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The Graveyard Book as a Bildungsroman

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Z á s a d y p r o v y p r a c o v á n í :

V úvodu práce diplomandka charakterizuje žánr Bildungsromanu, stručně pojedná o jeho historii především s ohledem na anglojazyčné prostředí a nastíní možnosti žánrového prolínání či překrývání. Diplomandka uvede zvoleného autora do obecnějšího literárního kontextu a soustředí se z jeho díla především na literaturu pro děti a mládež. Jádrem práce pak bude analýza díla *The Graveyard Book*, v níž se studentka zaměří na způsoby zachycení procesu dospívání hlavního protagonisty, a to jak z hlediska tematického, tak i formálního. Pojedná o souvislostech s dílem *The Jungle Book*, s žánrem Bildungsromanu, hororu a fantasy. Závěrem své vývody shrne a pokusí se vyslovit obecnější závěry o zvoleném díle, nakolik naplňuje tradiční rysy Bildungsromanu a rovněž zda příběh dospívání jedince slouží k pojednání o komplexnějších společenských otázkách.

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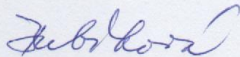
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ABSTRACT

This thesis searches for the aspects of Bildungsroman in Neil Gaiman's *The Graveyard Book* (2007). In the initial part of the paper, the origins, definitions and features of the genre are presented. The second half of the theoretical background introduces the novel in terms of other genres, such as fantasy and horror, and also describes its connection to *The Jungle Books* by Rudyard Kipling. The analytical part essentially searches for the defying moments in the hero's life and describes how those events and situations influence the character's development and the hero's becoming.

KEYWORDS

Bildungsroman, children's literature, Neil Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, fantasy, character's development

ABSTRAKT

Tato práce si klade za cíl najít prvky Bildungsrománu v *Knize hřbitova* od spisovatele Neila Gaimana. Úvodní část popisuje původ a definici žánru a další aspekty, které k Bildungsrománu patří. Druhá polovina teoretické části představuje *Knihu hřbitova* z pohledu dalších žánrů, především fantasy a hororu, a dále popisuje spojitost knihy s Kiplingovou *Knihou džunglí*. Praktická část práce se zabývá více či méně určujícími momenty ze života hlavního hrdiny a rozebírá jak tyto události a situace ovlivňují vývoj postavy.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

Bildungsromán, dětská literatura, Neil Gaiman, *Knih hřbitova*, fantasy, vývoj postavy

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INTRODUCTION

Neil Gaiman is the mastermind behind many acclaimed novels including *Neverwhere* (1997) or *American Gods* (2001) known especially for his imaginary worlds colliding with the common one. Gaiman took this concept, a common denominator of majority of his novels, and created *The Graveyard Book* – a story for children that pays respect to the timeless classic that is Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book*. Inspired by the tale of a boy raised in a jungle by a pack of animals, Gaiman transforms the story to meet the demands of contemporary readers. Replacing the jungle with a forgotten graveyard, the novel is filled with mysterious atmosphere leaving its readers at the edge of their seats. The main character, a tragically orphaned boy, coincidentally ends up being raised by the denizens of the graveyard. *The Graveyard Book* was highly acclaimed especially due to the combination of the hero's development and its Gothic features. Nevertheless, young readers, the targeted audience of the novel, probably appreciate more the adventurous side of the story, rather than the protagonist's coming of age. The book was by many labeled as the "Gothic Bildungsroman". Therefore, the depiction of hero's process of maturation in *The Graveyard Book* will be the main focus of this Master's thesis.

The aim of this thesis is to closely analyze the many aspects that influence the main character's transformation from childhood to mature age on the background of an old graveyard. It will take into consideration not only spatial aspects but also the influence of protagonist's family, friends and other graveyard's citizens. Moreover, the thesis will analyze the impact of the dead society and its rigid manners on hero's development and his feeling of not belonging to either world.

The thesis consists of nine chapters. The first one consists of the definition and origins of the term Bildungsroman with a main focus on the theory presented by Russian theorist Mikhail Bakhtin in his fragmental essay "The Bildungsroman and Its Significance to the History of Realism". It looks closely on Bakhtin's division of novels and a term "chronotope" coined by him. It also takes into consideration specifics of the genre by Bakhtin's followers such as Fritz Martini or Franco Moretti. Furthermore, chapter one presents specifics of British Bildungsroman as *The Graveyard Book* is set in London cemetery.

The second chapter introduces the author Neil Gaiman, lists his most important novels for adults and especially for children. It describes common features of his novels. Chapter three focuses on *The Graveyard Book* itself and offers a brief description of the plot. It also puts the

novel into the genre contexts – specifically fantasy and horror, and its Gothic aspects. It defines the main features of the genres and the quite new Young Adult category. Eventually, it searches for the similarities between the novel and Kipling's *Jungle Books* within the characters and the storylines.

The analytical part of the thesis is divided into six chapters according to different aspects influencing the hero's maturation. Chapter four focuses solely on the character's arrival to the graveyard for it is one of the most important defining moments in the book. Chapter five draws attention to the many educational aspects of the novel. The book emphasizes the importance of formal education, but with the similar amount it stresses the significance of acquiring and learning through experiences. Chapter six deals with the existential question of navigating the life between two worlds, which the hero tries to solve throughout the course of the whole novel. Chapter seven analyzes the climax of the novel, the moment the protagonist faces the order that murdered his family when he was just a toddler and threatens his life since then. Yet again, it is one of the defining moments of the book since the hero practically utilizes everything he has learned during his life. Chapter eight focuses on the moment when the hero leaves the graveyard as a mature person and the final moment of realizing who he is and what he wants. The last chapter takes into consideration the initially presented theories and how the novel deviates from them.

1. BILDUNGSROMAN: ORIGINS AND DEFINING THE TERM

The term Bildungsroman, originating in Germany, denotes a literary genre where, simply said, the main character comes of age as an adult. Bildungsroman is translated as a novel of education, or more precisely, novel of formation.¹ The term was coined by Professor Karl von Morgenstern of Dorpat around 1820 in his two lectures. But the one who is connected the most with its origin, and who was also believed to be the first to use the term, is the philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey.²

As Fritz Martini states in his work, the word *Bildung* represents the idea of cultivation “through a harmony of aesthetic, moral, rational, and scientific education”. This very thought has been an inherent part of the Enlightenment period, even though Enlightenment philosophers put emphasis on real stories rather than on invented ones. In addition, the priority in the Romantic era, which followed, was symbolism and mythology,³ but one of its significant aspects was the interest in individualism and youth.⁴

The classical model of Bildungsroman presents the main character as, usually, a child or a young adult who suffers from his social differences and goes through a change, resolves his (in the traditional genres the protagonist was often a male) differences, becomes the mature adult and his lifelong journey quite frequently ends up with a marriage.⁵ Usually, children are viewed as passive receivers of cultural tradition. While growing up, children adapt to the norms of society, culture and model behavior, accept them as their own and live by them. Concerning this theory, Karl Mannheim states that such process of growing up is possible only in traditional societies where values do not change much during the course of years. However, past few centuries brought many changes within the society making the process of growing up quite unpredictable.⁶

Russian theorist Mikhail Bakhtin was one of the contributors to the theory of genre, especially in his fragmental essay “The Bildungsroman and Its Significance to the History of Realism”. Bakhtin divides the historical novels into two categories. The first category includes novels without emergence where the protagonist lacks development. He further classifies those

¹ David Scott Kastan, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of British Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

² Lorna Ellis, *Appearing to Diminish: Female Development and the British Bildungsroman, 1750-1850* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press).

³ Fritz Martini, *Bildungsroman: Term and Theory* (University of South Carolina Press, 1991).

⁴ Šárka Bubíková. „The Literary Image of Man in the Process of Becoming: Variations of the Bildungsroman Genre in English and American Literature“. *American and British Studies Annual* 4 (2011), p. 118.

⁵ M. Keith Booker, *Encyclopedia of Literature and Politics: A-G*, (Greenwood Publishing Group, 2005), p. 83

⁶ Bubíková, “The Literary Image of Man in the Process of Becoming“, p.127.

novels according to the way the image of the hero is constructed into three subcategories – travel novel, novel of ordeal, and biographical novel. The travel novel takes place in a certain time span. The hero is a moving point in space. The novel of ordeal is more complex in its subdivision, but generally it is constructed as a series of tests, and the character is presented as complete and unchanging. This type of novel was surpassed in the 18th and 19th centuries by the biographical novel and the Bildungsroman as those two genres are much more complex from the psychological point of view. Even though, biographical novel is quite similar to Bildungsroman, it lacks the most important feature – the hero's development.⁷

The second category contains novels of emergence, novels where the main character develops.

The main theme of our essay is the time-space and the image of man in the novel. Our criterion is the assimilation of real historical time and the assimilation of historical man that takes place in that time. [...] ...more specific and special theme – the image of *man in the process of becoming* in the novel.⁸

Bakhtin claims that in order to explain the term Bildungsroman, it is necessary to define the aspects of man's essential becoming. In the subcategories of novels without emergence, the hero is an unchanging constant whereas everything surrounding him, the environment, society, or hero's destiny are changeable aspects – varieties. This is where the Bildungsroman differs considerably from the first category. One of the most significant features of the genre is that it depicts "a man in the process of becoming". Therefore the change of hero due to circumjacent influences is the most desirable outcome. Martini also claims that "fantasy no longer productively builds up its own world but transforms the experienced world." This world made of experiences focuses on individual.⁹ Time becomes fundamental aspect to hero's life and destiny.¹⁰ This also relates to Tobias Boes' statement that "the increasing social and political pressures of the day gave birth to the idea that 'history' might itself have a 'story', and that its basic determining factors might themselves be in motion."¹¹

Bakhtin further divides Bildungsroman into five subcategories. The first type is the idyllic-cyclical time. It displays hero's path from childhood to old age and also describes all inner changes within him or her. Purely cyclical type does not exist, but its elements appeared,

⁷ Mikhail Bakhtin, „The Bildungsroman and Its Significance to the History of Realism“, in *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), p.10 - 18

⁸ Bakhtin, „The Bildungsroman and Its Significance of the History of Realism“, p. 19

⁹ Martini, *Bildungsroman: Term and Theory*.

¹⁰ Bakhtin, „The Bildungsroman and Its Significance to the History of Realism“, p. 20 - 21

¹¹ Tobias Boes, „Apprenticeship of the Novel: The Bildungsroman and the Invention of History, CA. 1770-1820“, p. 273

especially during the eighteenth century, in works of idyllists and novelist of regionalism, e.g. Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy. The second type is Bildungsroman in narrower sense. It includes eighteenth-century novels of education that depict the path from youthful idealism to mature practicality. The third type is the biographical and autobiographical novel where the cyclical time is replaced by biographical time. Destiny of a person and his/her image is shaped by character's activity. *Tom Jones* by Henry Fielding and *David Copperfield* by Charles Dickens could be included in this category. The fourth type is the didactic-pedagogical novel which recounts the pedagogical process of education. *Emile, or On Education* by Jean-Jacques Rousseau is a typical example of the fourth type. The fifth and last type is also, according to Bakhtin, the most significant one. The process of character's development takes place in real historical time, and a hero evolves along with the ambient world. The hero's emergence takes place in real historical time and unlike in the four other types, the process is no longer man's private affair in unchanging world but rather the opposite. Man emerges along with the world. As Bakhtin claims: "It is as though the very foundations of the world are changing, and man must change along with them."¹²

But even though Bakhtin considers the fifth type most important, he also points out that it cannot be understood without its relation to the other four types.¹³

The importance of connection between time and space, so called chronotope (literary translation is "time space"), presented for the first time by Mikhail Bakhtin, and its influence on man's development is quite visible in works by German writer Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Bakhtin focuses greatly on Goethe's work in his Bildungsroman essay. Chronotope is the spatial and temporal frame where narratives are closely combined and consequently create one unique frame.¹⁴ Bakhtin himself explained the terms as follows:

In the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history. The intersection of axes and fusion of indicators characterizes the artistic chronotope.¹⁵

¹² Boes, „Apprenticeship of the Novel: The Bildungsroman and the Invention of History.“, p. 23 - 24

¹³ Boes, „Apprenticeship of the Novel: The Bildungsroman and the Invention of History.“, p. 24

¹⁴ Phillippe Lorino, „The Bakhtinian Theory of Chronotope (Spatial-temporal Frame) Applied to the Organizing Process.“ *Second International Symposium on Process Organization Studies*, p. 1.

¹⁵ Mikhail Bakhtin, „Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel: Notes Toward a Historical Poetics.“ *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* (1981), Austin: University of Texas Press, p. 84.

Bakhtin illustrated the examples of chronotope on Goethe's work and especially highlighted and admired Goethe's insight of time. He stated that Goethe "could, for example, quickly determine the age of trees... see epochs and ages. He had an exceptionally keen insight into all visible signs of time in human life – from everyday time that is measured by the sun and the ordinary sequence of man's day, to the time of the whole of human life – ages and epochs of man's emergence."¹⁶

Goethe's greatest contribution to the Bildungsroman genre is his novel *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (1795 – 96) [*Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*]. It is a story about a young man who does not want to accept the life that was set for him but rather travel and find his place in the world.¹⁷ There can be seen the relation of forming the protagonist on the background of historical development of the era which marks the beginning of the Bildungsroman genre and also the origin of a new hero.¹⁸ This work is by many considered to be the main Bildungsroman canon, however one can search for this genre in other places than Goethe's Germany.¹⁹ Summerfield and Downward compare *Wilhelm Meister* to Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, even though the first British Bildungsroman is considered to be *David Copperfield* by Charles Dickens.²⁰

Roberta S. Trites, in her book *Disturbing the Universe: Power and Repression in Adolescent Literature*, draws attention to the difference between the Bildungsroman and Entwicklungsromane. According to her the term Entwicklungsromane often blends into the Bildungsroman genre. Trites argues that only novels where the protagonist comes of age as an adult can be classified as a Bildungsroman. Entwicklungsromane is a novel of development in which the hero does not mature into adulthood.²¹ Marianne Hirsch considers the Entwicklungsroman to be an umbrella term that "depart from specific Goethean norms", however incorporates the more specific Bildungsroman. She adds that the German Entwicklungsroman involves utopian impulse and "resolves the conflict between the need for

¹⁶ Bakhtin, "The Bildungsroman and Its Significance to the History of Realism", p. 30 - 31

¹⁷ Giovanna Summerfield, Lisa Downward, *New Perspectives on the European Bildungsroman* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2012), p. 28

¹⁸ Bubíková, „The Literary Image of Man in the Process of Becoming“, p.117.

¹⁹ Ellis, *Appearing to Diminish: Female Development and the British Bildungsroman 1750-1850*, p. 22

²⁰ Summerfield, Downward, *New Perspectives on the European Bildungsroman*.

