University of Hradec Králové
Faculty of Education

Diploma Thesis

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Univerzita Hradec Králové
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Motiv proměny osobnosti v kontextu 2. světové války v literatuře pro děti a mládež

Diplomová práce

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Studijní program: N0114A300053 Učitelství pro střední školy

Studijní obor: Učitelství pro střední školy– Anglický jazyk a literatura
Učitelství pro střední školy– Německý jazyk a literatura

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Hradec Králové 2024

University of Hradec Králové
Faculty of Education
Department of English Language and Literature

The Motif of Personality Transformation in the Context of the Second World War in Literature for Children and Young Adults

Diploma Thesis

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Field of Study: Specialization in English Language and Literature
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Hradec Králové 2024

Univerzita Hradec Králové
Pedagogická fakulta

Zadání diplomové práce

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Studijní obor:	Anglický jazyk a literatura, Německý jazyk a literatura
Název diplomové práce:	**Motiv proměny osobnosti v kontextu 2. světové války v literatuře pro děti a mládež**
Název diplomové práce AJ:	The Motif of Personality Transformation in the Context of the Second World War in Literature for Children and Young Adults

Cíl, metody, literatura, předpoklady:

Práce bude pojednávat o vybraných románech pro děti a mládež s motivem proměny osobnosti v kontextu 2. světové války. Jednotícími prvky románů jsou válečné téma, evropská půda a samozřejmě dětští protagonisté. Společným jmenovatelem je také fakt, že všichni autoři zmiňovaných děl jsou anglicky píšící spisovatelé. Diplomová práce bude rozdělena na teoretickou a teoreticko-analytickou část. V teoretické části autorka přiblíží pojmy jako literatura pro děti a mládež, osobnost a bude se věnovat otázce změny osobnosti jako sociálnímu fenoménu. Autorka se bude věnovat také typickým tématům v literatuře pro děti a mládež v kontextu 2. světové války a zmíní, jaké žánry se v souvislosti s touto tematikou objevují. Teoreticko-analytická část bude zaměřena především na představení autorů vybraných románů a analýzu textu románů. Proměna osobnosti bude zkoumána především pomocí charakteristiky protagonistů a její komparace. Součástí práce budou úryvky děl v originále, které mají demonstrativní účel.

BOYNE, John. *The Boy at the Top of the Mountain*. 2. edition. Penguin Random House UK, 2016. ISBN 978-0-552-57350-4.

BRADLEY, Kimberly Brubaker. *The War I Finally Won*. Text Publishing, 2017. ISBN 9781911231165.

BUČKOVÁ, Tamara. *Interkulturní didaktika cizojazyčné literatury: kontexty a perspektivy se zaměřením na německy psanou literaturu pro děti a mládež a zřetelem k tématu 2. světové války.* Praha: Univerzita Karlova, Pedagogická fakulta, 2020. ISBN 978-80-7603-183-8.

ČEŇKOVÁ, Jana. *Válečné dětství a mládí (1939-1945) v literatuře a publicistice*. Univerzita Karlova: Karolinum, 2016. Str. 100-126. ISBN 978-80-246–3413-5.

KERR, Judith. *When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit*. HarperCollins Children's Books, 2008. ISBN 9780007274772.

REYNOLDS, Kimberley, ed. *Modern children´s literature: an introduction*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. ISBN 1-4039-1612-8.

Zadávající pracoviště:	Katedra anglického jazyka a literatury, Pedagogická fakulta
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Datum zadání závěrečné práce: 5.12.2018

Odevzdáním této diplomové práce na téma Motiv proměny osobnosti v kontextu 2. světové války v literatuře pro děti a mládež potvrzuji, že jsem ji vypracovala pod vedením vedoucí práce samostatně za použití v práci uvedených pramenů a literatury. Dále potvrzuji, že tato práce nebyla využita k získání jiného nebo stejného titulu.

V Hradci Králové dne _____ _____

Bc. Eliška Kramolišová

Tímto bych ráda poděkovala paní Mgr. Heleně Polehlové, Ph.D. za odborné a svědomité vedení mé diplomové práce, a všechny její rady. Velmi si cením jejího přívětivého přístupu ke studentům nejen při její inspirativní výuce, ale i mimo ni. Dále děkuji svým rodičům a bratrovi za podporu při studiu, a svým přátelům za to, že jim ani v náročných životních okamžicích nechybí humor.

Anotace

KRAMOLIŠOVÁ, Eliška. *Motiv proměny osobnosti v kontextu 2. světové války v literatuře pro děti a mládež*. Diplomová práce. Hradec Králové: Pedagogická fakulta Univerzity Hradec Králové, 2024.

Tato diplomová práce pojednává o šesti vybraných románech pro děti a mládež s motivem proměny osobnosti v kontextu 2. světové války. Vybranými díly jsou *The Boy at the Top of the Mountain* od Johna Boyna, *When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit* od Judith Kerr, *Wave me Goodbye* od Jacqueline Wilson, *The War I Finally Won* od Kimberly Brubaker Bradley, *Goodnight Mister Tom* od Michelle Magorian a *Carrie´s War* od Niny Bawden. Společnými jednotícími prvky románů jsou zde válečné téma, evropská půda, proměna osobnosti postav, a dětští protagonisté. Předkládaná práce je rozdělena na teoretickou a teoreticko-analytickou část. V teoretické části autorka přibližuje pojmy jako jsou literatura pro děti a mládež, osobnost, a věnuje se historickému kontextu děl. Nastiňuje také typická témata v literatuře pro děti a mládež v kontextu 2. světové války, a zmiňuje důležité zástupce autorů, kteří se tímto tématem zabývají. Teoreticko-analytická část je zaměřena především na představení vybraných románů a jejich autorů, a analýzu textů výše zmíněných děl s ohledem na změnu osobnosti. Součástí práce jsou úryvky děl, které mají demonstrativní účel.

Klíčová slova: literatura pro děti a mládež, osobnost, dospívání, změna, 2. světová válka, evakuace

Abstract

KRAMOLIŠOVÁ, Eliška. *Motiv proměny osobnosti v kontextu 2. světové války v literatuře pro děti a mládež*. Diplomová práce. Hradec Králové: Pedagogická fakulta Univerzity Hradec Králové, 2024.

The presented thesis discusses six selected novels for children and young adults with the motif of personality transformation in the context of the World War II. The selected books are *The Boy at the Top of the Mountain* by John Boyne, *When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit* by Judith Kerr, *Wave me Goodbye* by Jacqueline Wilson, *The War I Finally Won* by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley, *Goodnight Mister Tom* by Michelle Magorian, and *Carrie's War* by Nina Bawden. The common features of these novels are the pre-war and war theme, the setting on European soil, development of the characters´ personalities, and the child protagonists. The thesis is divided into a theoretical and a theoretical-analytical part. In the theoretical part, the author introduces key terms such as literature for children and youth, and human personality. She also discusses the historical context of the works, the focal point being evacuation or relocation. She outlines typical themes in literature for children and youth in the context of World War II and mentions some of the most significant works with this theme, as well as briefly introduces the English-writing authors who wrote these works. The theoretical-analytical part is mainly focused on the introduction of the authors of the novels and the analysis of the texts of the above-mentioned books regarding the personality transformation. The thesis includes excerpts from the books, which have a demonstrative purpose.

KEYWORDS

literature for children and young adults, personality, maturing, transformation, World War II, evacuation

Rozšířený abstrakt v českém jazyce

Diplomová práce s názvem *Motiv proměny osobnosti v kontextu 2. světové války v literatuře pro děti a mládež* se zabývá šesti vybranými romány pro děti a mládež s pozadím druhé světové války. Vybranými díly jsou *The Boy at the Top of the Mountain* od Johna Boyna, *When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit* od Judith Kerr, *Wave me Goodbye* od Jacqueline Wilson, *The War I Finally Won* od Kimberly Brubaker Bradley, *Goodnight Mister Tom* od Michelle Magorian a *Carrie´s War* od Niny Bawden. Jednotící prvky těchto románů jsou dětští protagonisté, válka, a území, kde se děj odehrává. V tomto případě jde o evropskou půdu (Německo, Francie, Velká Británie). Pro tuto práci jsou důležité klíčové pojmy jako evakuace, osobnost, dospívání a válka.

Jedním z cílů práce je prozkoumat literaturu pro děti a mládež s tématem, které by mohlo být vzhledem k cílové skupině považováno za neobvyklé. Dále si práce klade za cíl krátce představit autory, kteří píší o druhé světové válce originálním a dojemným způsobem, čímž buď reflektují vlastní zážitky z jejich válečného dětství, nebo se snaží oživit kolektivní vzpomínku na největší válečný konflikt v historii. Hlavním cílem práce je pak prostudovat vybrané romány a provést analýzu textů. Na základě této analýzy by mělo vyplynout, zda a jak se mění osobnost postav a co tuto proměnu způsobilo.

Aby byly tyto cíle co nejdůsledněji dosaženy, je práce rozčleněna na teoretickou a teoreticko-analytickou část. V první kapitole teoretické části přibližuje autorka pojem "literatura pro děti a mládež" a věnuje se krátce historii publikace literatury pro děti a mládež v anglickém jazyce. Kapitola taktéž informuje čtenáře o problematice této literatury s tématem druhé světové války. Druhá kapitola zmiňuje osud dětí a mladistvých za druhé světové války, konkrétně popisuje nejen britský, ale taktéž německý systém evakuace dětí do bezpečí. Ve třetí kapitole práce se autorka snaží nastínit, co se rozumí pod pojmem „osobnost" a věnuje se také teorii jejího rozvoje. Teoreticko-analytická část je středobodem této diplomové práce. Je zaměřena především na představení autorů vybraných děl, a dochází zde k analýze románů a bližšímu zkoumání textů v souvislosti se změnou osobnosti jednotlivých postav.

Z vypracované analýzy zmíněných románů vyplynulo, že ačkoliv se každá z postav vyvíjí jinak vlivem odlišných okolností, dají se u dětských protagonistů najít jednotící prvky proměny osobnosti. Oblasti, u kterých by se dalo mluvit o proměně osobnosti, jsou například změna vnímání vlastní identity, rozvoj kompetencí, schopnost sebereflexe a reflexe vlastních

činů, přizpůsobivost, a v neposlední řadě také rozvoj empatie a zodpovědnosti. Překvapující by pro čtenáře mohlo být zjištění, že vykreslení okolnostmi vynucené změny prostředí není ve vybraných knihách zcela negativní, ale nabízí i pohled na pozitivní aspekty. Co se týče proměn osobnosti, odkryla analýza textů několik hlavních faktorů, které měly na osobnost protagonistů vliv. Jako nejdůležitější faktor, který ve změně osobnosti hraje největší roli, se bez pochyby jeví bezpečné rodinné zázemí či jeho absence. Jako další faktor důležitý pro proměnu osobnosti byl identifikován pocit sounáležitosti. V neposlední řadě je v některých dílech patrný i vliv pocitu viny.

Prohlášení

Prohlašuji, že diplomová práce je uložena v souladu s rektorským výnosem č. 13/2022 (Řád pro nakládání s bakalářskými, diplomovými, rigorózními, dizertačními a habilitačními pracemi na UHK).

Datum: …… Podpis studenta: ……

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Introduction

The inspiration behind my choice of this topic lies in my bachelor thesis. My previous research gave me the opportunity to dive deep into the phenomena of children´s literature and its magic. It made me critically think about the meaning of such literature and ask myself the questions "Why is children´s literature so important? What does it have to offer?". If we step aside from the more obvious answers discussing the development of imagination, creativity, and language competencies, we can find many other, just as important, merits of children´s literature. To name a few, the books convey important moral and ethical lessons made accessible and understandable for young readers. These lessons can as well serve as gentle reminders for adults of core values like empathy, kindness, and the importance of making the right decisions. Literature also offers essential cultural and social insights. In my humble opinion, children´s literature is just as important to adults as to its primary readers. The messages it conveys are powerful and often hide meanings, which are not yet apparent to children, unveiling many layers of viewpoints on the concept of childhood in general, and help us adults reflect on our own upbringing and our perception of the world. As we explore the stories and their impact on our perception of childhood, it becomes evident that understanding the process of personality change in the characters holds a special significance. With the focus on the background of the Second World War, these motifs of personality transformation serve as reflections of resilience, adaptability, empathy, and independence. Investigating such complex ideas can only add to our appreciation of these literary works and allows us to understand the connection between historical events and humanity.

