



Pedagogická
fakulta
Faculty
of Education

Jihočeská univerzita
v Českých Budějovicích
University of South Bohemia
in České Budějovice

Jihočeská univerzita v Českých Budějovicích
Pedagogická fakulta
Katedra anglistiky

Bakalářská práce

The World of David Walliams and Roald Dahl's Children's Books. A Comparative Analysis

Svět dětských knih Davida Walliamse a Roalda
Dahla. Srovnávací analýza

Vypracovala: Eliška Tůmová
Vedoucí práce: PhDr. Alice Sukdolová, Ph.D.

České Budějovice 2023

Prohlášení

Prohlašuji, že svoji bakalářskou práci jsem vypracovala samostatně pouze s použitím pramenů a literatury uvedených v seznamu citované literatury.

Prohlašuji, že v souladu s § 47b zákona č. 111/1998 Sb. v platném znění souhlasím se zveřejněním své bakalářské práce, a to v nezkrácené podobě elektronickou cestou ve veřejně přístupné části databáze STAG provozované Jihočeskou univerzitou v Českých Budějovicích na jejích internetových stránkách, a to se zachováním mého autorského práva k odevzdanému textu této kvalifikační práce. Souhlasím dále s tím, aby toutéž elektronickou cestou byly v souladu s uvedeným ustanovením zákona č. 111/1998 Sb. zveřejněny posudky školitele a oponentů práce i záznam o průběhu a výsledku obhajoby kvalifikační práce. Rovněž souhlasím s porovnáním textu mé kvalifikační práce s databází kvalifikačních prací Theses.cz provozovanou Národním registrem vysokoškolských kvalifikačních prací a systémem na odhalování plagiátů.

V Českých Budějovicích dne 30. 6. 2023

Eliška Tůmová

Acknowledgement

I would like to sincerely thank my supervisor PhDr. Alice Sukdlová, Ph.D. for her guidance and support of my bachelor thesis and especially for her patient approach and helpful advice.

Poděkování

Tímto bych ráda poděkovala vedoucí mé bakalářské práce PhDr. Alici Sukdlové, Ph.D. za její odborné vedení, podporu a hlavně za její trpělivý přístup a užitečné rady.

Abstract

Through a comparative analysis of the prosaic work of two British authors of children's literature, the bachelor thesis will attempt to describe the dynamics of the development of literary works for children's readers in the context of British fantasy literature. By way of examples from works of the contemporary author David Walliams, the thesis will deal with themes, motifs and manner of narration of the author of humorous children's prose in comparison with the literary legacy of works of Roald Dahl. The thesis focuses its attention on the form of literary grotesque and hyperbole, which in the context of works for children's readers opens up controversial themes in the case of both mentioned authors.

Anotace

Práce se prostřednictvím srovnávací analýzy prozaické tvorby dvou britských autorů dětské literatury pokusí popsat dynamiku vývoje tvorby pro dětské čtenáře v kontextu britské fantastické literatury. Na příkladech z děl současného autora D. Walliamse se práce bude zabývat tématy, motivy a způsobem vyprávění autora humorné dětské prózy v porovnání s literárním odkazem děl Roalda Dahla. Pozornost se soustředí na formu literární grotesky a nadsázky, která v kontextu tvorby pro dětské čtenáře otevírá kontroverzní témata v případě obou uvedených autorů.

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
1 Roald Dahl.....	2
2 David Walliams	6
3 Illustrators of Dahl and Walliams' Books for Children	9
3.1 Quentin Blake.....	9
3.2 Tony Ross	10
4 The Most Famous Books by Dahl and Walliams.....	12
4.1 Charlie and the Chocolate Factory	12
4.1.1 Plot Summary	12
4.1.2 Charlie Bucket.....	15
4.2 Fantastic Mr Fox	16
4.2.1 Plot Summary	16
4.2.2 Mr Fox.....	18
4.3 Billionaire Boy	19
4.3.1 Plot Summary	19
4.3.2 Joe Spud	21
4.4 The Ice Monster.....	22
4.4.1 Plot Summary	22
4.4.2 Elsie	24
4.4.3 Woolly	24
5 Comparison of the Works of Roald Dahl and David Walliams.....	26
5.1 Comparison of the Children's Main Characters	26
5.2 Comparison of the Animal Main Characters	27
5.3 Dahl and Walliams' Styles of Writing	28
5.4 The Most Frequent Themes in Dahl and Walliams' Books.....	29
5.5 The Use of Linguistic and Literary Elements	32
5.6 The form of Grotesque and Hyperbole.....	33
Conclusion.....	36
Bibliography.....	39
Primary Sources	39
Secondary Sources	39
Internet Sources	40

Introduction

This bachelor thesis will deal with the analysis of Roald Dahl's work for children in comparison with children's books by David Walliams. The main goal is to analyse their most famous novels for children and on the basis of them to compare the most significant features of their works, especially themes, way of narration, characteristics of the main protagonist and application of some linguistic and literary elements.

The theoretical part of this thesis, which is represented by the first three chapters, will introduce both these famous British authors in terms of their personal life and writing career. Moreover, this part will also present Quentin Blake and Tony Ross as the illustrators of Dahl and Walliams' books for children, more specifically their lives, collaborations with the writers and additionally their own authorships will be mentioned.

The fourth and fifth chapter constitute the practical part of the thesis. In the fourth chapter I will concentrate on the most popular books from both authors, it will include the fundamental information about them, the novel's plot summary and the attention will be as well given to the main characters of the stories. The special focus will be given to Roald Dahl's books *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (1964) and *Fantastic Mr Fox* (1970) and David Walliams's books *Billionaire Boy* (2010) and *The Ice Monster* (2018).

The second chapter of the practical part, which also serves as the last chapter of the thesis, will draw a comparison between the children's work of Roald Dahl from 20th century and the contemporary writer for children David Walliams. Very frequently, these two eminent personalities are mutually compared for their similar sense of humour, writing style, and particularly for the serious issues they explore through their novels. Therefore, this part will be dedicated to contrast the most conspicuous features of their works, as well as to examine the distinctive and similar attributes of their stories. The main attention will be turned to the main children's and animal characters, themes and manners of narration of the authors and equally to the form of literary grotesque and hyperbole in their stories.

1 Roald Dahl

Roald Dahl was a British author of children's literature and also literature for adults. He wrote many popular imaginative and impudent books for children's readers and teenagers, which gave him durable fame.¹ His stories are read all over the world, altogether his six-teen stories for children have been translated into 68 languages. So, we can consider him as one of the world's greatest storytellers. It is interesting that he wrote the majority of his works from a small white brick hut in his back garden in Buckinghamshire where he lived for most of his life.²

Roald Dahl was born on 13 September 1916 in Wales. His parents came from Norway and the name Roald they gave him after a famous Norwegian explorer, who as a first person in the world reached the South Pole in 1911. His father, Harald, was from a lower-middle-class family, in his childhood he had lost his left arm in an accident, nonetheless it did not influence his successful career. He got quite rich doing a ship business in Cardiff. Roald Dahl's mother, Sofie, was Harald's second wife, his first wife died very young, and he was left with his two children. She unlike Harald came from a bourgeois family, she was smart and well educated. Sofie and Harald had three daughters and one son, Roald, whom she loved the most. Their mother narrated them many great stories about monsters, trolls and other fairy creatures from Norway, which was also Roald's significant prowess. Dahls spoke English and at home they used Norwegian as well, they were a close and happy family. But when Roald was only three years old, his seven-year-old sister died and some time later his father too. His widowed mother had to raise five children in total and in addition she was pregnant again. She became very capable, confident and brave, and Roald very admired her for it.

Roald went to a boys' school, he really took to writing, but he was not good at spelling, despite it he started writing diary, which he kept in secret. Every time on the way home from school he together with his schoolmates stopped by the sweet shop. The old woman, who ran it, was unpleasant and dirty, so the children tricked her, but in the school, they were punished for it, with which Roald's mother disagreed a lot and sent him to another school.³

Thanks to his deceased father, they had no financial difficulties and Roald just as his siblings could go to English boarding school as their father wished. During the years he attended

¹ Roald Dahl. *Encyclopaedia Britannica* [online]. [cit. 2023-06-19]. Retrieved from: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Roald-Dahl>

² *Roald Dahl: Official Website* [online]. [cit. 2023-06-18]. Retrieved from: <https://roalddahl.com>

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

Repton School, the local Cadbury chocolate company occasionally sent cardboard boxes full of new chocolates to the boys to be tested by them. Each type of sweets they awarded points and Roald became fond of chocolate. It was of course a crucial inspiration for him to write his most famous work, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, which was published 35 years later.⁴

Eventually, he finished the school in 1934 and he really desired for any adventure, he did not want to go to university anymore, although his mother really wanted him to try for Oxford or Cambridge. He had a modest income from his late father, so because of no pressure to find a job, he decided to go abroad. Next year he joined some exploring society, with which he attended a trip across remote and unexplored Newfoundland in northern Canada. He learnt how to survive in the nature out of the modern civilization only with the equipment in his backpack, because the members of the expedition were hungry, wet and numb with cold for most of the time. After this hard and strenuous experience, he returned to England and took up a job in an oil company there. After some time, he did not enjoy it anymore and wanted to travel abroad again. It took almost four long years until he was transferred to East Africa. He made a two-week journey in Kenya with his company and also visited Tanzania, he wrote letters to his mother about his life there and sent her some souvenirs as a gift. In total, he spent a year in Africa.⁵

When the Second World War burst out, he joined army in 1939 and a year later he became a fighter pilot officer in the British Royal Air Force. However, he had a dangerous accident in Libya. He was flying in a biplane to a secret air base, but he could not find the landing runway, because it was hidden from the enemies. It was getting dark and after an hour of unsuccessful looking for the airstrip, his machine was low on fuel. He was forced to do an emergency landing, he had only one chance, because there were many rocks and boulders everywhere in the desert. Unfortunately, the plane crashed and burst into flames, but pilot from another plane pulled him out of it and saved his life, but Roald suffered a severe injury.⁶ Dahl delineated the crash together with his experience from the East Africa in *Going Solo* (1986). He kept on fighting as a Royal Air Force pilot until the World War II ended in 1945, he served also in Greece and in Syria. Afterwards, he started writing about his war adventures in Africa for

⁴ TREGLOWN, Jeremy. *Roald Dahl: a biography*. London: Faber and Faber, 1995. ISBN 0-571-16572-9.

⁵ STURROCK, Donald. *Storyteller: The Authorized Biography of Roald Dahl*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2011. ISBN 9781439189764.

