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**The Perception of American Culture in the Works of Contemporary
American Authors and Its Employment in English Language
Teaching**

Diplomová práce

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Prohlášení:

Prohlašuji, že jsem tuto diplomovou práci vypracovala samostatně, pouze s využitím uvedených pramenů a literatury.

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Vlastnoruční podpis

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Abstract

This diploma thesis tries to explain American culture and its perception in the works of two contemporary American authors, and use it in further employment in the concept of multiculturalism in English language teaching. In order to describe American culture and its features, it is necessary to anchor it in the theoretical background of culture and its features in general. The author mainly focuses on values and heroes, as the most important signs of culture. Furthermore, the author strives to apply the theoretical outcomes on the description of American culture. The aim of the diploma thesis is to analyze books of two American writers and present the possible way of using their work in English language teaching.

Introduction

When people are asked to define or to describe a particular culture, usually the answer is full of myths, prejudices, half-truths or simply negative opinions. When people are asked to describe American culture, the answer is always full of myths, prejudices, half-truths, simply negative opinions and McDonald's. Even when you ask school children. Everybody will say that Americans are addicted to fast food, they are too bold, they are know-it-alls, they are this or that... which is alarming. We cannot teach our children to be prejudicial or leave them with their prejudices, because then they will be very surprised when they actually encounter the real American culture. We cannot teach our children narrow-mindedness. This is the main motivation of the author of this thesis to write it and to observe American culture and its authentic depiction, and impart what she has learnt on learners.

In the first part of the thesis, the theoretical part, the author makes an adventurous journey into sociology and partly ethics to discover what the word culture really means and what are its features. The first aim of this thesis is then to apply the learnt theory on the description of American culture. This is necessary to say whether America is something more than McDonald's and obesity or not. The author strives to study American history and consider the elements, which might have influenced the contemporary form of American culture. She also strives to describe the underlying theories behind specific American features of character.

The author of the present thesis has many times encountered the opinion that literature is only a waste of time, if we talk about teaching and learning languages. But she wants to prove the people who hold this opinion wrong, and show (not only them) that literature is indeed very important for the development of people's personalities, also that it is a useful means of teaching foreign language and on top of that, that it is one of the best means to be used when teaching about a particular culture. This is another goal of this thesis – to prove the importance and beneficial effect of literature on teaching of culture.

The second part of this work – the practical part – is focused on the application of the theoretical findings into practice, therefore it strives to analyse two books by American authors and present their authentic interpretation. The analysis will be anchored mainly in the first part of the theoretical part, and the general features of culture. The author wants to examine whether the authentic interpretation of American culture also contains the same features and parts as the cultures in theory should have.

This thesis focuses on the two books by the two American authors – *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky and *Wonder* by R. J. Palacio. These books have been chosen because their main goal is not to describe American culture, and therefore if any cultural signs will be found there, they will be genuine and authentic. These two books are also attractive to young readers at the secondary school and, therefore, if the learners are motivated, their learning can be much more effortless. The subchapter which analyses the book *Wonder* functions partly as a comparison part of the two before mentioned books.

The very last part of this thesis aims to present possible applications of learnt findings in the English language teaching. The author has chosen extracts and prepared thorough lesson plans, which are in agreement with educational science and also are appropriate to be used in the Czech educational environment and in the scope of the Czech Framework Educational Programme for Basic Education¹ (2007).

¹ In Czech: *Rámcový vzdělávací program základního vzdělávání* (2007)

1. Theoretical Part

The purpose of this part of the thesis is to perform the theoretical anchoring of the topic: terms like culture, features of culture, symbols, rituals and heroes are defined. Also, the basis for the practical part is built, and as the practical part will be the analysis of the cultural features in two books by American authors, American culture is described and explained. The author of this thesis also wants to prove that literature is the appropriate means of teaching about cultures, therefore supportive arguments will be stated at the end of the theoretical part.

1.1. Culture

To be able to describe culture of the United States of America² and its features, and to incorporate it into further research, it is absolutely necessary to understand the general term “culture” first.

Culture is a very difficult term to define, as in certain connotations, it may bear evaluating hints. Anthropology and sociology try to provide the most accurate, value-neutral definition, without proclaiming one culture better than the other. Nevertheless, there can never exist a unified definition of a culture.

US anthropologists Kroeber and Kluckhohn had collected 164 different definitions of culture. Based on their analysis, they came to one summarizing meaning of culture. According to them, culture is a product of history, and it includes ideas, patterns and values, it can be taught, it is based on symbols and it can be abstracted from behaviour (Matějů and Soukup, 1996). According to Hofstede and Hofstede (2007), culture can be seen in the simplest elements of life. It might be a collection of greetings, table manners, personal space or individual hygiene.

Generally speaking, culture is a whole collection of patterns of human behaviour (O’Neill, 2012). Tylor in O’Neill (2012) states that culture is: *“that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.”* As O’Neill (2012) later explains, this means that all physical objects and products of human mind are only a material fraction reflecting cultural patterns.

These two definitions by Kroeber and Kluckhohn, and Tylor are broadly accepted as the most accurate and are used generally, when talking about culture. There are more definitions, e.g. by

² The United States of America – henceforth as the US; culture of the United States of America (or lands currently belonging to the US) – henceforth as American culture; the adjective *American* was chosen despite its possible linguistic ambiguity (i.e. the ambiguity of the US as *America* and *America* as the whole continent – South America and North America).

Schwartz, Matsumoto and others, but all of them are just derivations of the previously stated (Spencer-Oatey, 2012). Nevertheless, there is one more description of cultural features, which is rather important for this thesis. Hofstede and Hofstede (2007) state symbols, heroes, rituals and values as crucial when observing a culture. This division will be dealt with later on in the thesis, as it is a good way to describe culture transferred via literature.

Culture is often understood as a tool for sharing ideas about the world and also points of view among people. As Eriksen states: *“It is very difficult to find exact barriers between particular cultures.”* (Eriksen, 2007).

The most visible part of culture, which is the easiest to take a hold on, are cultural traditions. It is possible to include language, beliefs and values, customs, and morals among these; in short – anything that differentiates peoples apart. Cultures usually consist of many subcultures – so e.g. American culture consists of subcultures of Vietnamese Americans, Irish Americans, Mexican Americans, African Americans and many others. Nevertheless, these subcultures may fit in and blend to such an extent that the only sign which makes people to claim to belong to one subculture is a common ancestry (O’Neill, 2012). Culture is not transferred from one individual to another via genetic information, but it is exclusively acquired during the process of learning (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2007).

Here it is necessary to state that all of the signs and features of cultures cannot be dealt with separately. Cultural phenomena are intertwined, as for instance, the form of contemporary family is dependent on economy and social stratification. Let the most demonstrative example be Tibetan polyandry. In Tibet one woman can marry more husbands, because only that way the family can prevent its land from dividing. Furthermore, it is a means of controlling Tibetan birth-rate (Goldstein, 1987).

1.1.1. Symbols, heroes, rituals and values

It has been already said before that differences among cultures manifest themselves through different means. The first way to tell one culture from another is the language the people, who belong to the culture, use. Together with gestures, objects, clothes or flags, these are symbols. Symbols are the shallowest layer of culture, because they can be replaced easily, they are changing continually and are imitated by other cultural groups (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2007).

Another, more embedded part of cultural layers are heroes. This term is quite self-explanatory, as heroes are people (might be living, dead or imaginable), who have characteristics highly valued in the culture in question (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2007).

Another layer which goes even deeper into the way how cultures manifest themselves are rituals. These are collective activities, which do not lead to any particular effect. They are carried out solely for themselves, they are the only reasons why people do them. This may be ceremonies or good manners (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2007).

1.1.2. Heroes and Villains

Heroes can be perceived as one of the general signs and features of cultures. They are personalities, who are specific to a group³ and who change the world through their achievements, discoveries or inventions, or with their personal traits. People perceive them as role-models and tend to look up to them. Nevertheless, people have different heroes⁴ to look up to in various stages of life, and different generations have different heroes as well. The most telling evidence of this is the ever-lasting complaint of older generation that their offspring do not respect the same values and heroes as them (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2007).

On the other hand, villains, although it may look like they are something unwanted, are also very beneficial for the society. In many cultures, there is a rule – what is different is a priori dangerous. Historically, the threat of enemies invading a country or a camp, was the best way how to preserve the group's compactness. Hofstede and Hofstede (2007) even state that without enemies, many cultures would not exist.

Both heroes and villains have something in common. They are often characterized as people, who have a clear system of values, which, in perspective of the following chapters, is very important and significant. People, members of one culture, need a structure⁵ in their lives and the notion of heroes and villains helps them to establish the structure and therefore meaning and sense to their existence, because the order and structure is essential to people's lives (Alsford, 2006).

Many of our favourite literary stories contain the time-proven struggle between a hero and a villain. This topic is very popular among readers, because heroes are the role-models, which provide people with the behaviour representing the most effective survival strategies. On the other hand, villains represent the real dangers people may face in their lives, so people can figure out the most appropriate way to react (Robson, 2016). Furthermore, Alsford (2006) states that heroes help people to realize what is good and what is bad, they help to raise questions concerning people's decisions and help to teach people about the need of connectedness to the world.

³ Cultural, ethnic or religious.

⁴ In this case, small children's heroes are their parents, later their teachers and in adolescence they are their peers.

⁵ Structure means the belief that there is a pattern and consistency in reality.

A well-constructed literal hero should enable people to travel the world, learn important things about life and provide them with a model behaviour. It is important to say that many heroes teach people how to find love, but nevertheless, our most popular heroes teach us altruism⁶. Cooperation is absolutely essential for survival, which comes from the past and is still often depicted in literature. Therefore, the heroes who are the most sought for are not ambitious, greedy and hungry for dominance, although it may look like these are the right traits of a classical strong hero. The most frequently portrayed heroes are modest, quiet and they strive to hope for a better society rather than fight for their own benefit and wealth (Robson, 2016).

Again, our perception of a typical villain comes from the history of the mankind, when the strong justice system was an absolute need, because not even the smallest crime could escape unpunished. Without this, the societies would have been very fragile. This is the reason why people are so scared and alert of villains, who can spread their evil-doings widely (Robson. 2016).

As it has been stated before, villains are perceived as people coming from an outer-group, from a different culture or country. This statement may be manifested in often repulsive appearance of villains or other ways how they differentiate from heroes. Robson (2016) also points out that if a reader knew much about the villain, they would easily be able to identify with them, so the less the reader knows about them, the better for the image of a villain. This corresponds with the villain being usually a part of an unknown outer-group. Nevertheless, reading about members of minority groups can help the reader to be more open-minded, and realize that not all people and things coming from an outer-group are a priori bad and dangerous.

1.1.3. Values as the core of culture

Value is an inseparable term to culture, as culture is the bearer of values, or in other words, people are bearers of values which are affiliated with the culture they belong to. As with the term culture, there is not just one unambiguous definition, which would comprehensively describe all of the aspects of the word. In this thesis, the sociological definitions may be the most useful ones, as they reflect the intentions which this thesis tries to cover, the best.

The simplest way to characterize values is to say that values are the important things in people's lives (Schwartz, 2012). Hofstede and Hofstede (2007) state that values are general tendencies for preferring one aspect of reality to another. But unlike Schwartz (2012) they reckon

⁶ *"Unselfish concern for the welfare of others; selflessness."* (The Free Dictionary, henceforth as TFD)

that values can be polarized. Schwartz differentiates values and attitudes, where attitudes can be positive or negative, but values are exclusively positive.

Rokeach (1970) finds the most specific definition of values, which deals with beliefs, where “... *beliefs are inferences made by an observer about underlying states of expectancy.*” (p. 2). Value is a single belief, whereas attitude represents several beliefs and therefore a value is an imperative to action, but attitude is only a belief about preference (ibidem, p. 160).

Čábelková (2014) talks about the importance of values in society, since they ensure smooth functioning of society. They are manifested by behaviour, which is accepted by other members of the culture. These values are the following:

- Relationship to authority
- Self-concept of the individual, in particular
 - a. The relationship between the individual and society
 - b. Individual understanding of masculinity and femininity
- Ways of handling conflicts including control of aggression and expression of feelings.

Adopted from Hofstede and Hofstede (2007, p. 28)

But Schwartz (2012) points out that although it may seem that values are universal motivations for actions in one culture, individuals and groups usually have a different hierarchizing of values system.