The focus of the thesis are six selected novels with the motif of personality change in the context of the Second World War. These novels are exclusively works of English-writing authors. One of the objectives of the thesis is to explore literature for children and young readers with a topic that could be considered unusual, considering the target audience. Another objective is to point out the importance of such literature. Furthermore, the thesis aims to introduce the authors who write about the Second World War in an original, touching way. The main objective of the thesis is to study the selected novels and conduct an analysis of the texts in order to find out, if and how the characters´ personality changes and what caused the transformation.

To reach the objectives of the thesis, the thesis is divided into a theoretical and theoretical-analytical part. The theoretical part is further divided into 3 chapters. The first chapter focuses on the description of the umbrella term "literature for children and young readers" and outlines the problematic issues connected to its definition. In two subchapters, history of English publishing of the children´s literature and the topic of the Second World War are also briefly discussed. The second chapter offers an insight into wartime childhood and informs the reader about different takes on evacuation of children and youth from areas with a high risk of air raids. In the third chapter, the term "personality" is briefly explained, and the term "personality transformation" is discussed. The theoretical-analytical part of the thesis comprises of the analyses of the selected novels with regard to personality changes, and their subsequent comparison.

I. Theoretical part

1. Literature for children and young adults

It is not simple to define literature for children and youth. Although it could be assumed that such literature is only the one written for the intended children's readers, the reality is more complex than that. We could mention such literature, which was not primarily meant for children, but it was adopted by them. The clear definition of literature for children and youth also faces difficulties connected to setting a clear age frame of the readers. How do we say with all certainty who is a child and who is an adult? Where do we draw the line if every human matures in a different pace? This is why the general conclusion in many publications on literary criticism remains that the children´s literature cannot be precisely defined. In the publication *Essentials of children´s literature* (Lynch-Brown, Tomlinson, Short; 2014), the authors suggest that children´s books could be classified as such according to the topic and its relevance and interest to children. However, if we consider the Second World War, does it seem like a typical topic of children´ s literature? Probably not. The manner in which the works are written can be a great deciding factor. For instance, the used lexis is taken into consideration. In the publication *Understanding Children´s Literature* (1999) Karín Lesnik-Oberstein discusses what is children´s literature and what is childhood. She points out that the definitions of childhood were different throughout history and also differ with regard to culture.

1.1 Brief history of publishing for children in English

Before the invention of printing press, children's stories and myths were passed from generation to generation orally. Written children´s literature started to get published in the 17th century as a teaching tool. Some of the works were written by religious dissenters, starting with the Bohemian educational reformer John Amos Comenius and his *Orbis Sensualium Pictus*. The work was available in English just one year after the publishing of the German original in 1658. However, the target audience of such literature were mainly prepubescent children, therefore those who could already read often shared texts with adults. Another example of educational, religious work *A Token for Children* originated in England and was written by James Janeway. Those works remained in print for long periods, because few new texts for children were being produced (Reynolds, 2011, p. 6-30).

In the 18th century, in the context of Enlightenment, producing children´s literature was still seen as means of education. The main goal was to raise them to become valuable citizens.

The children´s literature market expanded because the child population began to grow. Not only did the birth-rate increase, but also more children were surviving. Therefore, education became a more pressing issue (Kinnell, 1995). Entertainment was not a priority nor a goal until the 19th century, with writers such as Lewis Carroll, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Washington Irwing. That is also the time, when printing children´s literature became highly profitable for publishers. In the 20th century, the most important phenomenon would be the development of teen literary culture. The first books written for teenagers first started to appear on the market in the United States after the publishing of *The Catcher in the Rye* by J. D. Salinger. Worth mentioning is also the fact, that in mid-20th century, the background of the characters in literature started to be challenged – not all the characters were growing up in white, middle-class, heterosexual families anymore. Importance of diversity display in children´s literature was something people started to recognize (Reynolds, 2011, p. 6-30).

The rise of new media and digitalisation has largely influenced contemporary children´s literature, and its forms and narrative techniques. Written materials are being adapted for television and radio, and they are being recorded on tapes and CD´s (Reynolds, 2011, p. 6-30). In the present day, the wide variety of forms and formats make literature even more accessible to those children who do not find reading as attractive as before.

1.2 The topic of the Second World War in literature for children and young adults

There is no wonder that the topic of the Second World War appears not only in adult literature but also remains a topic in literature for children and youth, since it has been the biggest and most devastating military conflict in history. It has understandably been written about by several generations (Kramolišová, 2022, p. 11). The authors surviving the war feel the need to articulate their own feelings and experiences from growing up during the Second World War in their works. Certainly, it could be seen as a coping mechanism or, as Lathey (1999, p. 129) suggests, a form of therapy. Many writers return to the sources of pain in their earlier life, like exile or evacuation. The autobiographical works mirror their greatest fears and experience, which played such a major role in the development of their personal identity (Lathey, 1999, p. 129).

However, the portrayal of war in literature is not only common for authors who had been through it as children. There are also such authors who feel the need to comment on the conflict, even though they did not experience it themselves. The urge to return to the topic of war and talk about the experience of children still persists, maybe because of the concern

that it might otherwise be forgotten. In recent decades, there has been a growing body of such literature that offers credible insight into these events (Kramolišová, 2022, p. 11).

The question arises, whether the topic of war has a place in children´s literature, for it is considered a body of literature that poses as innocent and offers escape from the harsh realities of life. One might object that children should be shielded from depictions of such suffering and inhumanity. However, it must not be forgotten children have been an integral part of all military (and other) conflicts throughout history. Why should they be shielded from reading about them? Not only have children been victims of such conflicts in the past and present, but they had also played an active role in wars: serving in armies, or doing their part in wartime propaganda (Lathey, 2005, p. 58-59). If children cannot be protected from these horrors in real life, surely the topic is relevant in children´s literature as well.

The first original children's literature with the topic of the Second World War was being written in the 1960s. It was the era when previously taboo subjects were beginning to be discussed also in literature intended for children´s audience, the themes being growing up in broken or dysfunctional families, illness and death, as well as war and holocaust (Townsend, 1995, p. 171-172). As the topic shifts to problems of wartime and post-war childhood, themes such as exile, evacuation, and arrival in a new home occur. Similarly, depictions of social deprivation, huge unemployment, or bombing, are not uncommon, especially in works set in Germany. The theme of friendship and familial relationships, and their impact on the perception of one´s childhood in these dark times, can be found very often (Kramolišová, 2022, p. 13). One of the first prominent fictions of children´s literature with the Second World War background by a British author was *The Silver Sword* (1956). In this book, Ian Serraillier describes an effort of three Polish children to find their parents taken away by Germans. Another successful work *The Little Fishes* (1967), written by an English writing Danish author, is set in Italy, and follows a story of children travelling through the war-torn country. From the books which feature the home front *Carrie´s War* (1973) by Nina Bawden and *Goodnight Mister Tom* (1981) by Michelle Magorian should be mentioned, for they are the works that still remain hugely popular to this day (Townsend, 1995, p. 198-201). The Irish author John Boyne currently belongs to the most acknowledged contemporary authors, recognized not only for his touching book *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* (2006). American authors did not turn away from the topic of the Second World War either, however, the works are set on European soil. Several books can be named: *The Upstairs Room* (1972) by Johanna Reiss, depicting a wartime childhood in Holland; Aranka Siegal´s

Upon the Head of the Goat (1981), an autobiographical story of a Hungarian Jewish family; or the Newbery Medal winner *Number the Stars* (1989) by Lois Lowry, in which a 10-year-old girl helps a Jewish family escape from occupied Denmark (Townsend, 1995, p. 198-201).

2. Wartime childhood

As previously mentioned, children were a part of the war as much as the adult population. Meanwhile during the First World War, the percentage of killed civilians was 5 percent of all casualties, the percentage of civilian deaths between 1939 – 1945 was 66 percent. So many of these innocent people who lost their lives during the war were children. For instance, in Poland as many as one third of the murdered were children (Bourke, 2001, p. 2-3). Children were affected in many ways during the war. They had to endure hunger and supply shortage, loss of loved ones, and evacuation, which meant separation from their families.

2.1 British government evacuation scheme

The first significant evacuation on the British Isles occurred already in 1938, before the war was declared. Those were 4000 physically handicapped children from London, who were evacuated to the countryside. The government evacuation scheme that followed was codenamed "Pied Piper", after a German folktale figure (Minx, 2016, p. 9). The mass evacuation of civilians from the large cities across the country began in September 1939 with the activation of the "Clean-Out Scheme", just two days before Britain formally declared war against Nazi Germany. In two weeks, nearly 3.5 million evacuees left the large cities (Jackson, 2022, p.18-35). The evacuation required thousands of volunteers. The first stage involved teachers, railway staff, local authority officials, members of Women´s Voluntary Service (WVS), and volunteers hosting the evacuees (Imperial War Museums, online[1]). The evacuation from urban areas to the countryside took place in waves since categories of priority were established by the government. In the first category, school-children were evacuated. In the second category, children under five years of age were relocated, making 80 percent of the total. That was a problem category because they were encouraged to be accompanied by their mothers, making it more difficult for them to find a billet. The third category were the blind, followed by the final category, which were pregnant women. The expectant mothers were usually sent to "neutral areas" in close proximity to medical care. Overall, the majority of the evacuated civilians were children born between 1924 and 1938. In London, the evacuation went very well because the public was prepared in advance. School staff was encouraged planning ahead in case the war came, finding the best routes from schools to train stations. Parents were being instructed on the possibility to evacuate their children and being encouraged to sign their children up. The children were to have their

[1] Accessible from: https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/the-evacuated-children-of-the-second-world-war [cit. 2024-05-19]

luggage ready, and the teachers were to prepare identity labels. In the receiving areas, preparations were also in progress. Local authorities were in contact with householders, finding out how many people would be willing to take in the evacuees if war broke out. Evacuation from the cities was not obligatory, however accepting an evacuee became mandatory with time. The hosts of the evacuated children were supported financially by the government, splitting the costs of the maintenance with the parents (Jackson, 2022, p. 18-35).

2.2 German evacuation scheme ("Kinderlandverschickung")

In Germany, as well as in the German-controlled territories, there was also an effort to get young population to safety, protecting the children from the bombs of the Allies. The evacuations from occupied Belgium and France were conducted since February and May 1941 with consent of Nazi authorities. Unlike German youth, Belgian and French children were not sent to youth camps, but to neutral Switzerland. Another significant difference was the fact that these children were chosen by the Red Cross based on their physical condition, not their race. However, the Belgian evacuation programme was terminated in May 1942, because it was opposed by high-ranking Nazi officials (Sambells, 2021).

By the late 1930´s, German children were also evacuated, on the basis of their health. However, as the resources were running low, the system was reconsidered. The German evacuation scheme, so-called "KLV" (relocation of children to the country), was an initiative to dispatch children from the cities to the areas of the Reich less threatened by air raids. The efforts would not be called "evacuation" by the Nazis, because the true purpose of the children´s relocation was hidden. The authorities would try to disguise it as "short recreational trips". Similarly to the British evacuation, parents were not obligated to send their children away. As already indicated, unlike during the British evacuation, the selection of the German evacuees was gradually more and more racially motivated. Only German children were evacuated, leaving many non-German children behind. Children under 10 years of age were sent to rural areas to stay with host families, sometimes accompanied by their mothers. Older children were relocated to the KLV camps. Those were situated not only in Germany, but throughout the greater Reich. The Nazi regime saw children as an integral part of the Reich and made sure their education was "proper", which meant under the influence of the ideology. About 98 percent of the German youth between the ages 14 and 18 is believed to had been members of the Hitlerjugend in 1939. It was seen as a vital preparation for furthering the legacy of the Reich. That is the reason why children were systematically indoctrinated in the camps, learning about Hitler´s life, singing Nazi propaganda songs,

and having to attend political lectures. Adolescents were often sent to Hitlerjugend camps instead, where they were being trained to join the German military forces. It is estimated that about 200 000 trains had transported approximately 2 million children to nearly 12 000 HJ or KLV camps (Sambells, 2021). As the end of the war drew near, children were being brought back, having to help with the war effort (Newcastle University, online[2]).