⁶ KELLEY, True. *Who Was Roald Dahl?*. USA: Penguin Workshop, 2012. ISBN 978-0-448-46146-5.

many magazines and that is why he is such a famous person, not many people know him as a war hero, but everyone associates him with his great ingenious stories, especially for children.⁷

After war he was assigned to work at the British Embassy in the United States of America, where he met the novelist C.S. Forester, who persuaded him to write about his war adventures for magazines and then he wanted to become a full-time writer. His first children's book *The Gremlins* was published in 1943, but many claim that *James and the Giant Peach* in 1961 was his first children's story. Walt Disney Studio wanted to make *The Gremlins* a full-length movie, but it has never happened. In New York City he met his future wife Patricia Neal, who was an American actress. They had five children overall, four daughters and only one son. Their son, Theo, suffered a serious accident. When he was a baby, a taxi struck the pram, where he was lying, and his brain was damaged. The family moved back to the United Kingdom, Theo recovered, but they were not doing well. Dahl's pains from the plane crash were coming back, their first daughter Olivia regrettably died at the age of seven and his wife, Patricia, suffered several strokes. He helped her recover, their fifth child was born, and he developed a positive outlook on life.⁸

Dahl attributed the success of his works for children's readers to his own offspring because he started writing humorous and riveting stories for them, so that he would have something to read to them before going to bed. He also dedicated his first children's book, *James and the Giant Peach*, to them. It was published in 1961 and subsequently very popular, so Dahl then turned primarily to writing the children's literature. His novels dealt with serious topics, unlike most other authors by that time, he was not afraid to use the motifs of bullying, death, violence, moral values poverty and others. Often the evil characters were adults, who treated the children awfully. In 1964 Dahl wrote his most famous work, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, which was twice adapted into the feature film *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory* (1971) and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (2005). Afterwards he wrote a sequel, *Charlie and the Great Glass Elevator* (1972). Among his most popular books for children belong *Fantastic Mr Fox* (1970), also adapted into animated film, *The Enormous Crocodile* (1978), *The BFG* (1982), adapted into movie in 1989 and 2016, *The Witches* (1983) and *Matilda* (1988), of which the second film was released in 2022.⁹

⁷ TREGLOWN, Jeremy. *Roald Dahl: a biography*. London: Faber and Faber, 1995. ISBN 0-571-16572-9.

⁸ MCELMEEL, Sharron L. *100 Most Popular Children's Authors*. USA: Libraries Unlimited, 1999. ISBN 1-56308-646-8.

⁹ Roald Dahl. *Encyclopaedia Britannica* [online]. [cit. 2023-06-19]. Retrieved from: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Roald-Dahl>

The union with Patricia lasted for thirty years until they got divorced in 1983. In the same year Roald married his second wife, Felicity Crosland, who was a co-worker of Patricia and was much younger than Roald, about twenty years. An also in the same year he won one of Britain's most prestigious awards in children's literature, the Whitbread Award, for *The Witches*.¹⁰ More than half of his career he spent writing children's book. He also made his cranky version of some well-known English folktales, for instance *Cinderella*, *Jack and the Beanstalk*, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, *Goldilocks* and others. Due to his humorous and ironical approach to some serious themes, his work has not been without controversy. Some found his novels nasty, macabre, violent and inappropriate for young readers, but Dahl claimed that the evil characters deserved some kind of punishment.

Roald Dahl died on 23 November 1990 of leukaemia at the age of seventy-four. In 1996 his widow, Felicity, opened the Roald Dahl Children's Gallery at the Buckinghamshire, visitors can take a look at his personal memorabilia, manuscripts and other related materials. Nowadays, his books are still best-sellers, and the film or stage adaptations are often remade.¹¹

¹⁰ BURGER, Peter. *Contemporary Legends in the Short Stories of Roald Dahl: Contemporary Legend* (ns 5). The Netherlands: Leiden University, 2002. ISSN 0963-8334, p. 136-158

¹¹ MCELMEEL, Sharron L. *100 Most Popular Children's Authors*. USA: Libraries Unlimited, 1999. ISBN 1-56308-646-8.

2 David Walliams

David Walliams is a British actor, comedian, television presenter, writer, charity fundraiser and, above all, children's book author. His original name is David Edward Williams, but he uses changed version of his surname since he joined the actor's trade union.¹² His successful writing career began in 2008 when he concluded a contract with the publisher HarperCollins and wrote his first book for children, *The Boy in the Dress*, which became an immediate bestseller. He is a brilliant author, he has written ones of the most favourite books ever and he is also one of the biggest selling children's authors who have started writing since the year 2000. His books are translated into more than fifty-four languages, and he has sold over fifty million copies worldwide.¹³

David Walliams was born on 20 August 1971 in Banstead, a suburb of London, where he also grew up. His father, Peter Williams, was an engineer for London Transport for long fifty years. He was obsessed with railway bridges and tunnels. His mother, Kathleen Williams, was a laboratory technician, she helped the science teachers with experiments at Sutton Grammar School. She was selfless, generous and warm-hearted, her whole life she was doing things for others, she helped in the local community centre until she retired at the age of sixty-five. He spent childhood with his two years older sister, Julie, who these days is a teacher in a primary school. During his boyhood he was a Cub Scout, and he spent a lot of time in nature on the camps, but often felt isolated and alone. Even when he was young, he admired James Bond, every year the family made a trip by train to see a film with him in London cinema. Later in the years he even filmed a documentary on him and nowadays he is still a big fan of James Bond. Walliams studied at Reigate Grammar School in Surrey and then he went to study drama at the University of Bristol, where he obtained a degree, Bachelor of Arts. During his holidays at university, he performed at the National Youth Theatre, where he met Matt Lucas, who became his comedy partner and friend.¹⁴

Subsequently, Walliams and Lucas started writing and acting together, they were startlingly successful with the sketch comedy *Mash and Peas* (1996) and the parody *Sir Bernard's Stately Homes* (1999), both broadcasted on British television. They became much more famous with a humorous interview show *Rock Profile* (1999–2001, 2009), where

¹² David Walliams. *Encyclopaedia Britannica* [online]. [cit. 2023-06-20]. Retrieved from: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/David-Walliams>

¹³ *The World of David Walliams: Official Website* [online]. [cit. 2023-06-20]. Retrieved from: <https://www.worldofdavidwalliams.com>

¹⁴ WALLIAMS, David. *Camp David*. London: Penguin Books, 2013. ISBN 978-0241957721.

Walliams and Lucas dressed up as Elton John, Bono, and Liam Gallagher, the front man of the 1990s British band Oasis and others. Nonetheless the highest popularity and viewing had their show *Little Britain*, which was originally aired on the radio and then they adapted it to television in 2003. *Little Britain* is a sketch comedy series which was on the BBC in the United Kingdom from 2003 to 2009 and then it was broadcasted even on the American HBO from 2008 for one season. Walliams and Lucas, both personally acted there, they represented eccentric and grotesque characters living all over the Great Britain. The show was oftentimes described as coarse and controversial, but regardless it was enormously successful, had a wide audience and people began to use some popular catchphrases from it in their speech. *Little Britain* was awarded numerous prizes, for instance it won the British Academy of Film and Television Arts award for the best comedy series in 2004 and 2005.¹⁵

His charity work includes long-distance swimming, and he gained an admirable attention for it. He successfully swam across the English Channel to France in 2006, which was twenty-one-mile unaided swim and took him ten hours and a half. He did it for the purpose of raising money for the organization Sport Relief, for which he gained over one million pounds in donations. In the same year he was honoured at the BBC Sports Personality of the Year Award, which is a special recognition ceremony for a sportsperson. In 2008, again for the Sport Relief, he swam across the Strait of Gibraltar from Spain to Morocco. He completed the twelve-mile distance in about four hours and a half. His last grand project was, when he beat illness and injury to swim the length of the Thames River in 2011. In the course of the eight-days-long swim he won over the entire nation and raised colossal two million and a half pounds.¹⁶

Thanks to the success of *Little Britain*, Walliams received many offers for acting roles, which were very miscellaneous. So, as an actor he played in the TV movie *Capturing Mary* (2007), *Dinner for Schmucks* (2010), in the television miniseries *Partners in Crime* (2015). However, he is best known for his co-operation with Matt Lucas, they both created and starred in the British television series *Come Fly with Me*, where they portrayed an extraordinary flight and ground staff at the airport. Thereafter another TV series written by Walliams, *Big School*, depicted an anxious science teacher. Walliams also appeared on stage several times, for example in *No Man's Land* (2008) and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2013). Between the years 2012 and 2022 he joined other three judges on the famous talent show *Britain's Got Talent*.

¹⁵ David Walliams. *Encyclopaedia Britannica* [online]. [cit. 2023-06-20]. Retrieved from: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/David-Walliams>

¹⁶ WALLIAMS, David. *Camp David*. London: Penguin Books, 2013. ISBN 978-0241957721.

Moreover all these achievements, he devoted himself to writing children's literature. After publishing his first work for children, *The Boy in the Dress* (2008), he became well-known among young readers, and they grew fond of the story. The novel follows a twelve-year-old boy, who plays soccer, cross-dresses and likes jokes. Together with his second book, *Mr. Stink* (2009), it reached the highest ranks in selling in the United Kingdom. They were also compared to the works of Roald Dahl. Arguably owing to the fact, that they were provided pictures by Quentin Blake, who illustrated all of Roald Dahl's books for children. David Walliams is therefore described as one of the fastest-growing children's authors in Britain. He subsequently continued to write children's book, he published *Billionaire Boy* (2010), *Gangsta Granny* (2011), *Demon Dentist* (2013), *Awful Auntie* (2014), *Grandpa's Great Escape* (2015), *The Midnight Gang* (2016) and *Gangsta Granny Strikes Again!* (2021).¹⁷ The cause why Walliams is so frequently described as an admirable successor of Roald Dahl is perhaps because the book *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* significantly influenced him. It was the first book that he read on his own and he considers it as one of the greatest children's books of all time.¹⁸

Numerous television, film or stage adaptations were made according to Walliams' books, including *Billionaire Boy*, *Gangsta Granny*, *Awful Auntie*, *The Midnight Gang* and others. Walliams personally represented some characters in a few of them. Walliams further published such short story collections as *The World's Worst Children* series, *The World's Worst Parents*, *Teachers* and *Pets* and also, he created some picture books for the little readers, for example *The Slightly Annoying Elephant* (2013), *The First Hippo on the Moon* (2014) and *The Bear Who Went Boo!* (2015). In 2012 he wrote his own autobiography *Camp David*. He keeps his personal life in privacy, he is divorced and has a son, Alfred. In 2017 he was appointed Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) for services to charity and arts.¹⁹

¹⁷ David Walliams. *Encyclopaedia Britannica* [online]. [cit. 2023-06-20]. Retrieved from: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/David-Walliams>

¹⁸ WALLIAMS, David. David Walliams: 'I haven't read any of my own books – I hear they are wonderful'. *The Guardian* [online]. 2021 [cit. 2023-06-20]. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2021/jul/02/david-walliams-i-havent-read-any-of-my-own-books-i-hear-they-are-wonderful>

¹⁹ David Walliams. *Encyclopaedia Britannica* [online]. [cit. 2023-06-20]. Retrieved from: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/David-Walliams>

3 Illustrators of Dahl and Walliams' Books for Children

In my bachelor thesis I would also like to briefly introduce you to the illustrators of both Roald Dahl and David Walliams, because the graphic arts also play besides the story itself very significant role especially in literature for children. They often pick out the book according to its pictures inside or on the front cover, because it is what catches their attention first. Quentin Blake illustrated all of Roald Dahl's children's books and the first two that David Walliams published. Tony Ross provided drawings to the rest of Walliams' novels or short story collections.