1.1.3.1. Division of values according to Shalom Schwartz

It was outlined previously that there are only minor differences among definitions of values. Furthermore, it is not easy to tell apart actual values. As Schwartz (2012) states, values can be told apart one from another by the type of motivation they express. This motivation helps to evaluate the values and put them into a system of universal values⁷:

- **Self-direction:** the possibility to control oneself and the individual action – autonomy
- **Stimulation:** new challenges leading to excitement – novelty
- **Hedonism:** pleasure, self-praise, enjoyment

⁷ The values are stated first and their motivational goal will follow.

- **Achievement:** success, proving of the self-competence on the background of social standards, reaching peer appreciation
- **Power:** prestige, the control over people and material aspects of things⁸
- **Security:** safety; stability of society, relationship and oneself⁹
- **Conformity:** restraint of actions which would be likely to upset the majority of society or violate social norms
- **Tradition:** respect and acceptance of customs and rituals that one's culture offers and which come from history or ancestors and ensures the survival of traditions¹⁰
- **Benevolence:** preferring welfare of an individual's close social circle¹¹
- **Universalism:** protection of welfare of all people and environment

Therefore, the general definition of culture is presented as well as its features (symbols, heroes, rituals and values) while the values were further divided into a system according to Shalom Schwartz.

The following chapter strives to describe the features of American culture, its origins and theories which underlie its development.

⁸ Power and achievement may seem very similar, but compared to achievement, power is more general and considers social status or position in society, whereas achievement takes into consideration active performance of a person.

⁹ Therefore, it can contain national security as well as care of personal health.

¹⁰ Again, tradition and conformity are very close to each other in terms of motivation, but whereas conformity means subordination to people one comes to touch regularly, tradition is more of a subordination to abstract concepts.

¹¹ Contrary to conformity, benevolence is driven by person's internalized motivation.

1.2. Civilization of the US

The civilization¹² of the US is such a specific matter that it cannot quite be compared to any other culture. The US are in many aspects perceived as a standard – either positive, or negative. Hardly any country has been building such an original system and such a distinguishing conception of life (Fichou, 1995). To be able to describe the culture of the US, it is necessary not only to describe its features, but also search for the reasons and origins of it.

The present chapter will try to describe the following origins of American culture and their underlying philosophies, its features and American values:

- British origins
- American exceptionalism
- Agrarianism
- The Frontier Thesis
- Abundance
 - Consumerism
- Conformity
 - The Melting Pot Theory
 - Homosexuality

1.2.1. British¹³ origins

The identity of American people¹⁴ and their appurtenance to American nation, and the American identity in general, has always been determined by the relationships with the UK¹⁵. Children always feel the impact of their origins and the same can be said about nations and the American nation in particular.

In 1607 three ships with Englishmen reached the coast of North America. As they were employees of the Virginia Company, the colony which had been founded by this was later named

¹² For purposes of this thesis and with reference to Matějů and Soukup (1996) and to Fichou (1995), the terms culture and civilization are interchangeable.

¹³ The adjective British, describing something of or relating to Great Britain and the United Kingdom or its people, language, culture, will be used to unify the terminology, although it may not be historically accurate.

¹⁴ The citizens of the lands currently belonging to the US are called “Americans” despite a possible linguistic ambiguity of this term (see above the note no.2).

¹⁵ The UK may not be historically accurate, because the name of the contemporary United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland was not used before the 18th century. Although, for the purposes of this thesis and to unify the terminology, the most recent name and its abbreviation is used.

Virginia. Their first settlement was named Jamestown in the honour of the English king James I¹⁶. The settlers were mostly gold-diggers, because they were sent there with the prospect of gold, pearls and other valuable products. They were not living the American dream, though. Many of them died of diseases, starvation and Amerindians'¹⁷ attacks (O'Callaghan, 2006).

Another attempt to colonize North America by Englishmen happened in the year of 1620 when Puritan Pilgrim Fathers came on their ship Mayflower. They had left their homeland torn by religious disputes and came to North America to obtain religious freedom. The living conditions they came to were not any easier than the ones Virginia employees had and they as well had to fight with diseases, hunger and cold. Anyway, they survived and their settlement, Boston, soon started to prosper – more and more Puritans¹⁸ followed the Pilgrims to North America (O'Callaghan, 2006).

The people, who came to the future US to settle a very promising land, were in many aspects different one from each other. Nevertheless, there were a few things which they had in common. The first and one of the most important bonds they had, was a shared language – the English language. In fact, this connection is immensely sustainable even nowadays, after the American English went through many changes and it still connects the US and the contemporary UK deliberately or involuntarily.

Another thing which influenced the US-citizens-to-be was the freedom awareness. They were leaving a country which had been in many conflicts, which had been torn apart many times and which had an idea about what a real freedom is. Furthermore, the decentralization was ingrained in the British government and municipal administration was common tool of governing the areas (Tocqueville, 2000).

One significant aspect which cannot be omitted is their religion and of course education which, in this case, comes hand in hand. The nature of British people has always been meditative and serious. In the religious fights the people became even more broody and their education was increasing, because they had to think about religious questions more often (Tocqueville, 2000)

There are a few more things to say about the new settlers. They were leaving their countries (it does not matter whether it was the UK, Spain, France or the Netherlands) because they did not like the life in their former country. It might have been poverty, misfortune, political reasons and

¹⁶ King James I, By the Grace of God, King of England, Scotland, France and Ireland, is called the English king, with reference to O'Callaghan (2006).

¹⁷ Meaning native Americans.

¹⁸ This issue is discussed more in Chapter 1.2.2., American Exceptionalism.

other influences which drove them out to the unknown. Being, broadly speaking, refugees, they did not perceive themselves as superior to the others. When a member of higher society emigrated to North America, they often found themselves in the same position as others, because the land they had to cultivate made hardly enough to feed them and their family (Tocqueville, 2000). Apart from other effects, this is one of the reasons for such an effective decentralization.

Alexis de Tocqueville (2000) points out that the first British people who settled in Virginia were mainly driven by the prospect of gold and wealth and even later, when handymen started to come to live in Virginia, they did not have noble ideas on mind. They wanted to get richer than they were in the UK. No wonder that slavery quickly found its home in the southern colonies.

In the North¹⁹, mainly educated people found there their new home; they were not poor but not very rich either. Their morals were highly developed and there was not any hint of inequality among the people. The only reason why they moved to a distant country was purely idealistic (Tocqueville, 2000).

1.2.2. American exceptionalism

As the New World Encyclopaedia states, American exceptionalism was first used by French political thinker Alexis de Tocqueville in the 19th century, although it was probably not meant in the true meaning of the phrase. That developed during the 20th century and it can generally be described as a belief that the US is an exception among all of the other countries in the world. It has an exceptional and unique position and it should not be bound by the international law, unless it serves the US intentions. This can be a problematic matter, as the US can claim to defend liberty and freedom in the name of altruism, and interfere in other countries' issues, but only if it is in its own intentions (New World Encyclopaedia, American Exceptionalism). The main theories concerning the origins of American exceptionalism were created by Justin B. Litke and Ian Tyrrell. The first sees the origins of American exceptionalism in further history than the later – at the very beginning of the American settlement, whereas the latter perceives it as later phenomenon, which occurred during the War of Independence²⁰.

The people who came to the future US after the year 1620 were Puritans. Puritanism is a religious reform movement derived from Protestantism (Bochynski, 2016). The Puritans wanted to purify the Church of England²¹ from the remains of the Roman Catholic popery, they were the synonym for morals and religious earnestness and they believed that God will only give salvation

¹⁹ So-called New England

²⁰ i.e. The American Revolution

²¹ i.e. The Anglican Church

to the people who live a proper life in fear of God and in prayers. They perceived themselves as role models and a behaviour pattern for the whole nation²² (Encyclopaedia Britannica, Puritanism, 2017).

Litke (2012) states that even though the early colonists were not Americans in the true sense, they have to be perceived as big creators of the US self-conception today. Puritans claimed their right to settle their part of the east coast of North America on behalf of bringing the gospel into these parts of the world. Nevertheless, they did not start a new colony only because of spreading the gospel. They wanted to start a country where people would live according to their rules of life, in peace with God. And it was them, who were setting the example.

Through the words of John Winthrop, the first governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony and the chief figure of Puritan founders of the New England (Dunn, 2016), Puritans were: “... *a company professing ourselves fellow members of Christ.*” (Winthrop in Litke, 2012, p. 206). The love of God was so infused in their souls that living a perfectly virtuous life, to get salvation and help others to be saved, was not a problem at all. They claimed this a “*bond of perfection*” (Litke, 2012, p. 208), which gave them the ability to live the life in the perfect community (Litke, 2012)

A perfect community might be the key word to solve the origin of American exceptionalism. The Puritans in New England are the perfect community. The only one in the whole wide world. This thought threads throughout the American history – the Declaration of Independence, the War of Independence, the Constitution, etc. – till now, when the US government proclaims the US to be the right one to set democracy in the Middle East.

Other authors, such as Tyrrell (2016), disagree with Litke (2012) on where the roots of exceptionalism are, and argue for much later events, as e.g. already mentioned War of Independence, and after-the-second-world-war prosperity. He supports his conviction with the definition of American exceptionalism. According to him, it is not only a belief that the US are different or unique, but rather a thought that they are an exception, on contrary to Europe. They are the only bearers of liberty and freedom. American exceptionalism is therefore based on the US vs. Europe dichotomy.

If Tyrrell is true, then the concept of Litke would have a few flaws. The first settlers were in heart still Europeans and it was not till the War of Independence that they started to feel different.

²² Covenant theology

The author of the present thesis thinks that both the authors are generally right, but inclines more to Litke's opinion, as it covers a wider spectrum of the US foreign policy.

In the theory of American exceptionalism, many signs of American values can be traced. The Americans are continually trying to prove their number one position among the countries of the world, which is of course an outcome of a competition between them. With reference to Shalom Schwartz' division of values, this fact leads us to think that by this, Americans praise a value of power. They try to pertain a certain prestige, they try to control other nations, help them to set up the American model of democracy. Nevertheless, the value of power is not the only one to be found in this conception and if we consider that the US see themselves as delegated nation to spread freedom and democracy, it becomes clear that the motivation for being so self-confident is the value of universalism. It seems that the Americans genuinely consider certain nations not as lucky as the Americans are and feel a duty to help them and protect them. Therefore, so far two of Schwartz' values – value of power and value of universalism – have been proven in application to American culture.

1.2.3. Agrarianism

When the first settlers reached the coast of North America, they needed to primarily feed themselves. Everybody knows the story of how unsuccessful they were in growing any crops, and how the first Thanksgiving took place, when native Americans helped and fed them. These were the beginnings of the American soil cultivation performed by former Europeans. From that time on, till the American Revolution, the farmland was the main source of profit for the US. The British colonies in North America were predominantly agricultural which means that the crafts or manufacturing were only a secondary way to make a living (Post, 2009). On those bases, the agrarianism found its way into the philosophy and worldview of Americans.

Agrarianism assumes that agricultural activities of any kind civilize personal traits, society as a whole and also the political aspects of life in a certain country (Beer, 2011). Generally speaking, agrarianism is an idea of democracy based on the virtues of small farmers (Fichou, 1995). The self-reliance of farmers is the thing which enables an economic and after that even a political independence (Beer, 2011)

People are perceived as good in their nature and the evil in the society comes with restrictions and forcing. That is the reason why the government in agrarianism is only a necessary evil, whose role is to ensure country defence (Fichou, 1995). This idea went hand in hand with the fear of the

intricacy of the social apparatus and therefore led to decentralization of the political power in the US.

It was the War of Independence, which turned the development of American production towards industry. When they severed their ties with the UK, the US suddenly stopped being able to compete economically with Europe, so they had to transform their economy (Post, 2009). Nevertheless, the idea underlying agrarianism is becoming topical even nowadays (Fichou, 1995)

Agrarianism might be also perceived as a small agent in the theory of American exceptionalism, because Thomas Jefferson (in Beer, 2011) wrote: *“Those who labour in the earth are the chosen people of God, if ever he had a chosen people, whose breasts he has made his peculiar deposit for substantial and genuine virtue...”*. Although Jefferson does not explicitly talk about Americans, it can be assumed that he might have been comparing the US to the UK or Europe as a whole.

From this chapter, it is clear that Schwartz' division of values is again present in one theory underlying American culture. This time it is self-direction and achievement. Self-direction can be spotted in the agrarian effort not to be restricted by government and rather live according to the principles of *laissez-faire*. In general, farmers are usually self-sufficient and self-supporting, therefore the thought of autonomy offers itself. With this idea comes the value of achievement, as agrarians only want success if they make an effort. Here it needs to be stressed that achievement is very different from power, as achievement only takes active performance of an individual into consideration. It is needless to say that an active performance is essential when a person who makes his living on soil, relies on his own forces and abilities.