[2] Accessible from: https://teaching.ncl.ac.uk/childrenunderthenazis/resources/topics/evacuationchildreningermany/ [cit. 2024-05-21]

3. Personality Transformation

3.1 Definition of personality

To general public with no education in psychology, the term "personality" can be quite ungraspable, since it is a very complex concept. Everyone has a slightly different idea of what personality really is and how exactly to define it. In a lot of cases, definitions are general and not specific enough even in many publications. The reason for this is that personality can be defined and examined by many different approaches. There are various theories and each of them has a slightly different understanding of this concept. Personality theorists continue to contend with the challenge of formulating a definition of personality that is universally embraced. However, according to Maltby, Day, and Macaskill (2002), lay definitions are a useful source of basic information. Some of the definitions suggest that personality is bound to a social context – it includes some sort of evaluation of how people interact with others. That would suggest that our personality is only apparent when not alone, which is rather misleading. Generally, personality is something which should be perceived as an inseparable part of human existence, regardless of the social situation (Maltby, Day, and Macaskill; 2002, p. 3-7).

Gordon Allport, one of the pioneers of personality psychology, popularised the term and defined it as "a dynamic organisation, inside the person, of psychophysical systems that create the person´s characteristic patterns of behaviour, thoughts and feelings" (Maltby, Day, and Macaskill, 2002, p. 5). The word *dynamic* suggests that personality is seen as something which is constantly changing and adapting. We respond to our experience and adjust to new situations and circumstances. While this is only one of the many available definitions, it provides a clear general idea of what a personality is. It could be explained as a psychological construct which influences an individual´s behaviour via the interaction between the body and mind (Maltby, Day, and Macaskill; 2002, p. 3-7). As J. L. Singer states in his publication *Human Personality* that personality "comprises public actions, gestures, statements, and nonverbal expressions as well as the private motives, wishes, beliefs, attitudes, day and night dreams, and styles of organizing information or experiencing emotion that delineate the unique individuality of each person within a given culture" (Singer, 1984, p. 6). If the public idea of personality is taken into consideration again, it may be possibly said that personality could correspond to many people´s idea of human soul.

3.2 Personality transformation

From the perspective of developmental psychology, human personality is shaped by two factors: genetic predisposition and environment. For the development of one´s personality, both internal and external factors are essential. The basis of personality is determined primarily genetically and is formed from the very beginning. However, the genetic predispositions interact with environmental influences, which can modify their effects in various ways. Environmental stimuli do not affect all individuals the same way, their effect is influenced by the genetic information. The perception of the stimuli differs in each individual, as well as in the way how they process the stimuli and what kind of experience they draw from it (Vágnerová, 2010, p. 15, 32).

The stability of personality traits fluctuates in the course of life. In some phases of human life, especially those referred to as transitional, personality traits may change more significantly than in others. They are least stable in childhood, and their stability increases in adulthood. The transformation of one´s personality is dependent on requirements and expectations of the environment. Stability of personality traits is conditioned by the continuity of environmental influences, so the reason for personality transformation may be a profound change in life. Experiencing a stressful or difficult situation can lead to a change of personality traits, or at least to the acceleration or suppression of their external expression (Vágnerová, 2010, p. 127-139). Mikšík (2009, p. 268) suggests that in periods of great social transition, personality is likely to be influenced by the current events. He mentions milestones that impact human lives in a major way, forcing individuals to adapt to new realities of life, such as both world wars, which can be characterised by a significant loss of security.

The environment in which children grow up fundamentally shapes their character. It is no surprise that all experience that children acquire affect their further psychological development, either positively or negatively. That can regulate the development of cognitive abilities as well as the development of personal qualities. The elements that affect psychological development of children are their families, peers, school, and other. These factors help to shape children's personality. Family is naturally the most vital social group, and all its members interact with each other and adapt to each other. The knowledge children gain in their family will influence the way they understand and process new information in the future. This particular social group should serve the child as a source of security and acceptance. However, if that is not the case, the lack of safety can have severe consequences. The acceptance from their peers is another key factor in children´s

development. Children compare each other to their friends, which motivates them to learn new things. If children fail to adapt to the requirements of their peers, they will not be accepted by them, which can negatively affect their personality development (Vágnerová, 2021, p. 11-17). Another important part of children's development is resilience. Children face challenges, traumas, and problems, which potentially pose a threat to their healthy development. By building resilience, they are able to manage stress and uncertainty much better (American Psychological Association, online[3]). As they adopt essential coping mechanisms, children usually depend on adults. They can help children overcome difficult situations and transitions by putting routines in place, assuring a feeling of stability and helping them with managing their emotions (Psychology Today, online[4]).

To conclude this chapter, it should be stated that defining and tracing personality transformation in children can be challenging, since in many publications, the topic of personality change centres around children´s mental development primarily given by developmental stages. In other words, the personality shifts are often attributed to general psychological development of children and are the subject of research of developmental psychology.

[3] Accessible from: https://www.apa.org/topics/resilience/guide-parents-teachers [cit. 2024-06-21]
[4] Accessible from: https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/our-thriving-children/201404/the-kids-are-alright-they-don-t-change [cit. 2024-06-21]

II. Theoretical-analytical part

5. Analyses of selected works

The selection of works with the motif of personality change in literature for children and young adults was based on the following unifying features. The first to mention is time and space setting of the books, since all of them take place on European soil in the timespan of the pre-war era, the Second World War and the post-war era. The pre-war events described in the books like *When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit* can be counted as the context of the Second World War, since it is their direct aftermath. That is the reason why even books that do not describe only the ongoing war were integrated in this thesis. Another unifying feature of these novels were the children's protagonists from the age of seven to teenage years (in two novels, *The Boy at the Top of the Mountain* and *Carrie´s war*, the protagonists reach maturity within the course of the books). A significant unifying feature that shall not be forgotten is the displacement of the characters. All of the protagonists are forced to leave their homes, all of them but one under the circumstances of the war. In the following subchapters, analyses of the personality development in the individual characters of the selected novels are carried out.

5.1 *The Boy at the Top of the Mountain* by John Boyne

John Boyne is one of the most successful contemporary Irish novelists. He received many awards and literary prizes, and his works have been integrated as educative materials in many schools. This Dublin-born writer is one of the writers who did not experience the war and was born decades after it had ended. Although he does not write about his own childhood and his book *The Boy at the Top of the Mountain* is pure fiction, it offers a fascinating viewpoint on war childhood, where moral questions and questions of one´s identity are tested to their limits. While the New York Times bestseller twin-book *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* offers a rather naive and innocent depiction of the events, and the reader is always somewhat conscious of the book being a fiction, the counterpart appropriate for older readers is full of moments which leave the reader needing a moment to process some of the passages. The reason for that is possibly the fact that with *The Boy at the Top of the Mountain*, John Boyne tries to stay more on course with the accuracy of the historical events. He does not shy away from describing moments like the protagonist witnessing the planning of the concentration camps, watching the murder of his own aunt, committing a sexual assault, or preventing the assassination of Adolf Hitler.

The protagonist of the book is Pierrot, a boy of a half-French, half-German origin. His father is a German patriot. He fought in the First World War, which still haunts him in his dreams. He becomes a violent alcoholic and leaves a four-year-old Pierrot and his mother. Later they find out he died in a collision with a train. Pierrot´s mother dies a couple of years later from a respiratory disease, possibly tuberculosis. Because he has no immediate family in Paris, he is sent to an orphanage, leaving his best friend Anshel behind. After a while, his aunt Beatrix claims him and Pierrot leaves France to live in Berghof – a house at the top of the mountain, where Beatrix works as a housekeeper. Pierrot spends his childhood and teenage years there and goes through a significant change, as the owner of Berghof, the Nazi leader himself, brainwashes him.

The personality change of Pierrot is extremely significant throughout the book. The question of what it takes for a once innocent child to change drastically is one of the main themes of the novel.

Resilience and adaptability

Probably the first acquired traits of Pierrot are the two mentioned above. Already at the beginning of the story, Pierrot faces challenges no child should have to. His father leaves the family when Pierrot is just a small boy, his mother passes away due to an illness. Just like that, the boy becomes an orphan. After his mother´s death, he is taken in by Anshel´s family for a while, however, he is soon sent to an orphanage, because they do not have enough money to support both boys. Pierrot feels rejected by the family. He believes they would keep him if he was Jewish. After being uprooted from everything he has known, he spends some time in the orphanage, having to get used to new environment and new people. The conditions at the orphanage are harsh – scarce or tasteless food, hard beds with thin sheets and barely any children willing to be friends with him. On top of that, he is constantly being bullied. Aunt Beatrix´s letter asking Pierrot to come to live with her is a redemption for Pierrot, although he has never met her before. Pierrot travels alone yet again to a new home, not knowing what to expect. Upon arrival at Berghof all his belongings are taken away and he is told by Beatrix not to be loud, to always obey everyone and above all else, to be less French. In order to adapt to the new life on the mountain, he has to give up his identity. Pierrot also needs to adapt to a new hierarchy in order to survive. Later on, his social standing changes as well, especially after Hitler takes notice of him and starts to invite him to meetings, giving him gifts and lets him train his dog. He tries to fulfil his obligations and do what is expected of him, although he does not always understand the meaning of his actions.

Change in identity perception

Identity is a complex concept to analyse when it comes to Pierrot. He comes to Berghof as a boy, who, although having German ancestors, feels French. He has a French name, his mother and his best friend are French, his homeland is France, and he is also said to look French. All at once he is forced to change into a German boy, wearing German uniforms, he is asked not to speak about Anshel at all and he is stripped of his birth name – suddenly becoming Pieter.

'But I'm not German,' said Pierrot. 'I'm French.' Beatrix turned to him quickly, and the smile faded from her face. 'You were born in France, that's true,' she said. 'And your mother was French. But your father, my older brother, was German. And that makes you German too, do you understand? From now on, it's best that you don't even refer to where you came from.' 'But why?' 'Because it will be safer that way,' she said. 'And there's one other thing I wanted to discuss with you. Your name.' 'My name?' Pierrot asked, looking across at her and frowning. 'Yes.' She hesitated, as if she could scarcely believe what she was about to say. 'I don't think we should call you Pierrot any more.' His mouth dropped open in surprise; he couldn't quite believe what she was saying. 'But I've always been called Pierrot,' he said. 'It's . . . well, it's my name!' 'But it's such a French name. I thought perhaps we might call you Pieter instead. It's the same name, only the German version. It's not so very different.' 'But I'm not a Pieter,' insisted Pierrot. 'I'm a Pierrot.' 'Please, Pieter—' 'Pierrot!' 'Can you trust me on this? In your heart you can still be Pierrot, of course. But at the top of the mountain, when other people are around – and particularly when the master and the mistress are around – you will be Pieter.' (Boyne, 2015, p. 80-81)

As the time goes, Pieter slowly forgets that he has ever been Pierrot. He becomes more and more violent (although when he first arrived at Berghof, he could not even watch a chicken being slaughtered) and undeniably antisemitic. Hitler´s influence shows in every aspect of his life as he spends more time on the mountain. His need for a sense of belonging and acceptance becomes stronger than his values, which are being corrupted each day spent on the mountain. The uniform, which he gets as a present from Hitler himself, serves as a symbol of belonging in the book.

Pierrot stared at the package's contents with a mixture of anxiety and desire. He remembered the boys on the train wearing clothes similar to this, with different designs but equal authority; how they had bullied him, and how Rottenführer Kotler had stolen his sandwiches. He wasn't sure that this was the type of person he wanted to be. But then again, those boys had been afraid of nothing and were part of a gang – just like the musketeers themselves, he thought. Pierrot quite liked the idea of being afraid of nothing. And he also liked the idea of belonging to something (Boyne, 2015, p. 117-118).