3.1 Quentin Blake

His full name is Quentin Saxby Blake, and he was born on 16 December 1932 in Kent in England. He is not only English illustrator of children's books, but also author. He has illustrated or written over 500 books, but he is best known for his co-operation with Roald Dahl on his children's novels. During his happy childhood he loved drawing, and he spent hours on it every day since he was able to pick up a pencil. At grammar school, when he was sixteen years old, his first cartoons were published in *Punch*, a humour magazine. Before university, he was on National Service for two years, he served in the Royal Army Educational Corps. There he illustrated his first proper book, *English Parade*, which was a booklet to help teach soldiers who cannot read. Quentin Blake studied English at the University of Cambridge, successfully graduated, and went on to University of London to obtain a teaching diploma. Afterwards he also attended some life-classes at Chelsea Art School as a part-time student because he wanted to learn more about drawing and painting. When he illustrated his first book in 1960, *A Drink of Water*, written by John Yeoman, he still continued to draw for many magazines. In 1965 he started teaching English at the Royal College of Arts, where he worked for over twenty years and some time he served as a head of the Illustration department. In 1968 he wrote his first book for children, *Patrick*, illustrated in full colour, which was a kind of protest because he was seen as a black-and-white illustrator. He asserted that he was never asked to do anything in colour, so he had to write his own story. He is mainly known for his collaboration with many famous writers, which began in 1974 with Russell Hoban, Michael Rosen, Joan Aiken and most popularly known Roald Dahl. In his early career he illustrated mostly just covers of books without illustrations inside, but later he almost ever worked on books as a whole. He had also illustrated some classic books, like *A Christmas Carol*, *Animal Farm*, *Don Quixote*, *Candide* and *Waiting for Godot*. Blake's first book with Dahl was *The Enormous Crocodile* in 1978,

followed by *The Twist*, *The BFG*, *The Witches*, *Matilda* and many others. Their partnership lasted to Roald Dahl's death in 1990. Later on, in 1094 he was asked for illustrating the early Roald Dahl's novels which had been published prior to their collaboration. For example, we will find the illustration of Quentin Blake in *Fantastic Mr Fox* in 1996 edition²⁰ and in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* in 1995 edition.²¹ Blake received many honours and his works won numerous awards during his career. The most important, he won, is the Hans Christian Andersen Award in 2002, which is the world's most prestigious award for children's books that a children's illustrator can win. When the post of Children's Laureate in England was created, Blake became the first person to hold the position for a two-year term and he received a knighthood for 'services to illustration' in 2013. He illustrated the first two books, *The Boy in Dress* (2008) and *Mr. Stink* (2009), written by David Walliams. These were the only books he has collaborated on with him. Both of the stories were very popular in the UK and have been adapted for television and the stage. In 2017, twenty-five years after the first publication of *Billy and the Minpins*, Blake illustrated it, because it was the only children's title by his friend and collaborator Roald Dahl for which he had not provided pictures before. Blake has always made his living as an illustrator, and nowadays when he is retired, he is still drawing too.²²

3.2 Tony Ross

Just as I mentioned the illustrator of Roald Dahl's books for children, so I would like to shortly introduce you to the illustrator of majority of David Walliams' works for children, Tony Ross. He uses this abbreviated form of his full name, which is Anthony Lee Ross. He is a British author and brilliant illustrator of many children's books. Tony Ross was born on 10 August 1938 in London. He is a British author and brilliant illustrator of many children's books. Tony Ross was born on 10 August 1938 in London, but for the sake of the Second World War his parents decided to go with the baby away from under bombing London to the north. Despite it he lived out happy childhood with parents there. His father earned their livelihood only as a conjuror, Tony loved the idea, that someone can make money by making fun and extraordinary things. Tony's mother was loving and caring and that was what he admired her for. He was drawing already at an early age, he was good at it and progressively he was getting better. Maybe that was also because of his lack of success in other subjects at school. Ross enrolled at the Liverpool School of Art and Design where he obtained a degree, during it he was selling his

²⁰ DAHL, Roald. *Fantastic Mr Fox*. London: Puffin Books, 2016. ISBN 978-0-141-36544-2.

²¹ DAHL, Roald. *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. London: Puffin Books, 2007. ISBN 978-0-141-32271-1.

²² *Quentin Blake: Official Website* [online]. [cit. 2023-06-23]. Retrieved from: <https://www.quentinblake.com>

cartoons to magazines. After finishing school, he went through several jobs, such as a graphic designer, a cartoonist and an advertising art director, later he taught art at a university. Tony Ross had three happy marriages, he is twice divorced, because he was not the easiest person to get on with. He illustrated more than 800 books, but he is best known for writing and illustrating the *Horrid Henry* and *Little Princess* series of books. *Horrid Henry* is a series of books written by American author Francesca Simon. The *Little Princess* series he started writing in 1986, the main protagonist is a vigorous four-year-old girl, whose members of family and friends help her to learn important lessons. Both of the series have been adapted for television. In his early career he illustrated a great deal of fairy tales. Tony Ross also illustrated some editions of Roald Dahl's books for children, including *Fantastic Mr Fox* and *The Magic Finger*. Ross fondly remembers their collaboration, he loved being in Dahl's company, because it was delightful and pleasant. For David Walliams he illustrated more than twenty children's books, including, but not limited to *Billionaire Boy* (2010), *Gangsta Granny* (2011), *Demon Dentist* (2013), *Grandpa's Great Escape* (2015), *The Ice Monster* (2018), short story collections of *World's Worst Children*, *Teachers and Parents* and others.^{23 24 25}

²³ FERGUSON, Donna. *Tony Ross: 'I wasn't at all like Horrid Henry when I was a boy'* [online]. 2022 [cit. 2023-06-24]. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2022/may/21/this-much-i-know-tony-ross-i-wasnt-at-all-like-horrid-henry-when-i-was-a-boy>

²⁴ GREENSTREET, Rosanna. *Q&A: Tony Ross* [online]. 2013 [cit. 2023-06-24]. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2013/apr/06/tony-ross-interview>

²⁵ FLOOD, Alison. *Horrid Henry artist Tony Ross named UK libraries' most borrowed illustrator* [online]. 2017 [cit. 2023-06-24]. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/jul/17/horrid-henry-artist-tony-ross-named-uk-libraries-most-borrowed-illustrator>

4 The Most Famous Books by Dahl and Walliams

4.1 Charlie and the Chocolate Factory

This famous children's novel is written by British author Roald Dahl. He published it in 1964. Nowadays, it is still very popular, possibly it is also mainly because of the modern and very successful film adaptation with starring Johnny Depp as Mr Willy Wonka. The story is full of amusement, fun and humorous incidents, but on the other hand it deals with several serious issues, like the power of kindness, good and bad characters, incredible potential of young people and furthermore the poverty, starvation and value of family relationships. We will find there many new made-up words by Roald Dahl, which predominantly name the particular type of sweets or of its flavour and which sounds funny. For instance, whizzpopping, strawbunkles, hippodumplings or natterbox.²⁶

4.1.1 Plot Summary

Little boy, Charlie Bucket lived with his mother and father and their parents (his grandparents) together in a small wooden cottage on the edge of a great town. The life was extremely uncomfortable for them, because the tiny house, which had only two rooms overall, was not large enough for seven people. The four old grandparents shared the only bed they had, and the rest of the family slept upon mattress on the floor. Particularly, in the wintertime it was awful since the freezing cold winds blew across the floor all nights. But the family were too poor that they could not afford to buy a better house. Charlie's father, Mr Bucket was the only person with a job, he worked in a toothpaste factory, but he was not paid very much money. Charlie's mother, Mrs Bucket had to take care of the elderly, because they were not able to get out of the bed. They had not even enough money to buy proper food, so they only could afford cabbage, cabbage soup or the boiled potatoes itself. The only thing Charlie was looking forward to the whole year was chocolate. The whole family saved up their money for one special occasion and only once a year, on Charlie's birthday, he was presented with one small bar of chocolate.

In the town, within sight of the house, there was an enormous chocolate factory, so Charlie could smell the melting chocolate on his way to and from school every day. It was the largest and most famous in the whole world. It was Wonka's Factory, named after its owner Mr Willy Wonka, the greatest inventor and maker of chocolates. The whole factory was surrounded

²⁶ DAHL, Roald. *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. London: Puffin Books, 2007. ISBN 978-0-141-32271-1.

by a high wall with huge iron gates, but no one ever saw anyone come out or go in there. Because of spies from another companies Mr Willy Wonka dismissed all his employees and he closed the factory. One day, the factory started working again, but nobody knew who the secret workers were.

Albeit, the family was so destitute, they enjoyed a lot their time together. Every evening this house became a happy place, when Charlie sat on their bed and listened their amazing stories. One evening, Mr Bucket came home holding the newspaper, which said that the Wonka's Factory would be opened to lucky few. Mr Wonka hid five Golden Ticket into his ordinary chocolate bars and would allow five children who would find them to visit his factory. Buckets thought that there is not a hope, because Charlie only got one bar a year, but his birthday was coming soon. First two finders were Augustus Gloop and Veruca Salt. Augustus was greedy and awfully fat, he ate so many bars of chocolate a day, that it was impossible for him not to find one Ticket. Veruca, an immensely spoiled child, got the ticket thanks to her father, who bought all the Wonka's chocolate in the town, sent it to his factory to his workers who started to unwrap the bars and after few days they found the second Ticket. The whole world went mad of buying chocolate and searching for the Golden Tickets.

On Charlie's birthday the whole family was so nervous and excited, when he was unwrapping the present, but unfortunately, he was not so lucky and did not find the golden paper in it. Newspaper announced two more finders, who were Violet Beauregarde and Mike Teavee. Violet, a girl who chews gum all days long, was very insolent to her mother and reporters. She broke a record in chewing one piece of gum for three long months. Mike Teavee, a boy who does nothing but watch television, was notably annoyed with all the visitors in their household. He did not want to be interrupted during watching film with gangsters, machine guns and lots of shooting. He was hung with many plastic guns. The grandparents were very concerned about how children behave nowadays. Grandfather Joe wanted a lot Charlie to find the Golden Ticket, so he secretly gave him all his savings and Charlie ran to the nearest shop to buy a bar of chocolate. Regrettably they were not so lucky again and no Golden Ticket was there. In the course of time the weather turned very cold and first came the snow. The cabbagy meals became even thinner, because the factory, where Mr Bucker worked closed down and he could not find another job that paid the same. Owing to it everybody in the house began to starve and the entire excitement over the Golden Ticket had been forgotten.