²¹ Roberta S. Trites, *Disturbing the Universe: Power and Repression in Adolescent Literature*, (University of Iowa Press, 1998). p. 10 – 11.

realism and the yearning for harmony” through protagonist’s adaptation to utopian reality without his compromising private values.²²

In Bildungsromane, the protagonist’s growth is not accidental nor is it a common development from childhood into adulthood. On the contrary, the hero’s development is a conscious “quest to achieve independence”.²³

Bildungsroman is considered to be a rather new genre. The focus on childhood and attention to growing up is also quite new from the historical perspective. In the modern times the “interest arises as the continuity between generations is dismantling.”²⁴ Franco Moretti finds that so far unknown mobility of capitalistic forces and inner exploration are one of the most significant features of Bildungsroman genre. Other important aspects, action and reflection, were mentioned by James Hardin. Therefore we can have two types of novel that are quite contradictory. In the first type, the hero actively confronts the world and in the other type, where the embittered protagonist withdraws from the world into his inner self.²⁵

Since *The Graveyard Book* by Neil Gaiman is set in Great Britain, the forms and features of English Bildungsromane should be discussed. The British Bildungsroman’s protagonist, as can be seen in e.g. Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*, is often by force set to unfamiliar surroundings and needs to deal with the “trauma” that is connected to the experience. It can be caused by both external (e.g. catastrophes) and internal factors (e.g. inner trauma).²⁶ The internal turmoil, or in Moretti’s words “the monster”, is an inseparable aspect to the protagonist of a story. It “gives flavor” to a rather bland British protagonist. “The monster” does not necessarily need to be part of character’s personality, but it can be presented or act as an antagonist. The protagonist of British Bildungsromane is “circular in the nature because his growth actually brings him back to his original social identity.”²⁷ Therefore all the difficulties he has faced on his journey and challenging his own roots brings the protagonist to return to his inheritance, as an act of justice.²⁸ The term ‘identity’ is quite important to the Bildungsroman

²² Marianne Hirsch, „The Novel of Formation as Genre: Between Great Expectations and Lost Illusions.“ *Genre* 12, no. 3 (fall 1979), p. 294.

²³ Trites, *Disturbing the Universe: Power and Repression in Adolescent Literature*, p. 10 – 11.

²⁴ Bubíková, „The Literary Image of Man in the Process of Becoming“, p. 119.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Summerfield, *Downward, New Perspectives on the European Bildungsroman*, p. 30

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

genre for it is “an internal, self-constructed, dynamic organization of drives, abilities, beliefs and individual history.”²⁹

Moretti also illustrates the proportionality of the expectations in youth and the amount of happiness and self-realization in an adult life. The greater the expectations are, the lesser satisfactory adulthood would be, as can be seen e.g. in the character Pip of Dickens’ *Great Expectations* (1861).³⁰

Jerome Hamilton Buckley believed that British Bildungsromane do not stress formal education as much as the German novels. On the contrary, they put emphasis on a thriving imagination and developing artistic inclinations which are often misunderstood. Buckley’s list of key elements of the genre includes the conflict of generations, self-education (school is restrictive for the protagonist), alienation, ordeal by love or the larger society. He also states that the protagonist can be fatherless (possibly even orphan) or feels estranged from his father. That often leads to loss of faith and traditional family values³¹ and hero’s departure. Since the setting is usually rural, the protagonist often travels into an urban center. The hero’s journey is complete when he overcomes the obstacles he faces and “accepts his own capacity for work and love.”³²

The analysis of *The Graveyard Book* will be based on the theories presented by Mikhail Bakhtin with connection to the time-space chronotope and will be complemented with theoretical background of Giovanna Summerfield and Lisa Downward, Franco Moretti and Fritz Martini.

²⁹ James E. Marcia, „Ego Identity Development.“ *Handbook of Adolescent Psychology*. (New York, 1980), p. 159.

³⁰ Moretti, *The Ways of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture*, (London: Verso, 2000) p. 184

³¹ Bubíková, „The Literary Image of Man in the Process of Becoming“, p. 121.

³² Trites, *Disturbing the Universe: Power and Repression in Adolescent Literature*. p. 11.

2. NEIL GAIMAN, ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Neil Gaiman was born on November 10th 1960 in Hampshire, UK, into a Jewish family.³³ His stories are influenced by works of authors such as C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, E. Nesbit, Edgar Allan Poe, or Michael Moorcock. Gaiman was also inspired by myths, legends and ancient stories. This matter is often reflected in his novels.³⁴

Gaiman's first novel, *Good Omens* (1990), was a collaboration with Terry Pratchett. It is a story about Apocalypse told via Christian apocalyptic tradition in a humorous manner.³⁵ The cooperation with Terry Pratchett laid the groundwork for another Gaiman's novel – *Neverwhere* (1997). One of the main themes of the book is the element of invisibility. Author's aim was to criticize the indifference between social classes.³⁶ *Stardust* (1998), a postmodern fairytale, is a fantasy set in two worlds. One world is a village in Victorian era and the other is a Faerie land. The story however is not listed among Gaiman's books for children mainly due to the explicit language, adult humor, and sexual allusions.³⁷ In 2001 Gaiman published a highly acclaimed bestseller *American Gods* followed by a sequel *Anansi Boys* (2005). *American Gods* won Hugo, Nebula, Locus, and Bram Stoker awards in several different genres (best SF novel, best horror novel, best fantasy novel). By the time *American Gods* came out, Neil Gaiman's fame and a worldwide reputation as a modern master of fantasy raised considerably.³⁸

Typical feature of many Gaiman's novels is the "world beyond world" concept. It has been appearing in his work since he started writing *The Sandman* comics. This feature became so famous that it is considered Gaiman's trademark and quite often some of the works of urban fantasy are referred to as "Gaimanesque".³⁹

³³ Charlotte Guillain, *Neil Gaiman. Rock Star Writer* (Chicago: Raintree, 2011).

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Karolyn Kinane, *End of Days: Essays on the Apocalypse from Antiquity to Modernity* (Jefferson: McFarland & Co., Inc., Publishers, 2009).

³⁶ Tracy Lyn Bealer, *Neil Gaiman and Philosophy, Gods Gone Wild!* (Chicago: Open Court, 2012).

³⁷ Jo Walton, „On the Other Side of the Wall: Neil Gaiman's Stardust.“ (available at: <http://www.tor.com/2011/07/22/on-the-other-side-of-the-wall-neil-gaimans-stardust>).

³⁸ Edward James, *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

³⁹ Hank Wagner, *Prince of Stories: The Many Worlds of Neil Gaiman* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2008).

Fairy tales are more than true: not because they tell us that dragons exist, but because they tell us that dragons can be beaten.

- Neil Gaiman, *Coraline*⁴⁰

The combination of fear and humor is a common feature in Gaiman's novels. This aspect is not diminished in his writing for young readers, and in the background of children literature it draws a strong contrast from more child-friendly novels. Gaiman's children novels have got a common feature of invoking fear or presenting, for children, nightmarish situations (one example for all might be *Coraline*, a story about a little girl walks through the locked doors into a parallel universe where her parents are spider-like creatures with buttons instead of eyes capturing children souls forever). Also Gaiman usually draws the line between good and evil very visibly.⁴¹

The first novel aimed at children and young adults was *Coraline* (2002), a winner of Hugo, Nebula and Bram Stoker awards. After the book's publishing the literary world acknowledged Gaiman as an author of children's literature.⁴²

Coraline is often compared to L. Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900) and Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* (1864) because all books mentioned are considered children's portal fiction - books in which magical portals or doorway connect two worlds, one commonly being mundane reality and the other portrays a fantasy land.⁴³ Neil Gaiman said about *Coraline* that "it is a story, I learned when people began to read it, that children experienced as an adventure, but which gave adults nightmares. It's the strangest book I've written, it took the longest time to write, and it's the book I'm proudest of."⁴⁴

The Wolves in the Walls (2003) followed *Coraline* a year later. Gaiman cooperated on the story with an illustrator Dave McKean with whom he created *The Sandman* graphical novels.⁴⁵ The wolves of this book represent many childhood fears, but especially darkness and the fear of strange sounds caused by unknown things. The book's main purpose is to point out the problems that can be caused by lack of communication between parents and their child.⁴⁶

⁴⁰ Neil Gaiman, *Coraline* (New York: W. Morrow, 2002).

⁴¹ Anna Jackson et al. *The Gothic in Children's Literature: Haunting the Borders* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

⁴² Wagner et al. *Prince of Stories: The Many Worlds of Neil Gaiman*, chap 6.

⁴³ Bealer et al. *Neil Gaiman and Philosophy: Gods Gone Wild!*.

⁴⁴ Anne Margaret Daniel, „*Coraline*, by Neil Gaiman: The First Decade.“ Online at *Huffington Post* (available at: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/anne-margaret-daniel/neil-gaiman-coraline_b_3876326.html)

⁴⁵ Wagner et al. *Prince of Stories: The Many Worlds of Neil Gaiman*, chap 6.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

InterWorlds (2007), a book following the tradition of two realities, was completed in cooperation with Michael Reaves. A year after Gaiman published a mythological story *Odd and the Frost Giants* (2008), a story using elements of Norse mythology that was aimed at middle-grade children. In the same year *The Graveyard Book* (2008), which is fundamental to this thesis, was also released⁴⁷.

⁴⁷ Wagner et al. *Prince of Stories: The Many Worlds of Neil Gaiman*, chap 6.

3. INTRODUCTION TO *THE GRAVEYARD BOOK* AND GENRE'S SPECIFICATIONS

In the past *The Graveyard Book* won several prestigious awards including the John Newbery Medal of American Library Association for library service to children (2009)⁴⁸, Hugo Award for best novel (2009)⁴⁹ and Locus Award (2009) for best young adult novel⁵⁰. The story develops around a baby boy whose family was brutally murdered by the man named Jack for unknown reasons. The toddler escapes and finds sanctuary at a local cemetery where he is met by its varied denizens, such as teachers, poets, romantics or ghosts of children among others. The boy is adopted by a family of ghosts, the Owens. They name him Nobody 'Bod' Owens. Apart from foster parents, he also acquires a guardian Silas, who is undead, and it is suggested that he might be a vampire. Bod is given the Freedom of the Graveyard that grants him a similar abilities the ghosts have, e.g. disappearing in shadows, being able to see in the darkness, or impose fear upon others. The one thing that the Freedom allows him, and ghost cannot do, is the ability to leave the graveyard's gates. Nobody gradually grows up and tries to figure his place in the two worlds. The novel follows Nobody's life since early childhood to approximately fifteen years of age when he comes victorious from the battle against his family's murderer. In the very last chapter, Bod prepares for the next stage of his life, specifically his entrance into the world of the living.⁵¹

Neil Gaiman states in the acknowledgements that the book was inspired by his son Michael who riding his tricycle between gravestones when he was two years old, gave Gaiman the idea of a child at home in the graveyard. The author also revealed that the book's graveyard was inspired by the Highgate Cemetery West⁵² (in northern London where, for example, Douglas Adams, George Eliot, Karl Marx, John Galsworthy or the family of Charles Dickens, rest).⁵³

The plot of the book is episodic, with each chapter providing insight into Nobody's life and through different adventures shows the development of his character from childhood to young adult age. Tally Jr. in his essay "Nobody's Home" generally describes *The Graveyard*

⁴⁸ ALA, „Newbery Medal Winners“, (available at: <http://www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/newberymedal/newberywinners/medalwinners>).

⁴⁹ The Hugo Awards, „2009 Hugo Awards“ (available at: <http://www.thehugoawards.org/hugo-history/2009-hugo-awards/>).

⁵⁰ Locus Awards, „2009 Locus Awards“ (available at: <http://www.locusmag.com/SFAwards/Db/Locus2009.html>).

⁵¹ Neil Gaiman, *Thre Graveyard Book* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2008).

⁵² Gaiman, *Thre Graveyard Book*, p. 311 – 313.

⁵³ High Gate Cemetery, „History“, (available at: <http://highgatecemetery.org/about/history>).

Book as a typical example of a story where “the young protagonist moves from innocence to experience, becoming a wiser (and often sadder) person by the end”.⁵⁴ Because the hero’s retreat into his inner self is irrelevant to the novel’s plot, *The Graveyard Book* represents the second type of the Bildungsroman in James Hardin’s typology of the genre, i.e. the one where hero actively engages and confronts the world.⁵⁵ It is very well illustrated by the protagonist’s many adventures and the final battle in which he manages to defeat millennia old order that was set on killing him.

The Graveyard Book is yet another Gaiman’s novel set in two worlds. This feature serves as a tool for the main protagonist to find his true self (as can be also seen in *Coraline*, *Neverwhere* or *Anansi Boys*). But in *The Graveyard Book* the aspect of growing up is so strong that the novel is quite often referred to as a Gothic Bildungsroman.⁵⁶

Considering the genre, *The Graveyard Book* is classified as young adult fantasy and horror. Defining young adult literature is not so easy for the term is too vast to properly grasp. It is considered to be part of the children’s literature where the target audience are, basically said, teenagers. Young adult literature is quite a new literary category that originated after the World War II in the United States and includes literary classics such as J.D. Salinger’s *Catcher in the Rye* or Harper Lee’s *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The late boom of literature targeted at adolescents is due to the fact that the word “teenager” was scarcely used before that time. There was a certain awareness about the period between childhood and adulthood, however it was not considered to be an important developmental period. Michael Cart in his *Young Adult Literature: From Romance to Realism* argues that it was caused by the need for children to enter the full-time workforce as soon as possible. This tendency started to gradually disappear after the 1900s when psychologist S. Stanley Hall draw attention to this problematic in 1904.⁵⁷ Young adult literature consists of many genres, fantasy and horror including.

The *Anthem Dictionary of Literary Terms and Theory* defines the genre of fantasy as work of literature where settings and characters are “imaginative and non-realistic”. Fantasy stories usually contain supernatural characters⁵⁸ such as ghosts, vampires and werewolves presented in *The Graveyard Book*. However, fantasy books generally originated from folk tales,

⁵⁴ Tally Jr., „Nobody’s Home“ (*Neil Gaiman and Philosophy: Gods Gone Wild!*)

⁵⁵ Bubíková, „The Literary Image of Man in the Process of Becoming.“

⁵⁶ Bealer et al. *Neil Gaiman and Philosophy: Gods Gone Wild!*.

⁵⁷ Michael Cart, *Young Adult Literature: From Romance to Realism* (American Library Association, 2010), p. 3 – 5.

⁵⁸ Peter Auger, *The Anthem Dictionary of Literary Terms and Theory* (London: Anthem Press, 2010), p. 109.

mythology and especially fairytales. Therefore other supernatural characters, e.g. witches, fairies, goblins or dragons, also appear. Moreover with reference to *The Book of Literary Terms* it is necessary to mention that apart from the imaginary worlds the stories present an imaginary happenings.⁵⁹ In *The Graveyard Book* it is for instance Bod's ability to disappear and walk through concrete objects, visiting people in their dreams or evoking fear.⁶⁰

Fantasy genre belongs to popular literature, it is connected to escapism for it offers the possibility to become lost in an imaginative world, providing readers with an "opportunity to pause" and slow down the hectic pace of modern times.⁶¹ As a matter of fact this can be symbolically seen in Gaiman's graveyard because its denizens do not change, and it seems as though the time stands still.