Pierrot reflects on his fascination with uniforms, but also feels a certain restraint. The uniform reminds him of the cruelty he experienced on the train and associates it with violence. He is worried that he will become the same kind of person, which later proves to be justified.

Loss of innocence and values

Another dominant change of Pierrot´s personality is the loss of innocence and values. The most significant value discussed in the book, which Pierrot lost (or to be exact, misplaced), is loyalty. Although Pierrot refers to Anshel, his childhood friend from Paris, as his best friend whom he considered his brother, he gradually starts to keep his distance when he moves to Berghof. First, he stops replying to his letters. Then he pretends not to know him at all. As he gets corrupted and brainwashed by Nazi propaganda, he openly manifests aversion towards Anshel, because he is Jewish. The change in his character can be observed in these three short excerpts:

”He's my best friend. I've known him since I was born. He's practically my brother.” (Boyne, 2015, p. 84)

“An old friend of mine,” he said, his voice betraying his anxiety at seeing the familiar handwriting. ‘Well, just a neighbour, really,’ he added, correcting himself. “No one important.” (Boyne, 2015, p. 141)

“I have no friends in Paris. And certainly not this Jew who insists on writing to tell me how terrible his life is now. He should be glad that Paris has fallen to the Germans. He's lucky to be permitted to live there still.” (Boyne, 2015, p. 168)

Pieter does not only turn his back on his friend when the situation becomes difficult. He also betrays his own family. Pierrot is desperately trying to be a good German patriot and blindly follows the idea of a greater good. That is why he warns Hitler when his aunt and the chauffeur Ernst try to assassinate him by poisoning his food. Pieter knows that it will result in an execution of the two people that were the closest to him, but believes it is the right thing to do. He once promised to his father he would make him proud by staying loyal to his country, and that is exactly what he thinks he is doing. He even watches the execution of both Ernst and his aunt from his window.

There are occasionally hints of childlike innocence in Pieter even after some time living on the mountain. Even though he starts to behave in a cruel manner and poses as superior to other people, he is still missing the big picture of what is actually going on in the meetings he is sometimes being invited to.

‘Each will be designed to look like a shower room,’ said Himmler. ‘Only there will not be water coming from the ceiling.’ Pieter looked up from his notepad and frowned. ‘Excuse me, mein Reichsführer,’ he said. ‘What is it, Pieter?’ asked Hitler, turning round with a sigh. ‘Forgive me, I think I must have misheard,’ said Pieter. ‘I thought you said that there would be no water coming from the showers.’ All four men stared at the boy, and for a few moments no one spoke. All four men stared at the boy, and for a few moments no one spoke. ‘No more

interruptions, please, Pieter,' said the Führer quietly, turning away. (…) Well, he might be young, he decided, but at least he knew there was no point in building a shower room without water (Boyne, 2015, p. 172-175).

One of the significant symbols of innocence is the children´s book *Emil and the Detectives*. At the beginning, Pierrot gets the book as a present from Simone, one of the sisters who runs the orphanage. The book gives Pierrot some needed comfort during his travels, because the main character Emil has a lot in common with Pierrot, and it reminds him of home every time he takes it in his hands. He rediscovers the book again after many years, when he is hiding in the closet from the American soldiers.

Guilt

Guilt is an unfamiliar feeling to Pierrot almost until the end of the book. Pierrot seems to realize on some occasions that he has done wrong but does not truly reflect on his actions until after the war ends. There is a particular moment in the book, in which Pieter seems to switch back to Pierrot and seemingly gets his innocence back – after the Americans come to Berghof, frightened Pierrot hides in the closet with his childhood book *Emil and the Detectives* and awaits his fate. The scene has a feeling of a "full circle", when the once-bullied bully appears as the scared, innocent child again. He is brought to a camp for disarmed enemy forces, where he decides to pretend that he is mute and deaf, so he is left alone. When he cannot sleep, he thinks about what he has done, blaming himself. Eventually he is set free from the detention camp, but he is confronted with his actions everywhere he goes. Everything reminds him of his part in so much suffering. In the following years, he is often moving, trying to find his peace. However, the bombed cities are a constant reminder of the war and his wrongdoings, just as the people he meets (for example, a survivor of Holocaust or Katarina, the girl whom he sexually assaulted when he was still in Berghof). Eventually he decides to come back to France. While roaming the streets of Paris, he stumbles upon a bookstore by accident, seeing a book written by his childhood friend Anshel Bronstein. He tracks him down and tells him his story, making it a confession of all his sins. It is implied that the book *The Boy at the Top of the Mountain* was written by Anshel. The book ends with Anshel starting to write and Pieter determined to redeem himself and earn his name back.

5.2 *When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit* by Judith Kerr

The book *When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit* was written by a German-born writer Judith Kerr who emigrated to Switzerland, France and then to London with her family as a young girl. It is evident already from this information, that the book is autobiographical to a great extent. The impulse to write the book and tell her story came from her own children, who were interested in what her childhood was like after seeing the movie *The Sound of Music*. That is when Judith Kerr decided "something had to be done" (Lathey, 1999, p. 217). Throughout the author´s life, she worked in the Red Cross during the Second World War, as an artist, as a script writer for the BBC, and wrote and illustrated many books for children. As so many other novels with the theme of war, her books are sometimes used as a didactic tool for children to familiarize them with the events of the war era. Judith Kerr died in 2019, but her works are still popular, and she was awarded for her contributions to children´s literature (Harper Collins Publishers, online[5]).

The story follows a German Jewish family trying to escape the Nazi regime and its politics after the elections of 1933. The protagonist of the story is a nine-year-old Anna, whose father is a well-known writer and a distinguished journalist. His political opinions do not match those of the Nazi regime, he is therefore forced to emigrate to Switzerland, soon followed by the rest of his family. Although the family was rather affluent in Germany, the father gradually struggles more and more to earn a living. After some time, they relocate to Paris, where Anna and her brother Max start new schools. The life does not get easier for the family in France since they are consistently short on money. Eventually they acquire a considerable sum from a film script the father sold to a Hungarian company, and they decide to move to Great Britain.

Throughout the story, many manifestations of personality transformation can be observed in the characters. Here are the most significant themes linked to personality change discussed in this book.

Resilience and adaptability

Resilience and adaptability are reoccurring themes in the story. Anna does not mind moving to a new country at all and does not worry about uprooting herself from her home. She approaches the concept of home as a feeling, rather than a place. As long as she is with her family, she feels confident enough to live anywhere.

[5] Accessible from: https://www.harpercollins.com/blogs/authors/judith-kerr [cit. 2023-08-25]

"It's just that I think we should stay together," she said. "I don't really mind where or how. I don't mind things being difficult, like not having any money, and I didn't mind about that silly concierge this morning – just as long as we're all four together." (Kerr, 1997, p. 179)

Anna is enthusiastic about the idea of moving to a foreign country. She was excited about Switzerland just as much as France and she does not mind moving to Great Britain either. Unfamiliar environments do not scare her and being the bright girl she is, she is not intimidated by having to learn new languages.

Acquiring new competences

Another way in which the characters´ personality is transformed is through acquiring new competences. Both children have to learn new languages to integrate into the foreign countries. They learn new things at school, which is naturally more demanding for the young non-native speakers. They are trying to navigate through the new school system, meet the requirements and catch up with the local children. The parents need to learn many new skills as well. As the mother was an unemployed stay-at-home woman with a successful husband, she was not really used to doing housework. She did not have to, since the family hired a maid who did all the cleaning and cooking, and they also had a housekeeper Heimpi who helped to raise the children. Since the family could not afford to pay a housekeeper after they fled from Germany, Anna´s mother needs to learn how to cook, mend clothes and run the household by herself. Her husband writes articles in French now and actively searches for jobs, which is something he supposedly did not have to do before. For both parents, learning how to get by with a much lower income is a skill, which had only recently become essential to them.

Change in identity perception

Throughout the story a considerable change in identity perception can be observed. Already in the first chapter, the identity of the family is discussed when Anna walks back from school with her friend, talking about what it means to be a Jew and what their idea of them is.

They spelled out the name under the photograph. Adolf Hitler. "He wants everybody to vote for him in the elections and then he's going to stop the Jews," said Elsbeth. (…) "Perhaps he'll stop me. I'm Jewish too." "You're not!" "I am! My father was talking to us about it only last week. He said we were Jews and no matter what happened my brother and I must never forget it." "But you don't go to a special church on Saturdays like Rachel Lowenstein." "That's because we're not religious. We don't go to church at all." (…) She looked at Anna curiously. "I thought Jews were supposed to have bent noses, but your nose is quite ordinary. Has your brother got a bent nose?" "No," said Anna. "The only person in our house with a bent nose is Bertha

the maid, and hers only got like that because she broke it falling off a tram." Elsbeth was getting annoyed. "Well then," she said, "if you look the same as everyone else and you don't go to a special church, how do you know you are Jewish? How can you be sure?" There was a pause. "I suppose …" said Anna, "I suppose it's because my mother and father are Jews, and I suppose their mothers and fathers were too. I never thought about it much until Papa started talking about it last week." "Well, I think it's silly!" said Elsbeth. "It's silly about Adolf Hitler and people being Jews and everything!" (Kerr, 1997, p. 8-9)

In the excerpt, Anna mentions that her parents started to talk to them about being Jews only recently, which suggests that the knowledge of them being Jews was not important to the children until recently. For the children, the Jewish identity is a rather unfamiliar concept. It is not clear to them how to recognize a Jew or how to know if someone is, in fact, one. Their confusion stems partly from prejudice and partly from the fact they simply did not need such information until the political tension occurred. In many books for children and youth which have a world war background, the theme of children´s innocence is an extremely distinctive one. Most of the authors suggest, that discrimination and segregation is hardly a rational concept, and it does not have a place in the children´s world. It could be argued that meanwhile some could see such matters as too complicated topics for children to grasp, it is in fact quite simple, and the children are the ones in the right.

As the story continues, Anna and Max are becoming more aware of their religious affiliation, and they consciously accept being Jewish as a part of their identity. As they are staying in Switzerland, their parents encourage them to proudly represent the Jewish community by being kind, honest and hard-working to prove that the Nazi propaganda is spreading lies about Jews.

"It may seem like a lot to ask," said Papa, "but I think it's worth it because the Jews are wonderful people and it's rather splendid to be one. And when Mama and I come back I'm sure we'll be very proud of the way you have represented us in Switzerland." It was funny, thought Anna. Normally she hated to be told that she must be extra good, but this time she did not really mind. She had not realized before that being a Jew was so important. (Kerr, 1997, p. 86)

Another identity that the children adopt is a rather complex one - the one of a refugee. As previously mentioned, Anna embraces the opportunity to move in new places rather enthusiastically. She feels a sense of proudness to be a refugee, it is debatable though, if she fully realizes what the identity of a refugee entails. She likes the idea of being a refugee because it seems exciting, but on the other hand, later starts to realize the direct impact of the situation and as the time goes by, it suddenly feels too real for her.

"I know we have no choice and I'm only making it more difficult. But I've never minded being a refugee before. In fact I've loved it. I think the last two years, when we've been refugees, have been much better than if we'd stayed in Germany. But if you send us away now I'm so terribly frightened …I'm so terribly frightened …" "Of what?" asked Papa. "That I might really feel like one!" said Anna and burst into tears. (Kerr, 1997, p. 179)

Emotional development

The loss of naivety is one of the results of an emotional development of the children. Maturing means the development of responsibility, empathy, modesty, and confidence. We can see all of these signs throughout the story. Anna and Max are both trying very hard at school to please their parents. The transformation is visible especially when it comes to Max, who has become very hard-working in France and improves his grades. Anna becomes a very empathetic girl as the situation deteriorates. She worries about her father because she knows that he is struggling. Being so sensitive, she notices when he is sad, or when something bothers him. For example, she tries to rid her father of nightmares by summoning them on herself. She is constantly trying to be brave for the parents, although the situation is bothering her as well. Both siblings also gain confidence on account of doing so well at school and gradually getting better at French. Especially Anna has doubts about herself since she started school in France but managed to overcome the initial difficulties.