One day, when Charlie was walking back home, he found a silver fifty-pence piece in the snow, he went to the nearest shop and bought chocolate. He was so ravenous that he gobbled

it up promptly, but he still felt hunger, so he bought another. He tore off the wrapper and suddenly he saw a flash of gold. He found the last Golden Ticket. The shop was quickly filled up with curious passers-by, and people even offered Charlie to buy a ticket from him, Charlie still could not believe it, so the shopkeeper told him to run straight home. The family was as astounded as Charlie and alongside they were delighted of course. The instruction on the Golden Ticket allowed children to bring with them one or two members of their own family to look after them. At last, they decided that Grandfather Joe would go with Charlie to the factory and thereafter the crowd of newspapermen and photographers filled up the tiny main room.

Outside the gates of Wonka's factory waited flocks of people hoping that they would see at least something of the factory. Mr Willy Wonka welcomed them, he was a little man and seemed a bit extraordinary. He had a black top hat, purple tailcoat, green trousers, grey gloves and in one hand he carried a fine walking cane. He looked clever, full of life and he moved, acted and spoke very quickly. In total nine adults and five children entered the Wonka's factory and the heavy gates closed. The factory inside was really enormous, they followed Mr Wonka to the greatest and most important room there, which was The Chocolate Room. No one expected to see a lovely valley with green meadows and wide brown river with an amazing waterfall, but what was the most astonishing was the fact that everything there was eatable, from the grass, flowers, trees to the brown water which was hot melted chocolate. In this room they saw Oompa-Loompas, the unknown workers, for the first time. They were tiny men with funny long hair, Mr Wonka brought them there from thick dangerous jungles. They loved dancing, music, jokes and making up songs.

During the wonderful tour of the factory, the bad qualities of the other children manifest themselves and gradually the group became smaller and smaller. First of all, they lost Augustus, who fell into the chocolate river while he was drinking it and was sucked by the huge pipe. After it they went down the river to see Mr Wonka's latest inventions, for example everlasting gobstoppers or hair toffee. When Mr Wonka was showing them one of his new chewing-gum meal, Violet took one, although it had not been tested yet, and she turned into a huge blueberry. In the Nut Room they lost Veruca because she set her mind on that she wanted one of those squirrels at home. The squirrels identified her as a bad walnut shell and sent her down the rubbish chute. Mr Wonka took the remaining Mike and Charlie by the Great Glass Lift to the Television Room, according to Mike's choice. He tested there how to transport the bar of chocolate to somebody's house via the television set. When Mike saw it, he was so amazed that he wanted to be the first person to be sent by television, he jumped in front of the camera and

disappeared. Whenever you send something by this dangerous process, it always comes out much smaller, so Mike emerged in the screen not more than an inch tall.

At that moment only Charlie was left, and Mr Wonka zealously congratulated him, they got in the lift and pressed the button Up and Out. The lift went faster and higher until they broke through the roof, they saw through the glass floor the other changed children going home with the trucks of sweets. Then Mr Wonka said Charlie, that he decided to give the whole chocolate factory to him, because he was old enough and he did not have his own descendant or family and that is why he sent out the Golden Tickets, to find a child's winner he liked the best. Charlie did not want to leave his family, because his grandparents were so old, they could not get out of bed. Mr Wonka figured it out, they used the glass lift to break through the roof of Buckets' house. The family could not believe it and was against it at first, but then Mr Wonka, Charlie and Grandfather Joe pushed the bed into the lift and Charlie's parents too. The lift rose up and from this moment on, the whole family would not starve in the Charlie's Chocolate Factory.

4.1.2 Charlie Bucket

Charlie Bucket is the main children's character of the story. He lives with his immediate family in destitution. Unlike the other children in the story, he is polite, well-behaved, kind-hearted, selfless, honest and generous. He loves his family a lot, every evening he is glad to come to his grandparent's room to listen their stories and for the old ones it is the brightest part of the whole day, they forget about the hunger and poverty for a while. We can see his generosity, for example, when he insists on that each member of the family will taste his birthday chocolate, even though he is very hungry or when Mr Wonka gave him the whole factory, he initially thought about that he cannot leave his family. Altogether, the value of family is very important to him. We can consider him a moral example for the children, and he symbolizes the very opposite of the bad qualities of the other children. In some ways, Charlie is similar to Mr Wonka, who is hospitable, affable, kind, hardworking and imaginative, but on the contrary, he has no family and lives alone only with Oompa-Loompas. During the tour of the factory Charlie is modest, obeys Mr Wonka's directions and he is also worried about the other nasty children if they will actually be alive. Perhaps, this is what helped him to win the prize, he always hoped for better life.²⁷

²⁷ DAHL, Roald. *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. London: Puffin Books, 2007. ISBN 978-0-141-32271-1.

4.2 Fantastic Mr Fox

Second children's novel by British author Roald Dahl, I want to focus on, is the story *Fantastic Mr Fox*. The first edition was published in 1970. The book is full of anthropomorphic characters, who try to outwit the humans in the story. The reader sympathizes with the animals, although they illegally steal the food from the farmers. The story is full of irony, humour and funny incidents, using which it depicts some serious topics, like the moral values, the importance of family and friendship, cleverness and stupidity, environmental destruction and usage of modern technologies. Thanks to that it is very famous and successful story, which has been adapted into an animated film version that may have also helped to gain the popularity of the story.²⁸

4.2.1 Plot Summary

There were three farms that were owned by three nasty, mean and rich men. Farmer Boggis kept thousands of chickens on his farm. He was enormously fat because he ate many fatty chicken meals with dumplings a day. Farmer Bunce, a duck-and-goose farmer, was a short man with a bulky belly, his food consisted of doughnuts and goose livers, which caused him many stomach aches and bad mood. The last, farmer Bean kept thousands of turkeys on his farm, and he had an extensive apple orchard there. Unlike the other two farmers, he was very thin, because he never ate any food, instead of it he drank a lot a strong apple cider he produced. He was also the cleverest of them all.

On a hill above the valley where were the three farms, there was a hole where lived Mr Fox, his wife, Mrs Fox, and their four small foxes. Each day when it got dark, Mr Fox crept down into the valley and stole some food from the farmers. They knew it very well and many times they tried to catch or shot the robber. Nevertheless, they were unsuccessful which made them wild with rage because they did not want to give anything of their yield away. Luckily for Mr Fox, he was too clever for them and always managed to escape, thanks to his brilliant sense of smell. One day, farmer Bean came up with a plan, they would hide near the foxes' hole, wait until Mr Fox would emerge and then they would shoot him down. The next evening, unsuspecting Mr Fox was preparing for a night robbery and albeit he was always especially careful, this time he was not so lucky. Just right when he appeared outside the entrance to the hole the three hiding farmers started shooting. Mr Fox quickly jumped back into his hole and bullets were flying all around him. Fortunately, he got only the tail but missed the fox. Farmers

²⁸ DAHL, Roald. *Fantastic Mr Fox*. London: Puffin Books, 2016. ISBN 978-0-141-36544-2.

were angry, because it would take a few days before the fox got hungry to come out, so they decided to dig him out.

Meanwhile in the hole Mr Fox's wound was bleeding and he was very glum and sad that he lost his tail, which was the finest one for miles around. This time they went to sleep without the dinner, but suddenly the most frightening sound terrified them. They heard the sound of shovels digging into the soil and they were wide awake in one second. At the time when small stones and bits of earth began falling from the roof of the tunnel and they saw the sharp end of the shovel, Mr Fox came up with an idea. Foxes can dig quicker than men, so immediately all six of them began to dig. They went downwards deeper and deeper below the surface of the ground and were safe for a while. Boggis, Bunce and Bean were so tired the next morning and had enough of digging, that they brought their two tractors with mechanical shovels. It was a dreaded sight, the two machines were biting huge amounts of soil out of the hill, trees were falling, stones were thrown away and the noise was ear-splitting. Scared foxes started digging again hotly pursued by these iron monsters and in the afternoon, there were no hill, the farmers hollowed out a huge crater. Farmers were determined that they would not give it up until they would catch the fox, but they also were very tired, so they switched off the tractors and decided to camp there and starve the foxes out.

They were right, after three days the foxes were starving to death. Fortunately, Mr Fox had another fantastic idea, but he did not tell anyone what it was. Mrs Fox was too weak to work further, so just five of them dug not downward but this time sideways. The small foxes wished to know where they were going, but Mr Fox did not want to tell them, because in case of fail they would be very disappointed. They proceeded very slowly, but finally they got to the chicken house. Foxes jumped for joy, they drank water and Mr Fox expertly killed three hens, which he gave to the biggest of his children to run back to his mother and to prepare a feast. Mrs Fox thought that she was dreaming, however she started preparing the chickens. The four left foxes were digging further ahead and unexpectedly a head of the Badger peeked at them from the roof. He, his son and other animals, like moles, rabbits and weasels were confused due to the commotion all over the countryside. Mr Fox knew it was his fault, so he invited the other animals to join them for a feast. The Small Badger spread the good news and the Badger helped them with digging. They got to the Bunce's storehouse filled with the finest ducks and geese, smoked hams and bacons. Mr Fox chose the most delicious pieces, and the smallest fox reminded him to take some carrots for rabbits. So, they loaded on all the chosen food to a cart and the two small foxes pushed them to their mother to prepare a great feast. It was funny to

realize that while the farmers were waiting for them, they had the most delicious food within arm's reach.

Mr Fox, Badger and the smallest fox kept digging, but abruptly the Badger asked Mr Fox if he worried about all this stealing. Mr Fox was surprised and explicated to him his point of view. The three farmers strived to kill them, but the animals did not want to do the same, they just simply took some food from the farmers to keep their families alive. They are decent and peace-loving. Badger agreed and they continued until they struck the Bean's secret cider cellar. They had plenty of food, so they did not need Bean's turkeys, but they want to have some apple cider for the feast. They had to be very careful and quiet because there was the farmhouse directly above the cellar. There was also a rat in the underground room screaming at them to leave the cider or there would be none left. The rat was drunk because the shelves were overflowing with the homemade cider, and no one could discover that few of the jars were missing. However, they heard a woman's voice, and she walked in. While the woman was looking for the ciders for the farmers outside, the animals was hiding behind the jars and sitting still. Luckily, she did not saw them, just took two bottles, but on the way upstairs she smelled the rat, so Mr Fox, Badger and the smallest fox fled with ciders before she placed the rat poison.

They hurried home to the feast until they reached a hollowed large dining room with a huge table covered with food, around which sat twenty-nine animals altogether. They hugged their wives and children and each other, so the feast could begin. After a while the Badger, Mrs Fox and Mr Fox proposed a toast. Mr Fox came up with a thought, that they would build up a little underground village and stay there for ever with endless supplies of all the delicious food from the farmers, because if they went out, they would be shot. Everyone was cheerful, especially Mrs Fox because she had a fantastic husband. Meanwhile, Boggis, Bunce and Bean were sitting and waiting for the ravenous fox outside in the rain.