The genre of fantasy, as Megan M. McArdle states in her *The Reader's Advisory Guide to Genre Blends*, has got "blurry edges". Nowadays, anything containing any kind of supernatural elements is considered to be fantasy. Epic, or high, fantasy is quite a distinctive sub-genre based on a world building, but the world presented in many fantasy books is not very different from the one we know. *The Graveyard Book* presents an old and already closed graveyard in an unnamed but ordinary English town. There is just the "added layer of otherness" that marks it as a fantasy.⁶² Because of its town settings *The Graveyard Book* can be furthermore classified as an urban fantasy.

The horror genre is not a typical representative of children's literature. However, horror originated among others from folklore, the common denominator of the fairy tales' development.⁶³ According to Philip J. Nickel the genre should include the occurrence of evil creatures or monstrous and evoke "dread, visceral disgust, fear, or startlement in the spectator or reader".⁶⁴ Victoria de Rijke states that children's horror fiction is a relatively new genre, "especially since (bizarrely) fairy tales are not categorized as horror". Horror for children is tied

⁵⁹ Lewis Turco, *The Book of Literary Terms: The Genres of Fiction, Drama, Nonfiction, Literary Criticism, and Scholarship* (UPNE, 1999), p. 61.

⁶⁰ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 22 – 32.

⁶¹ John. H. Timmerman, *Other Worlds: The Fantasy Genre* (Popular Press, 1983), p. 1 – 2.

⁶² Megan M. McArdle, *The Reader's Advisory Guide to Genre Blends*, (American Library Association, 2014), p.

⁶³ Victoria de Rijke, „Horror“ (in *International Companion Encyclopedia of Children's Literature* written by Peter Hunt, Routledge, 2004), p. 506.

⁶⁴ Philip J. Nickel, „Horror and the Idea of Everyday Life: On Skeptical Threats in *Psycho* and *The Birds* (in *The Philosophy of Horror* by Thomas Fahy, University Press of Kentucky, 2010), p. 15.

to the horror for adults, and it might include moral lessons.⁶⁵ Nevertheless, *The Graveyard Book* can be even further specified as a gothic novel.

Gothic novel is a type of prose fiction that originally preceded the horror story. The term was introduced in Pre-Romanticism and was very popular in Europe between the years 1760 – 1820. Its main features are the interest in the dark, atmosphere of terror, mystery and gloominess. The common setting may be ruins of an old castle or monasteries, possibly other devastated landscapes. Ghosts and other supernatural beings lurking in the dark are considered to be a typical feature of the genre. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) or Horace Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* (1764) are good examples of a gothic novel.⁶⁶

Gothic features in *The Graveyard Book* are quite distinctive. They help set the mood of the book and highlight the mystery surrounding the characters. Specifically, they are noticeable in the murder of Nobody's parents, which happens "offstage", but still represents a mysterious occurrence. The setting itself - an ancient graveyard inhabited by ghosts from roughly two millennia is another strong Gothic aspect.

Another aspect is the presence of the Lady on the Grey who is traditionally viewed as the Death's harbinger.⁶⁷ Even though she appears only in two scenes of the novel, she plays quite an important part, especially at the beginning of the story. The Lady on the Grey is the one who persuades the denizens of the graveyard to let Bod stay and to protect him.⁶⁸ In medieval times people believed that she was directly linked to the four horsemen of the Apocalypse. She is not a typical Gothic symbol, but what she represents may be considered one.⁶⁹

Gothic symbols might not be found only in the setting or individual attributes but also in the particular chapters themselves. One example for all can be the mystical Macabray, more likely known as the Danse Macabre, a festival joining the dead and living.⁷⁰ When the flowers in winter's graveyard blossom, the dead descend to the Old Town to dance with the living. During the dance Bod encounters the Lady on the Grey, and she promises him that one day he

⁶⁵ De Rijke, „Horror“, p. 506.

⁶⁶ Auger, *The Anthem Dictionary of Literary Terms and Theory*, p. 127.

⁶⁷ Richard Bleiler. „Raised by the Dead: The Maturational Gothic of Neil Gaiman's Graveyard Book“, in *21-st Century Gothic: Great Gothic Novels Since 2000* (Scarecrow Press, 2010).

⁶⁸ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 9

⁶⁹ Bleiler. „Raised by the Dead: The Maturational Gothic of Neil Gaiman's Graveyard Book“.

⁷⁰ Bleiler. „Raised by the Dead: The Maturational Gothic of Neil Gaiman's Graveyard Book“.

will ride her horse as everybody else.⁷¹ Although a Danse Macabre, that actually originated in medieval ages preceding the existence of Gothic novel, is not a typical motif for a Gothic novel, and even though the representation of death and dancing with the ghosts might evoke an uneasy feeling in the audience, the Gothic novelists prefer more physical horror – meaning provoking a physical response from the readers, usually fear, building the story upon suspense and horrifying images.⁷²

Bod's guardian Silas possesses abilities that suggest he is a vampire. He is neither dead nor living, he cannot stand the daylight and needs blood to survive. In addition Silas can flight and use hypnosis. Even though Silas warns Bod that he did not always did the moral things and that he might be considered a monster for things he committed, his character, as presented in the novel, is not evil, but, on the contrary, he is one of the heroes. Another character with a supernatural origin is Miss Lupescu, the werewolf, or rather the Hound of God. She is brought to the graveyard by Silas to care for and teach Bod while the guardian is away for longer periods of time. Bod also encounters ghouls who kidnap him to their own realm and on the terrifying journey to wrongness and discordance of the capital city Ghûlheim, they keep discussing the possibilities of Bod's fate – none is pleasant. However, Bod is saved by Miss Lupescu and taken back to the safety of the graveyard.⁷³

All of these aspects show the novel's connection to the Gothic genre. However, *The Graveyard Book* is primary a Bildungsroman. Gothic novel does not deal with the lessons on maturation, child's coming of age or the didactics and education. The narrative tone of *The Graveyard Book* is not sensational but rather calm and almost journalistic. The supernatural creators are in most cases protagonist's friends and protectors. The novel is built on contradictions between the gothic novel and Bildungsroman, therefore the label "gothic Bildungsroman".⁷⁴

The most distinctive feature of *The Graveyard Book* is its connection to Rudyard Kipling's classical collection of stories *The Jungle Book* (1894). Kipling, born in Mumbai, India, is internationally known for his pro-colonist stories in the late nineteenth century⁷⁵. *The*

⁷¹ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 144 – 165.

⁷² Bleiler „Raised by the Dead: The Maturational Gothic of Neil Gaiman's Graveyard Book“, p. 275.

⁷³ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 61 – 97.

⁷⁴ Bleiler „Raised by the Dead: The Maturational Gothic of Neil Gaiman's Graveyard Book“, p. 276 – 277.

⁷⁵ Eileen Gillooly, *Rudyard Kipling* (New York: Sterling Publishing Co., Inc., 2000), p. 4.

Jungle Book, one of his most famous children fable-like stories, describes the adventures of lost Indian boy Mowgli who finds himself in forest being raised by a family of wolves.

First, foremost, and forever: I owe an enormous debt, conscious and, I have no doubt, unconscious, to Rudyard Kipling and the two volumes of his remarkable work *The Jungle Book*. I read them as a child, excited and impressed, and I've read and re-read them many times since. If you are only familiar with the Disney cartoon, you should really read the stories.

—Neil Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, Acknowledgments

Gaiman's book is based on the intertextuality of Kipling's *Jungle Book*. He attempts to make the classical tale more suitable to the current audience. Christine Robertson in her essay on Gaiman's usage of intertextuality claims: "By transforming Kipling's Victorian jungle into a Victorian graveyard set in the middle of twenty-first century England, Gaiman recontextualizes Kipling's value system, suggesting to contemporary readers how we might now read or re-read Kipling's *Jungle Books* while renegotiating his imperialist politics."⁷⁶ The claim well summarizes what Gaiman probably wanted to achieve by using the literary intertext.

Gaiman takes the story of a boy, Mowgli, raised in the jungle by animals, and sets it into an English graveyard.⁷⁷ Most of the minor Kipling's characters have their counterparts in *The Graveyard Book*. Apart from Nobody and Mowgli, we can find similar character traits in Nobody's adoptive parents and Mowgli's wolves' family. Very interesting similarity might be seen between the characters of Bod's adoptive mother Mrs. Owens and Mowgli's wolf mother Raksha. Even though neither Mrs. Owens nor Raksha are the main characters in the novels they play immensely important role at the beginning of their respective stories. Raksha, whose name means "protection", needs to persuade her pack to keep the toddler. She is prepared to literary fight for him, even though she realizes it "would be her last fight" if things came to that.⁷⁸ In *The Graveyard Book*, Mrs. Owens is driven by the desire to have got a child of her own which she carried into the death from her childless marriage. She is also Bod's biggest advocate. Of course, her circumstances would logically not allow her to fight to the death, nevertheless she does try to persuade her fellow dead neighbors to accept the child into their care and

⁷⁶ Christine Robertson, "I want to be like you": Riffs on Kipling in Neil Gaiman's *The Graveyard Book*" (Children's Literature Association Quarterly, Volume 36, Number 2, Summer 2011, pp. 164-189), p. 165

⁷⁷ Wagner et al. *Prince of Stories: The Many Worlds of Neil Gaiman*, chap 6.

⁷⁸ Rudyard Kipling, *The Jungle Book*, (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 2010), p. 8 – 11.

consequently in their society. Both eventually succeed and become mother figures to the lost boys.

In addition graveyard's Silas, the dangerous protector who is neither dead nor alive, bears the similarities to the black panther Bagheera. They both bare similar qualities, especially certain enigmatic and dangerous aura. Bagheera and Mowgli's friendship is rooted in their similar past so they can easily relate to each other. The panther becomes a mentor to the boy and eventually pays off Mowgli's debt so the protagonist can return to the humans. Silas and Bod's relationship is also based on *The Jungle Book*. The two characters can relate to each other too but for entirely different reasons. It has been hinted that Silas is a vampire, therefore he is neither dead nor alive, living in-between the two worlds. Bod is basically in the very same position. He is a human boy raised by the dead belonging to neither of those two worlds. Silas is Bod's guardian throughout the novel, and at the end, he helps Bod to realize why it is a necessity for him to live his human life and leave the graveyard. Consequently, Silas is the one who ensures Bod's return to the world of the living where he rightfully belongs.⁷⁹

The protagonist's nemesis, the man Jack, is an obvious counterpart to Shere Khan, who is the main antagonist of *The Jungle Books*.⁸⁰ They both share the similar characteristic traits, especially the arrogance and the sense of being more clever and powerful than others. They both make it their mission to kill the boys one day, however they are eventually defeated by them. In addition, the teacher of the wolves, bear Baloo, who pleads for Mowgli's life has got his own counterpart in *The Graveyard Book*. Miss Lupescu, the werewolf, becomes Bod teacher, and even though she appears later in Bod's life, unlike Baloo who is part of Mowgli's existence from the very beginning, Miss Lupescu and Baloo share similar traits. Baloo teaches Mowgli the law of the jungle, specifically Master-Words of the Jungle, however Mowgli does not want to learn anymore.⁸¹ Bod, on the other hand, is supposed to learn how to call for help in many different languages.⁸² Both boys are defiant, nevertheless the lessons ultimately save their lives.

Also chapter 3 "The Hounds of God" and chapter 4 "The Witch's Headstone" are parallels to Kipling's "Kaa's Hunting" and "The King's Ankus" respectively.⁸³ "The Hounds

⁷⁹ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 303 – 304.

⁸⁰ Helen Keeble, „Comparing the Graveyard and the Jungle.“ Online at *An Unexamined Life* (available at: <http://helen-keeble.livejournal.com/76398.html>)

⁸¹ Kipling, *The Jungle Book*, p. 31 – 33.

⁸² Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 70 – 72.

⁸³ Christine Robertson, "I want to be like you": *Riffs on Kipling in Neil Gaiman's The Graveyard Book*, p. 166.

of God” and “Kaa’s Hunting” have got both heroes rebel against their teachers, running away and ending up in a grave danger which they overcome thanks to the lesson they had previously learned. “The Witch’s Headstone” and “The King’s Ankus” where both heroes find an ancient and dangerous treasure which value they do not understand. After realization that the objects are priceless and what it means and what disasters the objects might cause, they return the treasure back to its hiding place. Gaiman furthermore uses the same narrative structure as Kipling does in *The Jungle Book*. Both books are episodic and ‘trace the development of a central male protagonist to maturity’.⁸⁴

Gaiman took the timeless classic and transformed it into a whole new tale fitting the demand of contemporary young adult market. Also it is necessary to remark that there is no direct reference to Kipling’s *Jungle Book* in the whole novel. The book can be read as a stand-alone text without the knowledge of the prior text.⁸⁵ The thesis’ aim is not to search the similarities between both books. *The Jungle Book*, due to its similarities, Kipling’s novel will serve as one of the tools for the analysis.

⁸⁴ Christine Robertson, “I want to be like you”: Riffs on Kipling in Neil Gaiman’s *The Graveyard Book*, p. 164.

⁸⁵ Christine Robertson, “I want to be like you”: Riffs on Kipling in Neil Gaiman’s *The Graveyard Book*, p. 166

4. THE BAD BEGINNING AND HOW NOBODY CAME TO THE GRAVEYARD⁸⁶

The hunt was almost over. He had left the woman in her bed, the man on the bedroom floor, the older child in her brightly colored bedroom, surrounded by toys and half-finished models. That only left the little one, a baby barely a toddler, to take care of.⁸⁷

An early age of protagonist's childhood in Bildungsromane often marked by an unexpected, often horrific milestone, usually in the form of some kind of tragedy⁸⁸. Gaiman's novel does not differ from this pattern.

Nobody Owens is an eighteen-month-old toddler when *The Graveyard Book* begins. His early life is, indeed, marked by a traumatic experience. The antagonist of the novel, the Man Jack, whose name immediately evokes the connection to Jack the Ripper⁸⁹, is charged to murder the protagonist's family. Gaiman uses the markers of horror genre and illustrates the scene in a gruesome way⁹⁰. However, the toddler escapes the house and coincidentally finds a refuge at a local graveyard.