5.3 Wave me Goodbye by Jacqueline Wilson

Jacqueline Wilson has been writing stories since she was a child and has written over 100 books in her life. She has sold more than forty million copies of her books, which have been translated into over thirty languages, and she is considered one of the most beloved children´s authors in the UK. She has won plenty of book awards and is a former Children's Laureate from the year 2005 to 2007. In 2008 she was appointed a Dame in recognition of her services to children's literature (Wilson, 2018).

Jacqueline Wilson´s main characters are mostly young girls, so her readers are also to a large extent female. In her books, her characters struggle with their own emotions, as well as with dealing with the feelings of people around them. Wilson started her career as a journalist, working on girls' magazines, and this is probably a significant factor in her awareness of, and sensitivity to, the feelings and dilemmas of young girls, from dramatic, life-changing events, to the seemingly trivial problems of growing-up (which, as Wilson makes clear, are by no means trivial to those experiencing them). Wilson's work displays a remarkable balance of serious issues and entertaining reading: her novels are grounded in strong social realism

and psychological perceptiveness, yet, simultaneously, they are also 'light', fun and abundant with humour (British Council, online[6]).

Jacqueline Wilson´s key merit, when it comes to her writing, is her portrayal of family backgrounds of the characters. She does not usually write about conservative ideal families, nor about children with perfect parents. She chooses a more realistic approach, depicting split couples, parents serving time in prison, unfaithful partners or parents simply neglecting their children (British council, online[7]). In this regard, the book *Wave me Goodbye* is no exception.

The protagonist of the book is a ten-year-old girl Shirley Smith. She is one of the children who get evacuated to the country from London after it becomes apparent that there is an imminent threat of Britain being at war. She loves to read and she is keen on ballet, although she does not really know how to dance. She has no friends, so she makes up imaginary ones: characters of the books she had read in the past. She talks to them and plays with them when she feels lonely or uncomfortable. She longs for a best friend, which is a wish that comes true once she gets on the evacuation train. As the children get to the country, precisely a village named Meadow Ridge, Shirley is billeted together with two boys to a grand house on a hill, where two women are living together – rather mysterious Mrs Waverly and her maid, Chubby. What confuses the children is that they do not seem to have the relationship of a maid and her mistress. Even more extraordinary is the fact that Mrs Waverly seems to be mentally ill. She barely leaves her room, seems rich but does not have all rooms furnished, and spends a lot of time in bed, although she is not really sick. The two ladies as well as the children try to get used to the new set-up and embrace the big change that the war has forced on them. Although everyone feels shocked and uneasy about the children´s relocation, the change proves to be not all bad in the end.

Resilience and adaptability

Shirley, Kevin, and Archie each adapt to the life in the countryside in their own pace. For Shirley, being apart from her parents seems to be the hardest. She thinks about her mother a lot and often ponders how her mother would feel about certain things. She is also worried about her father who joined the army. Shirley is well-liked by their new teacher, the strict Mr Mitford, because she is clever and has an impressive vocabulary. She is one of the few children who manage to impress him. Shirley feels important and enjoys the attention, until

[6] Accessible from: https://literature.britishcouncil.org/writer/jacqueline-wilson [cit. 2024-04-12]

[7] ibid.

she humiliates herself at school, trying to dance. She finds comfort in Kevin, whose friendship ends up playing a very important role in their adaptation. The fact that Shirley wanted to stay at Meadow Ridge when her mother came to get her after receiving her postcard proves she adapted well eventually.

Kevin lived with his father until he was evacuated to Meadow Ridge, however, when he gets relocated, his father renounces him. That becomes clear after Shirley and Kevin run back to London to find their parents and Kevin´s father sends him back, saying he has another family to take care of. Kevin has a difficult time settling in Meadow Ridge mainly because of his problem with bed-wetting, which he tries to keep a secret. These troubles bother him until Shirley´s father gives him a tip how to get rid of it. He also reassures him it happens to some grown men in the army, which makes him accept and consequently tackle the problem. Kevin spends his whole childhood being proven he is not wanted. He is the very last child to get billeted, his parent rejects him, and he is prone to cause troubles, which does not make him very popular. He is a troubled child, hence the bed-wetting. Kevin often uses insults as a defence mechanism and keeps everyone at arm´s length. Shirley has a tremendously positive impact on him. Her friendship and acceptance seem to heal him and help him to become a kinder person. Chubby also makes a point about Kevin being like a big brother to Archie, which gives him a new purpose. The supportive environment and reassurance contribute to him feeling much more comfortable with staying in Meadow Ridge.

Archie does not have a mother at all, and his father is in prison serving time for robbery. Of all three children, he is the happiest. He does not come from any familial background he could miss, because he had been taken care of by “aunties”, which is probably how he addresses social workers. When he arrives at Meadow Ridge, it is the first time he finds himself close to having a family. He grows to love Chubby, which proves to be mutual. For Archie, the change was probably the easiest.

Disillusionment

Many children evacuated from London and other urban areas had never actually been in the country before. Spending time outdoors and learning how to play there was a new territory for them. There arises significant disillusionment about how food gets on the table. Some of the children had only read about farm animals in the books but never seen them in real life, like Shirley, other children do not even know what they look like. While they are walking from the train station, they encounter cows on a field. One of the children does not even

recognize at all it is an animal. When they are explained, where milk comes from, they are disgusted. With chickens it is the same case.

'They're not sparrows, silly, they're hens,' I said. 'Hens?' said Archie, looking blank. 'You know. They lay eggs. I wonder if they've laid any eggs overnight? Chubby might let us have them for breakfast,' I said hopefully. 'What do you mean, lay eggs?' Archie asked. 'You know what eggs are. You fry them and have them with chips. Well, hens make them. They squeeze them out their bums,' said Kevin. 'What?' Archie squealed. 'That's disgusting. You're kidding me, right?' Kevin mimed cutting his throat and hoping to die if he told a lie. 'I don't like all them country animals,' said Archie. 'They're dirty. Cows squirting milk out of them pink dangly bits and hens doing a big toilet. It's all mucky!' (Wilson, 2018, p. 136-137)

The country life seems too cruel for Shirley, once she finds out how people get their meat. For her, it is a shocking, close to unbearable truth. She refuses to eat anything with rabbit meat in it, once Chubby tells her that she kills the rabbits herself. She also reveals that animals do not get processed for meat after they peacefully die in their sleep, but they are kept solely for that purpose. Shirley is horrified to find out what a slaughterhouse is.

'What was the meat? I've never had it before but it was soooo lovely.' 'It was just rabbit,' she said. My smile tensed. I gave a silly little giggle, thinking she was joking. 'Not rabbit!' I said. 'Course it was! Didn't you hear me go out and shoot it with my shotgun this morning? (…) We've got hundreds of the little beasts running wild,' said Chubby. 'Not – not the little grey rabbits with the fluffy white tails?' I stammered. 'What other kind are there? I've kept the tail I chopped off. Do you want it for a pom - pom on your hat?' Chubby asked. (…) My stomach heaved. It felt as if it was scrabbling inside me. 'Murderer!' I gasped, and then I was sick all over my empty plate. (Wilson, 2018, p. 184-185)

Another area of Shirley´s disillusionment concerns the adult world. How adults behave comes as a shock to her once she spends time outside of home: they lie and cheat, and their moral compass is often off. It is in Meadow Ridge, when she first hears about people being capable of such actions as adultery and intrigues. She tries to stay in denial as long as possible, but eventually gives in and starts to see the world in a more realistic, sober light: the world, in which people are simply not perfect.

As the story continues, Shirley gradually uncovers the truth about Mrs Waverly and the story of her marriage. She is dying to know the truth about her life since she arrived at Meadow Ridge, but only finds intriguing clues from time to time, which she cannot interpret. She is makes up theories while picking up bits and pieces from what Chubby and Mrs Waverly tell her. However, until Chubby confides in her with the whole story, the person who gives her most information is a gardener on the grounds of Jessica´s school. Shirley is reluctant to

believe what he has to say, but also starts to realize that world is not the romantic place she once thought it to be.

'Miss Maddy. She fell for him hook, line and sinker. Along with half the village girls. But they didn't have anything to lose. She did, all right. It caused such a scandal! A posh young lady from the White House cavorting with a common gardener! They reckoned he was only after her money – and they were probably right. But she lost her inheritance when she went gadding off with Will. Silly cow.' (…) 'Stop it! I don't believe a word of it. You're making it all up,' I said. 'Am I?' he said. 'You ask her then. She thought it was the love match of the century. Oh, he followed through and married her, but he'd never have stayed. He wasn't that sort. I doubt he'd ever have come back after the war, but he copped it anyway. So now she wanders around like a wet weekend, pining after her Will, when she didn't have a clue that he was always carrying on behind her back.' (…) I didn't want to believe any of it. (…) But somehow the gardener's words seemed dreadfully convincing. (Wilson, 2018, p. 380-381)

A more personal issue for Shirley is when Jesicca suggests her mother is having an affair with her boss. It upsets her to a great extent, and she responds to the accusation with anger.

Jessica's eyes opened wide. She gave an odd little smile. 'Oh, I see!' she said. 'So this Gerald's your mum's boyfriend?' 'What? No, of course not!' I was shocked. 'My mum's married to my dad!' 'As if that makes any difference,' said Jessica. 'Yes it does! Ladies don't have boyfriends, not if they're already married,' I insisted. 'Of course they do. My mother has boyfriends all the time, whether she's currently married or not,' Jessica said airily. 'You're such a baby, Shirley.' 'No I'm not. Your mum might be like that because she's an actress, but my mum's just an ordinary secretary and this Gerald is her new boss,' I said. 'Well, that's the most classic situation of all.' (Wilson, 2018, p. 316)

Shirley defends her mother against Jessica´s accusations because she wants to believe they are not true. However, at the same time she remembers how her parents fought at home and how cold her mother behaves towards her husband. She also realises her mother in fact speaks very fondly about Gerald and even talks about going to live with him, when he offers. After the children run away from Mrs Waverly´s house to London, Shirley comes back home to find her mother in her bed with a man. The room is dark, and she cannot see who the male figure is. Although it was her father, she assumed her mother was being unfaithful. The fact that she thinks the stranger was Gerald proves Shirley finally admits to herself situations like these occur. This can be seen as a sign that Shirley is maturing.

Empathy and sense of responsibility

Shirley is a very emotionally mature girl for her age. She always tries to see the good in people and support them. No matter the circumstances, she stands up for everyone who is being picked on or slandered. Ever since she got on the train, she started to behave more

responsibly, taking care of other children and helping them. Already on the train Shirley helps to clean Mary´s blouse, even though she is a friend of her school bully. She helps taking care of Archie when they move into the red house and she is a good friend to Kevin, in spite of the fact that he is not always nice to her. She finds him annoying, but at the same time wants to help him. Feeling sorry for others is a very common emotion to Shirley.

Mrs Smith gives an impression of an emotionally distant, cold mother. Her approach to her daughter could be described with the colloquial saying "tough love". Shirley yearns for her love and approval, which is implied several times throughout the story. She frequently assesses events and things she sees based on the fact, if her mother would approve or not. She is also very self-conscious about her appearance and how she presents herself, so her mother would not be embarrassed. Mrs Smith seems to care a lot about the perception of the family, and she tries to prevent being seen as common. Shirley must wear decent clothing. She must not wrinkle her nose, because according to her mother, she looks like a rabbit. She must, at all times, use upper-class vocabulary, although their family is not upper-class at all. Shirley is also initially prevented from taking her favourite toy, a stuffed teddy bear, with her to the country, just because it looks awful. Generally, she does not show affection towards her daughter nor her husband. Shirley once states:

(…) Mum always said she wasn't one for lovey-dovey stuff and hardly ever hugged. She hadn't even given Dad a hug when he went off to be a soldier, just a quick peck on the cheek. (Wilson, 2018, p. 5-6)

Last, but not least, Mrs Smith sometimes speaks to her daughter in a degrading manner, calling her stupid or childish. She seems to have trouble reminding herself that her daughter is, in fact, just a child and needs to be treated as such. She is also rude to Mrs Waverly and Chubby, when she comes to get Shirley to Meadow Ridge after she sends a postcard, in which she complains about everything. That is a key moment in the book, because it is this event which causes Mrs Smith to become more sensitive to her daughter´s needs. When they meet after some time apart, Mrs Smith shows her love for Shirley in a more obvious way, although she is still strict and worried about her looks. A significant improvement can be observed from this moment onwards.