4.2.2 Mr Fox

Mr Fox is the principal animal character of the story. He, just as other animals there, is fully personified. In the illustrated pictures, we saw him standing on two legs, he is wearing waistcoat, tailcoat and spotted scarf around his neck. He communicates with other animal species. Mr Fox is very tricky, clever, cunning, he has many ideas, he cares about his family a lot. Mrs Fox admires him for his fantastic plans, that always save them from any troubles. Her support is for Mr Fox very important, and he is very dejected when he sees her so weak and incapable of doing anything. To feed his family, he is forced to act immorally, therefore he steals

food and ciders from farmers. But he never wants to stoop to farmers' level to kill someone, so he thinks that he conducts morally. The stealing is really necessary for him to survive. His generosity and also feeling of guilt caused that he invited all other animal, who were starving as his family, to share the majestic feast. This hospitality is in the book contrasted with the wealthy, greedy and miserly farmers, who do not want to share their products to anyone, they only wanted to sell them at a high price. Mr Fox behaves a little bit mysteriously to his children, the small foxes, because he does not want to tell them why and where they are digging to not disappoint them, if he is mistaken.²⁹

4.3 Billionaire Boy

Billionaire Boy is a hilarious children's novel written by David Walliams and published in 2010. The story follows Joe Spud, a twelve-year-old boy, who is, as the title suggests, the richest child in the country and maybe in the whole world. Despite this, he is not happy. He misses someone with whom he could have all those wonderful experiences. He lives with his father in a huge mansion, but they are both alone, so Joe gradually discovers the value of friendship and that some things he cannot buy for any amount of money. At the end of the story, he and his father discover that what makes them happy is definitely not money, expensive gifts, luxury goods or champagne and caviar for breakfast.³⁰

4.3.1 Plot Summary

The story begins when Joe dashes himself around his own car racing track in his private Formula One. He lives in the huge mansion with his father and has totally everything he could ever want. For example, own water slide that leads from his bedroom to an indoor swimming pool, every computer game in the world, two crocodiles, live shark in aquarium, underground bowling alley, a roller-coaster in the back garden, also his own cinema and many others. It was his birthday and he got a cheque for a million pounds from his father Leonard Spud, but Joe was disappointed, because one million pounds he had got last year when he was eleven. Forthwith his father rewrote the cheque and gave him two million pounds. So, you can judge for yourself how horribly spoiled Joe was. But it is important to know that the Spuds were not always so rich. Leonard Spud invented a revolutionary Bumfresh toilet paper, which was a blockbuster at once.

²⁹ DAHL, Roald. *Fantastic Mr Fox*. London: Puffin Books, 2016. ISBN 978-0-141-36544-2.

³⁰ WALLIAMS, David. *Billionaire Boy*. London: HarperCollins Children's Books, 2011. ISBN 978-0007371082.

Although Joe had billion reasons to be happy, he was not. The only one thing Joe wanted, he did not have. It was to have at least one friend. He arranged with his father to stop going to posh and expensive private school and start going to the local school instead. On the very first day at school Joe made a friend during physical education. During a cross-country running he was the last together with a boy as fat as Joe, who named Bob. Joe tried to hide his wealth, but Bob eventually found it out anyway and forgave Joe not telling him. They spent their free time together during breaks, and Joe found out that two older students were bullying Bob, so he wanted to help him and paid them to leave him alone. One day, Joe forgot his history assignment at home, but luckily the teacher allowed him to hand it in fifteen minutes after class. Joe asked his father to bring the homework to him, but he did not expect that his father would fly in his private helicopter to the middle of the school playground during the break when all the students were there. That was the worst possible way for Joe how others could find out who really and how rich he was. Furthermore, Joe did not manage to submit the homework in time and had to clean up the litter on the school yard. After this incident everybody wanted to borrow some money from Joe or to pay lunch or something for them. And to make matters worse, Bob found out about the money that Joe was giving to older classmates to not bullying him and they had an argument. Joe came home devastated and blamed everything on his father. At that moment, father's new girlfriend, a young pretty lady, was visiting him. Joe knew immediately that she was with his father only because of his money, but Mr Spud was blind and thought she loved him and that is why he bought her every possible present she desired.

After a few days, a new classmate Lauren appeared at school and was only interested in Joe. He was happy to have a friend again, so he did not notice anything, not even if Lauren did not bother about how rich he was. Then another incident happened - Joe's history teacher was dismissed, and the headmaster had a new modern motorcycle. When Joe brought Lauren home for a visit, there was a big party thrown by Mr Spud and his new young girlfriend. She instantly recognized Lauren from some commercial and Joe this way found out the truth. His father paid Lauren to be his friend, because Joe so yearned to have some, Mr Spud also had fired the history teacher and bought the headmaster a new motorcycle. Despite his father's good intentions, Joe yelled at him that there were things that could not be bought, like friendship, feelings or love. Joe was in a fury and decided to run away from home. As he raced as fast as he could, his father searched for him in his private helicopter, but Joe succeeded in fleeing and he hid in a dustbin next to the newspaper stand, that belongs to Indian newsagent Raj, a Joe's friend.

Raj found Joe numb with cold and worn-out in the morning, took him inside and Joe told him everything. Raj offered to take Joe to his father because he must be freaking out. Joe agreed, but on the way home he wanted to visit Bob to apologize to him. They reconciled, but during the visit, Joe saw his father completely devastated on television. Bob's mother explained him, that is why people started having health problems from using his toilet paper and they all sued him extensively. His father lost all his money, but the only thing he wanted back was his beloved son. Joe promptly ran to Raj and they continued to his house, where there were so many journalists and reporters that they could not get to the front door. On way up the stairs, Joe passed by his father's girlfriend running away with several suitcases and bags from which banknote of his father were spilling out. Joe apologized to him for his behaviour, but he was still sad because executors carried all their furniture and possessions away. Joe still had a little time to take something from his children's room and when he came back all he took was a small rocket made from toilet paper rolls. Father did not understand why exactly this, and Joe said to him that this rocket he made for him with love when they did not have so much money and were happy, so it is the best gift he ever received from him. They hugged and were happy.

4.3.2 Joe Spud

Joe is the main character in the story. As I mentioned above, he is awfully spoiled, he does not appreciate anything, and he treats his father without respect and reverence. For instance, when he destroyed his Formula One, he told his father only incidentally that he wanted a new one or when he got birthday, one million pounds as a gift was not enough for him. The fact that he was so impudent and annoyed with his father, when he brought him his school assignment, was because he wanted to be a normal pupil at the new school and was ashamed of being rich. Previously, at the private school all the other boys made fun of him, because his father made a fortune by selling a toilet paper and he refused to go through it again. Progressively, Joe changes and begins to value people and relationships with them more than things themselves. Before he runs away from home, he regrets that he quarrelled with his father, but he knew that if he stayed, nothing would change and his father would buy more and more expensive things, go out with young ladies, and ignore his son. He values his best and only friend Bob a lot as well. Joe even admits that he was wrong about his new friend Lauren and apologizes to him. To sum it up, we can see a big progress of Joe's mind and a conspicuous

change in his value system during the story. This change in him also influenced his father to realize what is important.³¹

4.4 The Ice Monster

This second story of David Walliams, I chose for my work, was published in 2018 and is based on unbelievable adventure of two completely unlike friends. Little readers will not only be entertained by funny incidents, but also will learn a little bit of history. The plot is set in the Victorian London in 1899. We will get to know a little about Queen Victoria, her departed husband Prince Albert, The Natural History Museum, The Royal Hospital Chelsea, about the famous ships HMS Victory and HMS Argonaut, munshi Abdul Karim and we will also learn more biological information about woolly mammoths. Most of these facts are placed at the end of the book, but during the story there are some mentions about them.³²

4.4.1 Plot Summary

This story is about an extraordinary friendship between two completely different creatures, united by a similar life experience. As a tiny baby, Elsie was left on the steps of an orphanage. She was left there without any note, name or clue which can help to who this little person is. This strange home for unwanted children, Wormly Hall, where Elsie grew up, was definitely not a suitable place for young person. There lived twenty-six orphans in one cramped room, because in Victorian times it was quite common, that the newborn babies were abandoned outside orphanages or hospitals. Each of them was very thin and starved, because all the donated food were taken by Mrs Curdle, who run the orphanage. She was an old evil horrifying woman, her skin was covered with many warts and she did not care about children at all and even beat them when they disobeyed her nonsensical rules. Elsie endured ten long, hard years at Wormly Hall hoping that her mother would magically appear and get her away. But she never did. So, one day after a severe beating from Mrs Curdle she decided to escape on her own.

Her plan was successful, she said goodbye to her friends and was finally free but alone on the streets of London where she had never been before. The big city was a scary place, especially for a little girl, but she got used to it and learnt how to survive there. Elsie got food by stealing it from marketers and this way she was among the first to learn about the discovery of the century. At the North Pole was found a ten thousand years old monster frozen in ice and

³¹ WALLIAMS, David. *Billionaire Boy*. London: HarperCollins Children's Books, 2011. ISBN 978-0007371082.

³² WALLIAMS, David. *The Ice Monster*. London: HarperCollins Children's Books, 2021. ISBN 978-0062561138.

it was coming to Natural History Museum, where Elsie spent much time examining the models, bones, meteorites or beautiful pictures. She always sneaked there with some grown-ups and therefore, she immediately knew that it was a mammoth from the Ice Age. When she saw a photo of the beast in the newspaper, it was just a baby and looked just as lost and alone as Elsie, that is why she was determined she had to meet it.

During the transport of the animal to the museum, crowds of people gathered in front of it and all along the River Thames, thus Elsie used the opportunity and managed to get into the museum. Together with the Queen Victoria, Elsie was the first to see the ancient mammoth with her own eyes. Nevertheless, due to breaking in, the police were looking for Elsie, so she with the help of her friend Dotty hid in a secluded cellar. Dotty, as her name suggests, was a little wacky, but as well she was the only one who treats Elsie nicely. Thanks to working as a cleaner in the museum, she knew the surroundings very well. Together with a former professor they met in the basement, Elsie came up with a plan how they could bring a prehistoric creature back to life. This weird group of experimenters, using even weirder tools, eventually brought the dead mammoth back to life. However, their incentives were very different. Professor intended to put the animal in the cage, show it to the whole world and gain his lost popularity back. Elsie just wanted to free the mammoth and take care of it. And Dotty only assisted Elsie with her dream plan, so she joined her intentions. Despite many hindrances they escaped from the museum with the mammoth, that they called Woolly.

It is obvious, that you cannot hide a two-tonnes monster easily, so Dotty decided to use help from her boyfriend Titch, an old retired soldier, who lives in the Royal Hospital. They hid here, but Woolly was not happy, her trunk was still pointing north, so Elsie and the other retired soldiers came up with a plan to get her back to the North Pole. They had to act quickly because the police were hot on their heels.

They managed to sail the old navy flagship HMS Victory down the Thames to the high seas. During their voyage to the North Pole they defeated the British navy with their modern steamships thanks Elsie's tricky idea using the gunpowder. After weeks at sea they ultimately stepped out onto solid ice, Elsie and Woolly instantly started to play in the snow and everyone could see how satisfied and happy they were together here. It was time to say goodbye to Woolly, but she led Elsie, Dotty and Titch further north. Suddenly the four were in the centre of a spiraling snowstorm and after it, they found that they were not alone. They were surrounded by a herd of mammoths and Elsie knew her friend was finally home. It was time for a really final goodbye, Woolly looked back one last time and then they disappeared.