Considering Bakhtin's chronotope, the time and place⁹¹ is extremely important at the beginning of the story. The murder of his family, and the danger the man Jack represents are both common denominators of incoming change. In consequence, the toddler is suddenly tore away from the comfort of safety, his sanctuary shattered in a matter of minutes. However, Gaiman does not present the motif for the massacre, and it remains a mystery until the very end of the book. As said before, the unnamed baby, our protagonist, escapes the murderer by sheer luck and tatters to a nearby graveyard covered under the thick fog that formed that night.⁹² The timing of the toddler's escape is crucial in the opening scene. While the man Jack busies himself killing the other members of the family, the baby gains time necessary for his escape. The scene is quite ironic for the killer is able to murder adults but not a small toddler. The paradox is that the baby is the main reason why the man Jack is targeting the family in the first place. The

⁸⁶ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*

⁸⁷ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 7.

⁸⁸ Summerfield, *Downward, New Perspectives on the European Bildungsroman*, p. 30.

⁸⁹ Bleiler, *Raised by the Dead, 21st-century Gothic: Great Gothic Novels Since 2000*, p. 271.

⁹⁰ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 5 – 10.

⁹¹ Bakhtin, *The Bildungsroman and Its Significance to the History of Realism*, p. 23.

⁹² Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 10 – 12.

toddler is the one who is supposed to be killed in the first place since he is destined to defeat and destroy an ancient order. However, the antagonist is apparently confident and arrogant enough to save the best, and also most important, for last ultimately giving the hero enough time to escape. The location of the graveyard is also convenient as it lies within a reachable distance of the family's house.

The baby reaches the graveyard, a typical representation of the traditional Gothic⁹³, and is protected by the graveyard's caretaker Silas from the murderer Jack. The story so far follows the premise set by Summerfield and Downward who stated that the protagonist often finds himself in an unknown location. However, the toddler does not need to come to terms with the trauma from the experience as it was suggested in *New Perspectives on the European Bildungsroman*.⁹⁴ The baby is too young to process such a tragedy. Considering his personality so far, it is irrelevant and Gaiman does not explain who the toddler was before he came to the graveyard. Therefore, who Bod will become will be determined by the protagonist himself as he gradually grows up.⁹⁵

Even though the hero necessarily does not suffer from any serious trauma, it does not mean that the event of the murder will not play an important role in the protagonist's development. On the contrary, it has got a great impact on Bod's future actions and character's development and will be discussed later in the thesis.

Nevertheless, the following scene is also a key part of the hero's development. The baby encounters his future foster parents, the Owens who happen to be local ghosts. Soon, all inhabitants of the graveyard learn about the boy and argue what the next course of action should be. After the appearance of the late mother's ghost who pleads for her son's protection, Lady on the Grey, the Death's harbinger appears and states: "The dead should have charity."⁹⁶ This act silences all the protests and unites the ghosts in one goal – to protect the child. The Owens become his foster parents, and the graveyard's caretaker Silas, the mysterious undead character, self-appoints himself as the boy's guardian.

So far the boy presented a blank page. At the point of his arrival to the graveyard he has got no name, no family, no home. Concurrently, the protagonist presents a blank page and his

⁹³ Bleiler, „Raised by the Dead“, p. 272.

⁹⁴ Summerfield, Downward, *New Perspectives on the European Bildungsroman*, p. 30.

⁹⁵ Tally Jr., „Nobody's Home“.

⁹⁶ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 30.

journey to discover his identity starts at this moment.⁹⁷ The child's acceptance by the 'dead' society is crucial. It is decided to give him the Freedom of the Graveyard. This being another feature contributing to protagonist's personality. Freedom of the Graveyard means he is enabled to see, speak and touch the dead, he can perfectly see in the dark, Fade, Slide, Dreamwalk, basically all the perks the ghosts get themselves. The protagonist is accepted by the ghosts, protected by them and is part of their group as only a living person can be among the dead.⁹⁸

The last question left to solve, a thing necessary to the protagonist's 'self', is the name. It was not deliberately mentioned by the author at the beginning of the novel.

“‘Well, then,’ said Silas. ‘His old name won’t be of much use to him now, anyway. There are those out there who mean him harm.’”⁹⁹

The ghosts argue about the name presenting ideas based on the boy's similarities to other people the ghosts knew during their lives. However, Mrs. Owens looks at the baby and states that he looks like nobody but himself. Hence the name Nobody 'Bod' Owens that would protect him from harm and keep him safe.¹⁰⁰

Another aspect of the naming scene should be taken into consideration. When the ghosts discuss Bod's name, each of them associate him with people they knew when they were still alive until Mrs Owen interjects them. Having a name after someone, especially after a parent, puts a certain amount of pressure on a person. It is expected from them to following in the predecessor's footsteps. Nobody has got an advantage then. His name is only his and his parents are gone. He has got a clean slate to truly become nobody but himself.¹⁰¹ In addition, the name he was given does not define him, he is nobody so as a consequence, he can be anybody. There are no "histories associated with him" which enables him to grow and change without any restrictions.¹⁰² In addition, Robert T. Tally Jr. states in his essay "Nobody's Home" that the protagonist "will have to make sense of his being in the face of the nothingness confronting it

⁹⁷ Joseph Abbruscato, „Being Nobody: Identity in Neil Gaiman's The Graveyard Book“ (*The Gothic Fairy Tale in Young Adult Literature: Essays on Stories from Grimm to Gaiman*. McFarland, 2014), p. 67.

⁹⁸ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 22 – 32.

⁹⁹ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 24.

¹⁰⁰ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 24 – 25.

¹⁰¹ Wayne Yuen, „The Dead Teach Us How to Live“, (*Neil Gaiman and Philosophy, Gods Gone Wild!*, Chicago: Open Court, 2012).

¹⁰² Abbruscato, „Being Nobody: Identity in Neil Gaiman's The Graveyard Book“, p. 68.

at all times”.¹⁰³ After being given the name, Bod opens his eyes as if “responding to the name”.¹⁰⁴ This act despite Bod’s young age might be viewed as a symbolical association with his future identity¹⁰⁵ and acknowledgment of his fate.

The first chapter of the book, “How Nobody Came to the Graveyard”, is a typical example of trauma caused by external factors. The protagonist could do nothing to prevent the actions, nor did it affect him psychologically. The events simply serve as a launching pad for the character’s development.

¹⁰³ Robert T. Tally Jr., „Nobody’s Home“, (*Neil Gaiman and Philosophy, Gods Gone Wild!*, Chicago: Open Court, 2012).

¹⁰⁴ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 25.

¹⁰⁵ Abbruscato, „Being Nobody: Identity in Neil Gaiman’s *The Graveyard Book*“, p. 68.

5. EDUCATIONAL ASPECTS

The process of protagonist's learning is another inherent part of the Bildungsroman genre. The novel of education depicting the journey from childhood to adulthood maturation is one of the five novels of emergence according to Bakhtin.¹⁰⁶ Even though, *The Graveyard Book* cannot be defined solely as a novel of education, the novel puts quite an impact on acquiring knowledge and experiences, whether it is throughout life lessons or rather more formal education.

Men's education is extremely important because it influences one's development and should prepare children for their adulthood. Alfred North Whitehead says in connection to the topic:

What we should aim at producing is men who possess both culture and expert knowledge in some special direction. Their expert knowledge will give them the ground to start from, and their culture will lead them as deep as philosophy and as high as art. We have to remember that the valuable intellectual development is self-development...

- Alfred North Whitehead, "The Aim of Education"¹⁰⁷

However, *The Graveyard Book* might fail in some of the aspects of protagonist's preparation for adulthood in the contemporary society, but it still teaches the hero quite valuable lessons important for survival in-between two worlds.¹⁰⁸ Bod has got many moral role models in the graveyard's citizens. For example Bod's foster parents teach him the necessity of a moral life, rather than what "the traditions of the graveyard dictate[s]."¹⁰⁹ Every graveyard citizen represents a different piece of history, for example one of the oldest inhabitants is the Roman Caius Pompeius. Readers also encounter Liza Hempstock, a witch that Bod befriends, who was executed in a witch trial, and several other ghosts representing the Victorian period.¹¹⁰ Furthermore, the journey of Bod's maturation takes place approximately in the time span of thirteen years, and each chapter is roughly two years apart. Through the book readers experience

¹⁰⁶ Bakhtin, „The Bildungsroman and Its Significance to the History of Realism“, p. 23.

¹⁰⁷ Alfred North Whitehead, *The Aim of Education* (Simon and Schuster, 1967), p. 1.

¹⁰⁸ Daignault, „Growing Up Dead: Coming-of-Age in The Graveyard Book“, (Presented at the PCA/ACA Annual Conference 2013, Washington DC), online (available at: http://www.academia.edu/3575960/Growing_Up_Dead_Impossible_Coming-of-Age_in_The_Graveyard_Book), p. 2

¹⁰⁹ Wayne Yuen, „The Dead Teach Us How to Live“.

¹¹⁰ Wade Newhouse, „Coming of Age with the Ageless“ in *Neil Gaiman and Philosophy: Gods Gone Wild!*, Open Court, 2013.

Bod's dealing with life's challenges, each more difficult than the previous one, yet all displaying the same pattern of acquiring a certain knowledge necessary for overcoming the future obstacles, awareness of surroundings and minor character's help or advice. Simply said, at the beginning of each chapter Bod is forced to acquire a certain knowledge that will eventually become necessary for surviving his later adventures.¹¹¹

5.1 FORMAL EDUCATION

The first thing Bod learns is the alphabet followed by reading and writing. When Silas realizes that Bod is almost six years old and has got almost no basic knowledge of school subjects, he brings the boy ABC books, and the protagonist gradually starts to learn how to read and write. Silas has him running around the graveyard, looking for the letters written at tombstones and copying them. In this manner, Bod learns copperplate handwriting.¹¹² Shortly after, Mr. Pennyworth, the ghost of an old university professor, takes over Silas' supervision of Bod's education. Mr. Pennyworth, who is dead for over two centuries, teaches Bod math but also for example about the four medical humors. Apart from science, Mr. Pennyworth also makes Bod practice ghost abilities such as how to invoke fear in people or Slipping and Fading, "the way of the dead. Slip through shadows. Fade from awareness".¹¹³

Considering Jerome Hamilton Buckley's theory that states the British Bildungsromane do not stress the need for formal education enough¹¹⁴, *The Graveyard Book* might be considered an exception. The moment Silas learns Bod is not able to read or write, he immediately takes necessary steps to ensure a proper formal education for the boy presented in many ways throughout the novel. In this case, school or the form of "home-schooling" Bod undergoes is mostly not restrictive, but rather the opposite, and proves useful to him many times during his adventures.

Reading, writing, mathematics or history, those are basic subjects taught in schools. However, the protagonist does not learn current social behaviour, technology, or simply basic operations of everyday life such as shopping, cooking, or traffic rules, all of which are also part of education connected to childhood. Bod learns things fitting the society he lives in. He learns

¹¹¹ Abbruscato, „Being Nobody: Identity in Neil Gaiman's *The Graveyard Book*“, p. 70.

¹¹² Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 37 – 39.

¹¹³ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 105.

¹¹⁴ Bubíková, „The Literary Image of Man in the Process of Becoming“, p. 121.

how to live and survive in the graveyard. This can be very well seen in the following excerpt when Bod meets three unknown ghosts.

There were three of them [ghosts] there, then, and Amabella was introducing Bod and he was shaking hands and saying, 'Charmed, I am sure,' because he could greet people politely over nine hundred years of changing manners.¹¹⁵

Those manners are necessary because every single ghost in the graveyard maintained the temporalities and the cultural manners of their time.¹¹⁶ Therefore fitting in the society of the dead proves to be quite difficult for the ghosts represent a wide social and cultural range. That might be the reason why Bod feels that the time and history is a too large concept to be understood, and that human life is insignificant in the light of such vastness. On the other hand, in the face of evil Bod gains an advantage because the way he chooses to handle the situation comes from extensive varieties “of historical personalities and moralities”.¹¹⁷ Bod is a typical “passive receiver of cultural tradition.”¹¹⁸ During his maturation, he adapts to the norms of the dead society he is part of. The protagonist learns the rules and values of the society who is, in sense, traditional since the culture and model behaviour does not change at all.

Another important aspect of Bod's formal education is his time spent in a human school. After a conversation with Silas about what happened to his real family, Bod himself decides to attend a school in a human world.¹¹⁹ This might be viewed as the hero's desire for a certain level of self-cultivation. Because it is only lightly outlined in the story, it fits Buckley's presupposition that the need for self-cultivation in the English Bildungsromane is not so distinctive.¹²⁰

The protagonist starts attending the human school, he is described as a sharp and disciplined student who excels in English language and literature (it is stated many times in the novel that Bod favours reading). The hero spends his free time mostly in the back of the class or in a school library, usually reading. However, since he is protected by the Freedom of the Graveyard, the protagonist slips from the human's minds the moment he disappears from one's sight.¹²¹ This does not allow him to be fully integrated in the process of education as a whole, including peer's interaction or teacher's feedback. Despite his invisibility, he is not allowed to

¹¹⁵ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 189.

¹¹⁶ Daignault, „Growing Up Dead: Coming-of-Age in The Graveyard Book“, p. 5.

¹¹⁷ Newhouse, „Coming of Age with the Ageless.“

¹¹⁸ Bubíková, „The Literary Image of Man in the Process of Becoming“, p. 127.

¹¹⁹ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 180 – 181.

¹²⁰ Bubíková, „The Literary Image of Man in the Process of Becoming“, p. 121.

¹²¹ Newhouse, „Coming of Age with the Ageless.“, p. 174 – 182.

mingle with his classmates anyway, or his teachers for that matter, due to his own protection. Yet Bod crosses path with the school bullies and the incident results into a series of problems that will be later discussed in chapter 6.

5.2 LEARNING THROUGH EXPERIENCE

Another way of hero's acquisition of knowledge is through experience. The very first example of it can be found in Chapter 2, "The New Friend". Bod befriends a human girl Scarlett, and together they experience quite a frightening adventure. While talking to the graveyard's oldest denizen, they discover the oldest object in the graveyard - an old tomb. The mausoleum is situated deep under the ground, and Bod and Scarlett need to overcome several obstacles before a phantom called the Indigo Man appears in front of them.¹²² The Indigo Man is not a ghost per say but rather, as Abbruscato expresses it, a projection capable of instilling fear.¹²³ Bod notices a dead body and realizes the victim was so afraid of the Indigo Man that he started running, however, eventually he probably tripped and broke his neck. The protagonist immediately internalizes this, adds to it Scarlett's knowledge about scarecrows, of them being scary but harmless, and conquers his own fear because he realizes that Indigo Man is just supposed to act as scarecrows do. Thanks to this, Bod and Scarlett pass the spirit and continue going further into the darkness of the cavern. There they meet the final obstacle - the Sleer.¹²⁴ Sleer is a recurring character that is essentially important for the novel's ending and Bod's self-realization. Abbruscato believes the Sleer might be a reminiscent from the pre-Roman times, presumably ghost of a druid.¹²⁵ It is a snake-like invisible creature whose voice announces that it is waiting for its master and that "fear is a weapon of the Sleer".¹²⁶ However, Bod is now able to control his own fear and anxiety and leads Scarlett away from the tomb. This is one of the moments Bod decides to ignore advices of the graveyard's ghosts and puts his life in jeopardy. Also the protagonist shows quite an amount of courage. He truly is afraid of Indigo Man when he sees him for the first time, especially after he also notices the dead body. Scarlett is spared

¹²² Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 40 – 60.