She shook her head and opened her arms and I flew into them. 'My little girl,' she said, hugging me tight, her chin pressing so hard on my head that it hurt. I didn't care. I wanted to stay there for ever, breathing in Mum's familiar smell of Coty L'Aimant and washing powder and pear drops. The tight knot inside me unravelled and I started crying into her chest. 'There, there. Mummy's here. It's all right now. I've got you safe. Stop that crying now. You'll get stains on my art - silk blouse.' Wilson, 2018, p. 285)

The evacuation of the children did not only change the lives of the children, but also the lives of those who took them in. There is a noticeable change of behaviour when it comes to Mrs Waverly. When the children first come to the red house, she does not really take any interest in them. It is Chubby who takes care of them. As time passes, she gets to know them and spends time with them more, which consequently seems to help her get better. She gets pulled back into reality after long years of spending her days in her bedroom, grieving. In a way, the responsibility of suddenly having to raise three children gives both Mrs Waverly and Chubby a new purpose.

5.4 *The War I Finally Won* by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley

Kimberly Brubaker Bradley is a contemporary author of children's literature. She studied chemistry at university, but she also took writing classes at the same time, discovering her love for literature. After settling down and quitting her career as a chemist, she chose to devote her time to writing instead. Throughout her life, she has won many literary awards. Both *The War I Finally Won* and its prequel, *The War That Saved My Life*, were New York Times bestsellers (Kimberly Brubaker Bradley, online[8]).

In the sequel of the novel *The War That Saved my Life* the protagonist of the story, an eleven-year-old Ada, finally escapes the horrors of her unhappy childhood in London for good. There is still the Second World War going on, but at least she is winning her own one. After waking up from a surgery that fixed her clubfoot, and with her abusive mother gone, she gets a new chance to be happy. However, happiness does not come easy to Ada since she is struggling to make peace with her past. Throughout the novel, themes like family relationships, loyalty and prejudice, sense of responsibility, and suppressed emotions are explored.

Change in identity perception and sense of belonging

Ada grew up feeling inferior, being told no one would ever love her because of her clubfoot. She had been an abused child until the evacuation, and she had never known kindness from adults. She believes her clubfoot defines her and over the years she had been made to accept the identity of a "cripple", as she refers to herself. Her theory of being completely unlovable proves to be wrong throughout the story, of course, but for Ada, accepting the fact her mother did not love her and mistreated her in such a horrible way is a battle. Even after her foot gets fixed, she is still haunted by her childhood trauma. She feels like she needs to prove herself to

[8] Accessible from: https://kimberlybrubakerbradleycom.wordpress.com/ [cit. 2024-05-12]

everyone just so they accept her. When Ada´s mother dies, leaving her and her brother Jamie behind, it represents an identity crisis for Ada. She does not know how she feels, or rather, how she is supposed to feel. She is trying to fulfil her role as a good child, but on the other hand feels she does not owe it to anyone – after all, she had been mistreated her whole life. Ada is also worried of her and her brother´s status changing from evacuees to orphans and what it means for them. She openly claims she is better off without her abusive mother, but at the same time she is terrified of suddenly not belonging to anyone.

"How am I supposed to feel?" A good daughter would feel sad, I supposed. But if Mam was dead, then I was no longer anyone´s daughter. (Bradley, 2017, p. 11)

As she goes back to the countryside to continue living with Susan, who proceeds to adopt them, Ada slowly realizes family is not always defined by blood. In addition to her brother, Susan and the Thorton family give her the supportive environment she was deprived of ever since she was born.

Feeling of security and self-confidence

Uncertainty was all Ada knew growing up. She was never safe, which is a feeling she still carries with her wherever she goes. For her, danger is ever-present, even in her dreams. She has nightmares of her previous bad experiences: memories of her mother and being caught in the air raid because of her inability to run. Ada states, she had never felt safe, so she does not know how it feels like. Under Susan´s care, she is beginning to learn.

I should have been used to birthdays. Mam should have celebrated my birthdays. "It´s alright," Susan said, watching my face. "Whatever you feel, it´s alright. She put her arms around me. "Why didn´t she love me?" I whispered. "Because she was broken," she said. "Remember that. She was broken, not you." I had the bad foot, but the foot worked better now. The foot wasn´t the reason. Something else must be wrong with me. Mothers loved their children. (Bradley, 2017, p. 211)

Ada´s self-confidence is bruised, but not lost. She is tired of feeling ashamed and fights to reclaim her confidence, eventually realizing her mother was, in fact, a sick and angry person, and her hating Ada was never Ada´s fault. It is after Jonathan Thorton dies, that she learns about grieving and understands people behave a certain way for many different reasons. This extremely significant moment of epiphany represents the beginning of Ada´s journey to emotional healing.

"Mam was angry at everything too." My head snapped up. "Because of me," I said. "Because of my foot." She´d said so, over and over. Jamie shook his head. "No. She was angry at *everything*. I stared at him. His words soaked into my brain. A knot I hadn't known I was carrying untied itself inside my belly. Mam had always been

angry. About everything. All the time. Mam had never been anything but angry. Even when she smiled, she always stayed angry inside. No sadness, no joy. Just anger. It had *never* been about me. (…) *It hadn't been my fault.* (Bradley, 2017, p. 251-252)

Sense of responsibility

Responsibility is a crucial theme in the novel. Ada suffers from the feeling of having to bear everything by herself. She could never rely on her parent, so she is convinced that all responsibility lies with her. She is the one who needs to take care of her brother, and basically everybody else. To trust others to bear the responsibility is a difficult task for her, since she could never count on anyone but herself. Throughout the book, she is learning to leave it to the adults and to let someone take care of her for a change. That poses a challenge to her since she cannot shake the feeling of having to earn her place. Although she slowly starts to see she could not change her condition, that does not stop her from obsessing over things she feels she can change. As she sets her mind to making a difference, she cannot be steered from sacrificing her childhood in the process. Towards the end of the book, the willingness to finally let someone take care of her for a change and accepting she does need to be taken care of is a significant indicator that she feels comfortable in her environment. For her, admitting she needed someone to take care of her is a big step forward.

I was falling, falling. I had no safe place to be. (…) I had to take care of Jamie. *Who was going to take care of me?* (Bradley, 2017, p. 330)

Emotional unavailability

Because of her upbringing, Ada could never learn how to manage her emotions and give them a healthy outlet. That is why she bottles them up. Being vulnerable in front of others scares her because of the lack of safe environment. In the past, she was even punished for showing weakness and letting her emotions show, consequently leading her to supress her feelings rather than letting them out. Ada being scared of her own feelings results in her being very emotionally distant. After the adoption, her little brother Jamie starts calling Susan, their guardian, mum. Ada hates it and defies it, repeatedly bringing up she is not their mother. The most obvious explanation of her behaviour is the possibility of the word *mother* having a negative connotation for Ada. That proves to be likely, when Ada watches a conflict between her best friend Maggie and Maggie´s mother and makes a rash conclusion that all mothers are horrible. It takes time for Ada to bind herself to Susan emotionally, because she does not have a previous experience with trust and love when it comes to a parental figure. She does not want to be touched or hugged. Her deep-rooted belief that she is unlovable impacts all her

relationships, but especially the one with her new guardian. Susan´s care and understanding, as well as Ada´s fear of losing Susan to pneumonia, eventually breaks the spell.

I cried like I might never stop. All the tears I hadn't cried for a whole week came out in one long flood. Tears and snot drenched Susan's nightgown. I didn't care. Neither did Susan. "I love you," I whispered. I buried my head against Susan´s shoulder. "I´m so sorry I didn´t tell you before." "Don´t be sorry," she whispered back. "I know you love me. You know I love you too." (Bradley, 2017, p. 350)

Prejudice

When Ada first encounters Ruth, she feels uneasy to have a German move in with them. She does not understand what being a refugee means, therefore does not trust Ruth. Until that moment, she had not encountered a Jew and does not realize how it changes the situation. Ada is uncomfortable and makes hasty conclusions about Ruth. She stays alert in case Ruth was a spy and she refuses to be her friend. Her behaviour is encouraged by the disrespectfulness of Lady Thorton, who treats Ruth like an enemy. As Ada learns more about Ruth´s family, their religion, and reasons to flee from Germany, she finds compassion for her. Their friendship, supported by the fact they have a lot to bond over, helps Ada to leave her prejudices behind and become more open-minded. Her coexistence with Ruth poses another stepping stone for Ada to learn to trust people and let them close to her, as well as a source of new values and knowledge about the world.

5.5 *Goodnight Mister Tom* by Michelle Magorian

Michelle Magorian is not only a successful, award-winning author. When she was young, it was her dream to be an actress. She studied Bruford College of Speech and Drama, and then decided to continue her studies in Paris. She has a postgraduate certificate in Film Studies from University of London and an Honorary Doctorate from Portsmouth University. In her twenties, she became interested in literature for children and since she already wrote stories, she decided to write a children´s book. *Goodnight Mister Tom* was her first one and has been a tremendous success. The novel was translated into more than 11 languages (Michelle Magorian, online[9]).

First published in 1981, the extraordinary book *Goodnight Mister Tom* is a well-known title in the United Kingdom, which appears on many schools´ recommended reading lists to this day. It follows a story of a nine-year-old boy William Beech who is evacuated from London to a village called Little Weirwold on the brink of the Second World War. He is billeted with

[9] Accessible from: https://michellemagorian.com/author/ [cit.2024-05-04]

Tom Oakley, a cranky widower in his sixties. Willie is a timid, heavily deprived child who was abused by his mother at home. Under Mister Tom´s care, as he calls his new guardian, William thrives. He transforms into a completely different boy and finally allows himself to experience a happy life without fear, having found people he can trust and love.

Resilience and adaptability

Quite objectively, William´s quality of life improves immensely once he leaves London. His journey of adaptation into his new home is an unsteady one, since it is interrupted once his mother demands him to come back to London, because she got ill. Before his sudden departure from Little Weirwold, William is getting used to better conditions, instead of vice versa. That confuses him. Rather than longing for home, he soon starts to dread having to come back to London. Living with Mister Tom brings many positive changes into William´s life: he has his own room, he suddenly gets to sleep in an actual bed instead of sleeping under it, he learns that reading other books than the bible is not a sin, he gets new clothes, and even celebrates his birthday for the first time in his life. He is being cared of like never before.

William cannot be considered a resilient child. After all the emotional and physical damage that he had experienced, William often feels overwhelmed. However, one of the traits he seems to acquire is not giving up. That can be observed on multiple occasions: learning to read and write, learning how to ride a bicycle, as well as dealing with grief.

Zach's death tests Will's newly learnt self-confidence and the happiness he has finally found with Mister Tom. Will's ability to draw and paint (a sign throughout the book of his emotional freedom) seems to vanish as Will grieves for the death of his friend. Only when he has to draw from a photograph of two young men whose situation parallels his relationship with Zach does he finally begin to accept Zach's death. In so doing Will learns again to take responsibility for his own life, making decisions about how he wants to remember Zach and what he wants to do in the future, his sense of liberation symbolically marked by his mastery of Zach's bicycle (Agnew, 2001, p. 95).

Acquiring new competences

As previously mentioned, since the relocation, William finally has room for learning. Mister Tom helps him learn how to read and write, and he also encourages William to start drawing, when he notices how fascinated he is with pictures in books. Any form of entertainment was considered sinful at home back in London, so the only book he has ever encountered was the bible, from which he had to recite passages. William is timorous and must learn how to overcome fear of animals, as well as fear of physical violence. Another important, until recently unknown skill is making friends. William had never had any, but that changes once

he arrives to Little Weirwold. He makes friends in the village with the help of his extraverted best friend Zach, also an evacuee. Not only Mister Tom, but also Zach encourages William to try new things, like playing a part in a play.