1.2.4. The Frontier Thesis

The Frontier Thesis²³ is a theory which explains the historical and political development of the US by the attempts to colonize the free land on the west of the North America, or in other words, settlement of American frontier. Its author is the American historian Frederick Jackson Turner.

Turner points out that this kind of US expansion is a very unique phenomenon, because if other nations had essayed to expand their land, they sooner or later had to conquer also the inhabitants of the land with certain level of self-government. But whereas Americans were busy founding the local governments and transforming them into a complex functional system on the east coast, again and again they had to expect the new evolution on the west. The American social development

²³ Also known as Turner's Thesis.

had to continually start over in the new areas. The pioneers who contributed to the settlement of American frontier, were in continuous touch with primitive conditions and primitive societies (Turner, 1958)

As Fichou (1995) states, the Frontier Thesis can sometimes be perceived as one of the most important factors in forming the US character. Turner (1958) argues that too much attention is devoted to European ancestry, but in fact it is the US, which is the biggest agent in the social development of its own. And furthermore, the frontier is the principal reason for Americanization²⁴. When people tried to move westwards, they had to try to transform the wilderness, but the product which arose was hardly European. The advance to frontier therefore meant a slow but steady drift from European influence.

Not only the relationship to the UK and Europe were influenced by this, though. The area of American frontier was basically isolated from the “civilised” east and that is why the western self-consciousness started to develop (Turner, 1958). Also Fichou (1995) argues that this had been the start of the American individualism, which he reckons is the most important trait of the American society. The west-settlers were becoming more and more independent, they had to rely on their abilities, but at the same time, the help among the members of the community was crucial. To survive, they had to be all-rounded, bold, adaptable and inventive. The features of character are all to be found in contemporary American society, which is noteworthy. The life in isolation is also a good base for the development of democracy, as everybody finds themselves in the same situation of uneasy conditions. Here the effort to become part of the country management had probably begun in the form of volunteerism, because the people knew how important participation on public matter is and that if everybody helps, it makes the life easier to all – people as individuals, the whole country, the society.

But the reason why the pioneers decided to move westwards is also relevant. They wanted to get better life with more fertile soil and with the prospect of possible gold mines. They had to be the “doers” and they had to be optimistic. Fichou (1995) remarks, that these two qualities hardly ever lead to intellectualism. Furthermore, the conquest was not non-violent and easy. The pioneers had French and native Americans to fight, from which other US attributes may be inferred – ruffianism²⁵, materialism, shallowness, naivety and restlessness. In addition to this, the solitariness in the land of plenty led to wasting, in which the germ of consumerism can be spotted.

²⁴ The process of formation of American habits and national identity hence building the loyalty to the new-born American nation while the influence of the European heritage was gradually diminishing.

²⁵ “Behaviour typical or characteristic of a brutal and violent person.” (TFD)

The Frontier Thesis is the most reflective feature of American values as it possibly can show four Schwartz' values at once. Firstly, it is self-direction. As in Agrarianism the pioneers had to be self-supporting and self-sufficient, but in addition, they moved to the American frontier in order to gain autonomy, to depend on nobody but them. This may be connected to a new challenge, therefore secondly, it is stimulation. The reason why the value of stimulation can be derived from the Frontier Thesis is very clear. The people settling the west part of the North America knew it will be very hard and challenging and so it was. It was adventurous, even dangerous. The spirit of novelty drove them, nevertheless, and brought them to a successful end, which now means another value in nowadays US. Thirdly it is achievement, because the pioneers had to work hard and gained their success fully, also they had to start from a scratch. It is something that Europeans can never understand and something Americans can be rightfully proud of. And last but not least, it is benevolence, which can be seen in the volunteerism of American people. They want to contribute to the whole society welfare, they want to help people in their own country and they want the US to prosper from their work and collective effort.

1.2.5. Abundance

Another author, who pays attention to the factors which determine the development of American culture and society, is David Potter, an American historian. According to him, and not contradicting Turner, the foundations of American culture is abundance. On the ground of abundance, the compound of social attitudes is built and developed, as the wealth influences social conditions, social hierarchy and social order and it contributes to the formation of American culture and national character (Fichou, 1995).

When Potter (1973) talks about abundance or wealth, he does not necessarily mean only natural resources like oil reservoirs or coal deposits, but also the human resources and industry, which increase the value of the natural wealth. Potter calls the increase in value, thanks to the skills of society which produces it, as "social value of natural resources". He strongly objects to the idea, that Americans do not deserve their wealth, as he states that it is mainly people, who develop the value of natural resources.

The very important aspect of wealth for Potter is soil. Henry Bamford Parkes (in Potter, 1973, p. 79) speaks of "... *unexampled abundance of land and resources...*" as "... *the cardinal factor in the development of American civilization.*". But Potter adds that although soil is in many aspects vital, the significance of market and its requirements cannot be missed out. As it was stated before, Potter (1973), strictly speaking, agrees with Turner (1958) and his Frontier Thesis, nevertheless, he elaborates it to bigger depth and adds the factor of land plenitude as the reason and initiator for

the US frontier conquest. In his book, Potter (1973, p. 80) quotes Eric F. Goldman and adapts an original pioneer song:

*“Come along, come along, make no delay,
Come from every nation, come from every way,
Our lands are broad enough, don’t be alarmed,
For Uncle Sam is rich enough to give us all a farm.”*

When Turner (1958) is rather careful in his interpretation of frontier conquest, Potter (1973) audaciously claims that the pioneers exposed themselves to hostile conditions only because they saw the prospect of their own farmland. The abundance was in this case the reason for their optimism, and it was their driving force. The optimism was the reason they succeeded and therefore the seeking for wealth is deeply ingrained in the US determination and is perceived as the main motivation in many situations the US has to deal with.

Potter (1973) also explains democracy on the background of abundance. When the European settlement started, North America had enough resources for everybody. That is why egalitarianism²⁶ could evolve – the US had enough of wealth, so it did not have to divide the wealth already belonging to somebody, but could draw from its own resources. The poor could get money without taking them from the rich. Potter even connects his thoughts to another theory – American exceptionalism (see above). He illustrates it on the conception of democracy, which the US try to redistribute to other countries, where it, nonetheless, fails to succeed. Nowhere else in the world are the same conditions for the development of egalitarianism, free choice and free will.

Especially helpful is Potter’s comparison to passengers in a train, which explains both – the Frontier Thesis and the abundance bases of democracy. The ones, who want to get a good seat for the journey, come early and those, who do not care, come late, but they are expected to reconcile with their situation. The people distribute themselves automatically, so that everybody is satisfied. There is no supervision and no extra investment to solve the administration needed, the train leaves on time. There is one problem, though. This system will only work, when there are enough seats for everyone, because every passenger needs to have a chance to find a reasonably good seat. Contrary to other democracy systems, the American democracy is able to offer this, which makes it so exceptional and unique.

²⁶ “A social and political philosophy asserting the equality of all men, especially in their access to the rights and privileges of their society.” (TFD)

The concept of David M. Potter (1973) may seem strictly positive, but that conclusion would be false. He critically remarks that even though it should be the other way round, democracy became the means to attain abundance and that abundance starts to equal freedom to American people. The inhabitants of North America soon began to put abundance above every other value. Potter points out that this may be the stumbling block for attempts to export the American concept of democracy, and the main reason why these attempts fail so often. Also the following fact is remarkable: the export of wealth and democracy is as unsuccessful as exporting mere democracy, because it is not only resources and wealth, but mainly a know-how, what other countries need to get closer to the US democratic model.

1.2.5.1. Consumerism

The source of American materialism and consumerism can be most likely traced down to the frontier conquest or the period immediately after that, when the descendants of the first pioneers became productive members of the society. Their ancestors had built new homes there, and the quest of their descendants was to make their homes, travelling and every other aspect of their life more comfortable. As Lerner's (1967) description of Americans goes: "*The more comfortable the American feels, the more he seeks to pile up physical comforts.*" (p. 250).

According to Lerner (1967), not only the pioneers but also the Puritan roots of Americanism play an important role in the genesis of American materialism. Whereas Puritans were obtaining the inner asceticism²⁷ via outer denial and austerity, their descendants do not want either of them. Susman (1984) explains that this situation came to existence in 1920's, when the newspapers, tabloids and most importantly mass advertisement came to existence. Only then Americans, being raised up in the Protestant work ethics²⁸, were encouraged to spend more and more money, because savings were portrayed as the "*evil in Puritanism*" (p. 111) They were taught that they live in the world of abundance and therefore, they have to discover new values – leisure and pleasure.

The then Americans found themselves with much more of the leisure time on their hands. This phenomenon is connected to industrial strides and the technological progress the whole world was experiencing at the beginning of the 20th century. While the goods were still being produced in high quantities, not so many people were needed to produce as much and more and more people were being employed in the clerical sector. With this type of job, the assurances and possibilities connected to stable and regular salary found its position in people's lives (Susman, 1984).

²⁷ "*The exercise of rigorous self-discipline, especially mental self-discipline practiced as a means to spiritual growth.*" (TFD)

²⁸ The value attached to hard work, self-denial, thrift and efficiency.

Nevertheless, Mary McCarthy (in Lerner, 1967, p. 250) argues for materialism not to be an entirely negative feature of a civilization: *“The virtue of American civilization, is that it is unmaterialistic. It is true that America produces and consumes more cars, more soap and bathtubs, than any other nation, but we live among these objects rather than by them.”*

Lerner (1967) points out a very interesting feature of consumerism connected to comfort, which is cleanliness. People started to be obsessed with bodily hygiene – every part of the body has its own cleanser or deodorant. The most home improvement hacks and mechanical improvements have been concerned with bathroom or hygiene, somehow. And perhaps all this comes from the effort to get rid of the smell of industrialism and manual work, or it has even more philosophical aspect of Puritanical cleaning from the sense of guilt.

The most important part of history concerning American consumerism appears to be the time after the Second World War. Americans emerged from it strong and proud of their military and industrial powers. Confident and enthusiastic, Americans were experiencing the years of prosperity, which Europe could only envy of. Tindall and Shi (1992) of course point out the phenomenon of baby boom which is only understandable after a war. The baby boom brought a huge demand for diapers, toys, clothes and schools. This was also accompanied by a construction boom and white appliances demand boom. The most important household product which changed the whole course of American society was the TV. TV sets enabled public opinions influencing, it captured people’s lives and concentrated them around itself and most importantly enabled the development of mass advertisements in the true meaning of the phrase. The unification and conformity got a word in the course of American history and never let it go ever since.

The new service industry of advertising would try hard to take advantage of the stimuli they were able to use to influence people’s opinions and desires. Let the most reflective example of this phenomena be birth control, which being advertised became the reason to change the attitude towards marriage and child conception. This meant changes in the values of home and family (Susman, 1984). Furthermore, what is alarming, is that more money is nowadays spent on cosmetics, tobacco and alcohol than on public education (Lerner, 1967).

Consumerism and materialism generally express values present in society very clearly and visibly. It is certainly hedonism which urges people to be more and more comfortable, to have better food, to have more and more things. Therefore, it is comfort and to some extent enjoyment, because it originates in comfort, which determine the contemporary American civilization and form it to a big extent. But the value of achievement cannot be missed out because of the competition the US often gets into with different countries. The Americans feel that their

abundance and hence consumerism (which may not be admitted) is fully deserved and gained. To certain extent this may be true, with reference to Potter (1973), who says that American abundance is not only in natural resources, but in human resources and the people's work as well. On the other hand, Americans should be more careful in the interpretation of the source of their wealth, because it is not only thanks to their work, but also natural conditions, and taking advantage of cheap workforce of immigrants etc.

1.2.6. Conformity

With a mechanized production of commodities, which were being produced in masses (i.e. mass production), conformism emerged easily and almost naturally. It was easier to buy, use and wear the same things as every other American did, to live in the same way and think the same as well. Conformity represents a shortcut for Americans, who did not feel a need to think for themselves. There always have been people who preferred the unified, unthinking, easy life, but what happened in the US, when the economics had expanded, is that the uniformity became standard and the majority of people started to live very similar or even the same lives. The American salesmanship contributed to the standardization of commodities, when they very cleverly came up with a genius plan to promote the unification of goods and therefore people. They found every possible buyer for a certain product and then with a targeted advertisement became a necessary part of every day's people's lives (Lerner, 1967).

