", Roald Dahl emphasizes in this story:

- „*violence that can be repressed, sacrificial and cannibalistic*
- *the symbolic incestuous relationship between mother and son that provides relief from anxiety and lack of control*
- *the mother punishes the child for imagining such sexual desires*
- *sexualised desire for domination*
- *anxieties and desires are repressed and the child must be punished* “³⁰

²⁹ MEHMI, Suneel S.: Understanding the significance and purpose of violence in the short stories of Roald Dahl. PsyArt 2014. (2014)

³⁰ *ibid*

Conclusion

In the first part of my bachelor's thesis I learned a lot of things about Roald Dahl's life. For example, that he went through very difficult times and nothing was easy for him. He is admired for managing to write so many popular stories.

Comparing the film version of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* was an integral part of my bachelor thesis. It is now well known that the film adaptation differs greatly from the book version in many more fundamental ways. It is always a very great pity when a film is not based on the whole story of the book.

The themes, motifs and symbols are very similar in both stories for children. The moral values in the story *Fantastic Mr. Fox* is also in some parts identical to the story of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. The theme of goodness triumphs is also typical of the adult stories, especially the short story *Switch Bitch*, which I have analysed at the end of chapter four.

In the final fourth chapter, I tried to find out why the author's stories for adults are not so popular. They are, however, Roald Dahl rather excelled in his works for children, gaining all the more success and fame. Although his adult works are full of violence, they are still very well known.

The main focus of my bachelor's thesis was the differences between Dahl's works for children and adults. The level of use of violence is greater in the stories for adults, and in the stories for children violence also appears quite often, but to a lesser extent. Children's literature has a moral model and a positive hero. Children's stories are about the clash of good and evil, where good always wins in the end and the ending is therefore usually happy. Animal stories do not highlight this moral code so much, but they do address it. The emphasis is on family and friendship, the cycle of nature and harmony. Humour is kinder in the stories, but grotesque elements can also be found. Harmony and love are unlikely to be found in the adult stories, the subversive ending, grotesque and morbid elements are characteristic.

The stories in Roald Dahl's works are still relevant and therefore constantly entertain readers. I would definitely recommend reading some of the stories not only to children but also to adults.

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