The most significant change of all, however, is William learning to enjoy life. At the beginning of the book, William is described as a sad, fearful child who never laughs. He does not know how to run, nor does he know how to play. He was used to being forbidden everything he had ever wanted to do. His constant fear or getting into trouble prevents him from having any kind of fun for a long time. After moving to the country, out of reach of his abusive mother, he is finally free to explore what life has to offer. He can scream if he wants to, he can run around, he has friends and hobbies. Briefly summarised, throughout the course of the book, William is actually learning how to be a child and for the first time in his life, he is being allowed to be one.

This was a different world altogether. For a start his mother had always taught him that it was a sin to work or play on the Sabbath. Sundays were for sitting silently with a bible in front of you. And, for another thing, if he got any dirt on his clothes he´d get a beating. His classmates had called him a sissie because he had never dared to dirty himself by climbing a wall or joining in any of their rough-and-tumble games. And, in addition to having to keep his clothes clean, his body was often too bruised and painful to play apart from the fact that he didn't know how to. (Magorian, 1983, p.72)

Change in identity perception

Willie Beech spent his London life being afraid of his mother, who was a religious zealot. She is described as a loveless, cruel woman with little understanding for her son´s needs. Her behaviour towards her newborn daughter suggests, she had probably also been abusing Willie his whole life. She brutally beats him, does not feed him properly and lets them live in a barely habitable place. He is raised in a strictly Christian environment. It is said in the book his mother would only let him be evacuated if he was near a church, billeted with someone who was religious. Willie grows up in the belief that he is a bad boy and needs to be punished for everything he does so he can be redeemed. Cruelty and physical violence are all he is used to and that is why he expects this kind of treatment after he gets billeted with Tom Oakley.

Willie heard him slam the front door and listened to the sound of his footsteps fading. He hugged himself tightly and rocked backwards and forwards on the stool. “I must be good,” he whispered urgently, “I must be good,” and he rubbed a sore spot on his arm. He was such a bad boy, he knew that. (…) He was dreading the moment when Mr Oakley would discover how wicked he was. He was stronger-looking than Mum. (Magorian, 1983, p. 13-14)

It is clear already from the beginning of the book that Willie suffers from post-traumatic stress caused by his terrifying upbringing. On multiple occasions, Willie expects a blow that never comes, and then faints or vomits. He also frequently wets the bed in his sleep and has nightmares. He is often ill, but the cause is always psychosomatic. He is too weak and exhausted to bear all his demons. Living in constant terror always expecting the worst drains him. Under Mister Tom´s care, he slowly starts to heal, both physically and mentally. He also adopts a new version of his name, since in Little Weirwold he is called Will.

"Oh, I dunno," said Tom. "He´s changed quite a bit in these last few weeks." So has you, thought Mrs Fletcher. "Yes," he went on. "I almost fancy he´s grown a bit. (…) Do you know, Mrs Fletcher, last week he laughed. It were a bit of a nervous one like, but he actually laughed. It were the first time I ever heard him do it. Didn´t think he had a sense of humor in him." (Magorian, 1983, p. 134)

It is obvious that William makes progress under Mister Tom´s care, however, all of this progress seems to be in vain once his mother suddenly requests William to be sent home. Having received a letter saying Mrs. Beech has fallen ill, William returns to London to take care of her. William is hopeful about the reunion with his mother because he believes she missed him. He had been doing so well that he nearly forgot about all the terrors he had been through. Once in London, he faces a harsh reality and realizes his mother hasn't changed at all. William excitedly tells her about his life with Mister Oakley and about his friends. However, his mother is horrified to hear about her son being friends with girls, boys who don't go to church and his best friend being a Jew. She beats him and locks him in a cupboard together with his newborn sister. She leaves them to die with only a bottle of milk for the baby.

He felt as though he was a different person lying there in the dark. He was no longer Willie. It was as if he had said good-bye to an old part of himself. Neither was he two separate people. He was Will inside and out. For an instant he wished he had never gone to Little Weirwold. Then he would have thought his Mom was kind and loving. He wouldn't have known any different. A wave of despair swept through him and he cursed his new awareness. He hadn't been used to this pain for a long time. He had softened. (Magorian, 1983, p.192-193)

From the moment he is rescued by Mister Tom, William refuses to be called Willie and corrects people if they do. He only responds to Will. The name Willie is forever stained by his dark past. The name Will, on the other hand, symbolizes hope for a happy life.

After being brought back to Little Weirwold, Will is again the desperate, haunted child he once was. Not only is he struggling to make peace with his mother´s actions, but he is also traumatized from the hospital, where they kept drugging him. What is more, he is haunted

by guilt, since he believes that his little sister dying is his fault. It takes weeks until he is nursed back to health. Mister Tom´s and his friends´ support has a tremendous effect on his journey of recovery.

"Do you think," said Will, gazing over the wall at the oak tree, "do you think you can die of happiness?" (…) "It´s jest that I feel as if I´m going to burst and that, if I did, there´d be bits of me all over this field." (Magorian, 1983, p. 303)

William is, of course, not the only character who goes through a noticeable change throughout the course of the story. Thomas Oakley is described as a bad-tampered, frosty man in his sixties who keeps himself to himself and barely talks to people. Everyone in the village is astonished when they realize Tom is taking care of an evacuated child. It is said he never joins any of the village activities, never helps with anything, rarely visit anyone, and ignores all the signs that a war is approaching. He had been this way ever since his wife Rachel and their newborn child died. Grief becomes a habit for him after this tragedy and Tom withdraws himself from people. He does not come out of his shell until little William arrives.

As Tom starts to care about William, he finds a new purpose. He soon realizes the difference he makes in the boy´s life and tries to give him the support he needs to get better. His empathy and understanding works wonders on William´s well-being. Although he had had no experience with children and their upbringing, he is a natural talent. Their coexistence has a good influence on both of them. Tom softens up and he also starts to heal from the death of his wife.

Mrs. Fletcher looked steadily into his eyes. His forehead has lost its old furrowed look. The deep pitted wrinkles above his eyes had softened outwards. Behind his scowling manner was a kindly old man and if it hadn't been for the arrival of a rather insipid little boy, she might never have known, nor might anyone else for that matter. (Magorian, 1983, p. 134)

Their bond proves to be very strong already when William leaves to London to visit his mother. After not hearing about him for several weeks, Tom goes to London to look for him, because he is worried about the boy. Tom saves William and brings him back to Little Weirwold. The relationship between the two strengthens even more and William says to Mister Tom, that he loves him. Mister Tom is determined to take William in permanently and adopts him as soon as it is possible, when his mother commits suicide. After the adoption, William starts calling Mister Tom "Dad". The identity shift in Mister Tom´s character from an irritable old man to a proud father is a very significant one, just like the one in his son.

"I´m sorry, Dad," he said. "I didn´t think you´d be worried, like. I had to be on me own, see. I had to. I forgot about you. I didn´t think. Sorry." (…) It wasn´t until Will was asleep and Tom was lying in his own bed that he allowed the full impact of Will´s words to sink in. "He called me Dad," he whispered croakily into the darkness. "He called me Dad." And, although he felt overwhelmed with happiness, the tears ran silently down his face. (Magorian, 1983, p. 289)

5.6 *Carrie's War* by Nina Bawden

The book *Carrie´s War* is considered a classic of children´s literature with the background of the Second World War. Nina Bawden was one of the most well-known and beloved authors in the United Kingdom not only for her merit to children´s literature, but also for her work dedicated to adult audience. Her books have been translated to several languages and she received many awards for her lifelong work: for example the Phoenix Award (*Carrie´s War*), The Guardian Fiction Award (*Peppermint Pig*) or the prestigious S T Dupont Golden Pen Award for a lifetime's contribution to literature. She was also shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize for *Circles of Deceit* (Curtis Brown, online[10]).

Since Nina Bawden experienced the evacuation herself as a child, it is clear several autobiographical elements can be observed in *Carrie´s War*. However, although the author has been through nearly the same experience as the main characters, Carrie´s story is not her own. Even though the book tempts to be considered autobiographical, it is fictionalized. It is primarily feelings of the evacuees which make the autobiographical element, rather than the story itself. The separation from the parents and loss of family security are the feelings which are being conveyed (Lathey, 1999, p. 55).

As has already been indicated, *Carrie´s War* tells a story of two siblings, an eleven-year-old girl Carrie and her nine-year-old brother Nick, who are evacuated from London to a coal-mining valley in Wales. They are billeted with Mr Evans and his sister Louise, whom they call Auntie Lou. Although they like Auntie Lou, they feel rather uneasy around her strict brother. While they are settling in the community, they find a safe haven in the house of the estranged sister of the Evanses, Mrs Gotobed, and make friends with her maid Hepzibah, Mr Johnny and Albert Sandwich, an evacuee in their care. As they spend more time in the two households, they uncover the complexity of the family relationships and understand the motivation behind the actions of the members of the community.

[10] Accessible from: https://www.curtisbrown.co.uk/client/nina-bawden. [cit. 2024-05-05]

Adaptability

The children are doing their best to adapt to the new conditions. As they arrive, Carrie realizes the importance of being no trouble to their hosts and behaving in a way that would be pleasing to the people who would take them in. She does everything in her power to make herself and her brother presentable, so they would be chosen. They try to abide by the rules of the house: keeping clean, being polite, and helping out around the house. The more time they spend there, the more they get out of touch with their mother. The separation from her is something they seem to simply accept, since nothing points to the fact that the separation is somehow traumatic for the children. When they receive a photo of their mother, they frame it, but they barely look at the picture, because she "belonged somewhere else, in another life". They do not feel homesick very often. Another possible proof of the siblings´ adaptation is their beginning to adopt certain Welsh lexis, such as "nesh". The language is an important part of fitting in a new environment and represents a significant indicator of the ongoing adaptation. By the time the letter comes from their mother informing the children they should leave and come to live in Glasgow, they seem fully adjusted to their present life. They feel sorry about having to leave their beloved Auntie Lou and Hepzibah behind. Carrie says she feels torn: in a way, she wants to go, but in another way she would rather stay. Nick also does not feel too excited about moving, until he gets used to the idea of relocating to Scotland.

Carrie didn´t know if she was happy or not. It was all so sudden it made her feel queer; affecting her stomach like looking down from the top of a cliff or riding on a Big Dipper. Nick actually grumbled. "I don't want to go to rotten old Glasgow. I don't want to go to a new school. I don't want to leave Auntie Lou." (Bawden, 1993, p.134)

Sense of responsibility and compassion

Carrie´s sense of responsibility is already quite developed at the beginning of the book. She feels responsible mainly for her brother, because she is older and therefore expected to take care of him. The perspective of an older sibling for whom feeling insecure goes hand in hand with the feeling of responsibility for the younger one is not an unusual one in children´s literature. Many novels with the theme of evacuation depict such a pattern (for example *The War I Finally Won* by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley). In Carrie´s case, the urge to care for Nick extends to other people around her, including adults. Her compassion has no limits, which can be observed on the way she treats Mr Evans, who is disliked by many (Agnew, 2001, p. 85). The need to put own happiness first gets suppressed not only in Carrie, but gradually in Nick as well. Although they initially hate staying with Mr Evans, they do not

complain to their mother when she comes to visit them. They do not want to worry her and cause trouble, so they rather pretend everything is alright. This particular moment points to their maturing and realization that the situation requires sacrifice. To Carrie, her compassion comes at a cost, as she consequently finds herself feeling lonely. She is trying to be fair and please everyone but ends up quite isolated as a result (Agnew, 2001, p.86).

Guilt

Carrie´s guilt works, in a way, as a framework to the whole novel. It serves as a motivation to Carrie to take her own children back to Druid´s Bottom in adulthood so that she could finally eliminate the fear of her past actions and fill the gaps in the story with the help of her grown-up point of view. As a child, she felt responsible for the house burning down, because she was superstitious. As her children reflect on her parenting while explaining to Hepzibah the reason their mother wouldn´t come to Druid´s Bottom to see her, they trace the origin of her worries to this experience and state that her guilt has been impacting their mother her whole life.