The standardization and mechanization of the production may seem as the main problem with the American style of life, but in fact, both principles are not as much of a problem as the conformism in American society is. On this topic Lerner (1967) literally states: "... *They flow from the mimesis of the dominant and successful by the weak and mediocre, from the intolerance of diversity, and from the fear of being thought different from one's fellows. This is the essence of conformism. ...*" (p. 262). Nonetheless, the connection between conformism and mechanization can be traced down in the big-scale manufacturing process, which is necessary to be controlled by government – and the directed society is, on one hand easily controllable, but on the other hand, it encourages conformism.

Alexis de Tocqueville (2000) seeks the origins of American conformism in much further history. Specifically, it is the time of the American character forming in the time of the first settlement of North America. The newly emerged society, based on the idea of equalitarianism, which had no elites, in fact did not have any moral or style model, and therefore the society in question is formless and unified. The only defining force is the opinion of peers and fellow members of the major society. The member of such a society is, thus, ruled by the imitation rather

than the sense of his own worth. But, on contrary to the conformism, it needs to be said that Americans accomplished not to lose the sense of equalitarianism and democracy, in the course of history.

1.2.6.1. *The Melting Pot Theory*

The US is sometimes called “the country of immigrants” and as such, it is no wonder that Americans based their national identity on cultural diversity. Still, even though they embrace their diversity, there is a need for national unity and that is where the Theory of Melting Pot comes to life (Smith, 2012). The Melting Pot Theory is based on a notion of metal melting pot, where cultural groups blend and combine and in the end form a new substance, which is stronger and has better qualities, just like metal. In this theory, the immigrants are expected to become loyal and hard-working patriots of the US and to contribute to their country development (Hurd, 2016). The immigrants coming to the US shed their pertinence to a specific ethnic, but contribute with their experience to the development of the new type human – the American (Smith, 2012).

In the first half of the 20th century, it was really so. There was a small tolerance to cultures which did not try to blend in. The immigrants had to learn to speak English and detach themselves from the country of their origin, which they did enthusiastically, because they were fleeing from poverty or prejudice and therefore they embraced the cultural requirements of the US (Hurd, 2016). Such an obedience and modesty of the new immigrant workers, was something, which contributed by a big deal to the economic progress of the US. They were working willingly for a small amount of money, and soon they started to be called “*coolies*”²⁹. Unjustly, they were being accused of stealing the jobs from “*the old Americans*”³⁰. The situation did not improve the fact that they were keeping the wages low and quite often they were the strike-breakers (Fichou, 1995).

Except having the economic effect on the US, the Melting Pot can sometimes be stated as one of the biggest influences on the process of Americanisation, because it kept “*the old Americans*” alert and trying to get even with the immigrants, and furthermore it aroused the feelings of nationalism, it united the nation and made it to value high their own customs, habits, language and heritage (Fichou, 1995).

After the Civil Rights Act (ratified in 1964), when it became illegal to discriminate different ethnic groups, Americans became more tolerant and the theory of Melting Pot was replaced with

²⁹ “*Labourers hired at subsistence wages for unskilled work, esp. formerly in the Far East.*” (TFD)

³⁰ Meaning descendants of people living in the North America at least from the War of Independence.

theories of Cultural Pluralism and the Salad Bowl. In both of them, the minority cultures retain their essence, although being mixed and although being part of a bigger unit (Hurd, 2016).

The Melting Pot Theory is a very interesting matter, concerning the values, which it bears. Americans feeling the pressure from outer world felt endangered by the foreigners and their own cultures and traditions, therefore they needed some feelings of security. The value of security aroused from this situation. The Americans wanted to preserve the stability of society, they wanted their jobs and money to be ensured and their own nationality to be respected. Of course, two values offer themselves immediately in connection to this and they are the value of conformity and the value of tradition. The Melting Pot Theory was supposed to ensure the continuity of American traditions and generally culture as it was known. Any deviation from the majority society had to be perceived as undesired in order to retain the alleged security of the society. Funnily enough, this belief was later the cause of the friction in society, which continues to present days.

1.2.6.2. Homosexuality

If we consider the American society in its multiculturalism, the topic of alternative sexual preferences should not be omitted. Historically, and with a great deal of irony, there is no better and, at the same time, worse place on Earth for sexual minorities. On one hand, the learnt tolerance towards all minorities, coming from equalitarianism, and on the other hand, strict Puritanism and conformism, restricting sexual minorities as something unnatural.

For much of the 20th century, the sexual minorities were ignored and marginalized. And though people had a vague idea that they existed, nobody ever admitted their actual presence. As Scott F. Hoffman (2011) points out, the churches of different kinds have always presented homosexuality as abomination forbidden by God and portrayed gays and lesbians as dark outcasts, and in response, gays and lesbians have always been very reluctant church-goers and generally their attitude towards faith was ambivalent. But the origins of biased antigay opinions cannot be only looked for at church and religion, but at the rigid gender role norms, which are often introduced and reinforced by schools, the government and later by mass media (Callender, 2015).

Kevin A. Callender (2015) offers an interesting theory of why homosexuals have always been treated differently: according to it, it is all based in classical group psychology. All groups and the individuals within the groups feel the urge to compete for real or alleged scarcity of resources or other values – such as power, social status, political power, etc. It is only natural that people from one group will be suspicious and hostile towards members of different social identities. Callender (2015) also reminds that hostility towards non-heterosexuals may come from cognition in forms

of stereotypes formed on personal experience, and affect and feelings in forms of prejudices. All of these may arise from heuristic or mental shortcuts³¹.

Concerning the historical periodization of the bias against homosexuals, the situation got worse with the coming of the Cold War, when Americans saw the threat of communism approaching them. Homosexuals became a target, because supposedly, if hired to government service, they would be the weakest links. Eisenhower in 1953 in Hoffman (2011) said that “*sexual perverts*” could be blackmailed into revealing state secrets. But as the Civil Rights movement was slowly becoming more and more important for Americans, also gays and lesbians started to fight for their place in the society. During next twenty years, homosexuality has been declared not to be a psychiatric disorder, homosexuals were allowed to be employed by government and more and more openly homosexual politicians were elected to high governmental posts³² (Hoffman, 2011).

Nevertheless, the battle was not won, and open hostility toward homosexuals started again in late 1970’s with Anita Bryant founding a political coalition “*Save Our Children*”, based on the premise that homosexuals cannot reproduce, which was acknowledged by Vatican (and the Holy See) and the fight started all over again. President Reagan banning homosexuals from immigrating to the USA, or the AIDS crisis being called the God’s judgement on homosexuals, these are just the most visible incidents of the hatred towards homosexuals. The situation started to improve in 1990’s, when sexual minorities started being accepted officially, but despite this, the intolerance and general rejection towards sexual minorities still takes place even nowadays (Hoffman, 2011).

The author of present thesis has incorporated a brief historical development of sexual minorities acceptance, because it is something that describes the attitudes towards homosexuals tellingly. Americans have been trying hard to accept this kind of difference and furthermore, they rationally know that there is nothing wrong with being a gay or a lesbian. Nevertheless, it is very hard for them to fight with something which is deeply rooted in their culture and in their tradition. That is conformism and strong tie-up with religion and the Holy Bible. It is not only a cultural issue, though, because it cannot be omitted that people’s minds are programmed to be distrustful towards people from different social groups, even if it were only a small difference which divides them.

³¹ Individuals tend to selectively gather, remember and interpret in a way, which affirm their already existing beliefs and attitudes.

³² E.g. Massachusetts State Representative Elaine Noble and San Francisco City Supervisor Harvey Milk

1.2.7. Conclusion

There are many aspects which influence the contemporary American culture and American national character, and ironically enough, they are the residues of the past, although the American society tends to look ahead while it focuses on the present and the future. This comes from the very beginning of American settlement, when Puritans coming to North America felt the urge to get rid of the British roots which were binding them. Nevertheless, it was not until the 18th century, when the Americans refused the UK with all of its traditions and freed themselves completely.

The American society is dynamic, because many immigrants are looking for new homes here, the mobility of people is high. Leaving aside the factor of immigrants, who somehow have to forget their past and have to be adaptable to all the conditions which are to come, the tendency for American mobility comes from the time of American frontier conquest. The people settling the American west coast had to be versatile and ready for everything, which is a quality even contemporary Americans bear. They are willing to change jobs, places of living or anything, if it is supposed to improve their living conditions or their situation in general. The other reason for such a high mobility of American citizens is retaining of their freedom. If they sever their ties with one place, they make a first step towards freedom, as a man who is on the go, is harder to control.

Another trait typical for Americans is optimism, coming probably from the frontier conquest as well. Americans are generally enticed by the future. In the prosperity of society, they see their own progress. That is why even children are encouraged to have a spirit of initiative, enterprising and diligence. This can be seen also in popular culture.

All of the American citizens are fully-fledged parts of American culture, but still they manage to retain their own individuality and independence. A good example is the division of the US to smaller sections – states. The states keep their own legislation and customs; they even make no secret of the different mentalities. At the same time, they are united under one federal government. This comes from egalitarianism combined with pluralism. A belief that even though people have the same opportunities, it does not mean that everybody will have the same result – a belief which differentiates the US from other countries. Yet, the Americans feel a strong affiliation to their country and willingly participate³³ on its running.

Concerning the division of values according to Schwartz (2012), the author of present thesis proved that all of them are present, that they are generally valued high in the American society and that they were developing in time and in the course of history. Of course, there are more specific

³³ By voting, volunteerism, participation on the country affairs, the jury duty, etc.

values which could be described, such as family, science and technology, volunteerism, democracy or mobility³⁴, but for the purposes of this thesis, whose aim is to approach the topic of American culture from a broad perspective, it has been decided to deal with the values from this point of view.

The next chapter is a segue from the theoretical to the practical part of this thesis. From the theoretical assumptions about culture and the features of it, to the specific case of American culture, it is now necessary to be prepared for applying the theory into the teaching practice, as the author of this thesis wants to use literature for teaching cultural facts. Therefore, it is necessary to clarify whether literature is an appropriate way to do so or not. It starts with a wide view of literature in the foreign language teaching, and then it narrows down to using literature as an ideal way to teach about cultures.

³⁴ Some of these specific values have been briefly mentioned in the discussion about general American values.

1.3.Possible Application of Literature in Foreign Language Teaching³⁵

The present chapter tries to present literature as one of the useful means of teaching in FLT. Specifically, as a way of forming learners' personalities, as a good way to teach foreign language, and, last but not least, as a bearer of cultural signs and features. Therefore, this chapter defends the opinion that literature is a proper implement to be used in FLT and what is more, to teach about a particular culture.

1.3.1. Literature as a Way of Forming the Personality of a Reader

Humans are basically animals – they need to survive; they have a need of food and they need to adapt to whatever environment they are plunged into. But whereas animals have genetic predispositions and appropriate environment to become fully functioning members of their own species, humans need to be turned into what they are supposed to be. Humans need to be humanized and socialized first, and they need to create the environment they want to raise their offspring in first. Furthermore, one of the cause for human uniqueness is the way of communication they use – language, something symbolic that animals do not master (O'Doherty, 1968).

Language is primarily meant to provide the means for interpersonal communication and it is experience and active usage that give the meaning to words. When there is a deficiency in the lexis, there is usually a limit to the function of intelligence, because a person cannot read, speak or even think when the vocabulary is missing. What is interesting, O'Doherty (1968) presents results of a research, which says that the most important words for one's intelligence are linking words and phrases, such as: "either – or", "if – then", "both – and", "whenever", "nevertheless" etc. Also, the development of language is closely connected to the development of personality in the pre-school years. Roe and Ross (2006) add that reading teaches the readers correct sentence patterns, vocabulary usage and standard story structures. Furthermore, reading books develops thinking skills.

Van Kaam and Healy (1967) set an important connection between literature and psychology. Both reveal the meaning of human existence, but each one from a different perspective. On one hand, literature describes a specific case, one experience; on the other hand, psychology conceptualizes and generalizes it. It suddenly becomes clear that because literature and psychology share the background of common human experience, literature can teach the readers to get to know

³⁵ Henceforth as FLT.

themselves and other people and function as an agent in personality growth. Roe and Ross (2006) directly state that reading helps children deal with their own problems.

In the process of child's personality development, there exist different types of identification. The first is with the child's mother and father, then the child's peers and friends become more important. But to become a truly independent personality, one must go through a hero identification, which is enabled mainly by reading (O'Doherty, 1968). Children can acquire new experience, because they "see" new places, "meet" new people and therefore broaden the experience they have with social interaction and conflict solving (Roe and Ross, 2006).