¹²³ Abbruscato, „Being Nobody“, p. 70.

¹²⁴ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 53 – 56.

¹²⁵ Abbruscato, „Being Nobody“, p. 71.

¹²⁶ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 56.

of the view since she does not possess the ability to see in the dark. Bod has got an advantage for he is not afraid of the death as much as people usually are. Living in the dead society inhibits the raw fear people feel in the face of death. Due to his experiences, Bod is able to control and eventually defeat his fear and walk out of Sleer's cavern without harm.

However, the graveyard's denizens are not the only teachers Bod has got. Silas, who taught the protagonist how to read and write, serves not only as a protector, but also as a mentor and advisor. According to Wayne Yuen, Silas possesses wisdom, one of "a classic Greek virtue that most people still value today". Silas' wisdom is important because his counsel shapes Bod's character over the years.¹²⁷ As a consequence, Bod is resentful when Silas unexpectedly leaves, leaving him with a new teacher Miss Lupescu, the werewolf.¹²⁸

"I have teachers. Letitia Borrowes teaches me writing and words, and Mr. Pennyworth teaches me his Compleat Educational System for Younger Gentlemen with Additional Material for Those Post Mortem. I do geography and everything. I don't need more lessons."

- Bod to Miss Lupescu¹²⁹

The several following paragraphs analyse Chapter Three, "The Hounds of God", due to its many educational aspects. Nobody is introduced to his new temporal caretaker and teacher Miss Lupescu. He is resentful due to Silas' absence and Miss Lupescu's teaching methods. Bod's new teacher is quite strict and has him memorizing long lists of seemingly useless items. Specifically, the different kinds of people (the living, the dead, day-folk, night-folk, ghouls, etc.) or ways to call for help in every language in the world including Night-Gaunt, the flying beast with leather wings occupying the sky over the ancient city of Ghulheim in another reality inhabited by the terrifying ghouls.¹³⁰ Bod, as probably most children his age, complains that what he learns in Miss Lupescu's lessons is useless to him. However, his correct imitation of Night-Gaunt's call for help ultimately saves his life.¹³¹

¹²⁷ Yuen, „The Dead Teach Us How to Live“.

¹²⁸ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*.

¹²⁹ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 70.

¹³⁰ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 72.

¹³¹ Robertson, „I want to be like you: Riffs on Kipling in Neil Gaiman's *The Graveyard Book*“, p. 167.

Since Bod realizes no one is sympathetic to his destitution, he starts sulking and acting out feeling unloved, a natural part of adolescent development¹³². Bod's disobedience of rules leads him to meet the ghouls, a flesh-eating monsters consuming lives and adapting personalities of influential people. The first ghouls Bod meets introduce themselves to him respectively as the honorable Archibald Fitzhugh, the Duke of Westminster, and the Bishop of Bath and Wells.¹³³ The ghouls have got no personal identity; they parasitize on others and do not remember who they were prior to their ghoul existence. Considering Bod's name one more time, he is the entire opposite.¹³⁴ He does not steal or share his name. As stated in Chapter 1 of the novel, "How Nobody Came to the Graveyard", he is "nobody but himself"¹³⁵ in reference to his uniqueness.¹³⁶ That is the reason why the ghouls' tale-telling about the glory of being a ghoul terrifies Bod so much. Consequently, this is one of the indicators that the protagonist is more scared of losing his identity than losing his life. The realization will grow stronger as the novel proceeds.

The ghouls teach Bod how to open and close the Ghoul-gate¹³⁷, a thing proved convenient in the novel's climax. Despite the fact Bod enters the ghoul's realm voluntarily, he soon finds himself in a grave danger as the ghouls plan to drag him into Ghulheim and consume him. In spite of the mortal danger, Bod notices the Night-Gaunts in the sky, remembers Miss Lupescu's lessons, and as was mentioned before, calls for help in their language using the previously acquired knowledge.¹³⁸ During his lesson, the moment Miss Lupescu asked about Night-Gaunts Bod had got an outburst claiming that he "do[es]n't remember what a night gaunt is."¹³⁹ Miss Lupescu described the creatures and that is why Bod recognized the flying beasts in the sky and was able to call for help. The protagonist, once again, proved his sharpness and quick deliberation.

Night-Gaunts notify Miss Lupescu, and she saves Bod from a fate worse than death. This episode serves as a lesson, not only for Bod himself but also for the readers that stresses "the importance of nurturing the intellect of the child".¹⁴⁰ What is more, Miss Lupescu cannot

¹³² Joseph Abbruscato, „Being Nobody: Identity in Neil Gaiman's *The Graveyard Book*“ (*The Gothic Fairy Tale in Young Adult Literature: Essays on Stories from Grimm to Gaiman*. McFarland, 2014), p. 72.

¹³³ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 72 – 74.

¹³⁴ Tally Jr., „Nobody's Home“.

¹³⁵ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 25.

¹³⁶ Tally Jr., „Nobody's Home“.

¹³⁷ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 74 – 79.

¹³⁸ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 79 – 98.

¹³⁹ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 72.

¹⁴⁰ Abbruscato, „Being Nobody: Identity in Neil Gaiman's *The Graveyard Book*“, p. 73.

receive the full credit for Bod's rescue. He used the acquired knowledge, sharpness and his talent for being aware of his surroundings. Unnoticed, Bod quietly steals a nail from a coffin which later helps him escape the ghouls and consequently meet Miss Lupescu who was already searching for him to take him back home.¹⁴¹

This adventure has got a big impact on Bod for it makes him realize how much he values and appreciates the safety of his home. While being kidnapped by the ghouls, the protagonist is desperate and homesick. Later, when he safely returns to the graveyard, he lies contentedly in his parents' tomb. The end of the scene is described by Gaiman as follows: "And then he was perfectly comfortable, beneath the earth, in a good place, with his head on his own pillow, and a gentle, exhausted darkness took him."¹⁴² Throughout this sentence the author points out the comfort and security children experience in a loving home as to contrast to the hostile city of Ghulheim.¹⁴³ At this moment, Bod is still a child who just went through a traumatic experience, the comfort and safety of his own home is immensely important for his recovery of the upsetting incident.

In conclusion, the reluctance and defiance towards the learning process Bod experiences can be easily spotted within children or teenage behaviour, especially the complaining of the uselessness of the content subject. The children readers of the story can easily relate to the protagonist's character, therefore the conclusion of the chapter teaches the important lesson on the importance of education. Therefore even though Bod acts out, he soon learns that education and knowledge is useful but mostly a necessary aspect of life.

In chapters 2, "The New Friend" and 3, "The Hounds of God" the protagonist showed how resourceful he is. Throughout the whole chapter 4, "The Witch's Headstone", the protagonist learns a lesson that his secretly leaving the graveyard might cost him his life. In the world of living, he could suddenly count mostly only on himself since the ghosts cannot leave the ground in which they are buried. Also this is a third time he was aided in his adventures. Firstly, the human girl Scarlett Perkins was with him in the Sler's cavern giving him the knowledge about scarecrows, secondly Miss Lupescu came to his rescue when he was kidnapped by the ghouls, and lastly the witch Liza Hempstock, buried in unhallowed grounds and therefore able to leave the graveyard, saves him from humans (discussed in more detail in

¹⁴¹ Abbruscato, „Being Nobody: Identity in Neil Gaiman's *The Graveyard Book*“, p. 73.

¹⁴² Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 96.

¹⁴³ Robertson, „I Want to Be Like You: Riffs on Kipling in Neil Gaiman's *The Graveyard Book*“, p. 168.

chapter 6). Nevertheless, each time Bod, through his experiences, awareness of surroundings and his friends' or helper's advices or help, escaped the danger and came out victorious.

“I’ve learned a lot of things in this graveyard,” said Bod. “I can Fade and I can Haunt. I can open a ghoul-gate and I know the constellations. But there’s a world out there, with the sea in it, and islands, and shipwrecks and pigs. I mean, it’s filled with things I don’t know. And the teachers here have taught me lots of things, but I need more. If I’m going to survive out there, one day.”

- Bod to Silas¹⁴⁴

The words uttered by Bod show how much is the protagonist aware of his inner needs. He realizes how important was all the knowledge he has acquired so far his immediate survival in the graveyard. Nevertheless, he is also aware that the rules outside his home’s gate are equally important if he wishes to return to the world he rightfully belongs to one day. The desire to learn information about the outer world represents protagonist’s awareness of his cravings to return where he rightfully belongs to. Bod acknowledges his human self in order to preserve his identity.

¹⁴⁴ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 180.

6. ALIVE BETWEEN THE DEAD, DEAD BETWEEN THE LIVING

In the last but one chapter, “Every Man Jack”, Bod finally solves the greatest mystery of the novel, the reason behind the murder of his family. When confronted with the villain, the Man Jack, Bod learns that the antagonist is a part of an ancient order called “The Jack of All Trades”, whose members happen to be all Jacks by their first name. One of the order’s members, Jack Dandy, tells Nobody the ancient prophecy that made him and his family the target:

“... there would be a child born who would walk the borderland between the living and the dead. That if this child grew to adulthood it would mean the end of our order and all we stand for. We had people casting nativities before London was a village, we had your family in our sights before New Amsterdam became New York. And we sent what we thought was the best and sharpest and the most dangerous of all the Jacks to deal with you.”¹⁴⁵

The protagonist is truly walking “the borderland between the living and the dead”, and that is one of the main topics and biggest obstacles Bod faces, the clash between the world of the dead and the world of the living. The protagonist faces this constant struggle in all eight chapters of the novel. By escaping the murderer at the beginning of the story, Bod had ensured his own survival, and with it a chance to choose his own path throughout the novel, especially due to the interaction with other characters that help him shape his personality.¹⁴⁶

Returning back to the first chapter, Bod’s acceptance to the graveyard society brings the readers back to Bakhtin’s temporal and spatial connection, in this case specifically temporal.¹⁴⁷ The time at the graveyard stands still for decades. The place is closed for another burial, and it is stated that no one was buried in the graveyard since the year 1936. This fact removes the protagonist out of the historical time leaving him at a place where no one changes in appearance or personality since the dead exist beyond time. Concurrently, the hero’s aging is the only thing at the graveyard measurable by time.¹⁴⁸ This also affects Nobody’s development, especially in the already mentioned clash of the worlds of the living and the dead.¹⁴⁹ Bod, simply said, is living in the past learning the manners of the long dead society frozen in the time. He is lonely

¹⁴⁵ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 271.

¹⁴⁶ Tally Jr., „Nobody’s Home“.

¹⁴⁷ Bakhtin, *The Bildungsroman and Its Significance to the History of Realism*, p. 23.

¹⁴⁸ Daignault, „Growing Up Dead: Impossible Coming-of-Age in *The Graveyard Book*.“

¹⁴⁹ Abbruscato, „Being Nobody: Identity in Neil Gaiman’s *The Graveyard Book*“, p. 72.

since the children in the graveyard do not age and Bod is therefore forced to befriend older and older ghosts to fit his age.

Bod received unique attributes from the The Lady on the Grey who bestowed upon him the Freedom of the Graveyard.¹⁵⁰ As Abbruscato claims, the protagonist is the combination of both human and ghost. Bod is alive, capable of growing up and personal development, but he also possesses some of the ghost's magical powers. However those are only temporal and disappear the moment Bod internalizes his true identity at the end of the novel.¹⁵¹ In addition, Bod's capability of existing in the space between two worlds "defines the horizon of being for the principle character[s], who must actively engage in an exploration of their own sense of self".¹⁵² Bod experiences this throughout the whole novel where he balances the two different realms and tries to find his place within them.

Not long after Bod learns to talk, he begins to ask questions, specifically why he is not allowed to leave the graveyard. To his constant questioning Silas proclaims the outside world dangerous for Bod and states that only the graveyard can keep him safe.¹⁵³ Even though the protagonist is still very young, he is aware of the outside world and is initially drawn to it. Chapters 1 and 2 are divided by a four-year gap. In this period Bod is completely isolated from the outside world. According to Joseph Abbruscato, the isolation can serve as a tool aiming to protect the protagonist and can be viewed positively in the future¹⁵⁴. Bod is, indeed, held in the graveyard for his own protection since his family's murderer is still alive and searching for the hero to complete his mission, a theme repeated several times throughout the novel. At the same time, the protagonist is not capable of fully considering the dangerousness of the situation and cannot entirely imagine the consequences his actions might have.¹⁵⁵

His first encounter with an outsider, of course since his arrival to the graveyard, happens already in Chapter 2, "The New Friend". Bod meets Scarlett Amber Perkins, a living girl his age, who plays in the graveyard while Bod learns his alphabet. She asks him whether she can help him copy the letters from the tomb stones.

For a moment Bod felt protective – the gravestones were *his*, weren't they? – and then he realized how foolish he was being, and he thought

¹⁵⁰ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 30 – 31.

¹⁵¹ Abbruscato, „Being Nobody: Identity in Neil Gaiman's *The Graveyard Book*“, p. 68 – 69.

¹⁵² Tally, „Nobody's Home“.

¹⁵³ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 35 – 37.

¹⁵⁴ Abbruscato, „Being Nobody: Identity in Neil Gaiman's *The Graveyard Book*“, p. 70.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

that there were things that might be more fun done in the sunlight with a friend. He said, “Yes”.¹⁵⁶

The excerpt shows Bod’s reluctance. He has not got any peers in the graveyard and the concept of sharing is an abstract term to him. This example presents another evidence of how Bod differs from the world of the living. His isolation is quite unique and some of the basic concepts connected to childhood, like sharing, are quite baffling to him. However, he quickly comes to terms with the fresh experience and invites his new friend to learn with him. Scarlett comes to the graveyard quite often after the initial meeting, but as stated in the book: “Scarlett never saw Bod first.”¹⁵⁷ The Freedom of the Graveyard grants Bod an invisibility, it is hard to initially focus on him, and when he disappears from the sight, the living immediately forget him. However, Scarlett poses an exception and does remember Bod even after she leaves the graveyard, a fact that might be ascribed to an innocent mind of a child. That allows her to befriend Nobody. Even though they live and grow up in two different worlds, Scarlett resembles Bod. She is a lonely child whose parents do not pay her any attention, she has got no friends due to the family’s constant moving from one university town to another. This aspect of Scarlett’s life is also very appealing to the protagonist.¹⁵⁸ Apart from the fact that Bod acquires a friend for the first time in his life, he can also quite easily identify with her. The importance of having a friend is extremely important for child’s socialization, especially in the early years of his/her life.