When they were returning home, everyone already knew about their mammoth's adventure through many headlines all across the world. In the dock several policemen were waiting on the riverbank for them and took them straight to Buckingham Palace. Her Majesty the Queen was interested in who and why stole her mammoth. Her Majesty the Queen was interested in who and why stole her mammoth. During the audience Elsie explained and described the whole adventurous journey to bring the baby mammoth to its parents. The Queen Victoria was deeply moved and found Elsie a very special young lady. She also awarded each member of the crew a medal, but Elsie declined it, because all she wanted for the Queen was to help orphans like her. They agreed on bringing all twenty-five orphans from Wormly Hall to the Buckingham Palace and locking Mrs Curdle up, but that is not all. It was New Years Eve, so the Queen invited them to welcome in a new century, as the year becomes 1900. Elsie, her twenty-five orphan friends, Dotty, Titch and other old retired soldiers joined the Queen Victoria for a midnight feast and they watched the fireworks together.

4.4.2 Elsie

Elsie is the protagonist of the story. She is very socially mature for her age, treats others with respect, she is nice and friendly. Of course, her childish nature also shows, her ideas and plans are really crazy and unfeasible in the real world. Unlike the others, she is not frightened by the huge mammoth, she does not consider it a monster, but sees it as a friend with some troubles, even gives it a name and tries to help it. Elsie develops a strong bond with Woolly and they understand each other even though Woolly cannot speak. Elsie is very selfless, often thinking of others before herself. For example, when she gets a slice of bread from Dotty after she has been starving for a long time, she shares it with her and also when the Queen Victoria intended to award her with a medal, she wants to help other orphans instead. Because of her good intentions and pure behaviour, she befriends someone from whom she is separated by age, class and wealth.

4.4.3 Woolly

Woolly, a prehistoric baby mammoth, is lost and alone in the modern hustle of London. She quickly understands Elsie's good intentions and begins to trust and protect her. She may seem aggressive or dangerous, but she is only confused and trying to escape those who want to lock her up or kill her. She tries to help others during the long voyage, although it is really hard with her giant and clumsy body. At the end of the story, she introduces Elsie and her friends to

her herd of mammoths, which is for them incredible and strong experience. Woolly and her mom are very grateful that Elsie helped her to find way home.³³

³³ WALLIAMS, David. *The Ice Monster*. London: HarperCollins Children's Books, 2021. ISBN 978-0062561138.

5 Comparison of the Works of Roald Dahl and David Walliams

In the comparative part of my bachelor thesis, I would like to contrast the Roald Dahl's work for children with David Walliams' contemporary children's books. I would like to draw a comparison of the selected features of their works, particularly the children's and animal principal characters, themes, the way of narration and style of writing, use of linguistic and literary elements, such as the form of grotesque and hyperbole.

5.1 Comparison of the Children's Main Characters

On the basis of my reading of chosen books by Roald Dahl and David Walliams I would like to compare Charlie Bucket with Joe Spud. Charlie Bucket is the main protagonist of Roald Dahl's novel *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* from 1964 and Joe Spud is the title character of David Walliams' book *Billionaire Boy* from 2010.

The most significant difference, I see, between Charlie and Joe is, that Joe's character has during the story developed a lot, of course he has changed for better. On the other hand, Charlie has at the end of the story the same qualities as at the beginning of it. That is probably because Charlie just at the outset behaves like a moral example for the children, he is selfless, honest and generous and I do not see much space, where he could markedly improve. Whereas we are introduced to Joe just at the moment when he destroys his own Formula One, but he does not care about it at all. He is terribly spoiled, insolent and self-interested. He is the very opposite of Charlie, we can even liken him to the remaining children, who found the Golden Ticket and went to the factory. During the story Joe gets to know, that it is not possible to buy everything. That is clear for Charlie, because his family is very poor, they live with modesty and the only way for him to feel better is the hope, that he will be the lucky one who will find the Golden Ticket. Whereas for Joe, every material object he wants is very affordable.

The feature that they both really have in common at the end of the stories is the value of family for them. Charlie did not want to move to the factory and leave his parents and grandparents and similarly, Joe did not want to keep any expensive furnishings from their mansion, he just took the woeful toilet-paper-rolls rocket and was glad to be with his father. Another resemblance, I see, is their origin. As I mentioned, Charlie with his family lives in poverty and they often starve. As well Joe before his father got rich, their family lived very modestly, for Christmas and for birthdays Joe received only presents that his father crafted from toilet paper rolls on his own.

One more similarity, I found, among them, but in case of Charlie it is not very evident, is a kind of bullying. In *Billionaire Boy* it is exactly written, there are mentioned all the nasty and insulting remarks and terms, that other boys used to call Joe when he attended the boys' private school. This was also the weightiest argument Joe used to persuade his father to allow him to go to the local state school. On the other side in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* there is just a reference to some ridicule when the lucky winners are standing in front of the gates of the factory and the crowd of people is debating about each of them. They talked about how skinny Charlie was, why he did not have any coat and if he could afford to buy one.

To sum it up, although at first sight these two heroes seem completely different, they have a lot in common and their characteristics are almost the same at the end of the story.^{34 35}

5.2 Comparison of the Animal Main Characters

In this section of my work, I would like to draw a comparison between two animal heroes, Mr Fox and Woolly, based on my own reading experience. Mr Fox occurs as the principal character in Roald Dahl's book *Fantastic Mr Fox* from 1970 and Woolly is one of the main protagonists in *The Ice Monster*, written by David Walliams in 2018.

One fundamental difference in these protagonists is that Mr Fox is fully personified, whilst Woolly is a wild animal. Mr Fox behaves like human, according to the illustrations in the book he walks on two legs and wears some clothes. He is able to think up new plans and communicate with other animals. On the contrary, Woolly acts by her animal instincts, she does not have any clothes, she cannot speak, nor with other mammoths, but she tries to communicate with Elsie, for example when she wants to introduce her to the herd of mammoths, she just gestures it with her trunk. She also cannot think on her own, she is dependent on Elsie's ideas how to get her home.

Their viewing of people is dissimilar for them too. Mr Fox perceives humans as enemies, who simply want to kill him. He does not distinguish the bad ones from the good ones. That is mainly because we will not become familiar with any kind human characters throughout the story. On the other hand, Woolly discovers who does not want to treat her well and that is why she behaves aggressive towards the professor, policemen and the lady with a gun. While people who tries to save her, she perceives as friends, she protects them and helps them as she can.

³⁴ DAHL, Roald. *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. London: Puffin Books, 2007. ISBN 978-0-141-32271-1.

³⁵ WALLIAMS, David. *Billionaire Boy*. London: HarperCollins Children's Books, 2011. ISBN 978-0007371082.

What both Mr Fox and Woolly have in common is that their whole adventures are based on the need to achieve some rudimentary goal. Mr Fox endeavours to feed his family, which is the cause why he steals the food from farmers, and they subsequently want to kill him. Likewise Woolly, she longs to meet with her family again, because without her parents in the unknown city and in the modern times she is lost. I think that this fulfilment of their basic needs is the most significant reason why the readers sympathize with them, even though they act illegally.

The self-same characteristic, I see in Mr Fox and Woolly, are friendliness, generosity and kindness. Their family and friends are also very important for both, so they try to protect them and simultaneously Mr Fox and Woolly are dependent on their support and help. It makes Mr Fox feel very good when he hears his wife Mrs Fox saying how fantastic he is, and Woolly is reliant on the assistance of Elsie and her self-sacrificing friends to get out of troubles.

Overall, I think that these two characters from totally different stories are very alike. Their adventures are full of numerous witty occurrences, both are positive heroes, and they represent large number of good qualities for little readers, for example they are kind, brave and fearless. Despite some wrongdoings they show good moral examples for children.^{36 37}

5.3 Dahl and Walliams' Styles of Writing

For Roald Dahl, the great source of inspiration were the traditional Norwegian fairy tales. It is obvious that his literary output was influenced by his mother who retold them to him and also by yearly visits to her native country, Norway. Dahl collected these stories, tales and folklore legends and used them in his own novels. We can find witches, giants, talking animals and many magic features there. He also loved a classic practical joke, and the plot was the most important and difficult element of the story for him. Sometimes it was really hard to find a good unique plot, so he used some of them several times.³⁸ Unlike David Walliams, Roald Dahl also wrote some short stories and novels for adults. For instance, the most successful became *Someone Like You, Kiss, Kiss* and *Switch Bitch*. He portrayed violence, immorality and taboo relations in his adult works, which were often misunderstood by readers. That is why he is today known primarily as an author of children's literature.³⁹

³⁶ DAHL, Roald. *Fantastic Mr Fox*. London: Puffin Books, 2016. ISBN 978-0-141-36544-2.

³⁷ WALLIAMS, David. *The Ice Monster*. London: HarperCollins Children's Books, 2021. ISBN 978-0062561138.

³⁸ BURGER, Peter. *Contemporary Legends in the Short Stories of Roald Dahl: Contemporary Legend* (ns 5). The Netherlands: Leiden University, 2002. ISSN 0963-8334, p. 136-158

³⁹ MEHMI, Suneel S. *Understanding the significance and purpose of violence in the short stories of Roald Dahl*. PsyArt 2014. (2014)

Just as Roald Dahl, so David Walliams takes inspiration from his own childhood. For example, many people think that his novel *The Boy in the Dress* is autobiographical, but it is not true. He just drew from his own experience, when he was at school and had to wear a dress in a children's staging, so that is why the story feel very personal. For David it is important to remember what it was like to be a child in order to write a good story for children. He often puts a lot of himself into the main protagonist. The hard work for him always comes after he finished the idea and started writing. Through this book he wants to say that it is alright to be different and to bring attention to hypocrisy in schools.⁴⁰

What both these authors of children's literature have in common is the way of narration. Their stories are predominantly told from the point of view of a child, the readers sympathize or even feel sorry for the title characters, who usually are neglected children. To exemplify it, I would like to mention four heroes from the books I have read. Joe does not have any friends and his father does not spend time with him at all. Elsie from *The Ice Monster* is an orphan, she is homeless, and no one treats her well. Charlie lives with family in poverty, they starve and do not have beds or any suitable clothes. Mr Fox with his family also starves and is afraid of being killed. Authors use third person narrating and the attitude is very subjective there.

Therefore, David Walliams is frequently compared to Roald Dahl, but there are many controversies about it. Many claim that no one can be so good as was Dahl, because his writing style is original, playful, a little odd and opens some contentious problems in the society. Nevertheless, Walliams' stories are also funny, some adults are represented as horrid, cruel and nasty and David focuses on the present-day taboo issues as well thanks to the themes and motifs he applies, for instance the relationships between grandparents and their grandchildren, the gender issues or acceptance of diversity.⁴¹

5.4 The Most Frequent Themes in Dahl and Walliams' Books

The stories of Roald Dahl as well as of David Walliams are filled with immense number of funny moments especially thanks to their brilliant and original writing styles. Nevertheless, they depict a whole range of serious issues and themes, which are especially for children

⁴⁰ GROVES, Nancy. David Walliams and Quentin Blake: how we made *The Boy in the Dress*. *The Guardian* [online]. 2014 [cit. 2023-06-24]. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2014/jul/07/walliams-blake-the-boy-in-the-dress-how-we-made>

⁴¹ ARDAGH, Philip. Awful Auntie review – David Walliams's best book yet. *The Guardian* [online]. 2014 [cit. 2023-06-22]. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2014/sep/25/awful-auntie-david-walliams-review-childrens-book>

comparatively common or at least they can very easily meet them. I would like to focus on the most frequent themes in Walliams and Dahl's works for children.