1.3.2. Literature as a Teaching Material in FLT

As it was discussed above, literature and language are closely entwined, because literature consists of language. In the foreign language classes, literature is sometimes used as a means to teach grammar, because literature gives space for the application of grammatical rules and language as a system in general. Nevertheless, not much attention is given to teaching the three out of the four language skills³⁶ – speaking, writing and listening (Babae and Yahya, 2014).

Hadaway et al. (2002) suggest there are three advantages of using literature in FLT. The first one is that the language in question is taught in context and learners have an opportunity to see the language and its practical application in various conditions. The second advantage is connected to social factors connected with different genres of literature³⁷ and it will be discussed more in the following sub-chapter. The third advantage considers the meaningful and natural application of language. It helps learners to speak accurately and fluently, to get to know idiomatic, real-life language, and to become more creative in the usage of the target language. If a mastery of language means mainly communicative competence, to know the structure and the form of a target language is not enough. Savvidou (2004) argues that it is acquiring the ability to understand discourse. Even O'Doherty (1968) states that literature in FLT leads to thinking in the target language, which should be the main goal of FLT. Last, but not least, Scott (2004) states that using literary texts in FLT motivates learners to achieve better results, as it functions as a challenge. And furthermore, teaching a foreign language via literature makes the learning more amusing, as it is creative and the learners are encouraged to think and work independently (Scott, 2004).

Povey (1972) states that "*literature will increase all language skills, because literature will extend linguistic knowledge*" (p. 18). This is enabled by the rich vocabulary and complex syntax

³⁶ The fourth skill is reading, which obviously is trained when using literature in classes.

³⁷ For example, different characters, setting, etc. in different genres, the background a specific genre etc.

that learners come across when reading literature. On the other hand, it cannot be omitted that the structures used in literary texts may be in some cases too difficult and complicated and do not cover the needs of the learners, in which case using such a literary text might be an obstacle on learner's journey to acquisition of a language and therefore an unwanted phenomenon. Hence, the choice of the texts to be used in FLT classes is vital.

1.3.3. Literature as a Mirror of Society

Literature and culture are inseparable. They are told to be inseparable to such an extent that you cannot even understand or appreciate one without a certain knowledge of the other. It is important to realize that culture is not something to be taught separately, but it is an always present constituent of the four skills – i.e. speaking, listening, reading and writing (Aghagolzadeh and Tajabadi, 2012).

Every writer is a product of the society they is a part of. Furthermore, their work is their own reaction to life, and, consciously or subconsciously, they incorporates the attitudes they holds towards the society and culture they lives in, their opinions, the values present in whichever culture they is a part of, etc. Although it may be used for aesthetic purposes only, there is no doubt that literary works³⁸ reflect societies and cultures which brought them into being (Duhan, 2015). Literature projects the positive and negative sides of one culture using imitation of human behaviour portrayed through a character description and character's deeds in order to inform, amuse and instruct (Anjana and Bhambhra, 2015). Therefore, it is clear that this relationship is reciprocal. Reading about more complex characters and describing their motives and thoughts, helps us to understand people who we would have never appreciated otherwise (Robson, 2016).

Additionally, literature has an impact on the society, as the writer holds a powerful tool for changing public opinions and tendencies (Duhan, 2015). Percy Bysshe Shelley (1821) claimed: *“Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world.”* Also Robson (2016) supports this thought by a psychologists' and neuroscientists' researches, which found out that literature builds on already existing brain system, but transforms people's experience with the world.

Literature might be a very valuable artefact for sociologists and historians, because, although the author projects their own personality and ideals, they is undoubtedly shaped by their culture. Furthermore, the purpose of literature is different from the purpose of history studies. Literature

³⁸ When talking about literature in this chapter, the author of this thesis means fiction literature. Science literature, chronicles and other types of documentary writings have to be taken out, because they were written to be source of information about a particular culture and society.

reveals the beauty in society and creates its own value of beauty³⁹, contrary to history studies (Duhan, 2015). Nevertheless, not many sociologists and historians use literature as a valid source of information and they rather pay attention to the instrumental aspects of social life instead. This is understandable, because it would be incorrect to think that every author describes the culture completely and thoroughly. It cannot be forgotten that every writer only shares their (and only their) perception and reflection of one society or culture (Anjana and Bhambhra, 2015). And as Anjana and Bhambhra (2015) state: “... *literature is a construct of language, its experience is symbolic and suggestive, rather than direct.*”. Ismail (2008) argues that this fact is caused by some authors reducing cultures to their most primitive forms.

Aghagolzadech and Tajabadi (2012) state that the main purpose of cultural teaching, and it does not matter whether it is cultural teaching by the means of literature, or different methods, is to teach intercultural understanding and intercultural communication. We also have to accept that language teaching will always be accompanied by certain cultural aspects of the language in question.

The fact that reading is important for the development of society and culture is self-evident. Literature is thought-provoking, it helps to develop and improve critical thinking and it teaches people about their world and world of other people. Judith Caesar in Ismail (2008) talks about all of its advantages and importance of reading and, besides other things, she mentions how literature teaches readers the nature of a human conflict and prevents them from a quick resolution of it with ineffective results. Only the fact that reading takes some time alone supports her theory. It helps to broaden one’s knowledge and education, and it teaches empathy and it helps to give insight into the character’s and writer’s mind, thus it helps to understand different culture’s mentality.

It needs to be pointed out that although it may seem that literature only provides us with the differences between cultures, it also shows us the similarities between them, if it were the usual topics of literature alone – love, hatred, nature, death, power, etc. This is an important remark that proves that literature is an important and powerful teaching tool in FLT.

Therefore, this chapter has proven that literature really is an ideal tool to be used in FLT generally, but, furthermore, it is an appropriate and an authentic source of knowledge about different cultures. Using literature in FLT to teach facts about the target culture is like killing two

³⁹ Beauty can be classified as a value belonging to the value of hedonism according to Schwartz (2012; for more information, see Chapter 1.1.3.1. Division of values according to Shalom Schwartz above).

birds with one stone – the personality of learners is being developed and on top of that, they learn so important cultural facts. The next chapter deals with two specific examples of doing so.

2. Practical Part

The previous chapters were focused on the theoretical bases of the further work. This means – general theory of culture and its features, American culture specifically, and the theoretical background for using authentic literature in classes. This part of present thesis deals with the analysis of two books – *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* and *Wonder* by contemporary American authors – Stephen Chbosky and R. J. Palacio. In this case, the analysis means the analysis of presented American cultural features⁴⁰. The books have been intentionally chosen, because their main purpose is not to describe American culture, and therefore for the author of present thesis, they are even more valuable. For teaching the cultural studies, it is very important to choose texts, which share the cultural features naturally and hence more genuinely. The subchapter dealing with *Wonder* functions as a comparison of the two books.

Using the analysis of the American cultural features in the named books, the author tries to prepare the way how to employ the outcomes in lessons of English. The lesson plans are presented as well.

2.1. The Perks of Being a Wallflower – Stephen Chbosky

The Perks of Being a Wallflower is a piece of young adult literature and as such, it shows many signs of coming-of-age genre. In short, it is a story of a young boy trying to find his identity and overcome the problems he is encountering in his life, which seems very ordinary. But as the story unravels, the readers are plunged into a swirl of emotions and memories, which lead them to a shocking revelation. It is a great book to be used in English lessons, as it is very attractive to young readers, but at the same time it has much to offer to an adult reader as well.

There are many topics concerning American culture, to deal with in this book. First of all, they are the symbols as the shallowest layer of culture according to Hofstede and Hofstede (2006). A symbol is a reference to culture, which can be easily spotted and in this text, there are many of these. Although it would be too basic to teach about culture using symbols, they cannot be missed out, because they are the cornerstones of the other cultural features. Second of all, they are heroes, as features expressing the tendencies of a certain society to act right according to their conscience. This is a very important topic in *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* and thus it is being dealt with thoroughly. The third topic connected to American culture in this book are values, which are the

⁴⁰ See Chapter 1.2 for more details.

essential notion concerning any cultures and as such, the author of this thesis has chosen this topic to be the most appropriate to be taught to the learners of English language.

2.1.1. Plot

The Perks of Being a Wallflower is an epistolary novel centring around a teenage boy Charlie during his freshman year. He is coping with a suicide of his best friend and furthermore he starts a new high school all alone, therefore he needs some comfort and he finds it in, more or less, anonymous letters to a stranger. From the beginning it is clear that Charlie is an extraordinary personality – he is very shy, but clever, he observes the life flying by him and the info he gets, he processes with a child-like perspective and strategies.

At school, Charlie's first friend and mentor is his teacher Bill, who in a way replaces Charlie's distant, though caring, father. He gives advice to Charlie to participate in life, so Charlie tries to overcome his chronic shyness and introversion, and makes friends with older classmate Patrick and his step-sister Sam. By this act, a whole new world of music, alcohol, drugs and sex opens to Charlie and step by step he digs in. In the course of the school year, he experiences his first kiss, date, joint or school dance.

Although it seems that Charlie has a relatively stable home-life, he is not entirely mentally alright and often goes through mental breakdowns. His family has a lot of "things in a closet" and as the reader approaches the end of the book, it unravels that Charlie belongs to them. His dead, but still beloved, aunt Helen is the cause of Charlie's mental problems and when Charlie in a flashback realizes the terrible thing he has been repressing for his entire life, he experiences a severe mental breakdown and ends in hospital.

The book ends with a hopeful end, though. Charlie forgives his aunt and looks forward to starting a new life as a sophomore, finding new friends and living a relatively normal life.

2.1.2. Symbols

This book is very rich in symbols connected to American culture. There are many references to famous American books and writers, to famous or less famous music bands and their songs, and to traditional ceremonies connected to school or family-life. It is necessary at this point to stress that although this subchapter is named "Symbols" and it aims to describe the symbols referring to American culture, the values which emerge from the symbols are dealt with as well.

The symbol which stands out the most, is the literature. During the school year, Charlie is assigned by his English teacher Bill to read dozens of books. Charlie himself is a keen and an acute

reader and, furthermore, he seems to other people that he aspires to be a writer, although he has never formulated that thought himself. This may be caused by the fact that writers are perceived in American culture as great observers, who understand people and what is happening around them. This is exactly what Charlie is. Bill numerous times remarks that Charlie should participate more on life and not just watch. On top of that, Charlie's nickname among friends is Wallflower⁴¹.

Nevertheless, the choice of books Bill assigns to Charlie is rather interesting. Mostly he recommends to Charlie American authors, except three times – J. M. Barrie and his *Peter Pan*, William Shakespeare and his *Hamlet*, and Albert Camus and his *The Stranger*. These three books have a special meaning in the story, because it seems that they somehow describe Charlie and his problems in the world. The other books, however, do not relate to Charlie and his life that much and their choice is closely related to Chbosky's opinion about American culture.

Among the writers of Bill's choice belong the following ones: Harper Lee, Francis Scott Fitzgerald, John Knowles, Randy Shilts, J. D. Salinger, Henry David Thoreau, Jack Kerouac, William S. Burroughs and Ayn Rand. Except the writers Bill has chosen, there is one more – e. e. cummings, whom Charlie read on his girlfriend's recommendation. If you consider these, with no doubt, great American authors, there is certainly something they have in common. They are considered to be some of the most important American writers of the 20th century. But what is even more interesting, even though Americans widely accept and respect them, they are the authors of scorching criticism of American society. They criticise consumerism, conformism, lack of benevolence and extreme clinging on traditions. Even though they criticise Americans (and not only them, of course), Americans still love them. Based on this fact, it is possible to deduce that Americans can accept an objective criticism and maybe perceive it as a challenge, which is an important value in American culture. But as a whole, they seem to be unable to react on the criticism in a creative way and to (re)solve the problems they encounter.

The other very important symbol of American culture is the rituals Charlie's family and his friends hold. The Thanksgiving celebration, the Christmas celebration, Easter, Rocky Horror Picture Show, eating at Big Boy, school dances, Secret Santa event, etc., are all examples of clinging to rituals and traditions which sometimes the people even do not like – i.e. the Christmas celebration, because Charlie's aunt Helen died on Christmas Eve and because their grandpa always starts a fight. This facts show that tradition is a very important value for Americans, no matter

⁴¹ Therefore, the name of the book.

what, and it is no wonder that their national character is formed by the value of tradition to such an extent⁴².