“I’m a stranger,” pointed out Bod.
“You’re not,” she said, definitely. “You’re a little boy.” And then she said, “And you’re my friend. So you can’t be a stranger.”
Bod smiled rarely, but he smiled then, hugely and with delight. “I’m your friend,” he said.¹⁵⁹

As Wayne Yuen points out in his essay “The Dead Teach Us How to Live”, friendships are extremely valuable for their own sake, not for what a person gets from them. According to Aristotle’s list of moral virtues, both wit and friendliness enable people to make friends easily as he believed friendship is an inherent part of a good life.¹⁶⁰ Despite the fact that Scarlett leaves

¹⁵⁶ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 41.

¹⁵⁷ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 42

¹⁵⁸ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 43.

¹⁵⁹ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 41.

¹⁶⁰ Yuen, „The Dead Teach Us How to Live“.

the town and moves to Scotland, she declares one more time that Bod is a friend. Her parting words seemingly carry a promise that it will not change.¹⁶¹

On the few pages describing the adventure, prior to Scarlett's departure, in the Indigo Man and Sleer's cavern, one can easily spot the difference between Bod and Scarlett, even though they are both living children and have got alike personalities. The Freedom of the Graveyard enables the protagonist to see in the dark, therefore Bod leads Scarlett down the stairs. When they meet the Indigo Man, Bod is surprised Scarlett sees him too. This is the moment Scarlett begins to believe that Bod can truly see ghosts and at the same time Bod realizes the Indigo Man is probably imaginary. But when the Sleer appears, Scarlett is capable of feeling his presence, or rather hearing a rustling when he speaks, but then, unlike Bod, she cannot recognize individual words.¹⁶² Scarlett is the first and only human in the entire novel who truly knows the whole truth about Nobody Owens, it is an important step in their friendship since not only Bod can identify with Scarlett, but she feels closer to him too. As a consequence, it strengthens their friendship, and it is probably one of the reasons why Scarlett, even though vaguely, remembers Bod when she returns years after their departure.

Scarlett's character might serve to highlight the contrast between living children's characters and the unusualness of Bod's condition. It also highlights the hero's unique abilities, whether one talks about his supernatural powers granted to him by the Freedom of the Graveyard or his quite intelligent reasoning.

Where Scarlett symbolizes the world of the living, the witch Liza Hempstock represents the dead. As Tally Jr. claims, the hero's personality is shaped by those he interacts with.¹⁶³ Bod's encounter with Liza is quite important because it leads him, for the first time, into the world of the living.

Bod meets Liza Hempstock a few years later after his initial encounter with Scarlett. Bod is naturally curious, and when he learns a witch is buried in the graveyard, he wants to at least look at her from the distance. Despite being advised otherwise by every ghost he talks to, Bod heads to the Potter's Field where the unhallowed ground is and climbs the apple tree to get a better view. Gradually, he gets bored and wants to pluck an apple when suddenly the branch gives away and he falls. As a consequence, he by chance meets the witch Liza who is neither

¹⁶¹ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 60.

¹⁶² Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book.*, p. 53 – 57.

¹⁶³ Tally Jr., „Nobody's Home.“

old nor iron-toothed as Bod imagines. Liza died not quite adult yet, being accused of a witchcraft, an accusation that was indeed true. She was drowned and burned in a witch trial as a consequence. Liza helps Bod because he hurt his leg in the fall and tells him the story of her death. Bod feels sorry for Liza, for she is buried in unconsecrated ground and therefore has got no headstone.¹⁶⁴

And she looked so sad, just for a moment, that Bod wanted to hug her. And then it came to him, as he squeezed between the railings of the fence. He would find Liza Hempstock a headstone, with her name upon it. He would make her smile.¹⁶⁵

He then decides to purchase her a headstone and because he has got no money of his own, Bod steals a snakestone brooch from the tomb of the Indigo Man, one of the three ancient items the phantom guards. In order to sell it and acquire the headstone, Bod must enter the world of the living and therefore leave the safety of the graveyard, even though he is aware of the danger the world of the living poses to him. He discovers a pawnshop owned by Mr. Abanazer Bolger and offers him the brooch. However, soon enough Bod realizes that he is indeed in a grave danger. Mr. Bolger starts questioning him in order to find the rest of the treasure, and the situation escalates when he locks Bod in a storeroom up until Bod decides to answer his questions.¹⁶⁶

He reached in, and took out a card, only slightly larger than a business card. It was black-edged. There was no name or address printed on it, though. Only one word, hand-written in the center in an ink that had faded to brown: *Jack*.¹⁶⁷

Bod's very first trip to the world of the living gradually starts to turn into a catastrophe. It is a reminder that the only safe place for the protagonist is within the graveyard's walls. Even now Liza Hempstock, a graveyard citizen, appears looking for him and helps him escape. She overhears a conversation between Mr. Bolger and his business partner Tom Hustings whose dialogue leads them to the realization that a certain man named Jack was looking for a boy that was about Bod's age. They argue whether to hand Bod over or rather keep him for themselves to find more treasures with his help.¹⁶⁸ By chance Bod meets possibly the only person in the surrounding world who can contact his enemy. Not only is Bod captured by people who want to use him to fulfill their greedy needs which would leave him without the possibility to return

¹⁶⁴ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 104 – 112.

¹⁶⁵ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 112 – 113.

¹⁶⁶ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 113 – 125.

¹⁶⁷ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 127.

¹⁶⁸ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 125 – 130.

home but he almost comes face to face with his family's murderer. All of that just because he left the safety of the graveyard's gates, even though he did it with the best intentions. By that moment Bod fathoms the extent of consequences his disobedience caused.

Nevertheless, Liza Hempstock, being buried in an unhallowed ground and therefore able to leave the graveyard, comes to his rescue. She helps him with his power of Fading, which gave him trouble until this moment, and Bod once again aware of his surroundings, is able to save himself. The aspect of repetitiveness is quite important because it stresses protagonist's resourcefulness.¹⁶⁹ Liza also ensures Bod more safety by giving him the Jack's card to take it away. Bod firstly resists taking the card for it "disturbed him" and "there was so something familiar about it, something that stirred old memories, something dangerous". However, Liza convinces him not to leave the card behind, and Bod decides to give it to his caretaker Silas and for the moment, he stores it next to his heart. Consequently, this act wakes up the man Jack hundred miles away and brings his attention back to the boy.¹⁷⁰ Bod's escapades in the world of living abruptly lead him to dangerous situations. Even though he still possesses the abilities granted to him by the Freedom of the Graveyard, the unknown surroundings and the absence of his supernatural guardians proves to be an enormous liability. Also Bod's departure from the safe grounds of the graveyard triggers a certain notional radar drawing the antagonist's attention back to him. Despite his good intentions, Bod has learned the hard way that disobeying orders have got its consequences.

The last words of the chapter describe Bod's kindness. To honor the promise he gave himself, to help Liza get her own headstone, he mowed the nettle-patch in the Potter's Field and then put a glass paperweight on the ground. The protagonist painted Liza's initials and wrote "we don't forget" on it.¹⁷¹ This action presented a different angle of Bod's personality. The compassionate and genuine act ensured him Liza's friendship until the end of the novel. Bod acquired precisely two good friends throughout the story, Scarlett and Liza, each from different worlds, but both complementing Bod in a different way.

When Bod learns the truth about the fate of his biological family, on the account, he decides to attend a human school. Nevertheless, the protagonist is not scared of the man Jack and insists on attending the school in the world of living since he has learned everything he

¹⁶⁹ Abbruscato, „Being Nobody: Identity in Neil Gaiman's *The Graveyard Book*“, p. 77.

¹⁷⁰ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 136 – 137.

¹⁷¹ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 141 – 143.

could at the graveyard. His wish is granted, and Bod starts to attend classes. It is the first time the protagonist spends repeatedly longer amount of time among the livings. He still has got the advantage of slipping of others mind. However, this ability later disappears due to his interference with the school bullies, Nick Farthing and Maureen Quilling. Bod gives an advice to bullied children about how to stand up for themselves which, eventually draws attention back to him.¹⁷² Once again, the protagonist learns that even good intention has got its own consequences. Bod encourages his bullied classmates not to be afraid and takes a stand himself. He makes the first step since he is not afraid of Nick and Mo. Thanks to Bod's bravery, it requires only a little courage on his part, since he faced far more dangerous situations. On the other side, his classmates would need a much bigger portion of bravery to stand up for themselves.¹⁷³

This chapter ("Nobody Owen's School Days") brings a certain novelty to the story. Nick and Maureen are not typical archetype villains, they are common children harassing their classmate – motif that might be seen in quite a lot of contemporary young adult novels. However, Bod who met the ghouls and evil characters like Mr. Abanazer, deals with them by his own means.

Bod, never experiencing or witnessing bullying, initially interferes because Nick and Maureen's behavior goes against his own morality. Bod uses his intellect to end the bullies' doing and when their attention turns towards him, Bod manages the situation in the only way he knows, in the ghostly way. Since this incident is purely connected to humans and does not involve the man Jack or other mortal danger, he can expect absolutely no help from the graveyard's ghosts and for the first time deals with the problem alone.¹⁷⁴

Bod suddenly starts to practice and master all the ghost powers granted to him by the Freedom of the Graveyard to overpower the school bullies. He finally found motivation for the training that will ultimately become useful in the upcoming battle against the antagonist. Eventually, Bod draws Nick and Maureen to a chapel graveyard near the school grounds where he can fully use his potential. He combines Fade and Fear to scare them off, and when it works only partially, he sets off to Nick's house to apply Dream Walking to scare off the bully for good.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷² Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 178 – 183.

¹⁷³ Yuen, „The Dead Teach Us How to Live“.

¹⁷⁴ Abbruscato, „Being Nobody: Identity in Neil Gaiman's *The Graveyard Book*“, p. 77.

¹⁷⁵ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 186 – 198.

Where Nick was scared away easily, Maureen did not give up. She set a trap to get Bod in troubles with the police. Liza Hempstock, who witnessed the event, alerts Silas who eventually comes to Bod's rescue. Only when the situation worsened did the denizens of the graveyard come for rescue. Consequently, the protagonist himself realizes the danger of the whole situation and agrees with Silas that he will not come back to the school and rather stay in the safety of the graveyard.¹⁷⁶ This chapter yet again emphasizes Bod's ability to use the surroundings to his advantage, but also for the first time, the protagonist relies on no one but himself which essentially highlights Bod's sharp intelligence.¹⁷⁷ It also stresses his resourcefulness and Bod's ability to support and stand up for his moral principles.

6.1 THE DANCE OF THE DEAD AND THE LIVING

The topic of life in the worlds of the dead and living is probably most distinctive in Chapter 5, "Danse Macabre". The centuries old custom of the dance between the living and the dead is a festivity occurring once the flowers blossom in winter time (in Chapter 5, it is the first time after eighty years). The author Neil Gaiman described Danse Macabre or Macabray at his webpage as a "[d]ance either of the dead, or of the dead with the living, to remind people that they are mortal".¹⁷⁸ In the novel the Macabray basically expresses that both the dead and the living need to follow "certain universal rules and governing structures".¹⁷⁹

The mortals of the Old Town truly honor this tradition even though they have got no recollection of it later. It is a time when the dead are allowed to leave the graveyard's gates and join the living at the festival. The Macabray is also the only occasion when the world of the dead and living collide and merge. When Bod hears about Danse Macabre, he asks Silas about it. However Silas cannot answer his question since he is nor living, nor dead to experience it himself and does not know what is it like to dance the Macabray. Bod therefore finds out himself. He receives a white flower.

¹⁷⁶ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 200 – 204.

¹⁷⁷ Abbruscato, „Being Nobody: Identity in Neil Gaiman's *The Graveyard Book*“, p. 77.

¹⁷⁸ Neil Gaiman, „Come to Dance the Macabray“, *Neil Gaiman Journal* (poste dat June 15, 2007, available at: <http://journal.neilgaiman.com/2007/06/come-to-dance-macabray.html>)

¹⁷⁹ Newhouse, „Coming of Age with Ageless“.

Bod listened to the music, entranced. There were people trickling into the square, in ones or twos, in families or alone. He had never seen so many living people at one time. There must have been hundreds of them, all of them breathing, each of them as alive as he was, each with a white flower.¹⁸⁰

Bod is fascinated by the amount of living people, an absolutely new concept for a boy who grew up among the dead. At midnight, the dead descend and each ghost picks one of the living and starts the dance. Liza Hempstock is the first to dance with Bod, she is the one who points out the Lady on the Grey, who is present, to Bod. The protagonist eventually ends up dancing with the Lady, the embodiment of the Death itself.¹⁸¹ Together they lead an interesting conversation that again researches the importance of one's name. Bod apologizes for not knowing the Lady's name, to which she responds that "names aren't really that important"¹⁸² – an interesting statement considering how significant Bod's name is in connection to his personality's development. However, Robert T. Tally Jr. explains throughout the philosophical existentialism that what is really important is the self-possession, "owning one-self", that is best represented by the protagonist's name.¹⁸³

The Lady on the Grey also promises Bod that one day he is going to ride the horse as everybody else.¹⁸⁴ She gives Bod a vow that signifies the inevitability of death, even though he does not fully realize that just yet.

After the Lady's promise to Bod, the music stops and the Macabray ends, and only then the protagonist realizes he danced as one of the living. It is the very first moment Bod contemplates where he truly belongs. When he asks the denizens of the graveyard about the Dance only a day after, they refuse to discuss it with him. One of the ghosts, Josiah Worthington, explains it as follows:

The dead and the living do not mingle, boy. We are no longer part of their world; they are no part of ours. If it happened that we danced the *danse macabre* with them, the dance of death, then we would not speak of it, and we certainly would not to speak of it to the living.¹⁸⁵

When Bod objects he is one of the ghosts, Josiah answers that he will not be for a lifetime. Bod's mortality shows at the end of the chapter when the whole incident starts to slip

¹⁸⁰ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 156.

¹⁸¹ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 160 – 162.

¹⁸² Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 161.

¹⁸³ Tally, „Nobody's Home“.

¹⁸⁴ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 160 – 162.

¹⁸⁵ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 163.

away from his mind since the living do not remember the Macabray.¹⁸⁶ It is yet another aspect that pushes the protagonist closer to the living world.

The end of chapter 5 is an interesting metaphor connected to the overall message of the novel that is summarized in one of the early reviews of the novel written by Ness: “Gaiman’s ultimate lesson is exactly right: get to know [death], make friends with it, then forget about it and live your life.”¹⁸⁷

6.2 IT’S ONLY DEATH¹⁸⁸

The protagonist’s viewpoint on death differs extremely not only from his peers but also from the vast majority of adults. Generally, people fear death for the unknown that comes after it.

According to Wade Newhouse accepting death is a common denominator of all societies and mostly the final rule children learn in the coming-of-age novels. However, for Bod, whose opinion is influenced by the society in which he grows up, it is the first rule.¹⁸⁹ Being raised by ghosts in the graveyard altered his perception of death. Bod perceives it as a common and inherent aspect of human life that ultimately leads him to certain indifference. Since coming to the graveyard, Bod’s life was endangered only once, specifically in the moment he was kidnapped by ghouls. However, throughout the whole time not once was he worried about being killed. What he was truly scared of was the loss of his identity (as discussed in 5.2). The best example of his standpoint can be found in his conversation with Silas in Chapter 6, “Nobody Owens School Days”.