"She won´t come, Hepzibah. I mean, she´ll come when we go back and fetch her, but she´s not coming now. She´s too – too afraid…" Had always been afraid, he thought. More afraid than most mothers. Not stopping them doing things, she wasn´t silly like that, but you would look at her sometimes and see the fear, holding her still. Especially when they were happy. As if she were afraid of a happy time stopping. (Bawden, 1993, p. 169)

6. Comparison of analysed works

As the previous chapter has already shown, it certainly cannot be spoken of a unified portrayal of personality and its transformation, although there are changes the characters have in common. The changes in the protagonists do not fit into a generalized pattern; it is rather a diverse tapestry of personality shifts. The conclusion which emerges from the analysis of the characters is that many of these characters' personal developments were not quite caused by war per se, but its consequences cleared the path for it. An interesting observation which emerged from the analysis, that is important to mention, is that the narrative of the books concerning evacuation shows not only the negative aspects of it, like separation from one´s parents or fear of the war. The positive aspects of the evacuations are shown with even greater predominance. The first one to mention should be the newfound freedom. Although the separation from one´s family can represent a challenge, it can also offer the opportunity to be free of constant parental supervision, as shown in *Carrie´s War*. Another positive aspect of the evacuation is the opportunity to experience a carefree, adventurous childhood in the countryside, as portrayed in *Wave Me Goodbye* and *Goodnight Mister Tom*.

In the analysed works several recurring themes of personality change can be observed, the most significant being the ability to change in order to meet new requirements or adapt to new conditions, changes in identity perception, acquiring new competencies, loss of innocence and maturing, development of responsibility and empathy, ability to reflect on one´s past actions, and a loss or acquisition of values. The changes of the characters´ personality often have a clear cause: a drastic change of environment and/or separation from their parents. Interestingly, some of these developments in one´s character can be traced back to the familial background of the characters. The most profound changes were observed on those characters, who come from an insecure, or even toxic environment, and did not or do not have a sufficient supervision or support from adults.

6.1 Familial background

Starting with Pierrot, the lack of parental guidance leaves him susceptible to the influence of the Nazi propaganda. There is nobody who would pay attention to Pierrot enough to be invested in his ethical or moral development. His aunt Beatrix is too busy running Berghof, so Pierrot clings to the only person who gives him any sort of attention: Adolf Hitler himself. The absence of a genuine care and positive role models gradually corrupts him, as he only has the Nazi ideals to follow. The relationship with the Führer is an extremely toxic one. He poses

as a father figure to Pierrot. Hitler uses Pierrot´s vulnerability and desperate wish to be accepted to further his own goals to indoctrinate German youth. As Pierrot becomes crueller and more inconsiderate there is nobody who would oppose his behaviour, because everyone is afraid to stand up to the regime. Although Pierrot just wishes to be loved and accepted by someone, it leads to his moral downfall.

Carrie´s transformation cannot really be considered a positive one either. Her most profound feeling which prevails, when she reflects on her childhood, is paralysing guilt. Her experience changes her and makes her overly careful in adulthood. As a child the circumstances forced her to learn how to be selfless, which would normally be a positive change. However, in Carrie´s case being excessively compassionate feels almost unnatural, considering the fact she is still a child. Her need to help everyone and mend conflicts, which are not her own, is given by the placement in a dysfunctional family, where the problems are communicated through the children, instead of a direct confrontation.

When it comes to Shirley, the change she goes through in the matter of a new-developed sense of empathy and responsibility is given by the need to find a replacement for her own family. She feels anxious and misses home, which makes her redirect her sympathies and care to those who need it the most: Kevin and Archie. The separation from her mother seems to help fix their relationship a bit, making her mother realize how much she loves Shirley, and also makes Shirley more resilient. Unlike Pierrot and Carrie, Shirley is billeted with someone, who tries hard to watch over the children. She is becoming more confident and learns to rely on herself while still having the support of her guardians. On the basis of the analysis, Shirley´s transformation could be seen as a rather positive one.

Anna´s personality does not change as drastically as is the case of some other characters. While her environment changes, her familial background stays the same. Although she is not always with all family members at all times, they never get properly separated. Despite the upheaval in her life, her family provides a stable emotional foundation. On the other hand, she absorbs some of her parents´ anxiety and fear. She also feels the pressure of having to prove herself to them, which would probably not be the case if they were apart. Anna changes in the course of the book: she becomes more empathetic and quite resilient. She always tries to accept everything as it comes. However, the seriousness of the situation (Nazi persecution and financial problems) hugely impacts Anna's well-being: the family's need to be constantly alert and careful affects her feeling of security she once felt.

The fates of Ada and Will are more similar to each other than to those of the other protagonists. They share similar experience from their childhood: they were neglected, abused, and they only had a mother, which proved to be completely unreliable. They had both never known safety and playful childhood until they were evacuated from London, getting out of reach from their toxic parent. Ada and Will have a lot in common when it comes to the changes in their personality. With finding a family, they finally have a safe place in the world, which consequently enables them to experience a positive personality development. Their sense of belonging, new-found confidence, and freedom start to heal both of them from the horrible past. They both also experience a change in the perception of their own identity. Ada´s and Will´s changes in their personality are the most profound of all the analysed texts and they are extremely significant, positive ones. Two other characters gaining caring, reliable guardians and friends, which consequently help them to embrace a happier life, are Archie and Kevin.

It can certainly be agreed that in all these cases a very rapid development of these children's personalities occurred. It was due to the big changes in their lifestyle, and the many stimuli to which the characters constantly had to react. The war did not only mean fear of the falling bombs (although it is yet another unifying feature). All of its aspects (evacuation, persecution of the Jews, Nazi indoctrination) were a tremendous intrusion to their childhood. At this time of greatest need for stability, having someone to count on is essential to a child. As already outlined in the theoretical part of the thesis, the lack of security and acceptance from one´s family can have enormous consequences. With regard to the analysis of the personality changes in relation to their guardianship, it can be observed that the children with insufficient support show a rather negative personal development, whereas the children who found a stable familial background manifest a positive personality change. This conclusion, though aligned with the theory of children´s development, does not make a rule. As previously mentioned, it is not possible to make a generalisation based on only six books, especially considering the fact the novels are works of fiction. Although some of them have certain autobiographical features, the characters are fictional, therefore do not have to fit into a certain pattern given by the theory of developmental psychology. However, based on the interpretation of the texts and the analysis of the characters, this theory proves to be correct and could provide a basis for further research.

6.2 Perception of guilt

The two characters who suffer from guilt the most are definitely Carrie and Pierrot. Carrie feels that the house burning down in the Druid´s Bottom is her fault, and her bad conscience impacts her whole life ever since, although it was based on mere superstition. Pierrot´s guilt sets in more slowly. It is not until significantly later when he fully realizes he had done something wrong, and the full impact of his actions dawns on him. The harsh reality of the fact he caused so much suffering and many deaths haunts him in adulthood, just like Carrie´s guilt haunts her. Both of them are trying to get rid of the guilt when they grow up and face what they feel responsible for in adulthood: Carrie by bringing her own children to Druid´s Bottom, Pierrot by telling Anshel his story. The main difference in experiencing their guilt lies in the fact, that Carrie´s guilt is caused by her childhood naivety (and believing Hepzibah´s tales), whereas Pierrot´s guilt is caused by growing up and maturing. While Carrie´s guilt might be viewed as unfounded, Pierrot´s repentance is well justified.

6.3 Sense of belonging

As previously implied, the sense of belonging is another significant feature in the development of the characters. It can be observed especially when it comes to Will, Pierrot, and Ada. In William´s case, the adoption of a new identity is illustrated with the change of name, or rather its form. The change of name resembles a symbol of the transformation from the scared, abused Willie in a more confident, happy Will, as well as a symbol of belonging with a new community and his new guardian Tom Oakly. The process of embracing his new name is a very natural one for William, although it was never planned.

When put in contrast to Pierrot´s story, the process of changing Pierrot´s name was involuntary. The name Pieter was forced on him without his approval. Its acceptance was his only way how to abide to new, quickly changing rules, and a way how to seem like he belongs to Berghof. In spite of this, his new name does not represent a symbol of belonging. As mentioned in the 5th chapter, the most powerful symbol would be the Hitlerjugend uniform. The letters from Anshel, which Pierrot gradually stops replying to, also represent a symbol of belonging, or more precisely not belonging to Paris anymore, since they illustrate his helplessness and inability to hold on to his previous life and who he was as a child.

For Ada, the sense of belonging is created through her brother and Susan, since they are the ones who give her the support she needs and accept her for who she is. The story uncovers a significant contrast between her old home in London and the new, loving home in the

country. The cottage, which offers safety and emotional warmth, can be seen as one of the symbols of belonging. Her healed foot could possibly also be perceived as one of the symbols since in the past, her clubfoot was repeatedly given as a reason why nobody would ever want her or love her.

Belonging with someone is a fundamental need of almost every human being, that is why it is not surprising these characters are no exceptions. As mentioned in the theoretical part, acceptance is essential for children´s well-being and positive psychological development. All the protagonists visibly yearn to belong somewhere and for somebody to support them, because it helps them to navigate difficult situations, especially if the situation means being uprooted and relocated to a completely new environment. The sense of belonging offers stability and reduces the feeling of loneliness, which all the protagonists are quite susceptible to.

Conclusion

The Second World War is the largest and most infamous military conflict in history. No other war has matched the scale and impact of the Second World War, so it is quite natural the topic remains relevant. It is still being reflected in art and in literature, mediating knowledge about these horrific events to people, who had not experienced it themselves. It is fortunate, to say the least, that children have the opportunity to access literature with the topic of wars that is tailor-made for them. The merits of the authors who had been and still are writing about historical events are immense. First of all, such literature serves as a medium. It can arouse interest and curiosity about historical events since they are conveyed in a casual way. Secondly, it can promote deeper understanding of the events and fill the gaps which would not be filled through traditional education. Another reason why such works are of great value not only for children´s audience, but also for adults, is that by paying attention to the characters, we can gain a deeper insight of how children understand such events. Especially autobiographical works offer a psychological insight into how children perceive concepts such as wars, politics, or religion; and how their perception of what is going on affects them.

The first two objectives of the thesis were to introduce the selected novels with the topic of the Second World War and draw attention to the importance of studying such literature. These two objectives should be considered achieved. The main objective of the thesis was to study the novels and conduct an analysis of the texts to find out, if and how the characters´ personalities change and what caused the transformation. Also this particular objective was tackled. In the theoretical-analytical part, the analysis of the texts revealed that the war and its direct consequences, like the evacuation or relocation, had an enormous impact on the characters and their development. They found themselves suddenly facing a new reality without any previous warning and they had to accept the new circumstances. The characters were forced to quickly adapt to the new environment and its demands, which led to significant changes in their personality and in some cases even to changes in their own perception of themselves. Based on the analysis, the personality perception and transformation were traced to familial background. As the theoretical part of the thesis suggests, children´s development is to a large extent linked to their social environment and their family plays a fundamental role. That proved to be true when it comes to the characters which were the subjects of the analysis. All characters whose familial environment changed for the better demonstrate a rather positive change in their personality, meanwhile those who lost the security of their family without any substitution found themselves manifesting some alarming personal traits

as a result. Another key feature already mentioned in the theoretical part is the importance of the sense of belonging, which also showed as essential in some of the character´s personality transformations. Guilt was another frequently discussed theme in some of the books. When it comes to positive personality development, the new circumstances are often shown to be an incentive for acquiring new competences, such as learning new languages or learning how to play in the countryside. In other words, the relocation is not depicted fully negatively in the chosen novels, which might be surprising.

The main message behind the thesis and its findings remains that military conflicts do not only affect adults (who, in fact, cause them) but innocent children as well. The importance to try to understand not only the material, but mainly social aftermath of wars is a key aspect of the effort of putting an end to them. It is fortunate that these past events are still talked about, and they remain a literature topic even nowadays. Such literature serves as a collective memory of humanity and hopefully prevents these grim parts of history from being forgotten.

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