2.1.3. Heroes

Heroes are one of the most important topics in this story. It seems like the author asks himself varied questions concerning heroes. The questions are assumed and taken into consideration in the subchapters which follow this introduction. Culturally, the heroes are important in order to tell what kinds of personal traits Chbosky considers important and the social behaviour which surrounds the specific hero. The topic of heroes can also be used in the lessons of English to teach about culture, because, with reference to Hofstede and Hofstede (2007), heroes are the layer of culture which goes deeper than the symbols.

2.1.3.1. *Charlie*

Chbosky experiments with heroic behaviour, particularly Charlie's heroic behaviour, because Charlie is an ideal character to do so. He is pure, unspoiled and absolutely selfless. Whatever he does, he does not want to disappoint or harm others, every time he follows the rules (except when he starts to smoke, do drugs and alcohol) and orders. So, for example, when his sister asks him not to tell her secret to parents, Charlie assumes he can tell it to Bill, because his sister explicitly forbade only parents. But by this, his heroic behaviour turns into the reason, why Charlie is so distant from other people.

When he starts to date Mary Elizabeth, he does not like her, and, furthermore, he loves Sam. But he wants not to hurt Mary Elizabeth and be honest with her, so he rather passively leaves her in the scheme that he likes her and listens to her. An interesting part comes when the friends play Truth or Dare and Charlie feels the urge to be honest and truthful actively, and therefore Mary Elizabeth realizes he loves Sam. It is a very important moment for this chapter, because Charlie is suddenly confronted with one of his innermost beliefs, which is honesty. He cannot make himself to lie in a game of Truth or Dare, so, as a result, he hurts more people than when he would have said the truth at the very beginning.

Charlie's passivity, which he considers to be in his friends' interests, or in other words heroic, causes him another problem, when Patrick kisses him after Patrick's and Brad's break up. Charlie does not like it, but he does not say a word and Patrick continues doing it every time they say

⁴² See chapter 1.2.6 Conformity.

goodbye. Though Charlie perceives it as something which helps Patrick, Sam tells him later: “... *At those times, you weren't being his friend at all. Because you weren't honest with him.*” (p. 215).

Sam sums it up nicely in another quote, concerning her and Charlie's relationship: “... *It's sweet and everything, but it's like you're not even there sometimes. It's great that you can listen and be a shoulder to someone, but what about when someone doesn't need a shoulder. What if they need the arms or something like that? You can't just sit there and put everybody's lives ahead of yours and thin that counts as love. You just can't. You have to do things.*” (p. 214)

By this, Chbosky presents the first of his unsaid questions concerning heroes. He asks whether by seemingly doing everything right, not trying to hurt people, one can be considered to be a hero. Furthermore, Chbosky unintentionally shows his ideal American hero, who is bold, active, being in charge of his own life, but at the same time, caring, loving, tender and protective to the people he or she loves. Charlie makes many mistakes in the relationships with other people, he is not active and he lacks assertiveness and thus he functions as a deterrent example.

The only time Charlie acted like a real American hero was when he defended Patrick in the fight with Brad and his friends. Patrick was outnumbered and standing against five strong footballers. Though Charlie and Patrick were not talking to each other, Charlie stood up for him because he knew the fight was not fair. In fact, he acts according to the principle “an eye for an eye” which in Chbosky's interpretation of heroism seems major. Another character who did a similar thing was uncle Phil.

2.1.3.2. *Great Uncle Phil*

Uncle Phil is a character who is mentioned only in one part of the book and seemingly he is not very important. Certainly, he does not get involved in the story of the book, except for one short episode. He is brother of Charlie's grandmother, whose husband had died in Korea when their two children (Rebecca and Charlie's dad) were small and she married another man. Her new husband was a violent man and was beating her and both of the kids. When great uncle Phil realized, he and his few friends beat Charlie's grandmother's husband and he died four days later in the hospital. What is important, not only that great uncle Phil did not go to prison, but furthermore, on every Christmas celebration, he loves to tell this story.

“I still don't know how my great uncle Phil missed going to jail for doing what he did. I asked my dad once, and he said that the people that lived around his neighbourhood understood that some things had nothing to do with the police. He said that if someone touched your sister or your mother, they paid the price, and everyone looked the other way.” (p. 93).

In Charlie's family, great uncle Phil is perceived as a hero, even though he virtually killed a man. The principle of "an eye for an eye" is applied again, though in a much more serious way. Chbosky's question in this case seems to be whether it is alright to be the active hero who protects people and the good cause, but harms, or even kills the villain, without even feeling sorry. The lack of conscience is the main problem in uncle Phil's case, because for a hero not regretting killing another human being is not a typical or common thing to do. Therefore, to the list of Chbosky's heroic features of character we can enlist another one – conscience.

2.1.3.3. *Peter*

Peter, as well as great uncle Phil, is rather a minor character in the story. He is Craig's (Sam's boyfriend) friend and that implies that he should not be a very positive character, because the reader is tempted to sympathise with Charlie and reprobate Craig and all his sidekicks. But, at the end of the story, Peter proves to be a hero by making Craig to confess to Sam that he has been cheating on her.

Based on Peter's character, another very important remark on Chbosky's heroes is that everybody has a chance to become a hero, and it does not matter that you are friends with a villain. The only thing you need to do is a right thing. Interesting is also the fact that contrary to Charlie, Peter is honest to the people he likes, despite the fact the truth may hurt them, and therefore, Peter may be perceived as a bigger hero than Charlie is. But it is a fact that the reader does not know much about Peter's other deeds, his preferences and his nature, whereas with Charlie, the reader knows what he has been through, how hard he is trying and he knows the motives behind his actions. By this Chbosky can imply the importance of knowing people before they are judged, which is crucial when we talk about heroes.

2.1.4. **Values**

As the reader gets deeper and deeper into the story, it becomes clear that beside heroes, the American cultural values are, even for Chbosky, the core of the culture. The values are somehow omnipresent and subtle, not stated directly, but it does not make them less important at all. If the fact that the author did not intend to incorporate them directly, but still, they stand out clearly, is considered, then the importance of values in cultures is highlighted significantly.

Based on the content analysis of the book, the author of present thesis has narrowed down the values expressed in *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* to two values – Tradition and Conformity. These values follow the behaviour and thinking of the characters.

2.1.4.1. Tradition

It has already been mentioned that tradition is an important value for American citizens. In Chbosky's book, the traditions are being performed via rituals and family and schools traditions. They are only symbols, but the fact that they are so important for Charlie's social circle implies that the respect for them is really high.

In the book, except for the cultural traditions, like celebrating the Thanksgiving, playing American football, respecting sportsman as national heroes etc., the dominant role play Christian traditions as well. Charlie once mentions an interesting thing: *"I wasn't raised very religiously because my parents went to Catholic school, but I do believe in God very much."* (p. 29). The word "because" in that sentence is the most interesting thing. Charlie was not raised very religiously because his parents went to Catholic school. This may imply that Charlie's parents made a negative experience with Catholic or Christian upbringing and education and therefore did not want to be too strict concerning the question of religion with their children. Nevertheless, it is clear that they still believe in God, because otherwise, Charlie would not believe in God himself. The Christian tradition is thus so strong that even a bad experience cannot make them stop believing.

Also the traditions of celebrating Christmas and Easter stands out in the book. But whereas Christmas became for Charlie's family and his acquaintances rather a secular tradition, the Easter, being the most important Christian feast, still remains truly religious for them. The evidence can be found in following paragraph: *"So, on Good Friday yesterday, we had a special showing of The Rocky Horror Picture Show. What made it special was the fact that everyone knew it was the beginning of Easter vacation, and a lot of kids were still wearing their suits and dresses from Mass. It reminded me of Ash Wednesday in school when the kids come in with thumbprints on their foreheads. It always adds an air of excitement."* (p. 144). From this, a strong affiliation to the religious tradition, rooted in the US mostly by Puritan immigrants, can be assumed.

Besides the Christian traditions and customs, it is needed to be pointed out that even patriotism⁴³ can be understood as an exhibition of the value of tradition. As Kertz-Welzel and Hebert (2012) claim, music has long served as an emblem of national identity, and the author of this thesis reckons that also Chbosky uses songs to express the patriotism present in American culture. There are 18 singers and music bands mentioned in the book, and out of 18, exactly half of them are American. This seemingly minor remark is gaining force if the fact how important the

⁴³ *"Love of and devotion to one's country."* (TFD)

songs are for Charlie is considered. They are his bards; they express his feelings and help him feel better.

Not only they respect only the rituals and customs, but by holding the traditions they praise high also their ancestors and their history and past. The strong clinging on traditions may be the reason why the US is such a specific country and why Americans are such a specific nation. They are unified by respecting the same traditions and their history, but on the other hand, they can be sometimes too intolerant to new and unknown people, things, situations. This means that the value of tradition is closely related to the value of conformism, possibly to the value of power as well.

2.1.4.2. Conformity

Conformity, unlike tradition, is not expressed by the means of symbols to such an extent. Conformity is a value present in people's behaviour, their beliefs and attitudes, but most of all, in their fear. The characters, who are the most important evidence of this hypothesis, are Charlie, as a main character, of course, and Brad, Patrick's lover and a high school football team quarterback.

Already at the beginning, the reader starts to suspect Charlie that he suffers from a mental illness of some kind. This is confirmed later in the story when Charlie's life story starts to unravel and when he has to start seeing his psychiatrist again, although the illness is never named. Despite this and despite his unusual behaviour, he is a very loving and caring person and he gains a few of very good friends, who like him no matter what. But Charlie, and in fact his family and Bill as well, think, he should be more "normal" and be like everyone else. Bill advises Charlie to participate more – i.e. go to school dances and school football teams matches, and everybody in Charlie's family seem to wish for his normality, especially his sister. *"You're a freak, you know that? You've always been a freak. Everyone says so. They always have."* (p. 28). Charlie confirms his desire for conformity when he goes to school events and popular pass-time places, even though he is not interested in them and he does not like them. *"Michael and I would go to the games sometimes even though neither of us were popular enough to go. It was just a place to go on Fridays when we didn't want to watch television."* (p. 20).

But it is not only the problem of behaving differently than the others, which concerns Chbosky. The biggest issue concerning conformity in his book is homosexuality. In Chbosky's interpretation of American culture (bear in mind that the story was written and takes place in 1990's), homosexuality is something unnatural and unwanted. If we leave out Patrick, every other character who is gay, tries to keep it secret and is ashamed of it. Even Charlie's parents had a suspicion that

Charlie might be a gay, since he used to kiss a boy when he was small, which concerned them a lot. Funnily enough, Charlie calls his parents' behaviour as "natural".

Nevertheless, it is not Charlie who functions as a manifestation of conformity in relation to homosexuality, but Brad. "*I opened the door, and I saw Patrick kissing Brad. ... 'Who is this kid?' Brad just looked real nervous and not in the Bob way. ... 'Brad doesn't want people to know. ... Because he's scared.'"* (pp. 39–40). Although Patrick never finishes explaining why Brad is scared, it is possible to assume that Brad is scared because he does not want to lose his status of a popular boy that he has got by being the football quarterback – he fears the opinion of his peers and even of the society. That the social circle of the characters is very intolerant may be stated based on the fact that they have a popular tackle game called "*smear the queer*" (p. 46), and most importantly, when Brad's father finds out, he beats his son and hurts him badly. He rather beats his son up violently, which is not acceptable in the society, than accept the fact that his son, a quarterback, a popular kid, is a gay. After this incident, Brad changes his mind and pretends to hate Patrick and even calls him "*faggot*", which only adds up to Brad's desire to blend with the majority of people.

Even the park, where gay men meet, is an evidence of conformism present in the society. The park only serves its purpose at night, when people can approach each other anonymously without fear of revealing their secret. When a famous sports journalist wants to have sex with Charlie and Charlie recognizes him, the journalist basically runs away, probably scared he would be exposed to public. The covering function of the park is striking when Charlie and Patrick meet Brad there – after he publicly calls Patrick a "faggot" – because even he is able to admit his homosexuality when no one can recognize him.

2.1.5. Conclusion

If the findings from *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* are summarized, it is possible to assume that American culture in Chbosky's interpretation is really based on the values according to Shalom Schwartz (2012). But, because the interpretation is unintentional and authentic, as a value added, there is this subjective dimension to the interpretation which implies that the most important values reflected in the book are tradition and conformism.