Silas said, “Out there, the man who killed your family is, I believe, still looking for you, still intends to kill you.

Bod shrugged. “So?” he said. “It’s only death. I mean, all of my best friends are dead.”

“Yes.” Silas hesitated. “They are. And they are for the most part, done with the world. You are not. You’re *alive*, Bod. That means you have infinite potential. You can do anything, make anything, dream anything. If you change the world, the world will change. Potential. Once you’re dead, it’s gone. Over. You’ve made what you’ve made, dreamed your dream, written your name. You may be buried here, you may even walk. But that potential is finished.”¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁶ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 163.

¹⁸⁷ Patrick Ness, „Ghost Stories: Neil Gaiman’s tales from the crypt are a deathly delight, says Patrick Ness.“ (Rev. of *The Graveyard Book*. *The Guardian* 25 October 2008. Web).

¹⁸⁸ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 179.

¹⁸⁹ Newhouse, „Coming of Age with the Ageless“.

¹⁹⁰ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 179.

Bod is reminded of his potential and ability to change and evolve throughout the entire novel. The naming scene in Chapter 1 can be one of the examples. The name “Nobody” truly contains a certain amount of potential. Another case can be made after his encounter with the bullies Nick and Maureen, Bod has got an argument with Silas who wants him to leave the school. After the dispute Bod decides to leave the graveyard. However, his witch-friend Liza Hempstock tries to persuade Bod not to run away and says to him: “He’s [the man Jack] out here, somewhere, and he wants you dead. [...] Us in the graveyard, we wants you to stay alive. We wants you to surprise us and disappoint us and impress us and amaze us.”¹⁹¹ While alive, Bod is still capable of those things for he still can change. He possesses the potential Silas was talking about.

On the other hand, as a contrast, the dead are unchangeable for they carry their personalities, desires, appearances and memories into the death. One example for all can be found in the character of Bod’s foster mother Mrs. Owens. While alive, she could have not conceive a child, and she brought this yearning to the afterlife.¹⁹² Consequently, that quality let her to fight for the foundling at the first place.

¹⁹¹ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 198.

¹⁹² Zoe Yang, Doris Huang, Mimi Chung, „The Graveyard Book: Bod’s Initiation into Maturity.“ (Hsinchu: National Hsinchu Girls’ Senior High School), p. 2.

7. FACING THE ANTAGONIST

One of the most important moments of the novel occurs when Bod finally meets his nemesis, the man Jack, in chapter 7, “Every Man Jack” after his reunion with Scarlett, Bod’s childhood friend. The man Jack impersonates a historian and gradually sneaks into the life of Scarlett Perkins’ family to finish what he started years ago.

Bod has learned many things since his arrival to the graveyard. He stood up to the threats and danger whether they came from the living world or were of a supernatural origin. The hero used his skills in combination with intelligence to overcome obstacles and ultimately integrated them into himself to face and defeat his final and biggest challenge.¹⁹³ The protagonist can finally avenge his family and has got the opportunity to put the last pieces of his past together.

Bod learns about his family’s fate, however, it is not until after Silas saves him from the human police when he realizes the danger the antagonist poses to him. He already internalized the need to stay safe within the graveyards walls, and by that moment it is deeply rooted in him. However, when Silas tells him about the man Jack, he finally grasps the reason behind this measure.¹⁹⁴ Bod accepts the news quite calmly; there are no emotional ties to his human family since he lives at the graveyard as long as he can remember. Nevertheless, the protagonist gradually processes the information, and the more time passes, the more is Bod dedicated to discover the whole truth and close the matter once and for all. As a result, Bod starts to develop a certain internal turmoil when his moral values clashes with the increasing need to stop the murderer so he can finally live in the world in safety. As Moretti said the internal turmoil, or “the monster”, does not necessarily need to be an internal force.¹⁹⁵ It partially is, but the rest is embodied in the antagonist himself as will be illustrated later.

At the final confrontation, Bod has got everything he can hope for, the support of others, his own wits, the knowledge of his surroundings and the mastery of the gifts given to him by the Freedom of the Graveyard. By integrating all of the above, the protagonist becomes an independent person capable of taking care of himself.¹⁹⁶

The man Jack, pretending to be Mr. Frost, settles himself in the old house of Bod’s family. By interaction with Scarlett Perkins, he realizes her connection to the protagonist.

¹⁹³ Abbruscato, „Being Nobody: Identity in Neil Gaiman’s *The Graveyard Book*“, p. 77.

¹⁹⁴ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*“, p. 178 – 181.

¹⁹⁵ Summerfield, *Downward, New Perspectives on the European Bildungsroman*, p. 30.

¹⁹⁶ Abbruscato, „Being Nobody: Identity in Neil Gaiman’s *The Graveyard Book*“, p. 77 – 78.

Consequently, he aids Scarlett and Bod with the investigation of the crime. As a result, the children are tricked to enter the house so the man Jack can finally finish his mission. However, Bod is prepared. He learned in past that leaving the graveyard might put him into a danger and consequently, when the man Jack pulls up a knife, Bod disappears from the plain sights, takes Scarlett and runs for the graveyard.¹⁹⁷ When Scarlett asks Bod where is he going, he replies: “This is my home .I’m going to protect it.”¹⁹⁸

The protagonist feels at home in the graveyard. He feels at home in a place that leaves other people uncomfortable, like the bullies, Nick and Maureen, who are feeling uneasy at the graveyard where Bod leads them to scare them. The protagonist feels safe there, and that creates a “powerful sense of self” that can be very well seen in Bod’s defending the graveyard from the man Jack and the Jack of All Trades later in chapter 7.¹⁹⁹ Bod chooses the graveyard as his own battlefield. It is a place he knows best and is familiar with all of its secrets. The protagonist uses it to its full potential. He has got the ghosts spying on the Jacks of All Trades, hides Scarlett in the Indigo Man’s cave and leaves to face the Jacks.²⁰⁰ The protagonist starts to be aware of his self, which is testified in the following words: “He was Nobody Owens, he told himself. He was a part of the graveyard. He would be fine.”²⁰¹

Bod clearly realizes that the Freedom of the Graveyard and the place itself are his greatest assets. Therefore, he is capable to calm himself and ratiocinate. He incapacitates the first enemy by leading him into an old grave; he tricks other three men to go through the ghoul gate so the only opponent left is the man Jack himself. Their last encounter takes place in the Indigo Man and Sleer’s cavern.²⁰²

Sleer, the assumed ghost from the pre-Roman times residing in the cavern, is a minor character appearing on and off throughout the whole novel. Bod has been to Sleer’s cavern four times altogether throughout the course of the story. Each time Sleer stated he was looking for a new master. Previously, Bod has declined the role of Sleer’s master two times since it was not the identity he would be willing to accept. Nevertheless, Sleer has got quite an important role

¹⁹⁷ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 201 – 257.

¹⁹⁸ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 264.

¹⁹⁹ Tally, „Nobody’s Home“.

²⁰⁰ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 260 – 263.

²⁰¹ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 265.

²⁰² Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 265 – 274.

since he essentially becomes the ultimate tool, not only for Bod's defeating his greatest enemy, but also for the protagonist's complete awareness of his identity.

Sleer's cavern is where the final confrontation between the man Jack and Bod takes place. The last time Bod was in the cave, Sleer told him to find his name, foreshadowing the main mean to the antagonist defeat. Bod initially tries to persuade the man Jack to tell him Bod's real name. However, the antagonist does not do that and Bod leaves the subject alone for now. Only later on, in the moment the man Jack is about to kill Bod on an altar stone, the antagonist is willing to reveal the name. At the same time, Bod discovers the answer to the question he has been asking his whole life.²⁰³

Bod felt the knife at his neck. And in that moment, Bod understood. Everything slowed. Everything came into focus. "I know my name," he said. "I'm Nobody Owens. That's who I am." And, kneeling on the cold altar stone, it all seemed very simple.²⁰⁴

This is the moment Bod finally fully internalize his identity. It is the ultimate reaction to Sleer's command to "find his name." In particular, by this statement the protagonist expresses the acceptance of everything he has been through during his life, which are specifically the lessons he learned, challenges he overcame and the influence people around had on him.

Consequently, Bod, who once again uses his wit, offers the man Jack to become Sleer's master. The antagonist perceives the spirit as a mean to more power and accepts his proposition. Sleer immediately begins to pull the man Jack through the wall of the cave where it can protect him forever.²⁰⁵ Therefore, the protagonist comes of the confrontation victorious and with the knowledge that his nemesis will never again threaten his life.

Returning to Moretti's concept of the inner turmoil within the protagonist of the British Bildungsroman, the readers may see the existential question that forms within the protagonist. He gradually realizes that if he ever wishes to live in a world where he does not have to be scared of the living, it is necessary to deal with the antagonist. He has got no knowledge of the fact that Silas, Miss Lupescu and other supernatural guardians are already disposing of the Jack of All Trades society²⁰⁶. With the help of Scarlett Perkins, Bod searches for more information on his family murder, which was conveniently covered by the enemy's order. However, the

²⁰³ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 274 – 282.

²⁰⁴ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 282.

²⁰⁵ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 283 – 285.

²⁰⁶ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 238 – 240.

events are already in motion with the order closing in on him. As a consequence, he meets the man Jack personally and is forced to accelerate his decision on how to deal with the antagonist. That is the moment Bod searches for help in the Sleer's cavern.

The protagonist is aware of Sleer's motifs and the danger he presents, which is the ultimate advantage the man Jack lacks, therefore Jack accepts the Sleer's offer to become his master. Bod can foresee the consequences of what might happen to his enemy in the cavern, and yet he still uses Scarlett as bait to lead the man Jack there.²⁰⁷ As a matter of fact, the protagonist does not kill any of the Jacks directly, however is aware that some of them might die in the ghouls' world, and that the man Jack will lose his identity when he becomes Sleer's master. Even though Bod does not perceive death in the same way people do, he still knows how murdering someone might affect one's personality. Not killing his enemies directly makes the decision to face them easier, however Bod is capable to realize the consequences and that is the reason why he is arguing whether living the rest of his life in safety and without fear is worth the sacrifice. Eventually, the answer to his dilemma is yes.

²⁰⁷ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 262 – 264.

8. NOBODY'S COMING OF AGE

Amanda Dagnault in her essay „Impossible Coming-of-Age in *The Graveyard Book*“ once again summarizes the main point of Bildungsroman, the process of child's growing up filled with mistakes and discoveries accompanied with the glimpses of what adulthood is like and stresses the matter that this journey is supposed to prepare the hero through integrated self-hood on the adulthood.²⁰⁸ Everything that has happened in the novel so far depicted Bod's journey to the very moment when the protection of the graveyard is no longer needed.

By defeating and dissolving completely the order Jacks of All Trades, the world of living no longer presents any dangers specifically to the protagonist's character. The climax of the story happened, without any doubts, in chapter 7 when Bod beaten the last member of the order, the man Jack. However, the last chapter, chapter 8 “Leavings and Partings” might seem even more important, at least while considering the Bildungsroman genre. It presents the last step the protagonist needs to make in terms to truly come of age.

Sometimes he could no longer see the dead. It had begun a month or two previously, in April or in May. At first it had only happened occasionally, but now it seemed to be happening more and more. The world was changing.²⁰⁹

Bod gradually starts to lose not only the ability to see the dead but other perks the Freedom of the Graveyard used to grant him. At this moment he is fifteen years old. The ghosts of the graveyard realize the inevitable fact that Bod is about to leave way sooner than the protagonist himself. They slowly start to bid him farewell, one of the last persons he speaks to at the graveyard is his guardian Silas who tells him: “I *was* your guardian. But you are old enough to guard yourself.”²¹⁰ By this statement Silas on one hand confirms that the world of living is finally safe for Bod and on the other expresses his believe in Bod's maturing and ability to take care of himself. Moreover this is the moment Bod realizes he can no longer stay at the graveyard.

“Can't I stay here? In the graveyard?”
“You must not,” said Silas, more gently than Bod could remember ever saying anything. “All the people here have had their lives, Bod, even if they were short ones. Now it's your turn. You need to live.”²¹¹

²⁰⁸ Dagnault, „Impossible Coming-of-Age in *The Graveyard Book*.“, p. 1.

²⁰⁹ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 295.

²¹⁰ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 302.

²¹¹ Ibid.

Silas basically summarizes all the hints presented throughout the book suggesting that Bod does not entirely belong to the world of the dead. The moment the Freedom of the Graveyard is gradually disappearing, Bod is fully becoming the part of the living world – the place he truly belongs to. The place he can fully use his potential as he was told many times throughout the whole novel.

Silas gives Bod a parting gift, a wallet with money to help him start his new life and a passport. Bod remembers stories he was told by Alfonso Jones, stories about exotic places. He says: "... there's a whole world out there. Can I see it? Can I go there?"²¹² Bod realizes his potential, the possibility to exist beyond the graveyard's walls, and should he decide to come back, the graveyard would be just a graveyard and not his home anymore. His parting words to Silas include the summarization of it all: "I want to see life. I want to hold it in my hands. I want to leave a footprint on the sand of a desert island. I want to play football with people. [...] I want *everything*."²¹³ Bod shows his maturation and the awareness of his true self through those words. He knows he has got no future in the graveyard. He ensured himself a safe human world to exist in and now he is prepared to fully enjoy it.

The last denizen of the graveyard Bod sees is his mother Mrs. Owens. She bids him farewell in the form of children's lullaby which last verse says: "Face your life / Its pain, its pleasure / Leave no path untaken."²¹⁴ Her parting words yet again symbolize the hope and prospective of Bod's future. When Bod wants to hug her goodbye, she is already invisible to his eyes. The last of the gift given to him by the Lady on the Grey is gone and in that moment Bod belongs solely to the world of the living. Bod sets toward his fate and leaves his home.²¹⁵

According to Summerfield and Downward, the protagonist of British Bildungsroman is circular in the nature. After undertaking all the lessons in growth he returns to his original roots.²¹⁶ This is what happens with the protagonist of the novel. Bod comes from the human world and his whole life is protected so he could someday return. Even Bod realizes that defeating the man Jack will ensure him a safe place in the world of the living and by defeating

²¹² Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 304.

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 306.

²¹⁵ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 306 – 307.

²¹⁶ Summerfield, Downward, *New Perspectives on the European Bildungsroman*, p. 30.

the threat, his reward is the infinite number of possibilities that human life, unlike from the life at the graveyard, offers.

9. DEVIATIONS FROM THE BILDUNGSROMAN PATTERN

The past five chapters analyzed the novel as a Bildungsroman, however, the book presents certain deviations from the theories of the genre. Chapter 9 will look closely on some of those examples and try to explain the reasons behind overlooking some of the aspects of the novel of formation.