Roald Dahl often used themes that hardly anybody would expect to be in books for children. Although the children's literature seems to be easier to read, it is not true that it is also simpler than the literature for adults. One can find many various adult books, where the main messages are not so complex and intellectually challenging, in comparison with Roald Dahl. People may think that the children's stories are more innocent and faultless, but it is very regular that many children behave more brutal, cruel, unfairly or selfishly than some grown-ups.⁴²

The most frequent and significant theme, which occurs in both Dahl and Walliams' works, is the importance of family. Customarily children grow up in families and during their childhood predominantly the family is the basic environment for them where they spend most of the time. That is the reason why this theme is in the children's literature so plentifully portrayed. The stories often demonstrate what happens if the family is not complete or working. We can frequently mention that one of the parents is missing, there is a fatal tragedy in the family, or there are some financial difficulties, or the family is forced to move away. The story line also follows the individuals who form the central family, and it also studies the relationships between them.⁴³ It is not much commonplace that the complete, loving and happy family is depicted, for example in *Matilda* (1988) by Roald Dahl the readers feel very sorry for the main protagonist, a young intelligent girl. Her neglectful, uncultured, and obtuse parents do not care about her at all and treat her awfully.⁴⁴ On the other hand, in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* the Charlie's family is the very opposite, they love and help each other. Nonetheless, the families of the other children there represent a bad examples and some related problems, such as obesity, consequences of spoiling, respect for parents, obsession and self-control.⁴⁵

We can find a special focus which is given to the orphans in Walliams' *The Ice Monster*, *The Midnight Gang* and in Dahl's *The BFG*. *The Ice Monster* follows an unusual relationship between the young girl and the prehistoric mammoth. Elsie, the main hero, ran away from the orphanage, saved the mammoth and they became the best friends. Furthermore, in the process she had to fight for what she believed is right, she is so warm-hearted that she changed other people, gave them hope and finally she created her own odd family. The story deals with the

⁴² EARLY, Gerald: *On literature and childhood*. Daedalus (133:1) 2004, 95-98. (2004)

⁴³ REYNOLDS, Kimberly. *Children's Literature: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press, 2011. ISBN 978-0-19-956024-0.

⁴⁴ DAHL, Roald. *Matilda*. London: Puffin Books, 2013. ISBN 978-0141346342.

⁴⁵ DAHL, Roald. *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. London: Puffin Books, 2007. ISBN 978-0-141-32271-1.

sense of belonging which is for Elsie and Woolly very important and also with the finding a way in the complicated world. In addition, the book is historically educational, because the timeline is set in 1899. The biggest message of the story is that the heroes come in all shapes and sizes regardless of their origin.⁴⁶ In *The BFG* a small girl became friends with a big giant. The story depicts that being an orphan is also connected with refusal by society, minority, or individuals. The value of strong friendship is very important in both mentioned.⁴⁷ The importance of friendship, family or community is also portrayed in *Fantastic Mr Fox* and in *Billionaire Boy*.

Another and much more serious theme, which is used by both Dahl and Walliams, is bullying. It can have different shapes, however in their stories there are largely adult villains who harm, hates, or mistreats children. The evil adults are represented by school staff, close relatives or even children's own parents, but of course sometimes the children's protagonists have to face bullying from their schoolmates. In *Matilda* by Roald Dahl, we can find more than one of the evil ones. First of all, her parents treat her badly and then the headmistress, Miss Trunchbull, not only with her horrifying physical appearance, but also with her brutal and wild punishing of little schoolchildren scares every pupil at the school.⁴⁸ In another Dahl's book, *James and the Giant Peach*, young James is raised by his two cruel, egoistic and indolent aunts, because his parents died at the beginning of the story by an accident. The author wants to emphasize how the lonely child can be neglected.⁴⁹ David Walliams in *Billionaire Boy* shows the bullying inside the private school and local state one, where Joe Spud goes. However, the main theme there is the importance of friendship and sharing and appreciating things because being rich is not everything and money does not buy happiness or love.

Further serious themes in children's books by David Walliams and Roald Dahl includes poverty, starving, death, hunger, moral values, punishment and environmental destruction. Moreover, Walliams in his books tries to point out on some contemporary problems, like gender issues. This theme he elaborates in *The Boy in the Dress*, where he wants to present the importance of embracing and loving yourself no matter the colour of skin, the gender or the sexuality. Nevertheless, one of his short story collections, entitled *The World's Worst Children* (2016), has received harsh criticism and one of the stories had to be removed. The story of a

⁴⁶ WALLIAMS, David. *The Ice Monster*. London: HarperCollins Children's Books, 2021. ISBN 978-0062561138.

⁴⁷ DAHL, Roald. *The BFG*. New York: Penguin Group, 2007. ISBN 978-0142410387.

⁴⁸ DAHL, Roald. *Matilda*. London: Puffin Books, 2013. ISBN 978-0141346342.

⁴⁹ DAHL, Roald. *James and the Giant Peach*. London: Puffin Books, 2016. ISBN 978-0-141-36545-9.

little Chinese boy was assailed due to the theme of casual racism. The thing is that his name Wong was associated with the word wrong and there were many racist jokes on Asian community. Finally, the publishing house HarperCollins decided to remove this problematic story from the next edition of the book.⁵⁰

5.5 The Use of Linguistic and Literary Elements

Dahl's language is very original, innovative and playful. The used terms and names entertain the readers. The best example is *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, where Dahl paid special attention to proper names of people, designations of the sweets and their flavours. For example, Charlie's grandparents have always the same initial part of their names (Joe, Josephine and George, Georgina), names of the other children, who went to the factory, represent their appearance or characteristics and Professor Foulbody's name predicts how successful his invention will be. During the tour in the factory, we get to know countless number of funny, absurd and contradictory appellations of sweets, including "square sweets that look round", "hot ice cream for cold days", "fizzy lifting drinks" or "eatable marshmallow pillows". Dahl, personally, invented some of these extraordinary words, such as Electric fizzcockler or Pink-spotted scrunch. At the end of the book there is a small dictionary of this strange language, which he named in *The BFG* Gobblefunk.⁵¹

On the other hand, the language that David Walliams uses is also very entertaining, original and full of humour. His imagination is fabulous, so the reader cannot predict how the plot will develop. The proper names of some characters describe them as well as the Dahl's ones. In *Billionaire Boy* the Joe's father's young girlfriend's name is Sapphire Stone, which absolutely corresponds with the way she behaves. She certainly does not love Joe's father and she only wants a great amount of money and many expensive presents. And in *The Ice Monster* we get familiar with Dotty, Elsie's best friend. She utterly represents the definition of the word dotty, she is outlandish, eccentric and cranky. It cannot be said that David Walliams invents many new words, but in *Billionaire Boy* he uses the term Bumfresh toilet paper, which invented Joe's father and became an epoch-making hit in the story because it was moistened unlike the ordinary one. The thing which is authentic for his books is the amount and form of used interjections. He applies them almost everywhere and he highlights them by much bigger font

⁵⁰ FLOOD, Alison. HarperCollins removes story from David Walliams' book *The World's Worst Children*. *The Guardian* [online]. 2021 [cit. 2023-06-21]. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2021/oct/04/harpercollins-removes-story-from-david-walliams-book-the-worlds-worst-children>

⁵¹ DAHL, Roald. *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. London: Puffin Books, 2007. ISBN 978-0-141-32271-1.

size than the regular text has, so it can look like the whole page is covered by interjections. There are also several unusual comical lists in the *Billionaire Boy*, such as list of teachers' most frequent catchphrases, list of silly names, list of Sapphire's birthday presents or diet of the school canteen and others. That is also the reason why most of David Walliams' books are often thicker than Roald Dahl's ones.^{52 53}

I would also like to shortly compare the illustrations in David Walliams and Roald Dahl's books. Dahl's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* and *Fantastic Mr Fox* illustrated Quentin Blake as well as all his books, whereas majority of David Walliams' novels, *Billionaire Boy* and *The Ice Monster* included, illustrated Tony Ross. At first sight both styles of the drawings seem to me that they are practically identical. I may be wrong about this, but I do not see any significant difference between them. They both use only black-and-white pictures. Although the illustrators did not colour them in, they are very descriptive and express the whole scale of emotions of the characters. Both authors use the pictures plentifully, at that in some of David Walliams' books the artwork adorns each and every page. He even refers to the drawings in the text, or he integrates the words into them, so the reader is compelled to look at them and not follow the lines. The front covers are always multi-coloured, remarkable and attractive for the future readers.

5.6 The form of Grotesque and Hyperbole

The grotesque has mostly developed in the historical period from the end of the Renaissance to the end of the nineteenth century, but some claim that it has existed from prehistory to today. Among the most overriding features of the grotesque, we can categorize parodies, inversions, disharmony, interest in the human body, violations, playful elements, mixture of humour and horror, also diverse usage of perspective and reversals. Historically the grotesque is presented as the product of author's own habits and distinctive language of writing, authors often contest the normative standards. It is hard to exactly define the term, because the grotesque is established on the border between the serious and the playful, the beautiful and the ugly, the horrible and the funny. Frequently, it is described by means of reactions which it provokes. The readers could hesitate whether to laugh or to be moved, because the same situation may seem comical for someone, thought for another one insulting.⁵⁴

⁵² WALLIAMS, David. *Billionaire Boy*. London: HarperCollins Children's Books, 2011. ISBN 978-0007371082.

⁵³ WALLIAMS, David. *The Ice Monster*. London: HarperCollins Children's Books, 2021. ISBN 978-0062561138.

⁵⁴ DUGGAN, Robert. *The grotesque in contemporary British fiction*. Manchester; New York: Manchester UP, 2013. pp. 276. (2013)

Both Roald Dahl and David Walliams use the grotesque and the hyperbole in their works a lot. Their specific sense of humour is one of the inseparable parts of their stories. Thanks to that they are not fearful of writing about some taboo themes, albeit some people find it harsh and inappropriate for young readers. Dahl usually ridicules things that children are taught by their parents to not laugh at. He makes fun of physical appearance, obesity, disability, or gender. It is clearly depicted in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, when some of the nasty children is punished during the tour, thereafter the Oompa-Loompas start singing funny, but kind of cruel song about the child. Also, the names are grotesque, the meaning of Augustus Gloop's surname perfectly corresponds with his figure, because he is overweight. Another example is spoiled Veruca Salt, when she entered the factory, Mr Wonka told her, that he thought a veruca was a sort of wart. Next one, Mike Teavee, he was addicted to watching television, which indicates the pronunciation of his surname.⁵⁵ David Walliams as well uses these grotesque names, as I have already mentioned Dotty and Sapphire Stone for instance. What also make the children's readers laugh in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* are puns. Dahl used them extensively, the songs of Oompa-Loompas are full of them and newly invented sweets by Mr Wonka are also kind of puns.