Chbosky pays a big deal of his attention to the depiction of different types of heroes, or more precisely, to different types of heroic behaviour in different situations and circumstances. It appears like he is trying to describe the ideal character of an ideal American hero. Another

interpretation of his intentions might be that he strives to depict a hero, who is not perfect, but it makes him more real, more plastic and even more heroic.

2.2. Wonder – R. J. Palacio

Contrary to the first book analysed, *Wonder* is intended to be read by younger readers and the topics which are being dealt with are not as dark as in *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*. Nevertheless, there are also many similarities between them. *Wonder*, being a story about one uneasy change in the life of a boy, who suffers from craniofacial syndrome, which basically makes his face look unusual, is also a coming of age novel. It is also narrated from the first person omniscient, but it has more narrators, than Chbosky's book. Because he becomes a victim of bullying, this book can serve many purposes, when being used in English language teaching⁴⁴. Except for teaching about American culture, which is this thesis' purpose, it can be used when dealing with bullying, building learners' self-conception and tolerance towards people, who are somehow different or disabled.

Both of the books in question are as rich in cultural symbols and cultural features, as it gets. Though, *Wonder* does not think about heroes profoundly, but rather stresses the importance of general kindness among people, which corresponds with the value of benevolence in American culture the most, but also other values can be spotted. Therefore, the topic of symbols and heroes is omitted, and, in this case, the author of this thesis focuses only on the values which are typical for the particular narrators.

2.2.1. Plot

This is a story of a ten-year-old, August Pullman, who suffers from a craniofacial abnormality (see above). Being home-schooled for the most of his life, Auggie is terrified when he realizes his parents want to send him to the fifth grade. By doing this, the biggest adventure of his life begins and Auggie has to deal with all the hardships that kids in his age encounter; but on top of that, he also has to overcome his uneasy situation being a differently looking boy. During his first year at school, he is bullied, but, nevertheless, he finds a couple of very good friends.

Auggie's point of view is very interesting and important, but the book is extraordinary since it considers more versions of one story and therefore the reader gets an access to the minds of Auggie's new friends – Summer and Jack, his sister, her best friend and also her boyfriend. By

⁴⁴ Henceforth as ELT.

this, the reader realizes that everybody has different problems and that Auggie's appearance does not only affect him, but also the people who are the closest to him.

Again, this book has a happy ending as well, teaching readers about the power of friendship and the importance of one's courage, accepting challenges and accepting oneself.

2.2.2. Values

From the content analysis of *Wonder*, it can be assumed that values really are the core of American culture, at least in Palacio's point of view. Of course, there are symbols and rituals depicted, but their importance is rather diminished. Furthermore, as it has been stated before, symbols and rituals are too shallow to be used in multicultural education in ELT.

Palacio's interpretation of American values is interesting in the way she shows different people having different values or appreciating values differently. From this, the reader gets truly multidimensional, plastic and authentic picture of the diversity in American society, which is also noteworthy.

2.2.2.1. Conformity

Just as in *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, the value of conformity stands in the foreground, because the main character, August is its main bearer. Thanks to the unusual appearance, he unwillingly stands from the crowd. This situation is ironic, because he does not do anything, which would differentiate him from the others, except the things connected to his health issues, he does not like anything the others would not like and furthermore, he does not feel different: "*It's like people you see sometimes, and you can't imagine what it would be like to be that person, whether it's somebody in a wheelchair or somebody who can't talk. Only, I know that I'm that person to the other people, maybe to every single person in that whole auditorium. To me, though, I'm just me. An ordinary kid.*" (p. 306).

Many times, Auggie expresses his desire to be just like everybody else, but by this, he only means his appearance. Being *different* for him means many hardships like people staring, children being afraid of him and most importantly, bullying at school. That is the moment, when Palacio probably implies that being a part of the crowd, being a conformist, is easier. This is confirmed when Auggie has the opportunity to hide his face behind a mask on Halloween and being subsumed within the majority, and it is his favourite day of the year because nobody notices him and he can truly be like the other kids.

Nevertheless, August is not the only character who does not want to stand out from the crowd. His sister Via does not like the attention her brother's face draws to him as well as to her. When she spends some time at her grandmother's house, it belongs to the most amazing time in her life because suddenly, she can be *normal* and ordinary. "I have to say it was so amazing to suddenly be free of all that stuff that made me so mad. No one stared at Grans and me when we went to town to buy groceries. No one pointed at us. No one even noticed us." (p. 85). From the excerpt above, it is possible to assume that although she and her family did normal things, like shopping for groceries, it was always unusual for other people because of August's face. As it was stated before, being a member of majority is easier for the characters in this book.

2.2.2.2. *Self-direction, stimulation*

Self-direction is another of the most important values in this book, as it is a value which is carried by the main character – August – and his sister Via. This subchapter, though, deals with two of the values at the same time – self-direction and stimulation because the author of the present thesis believes that they are entwined and interconnected, especially for the characters in *Wonder*.

At the beginning of the story, August is home-schooled and is terrified from the thought of going to school and face other children, expecting them being mean. But, he accepts the challenge, which means, he has to become more independent and do not rely on his parent's protection. As the story evolves, August is becoming more and more self-confident, and autonomous, as for example when he does not tell them he is being bullied. The biggest challenge for him and the test of his newly gained autonomy is the nature retreat trip, where he has to stay away from his home for three days. Nevertheless, August proves that he realizes the importance of his independence and leaves his comfort toy at home. This incident may seem irrelevant, but in fact it seems like confronting challenges makes August more and more independent to the point, where he willingly puts away the symbol of his childhood and becomes a teenager, which is the transition phase before becoming an adult.

On the other hand, the other child of the Pullman's family, Via, has always been quite autonomous because her parents were taking care of Auggie. But, as much as Auggie sometimes does not enjoy attention of his parents, Via misses it. Therefore, the challenge her autonomy represents for her, is the too-soon transition from being the first beloved baby, to the "less important" independent older sister, who is able to take care of herself. When her mother tries to limit her autonomy and implies Via is not old enough to travel by the underground on her own, Via protests strongly, though she might have liked more care from her parents. But she does not want to have her autonomy restricted, because it is probably too important and precious for her.

2.2.2.3. Benevolence

Contrary to *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, *Wonder* is more optimistic and as such, depicts more of the positive sides of American culture. Besides stimulation and self-direction, the other value, which is overall the most important one in this book, is benevolence. Benevolence is a value which is expressed by the two minor characters, Jack and Summer, but because along with Auggie they become the biggest heroes, their deeds become crucial in the story. It is their kindness which makes August believe in friendship and makes his school life easier. Both of them decide to befriend August, because they feel sorry for him.

Palacio suggests the significance of benevolence in a form of kindness to be the most fundamental value among people. Because she does not only imply this via Jack and Summer, but repeatedly states it directly through Mr. Browne's precepts or Mr. Tushman's final speech.

"Mr. Browne's September Precept: When given the choice between being right or being kind, choose kind." (p. 48).

"'Children, what I want to impart to you today is an understanding of the value of that simple thing called kindness.' ... 'If everybody in this room made it a rule that wherever you are, whenever you can, you will try to act a little kinder than is necessary – the world really would be a better place.'" (p. 301).

But it is also August, who realizes the value of kindness, because he has discovered how life is tough without the kindness of others. Therefore, whatever he does, he tries to consider other people's feelings. For example, making sure his mum invites everybody from his class for his birthday party, giving the opportunity to everybody from his school to sit at his table at the lunchtime, or not being mean to Julian even though Julian bullies him. From this, a strong tradition of Christianity in the American society may be assumed, because it has been never stated that Auggie's family is religious, nevertheless, he acts according to biblical precepts – *"if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also"* (Matthew 5:39) and *"do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good"* (Romans 12:21).

2.2.2.4. Hedonism, achievement

One of the topics mentioned when describing the interpretation of American culture in *Wonder*, must positively be hedonism. Mainly Jack represents the value of hedonism in this book, for his light-heartedness, but noteworthy is also the depiction of consumerism, being a part of the value of hedonism, in the character of Julian. With hedonism, the value of achievement can be

linked, which is why these two characters have been chosen. They represent hedonism, but at the same time, their perception of hedonism lies in different type of their achievement.

Jack certainly does not belong to the group of people who would be typical consumers, but it is good to compare the embodiment of his hedonism with the embodiment of hedonism in Julian's case. Jack's family is not rich, because his father works as a teacher and his mom works as a social worker. Sometimes, Jack is a bit jealous to Auggie, who has the newest pieces of technology of different kind, he can buy everything he wants to decorate his room etc. Nevertheless, Jack does not lose his optimism and he does not hold grudge, which may be influenced by the fact that Auggie does not show off. Jack is very proud of something he has done, as for example the sleigh he repaired. He enjoys every small thing he either accomplishes or experiences – a ride on his repaired sleigh, a wet-sock fight during the nature retreat, the science project.

On the other hand, Julian is a different matter. His parents are rich and he loves showing his wealth off by throwing massive parties or boasting with his possessions. He does not appreciate the experiences he might have got, he does not really appreciate the small things in his life, he just wants to validate his social status. His social status and wealth seem to be his biggest achievements and he does not really strive for anything else, except for humiliating August.

From this comparison, it may be assumed that the hedonism in Palacio's interpretation emerges from two types of achievements – he first is one's personal achievement and the second is one's social status and wealth. Palacio implies that the first one, represented by Jack, has a bigger value, because trying hard is generally praised high in the American society, which is proven by how many friends Jack has, how August and his family and Mr. Tushman like him and how his parents are proud of him.

2.2.3. Conclusion

Even though Palacio's novel is in comparison to *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* a lighter reading, in many aspects, they are very different from each other. They are meant for readers of different age-groups, they have different plots and, to some extent, they depict different values being important in American culture. But on the other hand, they are in a way quite similar, as they deal with the topic of being different, they are meant for younger readers and furthermore, they agree on the most important value in the US, which appears to be conformity.

Palacio, as well as Chbosky, describes conformity as something, which makes the coexistence with other members of a society easier and almost vital, because when a character deviates from the majority of society, it means a bad consequence for them.

Palacio's interpretation is also different, because, instead of heroes, she pays attention to more values than Chbosky. She also omits the value of tradition as important and rather focuses on the values of self-direction and stimulation; benevolence, which is for her the most important value of all; and hedonism, which she links to the value of achievement and divides it into two types of hedonism. Nevertheless, all in all, it may be concluded that Schwartz' values may be applied on Palacio's novel as well.

2.3.Lesson Plans

In this subchapter, the author of this thesis presents a possible employment of the findings from the analysis in a form of lesson plans. Of course, the books are always used as means of teaching American culture, and both of the lesson plans prepared centre around carefully chosen extracts. In this place, general information of the lesson plans is presented and the actual lesson plans are enclosed in Appendices. The lesson plans are lined up in the order the books have been analysed – therefore, the first comes the lesson plan for *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, and the lesson plan for *Wonder* follows next.

2.3.1. Lesson Plan I. – The Perks of Being a Wallflower⁴⁵

When using this book in ELT, the author of this thesis considers it to be an appropriate means for imparting some features of American culture on learners. Especially, it is American conformity and the topic of homosexuality. This topic can be classified as a part of cross-curricular topic *Multicultural Education* in lessons of English for 9th grades (ISCED2) or corresponding grades at grammar schools. It also infringes with the cross-curricular topic *Personality and Social Education*.

It should help teachers to teach learners about the diversity in culture, teach them to find a satisfaction in one's own life through tolerance and based on the good relationships to themselves and other people as well, and to build positive interpersonal relationships. It enables the learners to discover features of American society which have not been so much discussed.

The 9th grade has been chosen not because of the language difficulties, but merely because of the topic, which is not easy for teenagers to take in, and because of the selected methods.

⁴⁵ For the lesson plan, see Appendix 1.

2.3.2. Lesson Plan II. - Wonder⁴⁶

It has been stated before that *Wonder* is lighter in the topic and also in the rendition. Therefore, it can be used with younger learners, specifically at the 7th grade of lower secondary school (ISCED2) or at the corresponding grade of grammar school. The topic, which was chosen to be used in connection with American culture, is benevolence in order to present a positive topic and shed a light of positivity on American culture. Again, teaching about American benevolence may be a part of the cross-curricular topic *Multicultural Education and Personality and Social Education*. It can also be engaged in the facultative subject of *Ethics*.

Although, thanks to its topic, the excerpt can be used with younger learners, it cannot be used at the 6th grade, because the level of language used is quite challenging.

⁴⁶ For the lesson plan, see Appendix 3.