Absurdity is another crucial element of the grotesque. We can find it in both Dahl and Walliams' works. This time I would like to focus on Walliams' *The Ice Monster*. When Elsie and Dotty tried to smuggle the huge alive prehistoric mammoth into The Royal Hospital Chelsea, they just covered Woolly with many bed sheets and pretended that it is a brand-new top-secret tank. The guard believed this absurd fabrication and let them in. For children it seems funny, but many adults may find it absurd and nonsensical, because they have not so vivid imagination.⁵⁶ In *Billionaire Boy* the grotesque feature is expressed by the meals in the school canteen. The cook Mrs Trafe was smiling and kind lady, but her dishes were awfully revolting. The schoolchildren would rather die than eat anything she cooked. To get an idea, she prepared a very nice badger and onion pie, some deep-fried rust, or for the vegetarians she had jacket potatoes with sock cheese. So again, children would be amused, but many adults rather disgusted while they are reading it.⁵⁷

Walliams also uses the hyperbole, for example when he describes how rich Joe is, or when he wants to depict the health problems of using the Bumfresh toilet paper. In Roald Dahl's

⁵⁵ DAHL, Roald. *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. London: Puffin Books, 2007. ISBN 978-0-141-32271-1.

⁵⁶ WALLIAMS, David. *The Ice Monster*. London: HarperCollins Children's Books, 2021. ISBN 978-0062561138.

⁵⁷ WALLIAMS, David. *Billionaire Boy*. London: HarperCollins Children's Books, 2011. ISBN 978-0007371082.

Fantastic Mr Fox, we see the hyperbole, when the three farmers are sitting and waiting for the fox, who is meanwhile enjoying the greatest feast ever with his family and friends. And in the cellar full of apple cider, when the animals are hidden behind the jars, they are so lucky, because if the woman would grab another cider, she would discover them.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ DAHL, Roald. *Fantastic Mr Fox*. London: Puffin Books, 2016. ISBN 978-0-141-36544-2.

Conclusion

To conclude this bachelor thesis, I would like to accentuate and summarize the main findings of the work. The main goal was to analyse the work of two often compared British authors of children's literature, Roald Dahl and David Walliams and as well as to compare the most significant features of their stories.

The theoretical part of the thesis primarily points out the lives of Roald Dahl and David Walliams, further it brings their successful writing careers into focus. Afterwards, it aims to study the biography of Quentin Blake and subsequently it presents Tony Ross' life story.

The first chapter introduces Roald Dahl, as the great storyteller of children's tales in the 20th century, who was very successful and at present his novels are still very popular among the young generations of readers. The description concerns his early life, when he was forced to face several family tragedies, his childhood only with his mother, whose Norwegian origin influenced a lot his writing, and also his years at grammar school, from which he drew inspiration to write his most famous novel *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. After one-year-long business trip across the East Africa, Dahl joined the Royal Air Force at the beginning of the Second World War. His air crash in the Libyan desert is depicted there as well because his consequent short war stories published in newspapers brought him initial fame. Thereafter several tragedies in his personal life are briefly mentioned and then the main focus is given to his authorship, especially to his novels for children. The early going of his career influenced his own offspring, to whom he dedicated many of his books, for example *James and the Giant Peach*, then he continued to write, and many of his masterpieces was created, such as *The BFG*, *The Witches* and *Matilda*, which caused receiving the Whitbread Award, one of Britain's most prestigious awards in children's literature.

The second chapter follows the life story of contemporary British author David Walliams, whose writings resemble to Dahl in many ways. Initially, his boyhood, education and family are described, thereafter his very important co-operation with Matt Lucas, whom he met during his university studies. The great success of their show *Little Britain* is described there as well as their other comedy series. However, Walliams is not famous only as a comedian or children's writer, he is also well-known as a charity fundraiser for his admirable long-distance swimming. He successfully swam across the English Channel, the Strait of Gibraltar and he swam the length of the Thames, this way he raised millions of pounds for charity and was honoured. Afterwards early days of him as a children's books' author are recorded, namely his

famous *The Boy in the Dress*, *Mr. Stink*, *Gangsta Granny* and *The Midnight Gang*. At the end of this chapter numerous stage, film and television adaptations of his novels are mentioned, as well as his short story collections and his own autobiography.

Subsequently, in the third chapter, the work follows the life stories of two brilliant illustrators of children's books. At first, the career of Quentin Blake, as an illustrator of Roald Dahl's novels, is described, including his major co-operation, such as these with Russell Hoban, Michael Rosen and Joan Aiken. Nonetheless, his own publishing, participation in several classic books, his illustrating of two David Walliams' books and receiving a price are shown. In the same way, Tony Ross is depicted there, his most popular works include the *Horrid Henry* series by an American author and the *Little Princess* series, which he wrote himself. Lastly, children's books by David Walliams, which he provided pictures, are listed.

The practical part of the thesis is concentrated on a detailed analysis of the plot and main protagonists of four chosen children's books. Dahl's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* shows a story of poor little boy, who was so lucky that he won a ticket to the greatest chocolate factory in the whole world. The story depicts the themes of poverty, starving, bad children's qualities as well as the value of family. After that another Dahl's story is presented, *Fantastic Mr Fox*, which lifts up the importance of friendship, moral values and their violation and the need to maintain the family. Then follows two children's stories by Walliams. The main hero in the *Billionaire Boy* is still not happy, even though he has almost everything. He misses a friend and support from the family. Finally, the chapter gets us familiar with the young girl orphan and her best friend, ancient mammoth, in *The Ice Monster*. During the adventurous voyage the protagonists discover the importance of family, helping each other and the sense of belonging.

The last chapter of the work investigates the main differences between the work of these two awesome authors of children's literature, as well as finds many similarities in their books. The comparative part is divided into six segment which each examines one feature of both authors. Firstly, the main children's characters are compared with a focus on their origin and personalities as well as are drew in comparison the main animal protagonists. At first glance, the very different heroes represent so similar characteristics and try to convey to the children's readers the best possible example of behaving towards others in both Dahl and Walliams' books. Then the style of writing, for which is Walliams so often likened to Dahl, is described with the emphasis on the sources of inspiration of both authors. Usage of playful, original and ingenious language is characteristic also for both authors. In this section are mentioned some funny and made-up words they both apply in their stories. Ensuing part represents their most frequent

themes, for which their novels are often found controversial. They cover many serious and taboo themes in spite of that their stories are designated for children, namely the moral values, distinguishing between good and evil, bullying, relations inside the family, gender issues and punishment. In the end of the thesis, the form of grotesque and hyperbole is compared, because they facilitate a lot to open just mentioned themes to both Dahl and Walliams.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

DAHL, Roald. *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. London: Puffin Books, 2007. ISBN 978-0-141-32271-1.

DAHL, Roald. *Fantastic Mr Fox*. London: Puffin Books, 2016. ISBN 978-0-141-36544-2.

DAHL, Roald. *James and the Giant Peach*. London: Puffin Books, 2016. ISBN 978-0-141-36545-9.

DAHL, Roald. *Matilda*. London: Puffin Books, 2013. ISBN 978-0141346342.

DAHL, Roald. *The BFG*. New York: Penguin Group, 2007. ISBN 978-0142410387.

WALLIAMS, David. *Billionaire Boy*. London: HarperCollins Children's Books, 2011. ISBN 978-0007371082.

WALLIAMS, David. *The Ice Monster*. London: HarperCollins Children's Books, 2021. ISBN 978-0062561138.

Secondary Sources

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

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

EARLY, Gerald: *On literature and childhood*. *Daedalus* (133:1) 2004, 95-98. (2004)

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

MCELMEEL, Sharron L. *100 Most Popular Children's Authors*. USA: Libraries Unlimited, 1999. ISBN 1-56308-646-8.

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

REYNOLDS, Kimberly. *Children's Literature: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press, 2011. ISBN 978-0-19-956024-0.

STURROCK, Donald. *Storyteller: The Authorized Biography of Roald Dahl*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2011. ISBN 9781439189764.

TREGLOWN, Jeremy. *Roald Dahl: a biography*. London: Faber and Faber, 1995. ISBN 0-571-16572-9.

WALLIAMS, David. *Camp David*. London: Penguin Books, 2013. ISBN 978-0241957721.

Internet Sources

ARDAGH, Philip. Awful Auntie review – David Walliams's best book yet. *The Guardian* [online]. 2014 [cit. 2023-06-22]. Retrieved from:

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2014/sep/25/awful-auntie-david-walliams-review-childrens-book>

FERGUSON, Donna. *Tony Ross: 'I wasn't at all like Horrid Henry when I was a boy'* [online]. 2022 [cit. 2023-06-24]. Retrieved from:

<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2022/may/21/this-much-i-know-tony-ross-i-wasnt-at-all-like-horrid-henry-when-i-was-a-boy>

FLOOD, Alison. HarperCollins removes story from David Walliams' book *The World's Worst Children*. *The Guardian* [online]. 2021 [cit. 2023-06-21]. Retrieved from:

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2021/oct/04/harpercollins-removes-story-from-david-walliams-book-the-worlds-worst-children>

FLOOD, Alison. *Horrid Henry* artist Tony Ross named UK libraries' most borrowed illustrator [online]. 2017 [cit. 2023-06-24]. Retrieved from:

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/jul/17/horrid-henry-artist-tony-ross-named-uk-libraries-most-borrowed-illustrator>

GREENSTREET, Rosanna. *Q&A: Tony Ross* [online]. 2013 [cit. 2023-06-24]. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2013/apr/06/tony-ross-interview>

GROVES, Nancy. David Walliams and Quentin Blake: how we made *The Boy in the Dress*. *The Guardian* [online]. 2014 [cit. 2023-06-24]. Retrieved from:

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2014/jul/07/walliams-blake-the-boy-in-the-dress-how-we-made>

WALLIAMS, David. David Walliams: 'I haven't read any of my own books – I hear they are wonderful'. *The Guardian* [online]. 2021 [cit. 2023-06-20]. Retrieved from:

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2021/jul/02/david-walliams-i-havent-read-any-of-my-own-books-i-hear-they-are-wonderful>

David Walliams. *Encyclopaedia Britannica* [online]. [cit. 2023-06-20]. Retrieved from:
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/David-Walliams>

Quentin Blake: Official Website [online]. [cit. 2023-06-23]. Retrieved from:
<https://www.quentinblake.com>

Roald Dahl. *Encyclopaedia Britannica* [online]. [cit. 2023-06-19]. Retrieved from:
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Roald-Dahl>

Roald Dahl: Official Website [online]. [cit. 2023-06-18]. Retrieved from:
<https://roalddahl.com>

The World of David Walliams: Official Website [online]. [cit. 2023-06-20]. Retrieved from:
<https://www.worldofdavidwalliams.com>