Conclusion

Although the word *culture* does not have a unified definition, the author of this thesis came down to an appropriate definition of this term. It included other terms, like values and heroes, which guided this thesis into a good direction and proved to be accurate and very useful, when considering a culture. The presented definition states that the values are the core of the culture and one of the aims of this thesis has been to examine, whether American culture is based on them as well, and if so, what are the most important values in the US. The categorization of values created by American social-psychologist Shalom Schwartz was significantly beneficially employed throughout the course of the thesis. This categorization has been proven accurate when the author of the present thesis discovered all of them in the description of American culture by many specialists and furthermore, in the authentic depiction of American culture in the works of contemporary American authors.

It has been verified that the books which were analysed – *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* and *Wonder* – were a good choice as they met the author's expectations and gave her an authentic depiction of American values and therefore American culture as well. Both of them presented the importance of different values with an exception of the value of conformism, which seems to be equally important for both of the selected authors.

The author of this thesis managed to apply the particularities of the two books and prepare two employable lesson plans for learners of different ages and in agreement with the Czech Framework Educational Programme. The lesson plans take into consideration the differences between the two age groups of learners and increase the effectivity of teaching culture through literature by varying the teaching methods.

One of the biggest achievements of this thesis lies in the fact that it succeeded to prove the assumption that literature is an important part of teaching and learning languages in order to develop individual's personality and, furthermore, imparting cultural knowledge intuitively on readers and learners.

The other biggest achievement is the positive depiction of American culture, which shows the real face of Americans and their national character. Even though there are many negative phenomena when talking about American culture, they are all based on positive attitudes which is a very important thing to be realized.

List of Abbreviations

ELT = English Language Teaching

FLT = Foreign Language Teaching

TFD = The Free Dictionary (www.thefreedictionary.com)

UK = the United Kingdom

US = the United States

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List of Appendices:

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3. Appendix 3: Lesson Plan II – Wonder
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Appendix 1: Lesson Plan I. – The Perks of Being a Wallflower

Topic: American Culture, Conformity, Homosexuality

Teaching Aims:

- learner finds supporting statements for the definition of conformism in the excerpt
- learner is willing to share his opinion concerning the given topic

Terms and concepts: conformity, homosexuality, American culture, misconception, tolerance

Methods:

- clustering
- work with text
- roleplay
 - based on the method of diamond
- pairwork, individual work

Teaching aids: handouts with the text, black-board, chalk

Structure of lesson

Clustering – associations of American multiculturalism – 6 mins

- Teacher asks learners what American multiculturalism means, which cultures are to be found there
- Learners give their ideas and either write it on the board themselves or the teacher does it

Pre-teaching – the word conformity – 4 mins

- Teacher explains the term, gives examples of conformity
- Learners take notes

Work with the text – 10 mins

- Learners work individually, silent reading
- Learners make notes if they do not understand any words
- Learners look for supporting statements to support the definition of conformism the teacher gave them

The method of diamond (Černý, 2016) – 15 mins

- Learners follow the instructions of the teacher which are written on the board
 - Teacher should give as many examples as possible to make it easier
- Learners work in pairs and make a structure of following points (teacher's assistance might be needed):
 1. One word expressing the topic of the text
 2. Two words expressing the features of the topic
 3. Three words expressing what the topic does, what happens to it (verbs)
 4. Four words – a sentence about the topic (function words do not count)
 5. Four words – a sentence about the topic (function words do not count)
 6. Three words expressing the features of the topic

7. Two words expressing the features of the topic and learners attitude towards it
8. One word expressing a depiction (reflection) or metaphor for the topic

Role play – 8 mins

- Learners prepare and play in pairs or groups of three a talk show, where one of them is an interviewer and the other is an expert on conformity and homosexuality
- Learners can use the notes they have from the diamond method
- The expert explains following questions:
 - What are the component parts American multiculturalism?
 - What is good and what is bad on conformism?
 - Why does this topic matter?
- Some groups can perform their talk show in front of the class

Summary – 2 mins

- Teacher summarizes the main terms and the basic knowledge of the lesson
- Teacher stresses out the most important facts
- Teacher asks learners to explain certain terms – multiculturalism, conformity, tolerance

Classroom English:

- Today we will talk about American culture.
- What cultures form American culture?
- Come to the board and write it.
- Share your ideas.
- Today, the most important word is conformity.
- It means behaviour according to socially accepted standards, rules, customs, laws; obedience.
- Is this word positive or negative for you?
- Read this text silently.
- Write a structure according to these instructions.
- Work in pairs.
- Imagine you are in a talk show, one of you is a host, the other is an expert on conformity and homosexuality.
- Prepare answers for following questions.
- Does anybody want to perform their role play?
- Can you define the word multiculturalism?

Appendix 2: Extract I. – The Perks of Being a Wallflower

CHBOSKY, Stephen. *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*. 14. Aufl. London: Pocket, 2009. ISBN 9781847394071. (pp. 39-40)

¹When I got out of the bathroom, I heard a noise in the room where we left our coats. I opened the door and I saw Patrick kissing Brad. It was a stolen type of kissing. They heard me in the door and turned around. Patrick spoke first.

“Is that you, Charlie?”

⁵“Sam’s making me a milkshake.”

“Who is this kid?” Brad just looked real nervous and not in the Bob way.

“He’s a friend of mine. Relax.”

Patrick then took me out of the room and closed the door. He put his hands on both my shoulders and looked me straight in the eye.

¹⁰“Brad doesn’t want people to know.”

“Why?”

“Because he’s scared.”

.....

(pp. 161-162)

On Thursday, something really terrible happened.

I was sitting alone in the cafeteria, eating salisbury steak, when I saw Patrick walk up to Brad, who ¹⁵was sitting with his football buddies, and I saw Brad ignore him like he did at the locker. And I saw Patrick get really upset, but Brad still ignored him. Then I saw Patrick say something, and he looked pretty angry as he turned to walk away. Brad sat still for a second, then he turned around. And then I heard it. It was just loud enough for a few tables to hear. The thing that Brad yelled at Patrick.

²⁰“Faggot!”

Brad’s football buddies start laughing. A few tables got quiet as Patrick turned around. He was mad as hell. I’m not kidding. He stormed up to Brad’s table and said,

“What did you call me?”

God, he was mad. I’d never seen Patrick like that before.

²⁵Brad sat quiet for a second, but his buddies kept egging him on by pushing his shoulders. Brad looked up at Patrick and said softer and meaner than the last time,

“I called you a faggot.”

Appendix 3: Lesson Plan II. – Wonder

Topic: American culture, Benevolence, Solidarity

Teaching Aims:

- To identify the topic of the lesson based on the excerpt
- To create an advertisement for the newly learned concept

Terms and concepts: American culture, multiculturalism, benevolence, kindness

Methods:

- Discussion – sharing opinions
- Work with text
- Creative project work

Teaching aids: handouts with the excerpt, crayons, papers, old magazines (for pictures)

Structure of the lesson

Sharing opinions – 10 mins

- Learners are asked to imagine the best thing which could happen to the world
- Learners share their ideas about American culture
- At the end, the teacher sums up the discussion and can add a few facts about American culture

Work with the text – 15 mins

- Learners read the excerpt aloud
- Teacher should help the learners to drill pronunciation, if necessary
- Teacher asks them what they think the topic of this lesson is (if somebody says American culture, teacher should ask which aspect of it)
- Teacher explains the words benevolence and kindness
- Teacher encourages the learners to share their favourite part of the text (explains the word quote)

Creative project work – 13 mins

- Learners are asked to make a project – an advertisement for the concept of benevolence
- Learners work individually or in pairs
- Learners are encouraged to be as creative as possible (using pictures from magazines, drawing, finding the best slogans)
- If needed, finishing of the project can be assigned as a homework

Summary – 2 mins

- Teacher asks learners for the definition of the word benevolence
- Teacher asks learners why they think benevolence and kindness is important
- Teacher asks learners who is kind to them

Next lesson – teacher shows the projects to learners and they can vote for the best project in their class.

Classroom English:

- Imagine the best things that could happen to the world. What are they?
- Tell us.
- What belongs to American culture?
- Americans are independent – they like their democracy.
- Read the text aloud.
- Repeat after me: encouragement.
- What is the topic of the lesson?
- The book is about a boy with unusual face and children are not nice to him.
- Benevolence means helping or being kind to others.
- What is your favourite sentence or part from the text? It's called a quote.
- You can work alone or in a pair.
- Prepare an advertisement on benevolence.
- Use these magazines and crayons.
- Stop working, you can finish it at home.
- Who can tell me what word benevolence means?
- Why is kindness important?
- Who is kind to you?
- Bring your finished projects next time.

Appendix 4: Extract II. – Wonder

PALACIO, R.J. *Wonder*. Ed. en anglais. London: Corgi, 2013. ISBN 9780552565974. (p. 279)

¹“Mom? Am I always going to have to worry about jerks like that?” I asked. “Like when I grow up, is it always going to be like this?”

She didn’t answer right away, but took my plate and glass and put them in the sink and rinsed them with water,

⁵“There are always going to be jerks in the world, Auggie,” she said, looking at me. “But I really believe, and Daddy really believes, that there are more good people on this earth than bad people, and the good people watch out for each other and take care of each other. Just like Jack was there for you. And Amos. And those other kids.”

“Oh yeah, Miles and Henry,” I answered. “They were awesome, too. It’s weird because Miles and ¹⁰Henry haven’t even really been very nice to me at all during the year.”

“Sometimes people surprise us,” she said, rubbing the top my head.

“I guess.”

.....
(pp. 300-301)

He paused and took off his reading glasses again.

“It glimmered in their kindness to him,” he repeated, smiling.

¹⁵“Such a simple thing, kindness. Such a simple thing. A nice word of encouragement given when needed. An act of friendship. A passing smile.”

He closed the book, put it down, and leaned forward to the podium.

“Children, what I want to impart to you today is an understanding of the value of that simple thing called kindness. And that’s all I want to leave you with today. I know I’m kind of infamous ²⁰for my...um...verbosity...”

Here everybody laughed again. I guess he knew he was known for his long speeches.

“... but what I want you, my students, to take away from your middle-school experience,” he continued, “is the sure knowledge that, in the future you make for yourselves, anything is possible. If every single person in this room made it a rule that wherever you are, whenever you can, you ²⁵will try to act a little kinder than is necessary – the world really would be a better place. And if you do this, if you act just a little kinder than is necessary, someone else, somewhere, someday, may recognize in you, in every single one of you, the face of God.”

Anotace

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Rok obhajoby:	2017

Název práce:	Percepce americké kultury v dílech současných amerických autorů a její využití v hodinách anglického jazyka
Název v angličtině:	Perception of American Culture in the Works of Contemporary American Authors and Its Employment in the English Language Teaching
Anotace práce:	Cílem práce je popsat percepci americké kultury v dílech dvou současných amerických autorů – Stephen Chbosky a R. J. Palacio. Dalším cílem je aplikovat zjištěné poznatky do výuky anglického jazyka v rámci multikulturní výchovy. Práce dokazuje, že literatura je jeden z nejvhodnějších nástrojů pro výuku kulturních reálií.
Klíčová slova:	kultura, americká kultura, literatura, ELT, multikulturalismus, obsahová analýza
Anotace v angličtině:	The aim of this thesis is to describe the perception of American culture in the works of two contemporary American authors – Stephen Chbosky and R. J. Palcio. Then, another aim is to apply the outcomes into the English Language Teaching as a part of cross-curricular topic Multicultural Education. The thesis proves that literatur i sone of the best means of teaching cultural facts.
Klíčová slova v angličtině:	culture, American culture, literature, ELT, multiculturalism, content analysis

Přílohy vázané v práci:	Lesson Plan I. – The Perks of Being a Wallflower Extract I. – The Perks of Being a Wallflower Lesson plan II. - Wonder Extract II. - Wonder
Rozsah práce:	48 stran
Jazyk práce:	Angličtina

Resumé

V této diplomové práci se autorka pokusila uchopit americkou kulturu a její pojetí v dílech dvou současných amerických spisovatelů a dále je využít ve výchově k multikulturalismu ve výuce anglického jazyka. Aby bylo možno popsat americkou kulturu a její znaky, je nezbytné uchopit teoreticky téma kultury a pojmy s ní spojenými. Autorka se zejména věnuje hodnotám a hrdinům, coby nejdůležitějším obecným znakům kultur. Dále se autorka snaží aplikovat zjištěné teoretické poznatky při popisu americké kultury. Cílem diplomové práce je pak analyzovat knihy dvou amerických spisovatelů a prezentovat způsob využití jejich děl v hodinách anglického jazyka.