The biggest argument that would discard *The Graveyard Book* as a Bildungsroman as such was made by Roberta S. Trites who in her book *Disturbing the Universe* explains the difference between the Bildungsroman and Entwicklungsroman genres. According to her only novels where the hero comes of age as an adult can be classified as Bildungsroman whereas Entwicklungsroman only describes the development of the protagonist.²¹⁷

Technically, *The Graveyard Book* leaves Bod in the moment he is fifteen years old. Considering the contemporary society standards, people of this age are still thought to be adolescents, not adults (in the UK and USA minors become adults the moment they celebrate their eighteenth birthday). Apart from this Trites states another condition for a novel to meet the definition of Bildungsroman – that is the conscious “quest to achieve independence”. Now, Bod does manage to do that but the question is whether he does so consciously. The answer might be tricky; it is hard to state whether Bod in his actions and thoughts ever consider the possibility of his future independence. On the contrary, many times he relies on the help of his human friend Scarlett or the graveyard’s denizens. He truly starts to entertain the thought of being on his own at the very end of the novel and while it occurs to him, he welcomes the possibility.

Considering Trites theories, *The Graveyard Book* would incline to the Entwicklungsroman genre. However, considering the society Bod grows in one might argue that by its standards Bod really is an adult at the end of the novel. Kipling’s *The Jungle Books* is set in the jungle during the Victorian period and to preserve the atmosphere of the classical book, Gaiman’s graveyard is also mostly Victorian or even older. Up until the 1900s the society was divided into children and adults. The adolescent years were just a grey period not taken

²¹⁷ Trites, *Disturbing the Universe: Power and Repression in Adolescent Literature*, p. 10 – 11.

into consideration by anyone.²¹⁸ It is safe to say that by the time an individual reached the age of fifteen, s/ he was considered to be more likely an adult, not a child.

Another contra-argument can be found in Amanda Dagnault's essay where she points out that in the last two chapters Bod demonstrates "resourcefulness and bravery", and throughout that he has reached a version of maturity.²¹⁹ This statement is supported by the protagonist's later acceptance of his departure from home and enhanced by his enthusiasm for other adventures. It is safe to say that Bod truly is a young version of an adult at the end of the novel and therefore Trites' definition for Bildungsroman stays preserved.

Other common aspect of Bildungsromane is the presence of love. Love story is recurring aspect in novels of formation. Even in *Wilhelm Meister* Goethe incorporates tragic love as a mean for hero's development.²²⁰ This aspect can be found in many novels throughout the history of the genre, for instance in Stendhal's *The Red and the Black*, Brontë's *Jane Eyre* or Dickens' *David Copperfield*. Jerome Hamilton Buckley states that in general terms the hero encounters two love interests, one with potential to corrupt him and one with potential to purify him.²²¹ Bod does not experience any romance in the novel. Only two characters could be counted as his potential love interest. One is his human friend Scarlett Perkins who is a year older than Bod himself, however their relationship is strictly friendly and after the final adventure with the Jacks of All Trades, Silas makes Scarlett forget Bod and everything that happened in the graveyard, putting to end any possible development of their relationship into something more. Another possible love interest might have been the witch Liza Hempstock. Even though Bod always thought her to be just a friend, Liza exhibits certain behavior that would suggest her affections towards the protagonist. Nevertheless, their relationship would be restrictive to Bod's development since Liza has been dead for over two hundred years. The romance storyline is however not that important for the novel. The protagonist is after all still quite young for such aspect and his development is showed through many different features of Bildungsroman genre.

The ultimate reason behind protagonist's maturation is his preparation for the adulthood. The end of *The Graveyard Book*, where Bod leaves the graveyard and enters the world of the living, is probably the moment when this reason is undermined the most. Bod knows practically

²¹⁸ Cart, *Young Adult Literature: From Romance to Realism*, p. 4.

²¹⁹ Dagnault, „Growing Up Dead: Impossible Coming-of-Age in *The Graveyard Book*“, p. 4.

²²⁰ Summerfield, *Downward, New Perspectives on the European Bildungsroman*, p. 17.

²²¹ Trites, *Disturbing the Universe: Power and Repression in Adolescent Literature*, p. 11.

nothing about the modern world that lurks behind the gates. The evidence of this lack of knowledge can be seen in chapter 7, right after Bod beats the Jacks of All Trades, when Silas takes the boy to the pizza restaurant – “Silas showed him [Bod] how to use a menu, how to order food.”²²² This event occurred only a couple of months before Bod leaves the graveyard and is supposed to fend for himself. The protagonist has got a scarce knowledge of the living world and how it works. He has learned many things during his life in the graveyard, but they were mostly connected to the supernatural. His formal education consisted of often archaic subjects (e.g. the four medical humors, how to call for help in various languages), but did not prepare him for the functions of everyday and modern life.

Bod grew up in place that stands still in the time, and as Amanda Daingault puts it, “where history accumulates on top of itself”²²³ The ghosts, whose personalities do not change anymore, pose a contrast to the living world which Bod encounters quite scarcely. The only longer amount of time Bod spent in the world of the living is presented in his attendance of human school. Nevertheless, Bod was a mere observer because his protection of the graveyard made him slip of the minds of human people. His experience with the world also ended quite disastrously with his involvement with the police department.²²⁴ His only other mediator with the world of the living is Scarlett Perkins who tells Bod many stories about her family and places she has been to. Thus the protagonist’s knowledge of the modern world consists of series of misfortunate experiences and random stories of his friend. Daingault also highlights the fact that “Bod’s childhood effectively takes place in the past”²²⁵ and therefore is oblivious to the functioning of the contemporary world.

The concept of time itself, something so obvious to us, is a whole new concept to the protagonist. He has never previously encountered the world in which the time moves mercilessly forward and where everything changes every minute that passes. To sum up, the whole process of Bod’s development throughout the novel seems futile in preparation for his upcoming adulthood experience.²²⁶

However unprepared the hero might be, it seems irrelevant at the moment, he leaves the graveyard gates full of hope. Bod proved to be resourceful and quite smart for a boy his age, he

²²² Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 290.

²²³ Daingault, „Growing Up Dead: Coming of Age in *The Graveyard Book*“, p. 5.

²²⁴ Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*, p. 205 – 210.

²²⁵ Daingault, „Growing Up Dead: Coming of Age in *The Graveyard Book*“, p. 8.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*

surely must realize that the new, real world he enters will be full of novelty. Nevertheless, the protagonist is not scared of the challenge and appears to welcome the change that is about to come. Daignault suggests that the author criticizes the distrust of contemporary society towards the anxieties about the world the public builds and raises their children in.²²⁷ Therefore, the entire novel might harbor a secret social criticism and the protagonist's "unpreparedness" can be viewed as a contrast to the overprotective society. At the end of the novel, Bod is portrayed as an adolescent who does not have a single apprehension concerning his future. He is the contradiction to those worries and is presented as the children should have be viewed – daring, full of expectations and the will to entirely fulfill his potential.

²²⁷ Daignault, „Growing Up Dead: Coming of Age in *The Graveyard Book*“, p. 8.

CONCLUSION

The Master's thesis is aimed at depicting the various ways in the process of development from childhood to mature age of *The Graveyard Book*'s main character on the background of the dead society. For purposes of the analysis the term Bildungsroman is defined. The novel based on Kipling's *The Jungle Book* takes a spin on the classic and turns it into a tale about a boy who tries to find a place in-between two extremely different worlds.

The opening chapter of the novel is one of the most defining moments for the hero's development even though he cannot possibly remember it happening. Bod's family is murdered for an ancient prophecy that claims the protagonist himself will be the end of an ancient order. However, the murderer fails to fulfill his task and Bod finds a sanctuary at a long-closed graveyard. The ghosts decide to protect him, he is granted the Freedom of the Graveyard and, more importantly, offered a clean slate. He is named Nobody Owens and at the moment of his arrival to the graveyard, he is truly "nobody" which allows him to become anybody later in his life. The supernatural protection he gains as a consequence is probably the only thing that is capable to enable his future survival and tips the scale in his favor in the final battle.

Bod is a smart child, growing up, learning basic knowledge about life and initial school subjects, such as reading and writing. However, even in the young age, he realizes that the world is larger than the graveyard he lives in. The protagonist is naturally curious, nevertheless, he is constantly warned about the danger behind the graveyard's gates. All of these aspects help to shape Bod's personality. The process of learning through experience is extremely important for the protagonist's development for the adventures he undergoes are ordered in cyclical manner. This manner usually involves previously gained knowledge, awareness of surroundings and the hero's resourcefulness to overcome the obstacles and come victorious of the various situations. Also, Bod can usually rely on help from one of the supporting characters. All of Bod's adventures lead to the final battle against his nemesis, the man Jack, and Jack's society, Jacks of All Trades. With the help of Silas, who has been systematically dissolving the order for years, Bod manages to defeat the Jacks of All Trades and the man Jack, as the last standing member, by using his previously acquired skills and his wit. The protagonist could not defeat the order or his biggest enemies without everything he has previously learned. The choice to confront the Jacks at the graveyard is the most logical one since he knows all the details, routes and mysteries of the graveyard. He uses his friends and graveyard denizen's to beat one member of the order after another. His supernatural skills he has mastered before are a great advantage to his cause, and yet the biggest benefit in the protagonist's fight is his wit. In

addition, Bod shows a certain level of consideration for the graveyard's ghost by fiercely trying not to kill any of the Jacks so the denizens would not end up being harassed by the Jacks' ghosts.

However, the adventurous side of the novel is not the only aspect in the process of hero's becoming. It is the background events that are equally important to Bod's maturation. In consideration of Bakhtian's chronotope, it is important to consider the society that influences the protagonist's formation. The main scenery of Bod's growing up is the graveyard and its citizens who, after their death, maintained their temporalities. They are unchanging constants in Nobody's life. People whose characters, desires and etiquettes do not change anymore. Therefore, the protagonist must adjust to millennia of different manners. Consequently, that allows him to acquire tact and great amount of adaptability. He also learns how to master the skills granted to him by the Freedom of the Graveyard, skills that are only prescribed to ghosts. However, considering the temporal aspect of the protagonist's becoming, he is the only changeable constant in the graveyard. His perception of time is distorted because the concept of measuring it is alien to him. But where the stagnant temporality influences the protagonist, Bod also has got an impact on the graveyard's "life". He brings change and diversity to the unchangeable world which allows the denizens to share their wisdom and shape Bod's character in return in a cyclical manner. Influenced by his life among the dead, his viewpoint on death is quite unnatural as a consequence. Knowing there is life after life, he has not got any special regard for his own life. What concerns the protagonist more than death is the possibility of losing his identity, which is illustrated in the scenes where he is abducted by the ghouls or in which he is constantly tempted by Sleer to become his master. Bod starts to realize the true difference between death and life gradually. At the end of the novel, he is truly aware of the potential he has got as a living person and that the graveyard should be occupied by the dead who can no longer change, in other words, the protagonist realizes the graveyard is no place for the living.

The climax of the book is represented not only by the battle against the Jacks of All Trades, but also in Bod's decision to revenge his family and in consequence secure himself a safe world to live in. Bod decides to face the antagonist and undergo the unnecessary sacrifice of taking man's life. He chooses to make a stand against the order in the surroundings he knows best. The protagonist uses the graveyard and all his previously acquired abilities to do so. In the final moment, when the man Jack is about to tell him his true name, Bod realizes he does not need to know it. He is fully aware of his identity and a long-forgotten name cannot change it. The protagonist accepts all developmental changes he has gone through and that formed him

into the person he is at the moment. The man Jack is consumed by Sleer, what is more, he is, ironically, defeated by losing his identity – the thing the protagonist feared the most.

After the final confrontation, Bod finishes a circle and returns completely to the world of the living. The abilities granted to him by the Freedom of the Graveyard are slowly disappearing and he is forced to start living his life. Bod accepts the necessity to leave his home quite quickly, realizing the endless possibilities the outside world offers.

In conclusion, *The Graveyard Book* is a Bildungsroman because it traces the character's development since childhood to mature age, Bod's unceasing search for identity is emphasized several times throughout the course of the story. Some deviations from the genre were observed, the most unsettling is the hero's unpreparedness for contemporary living world. He has got only a few experiences with the place outside the graveyard's gates or even living without supernatural powers. Bod's departure might cause a feeling of uneasiness almost exclusively among adult readers. He is not familiar with basic daily activities which might raise a question whether the protagonist will be able to take care of himself in the near future. This occurrence might be however explained as author's intention. Bod leaves the graveyard with the hope of adventures and never-ending possibilities. He believes in himself, in his skills, in his intelligence, in his identity. Therefore leaving the graveyard might intentionally criticize the rigid anxiety and skepticism of current society towards children and their capability of taking care of themselves.

RESUMÉ

Cílem této diplomové práce je najít prvky Bildungsrománu a zachycení způsobu jakým dospívá hlavní hrdina Nikdo „Nik“ Owens v *Knize hřbitova*. Autorem románu je britský spisovatel Neil Gaiman, který se proslavil především svými příspěvky do žánru městské fantasy. *Knihy hřbitova* vyšla v roce 2007 a pojednává o osudech chlapce, jež jako batole přežil vyvraždění vlastní rodiny a našel útočiště na nedalekém hřbitově. Místní duchové se ho ujali a přidělili mu Svobodu hřbitova, která hrdinovi propůjčuje většinu schopností, kterými mrtví disponují. Román zachycuje Nikovo dospívání až do doby, kdy je nucen hřbitov opustit. Kniha je často označována jako „gotický Bildungsromán“ pro vývoj hrdiny zasazený do světa viktoriánského hřbitova.

Teoretická část práce je rozdělena do tří kapitol. Kapitola jedna vymezuje pojem Bildungsromán, který může být jednoduše definován jako román, kde se hlavní hrdina vyvíjí až do dospělosti. Termín Bildungsromán má své počátky v Německu v 19. století. Vznik tohoto žánru je úzce spojen s pracemi profesora Karla von Morgensterna z Dorpatu a filozofa Wilhelma Diltheyho. Hlavní hrdinové těchto románů se klasicky zobrazují již v dětském nebo mladistvém věku povětšinou trpící sociálními problémy. Během svého života projdou změnou, což jim umožní dosažení statutu dospělého jedince. Během svého vývoje hrdinové přijímají normy společnosti, ve které vyrůstají. Ovšem v posledních letech dochází k náhlým změnám v těchto společnostech, což činí proces dospívání nepředvídatelným. Jedním z největších příspěvatelů k teorii tohoto žánru byl ruský literární teoretik Michail Michajlovič Bachtin, který rozdělil historické romány na dva typy – romány bez vývoje hrdiny a romány s vývojem hrdiny. Bildungsromán patří do druhé kategorie, kdy romány psané v tomto žánru zobrazují hrdinu v procesu jeho vývoje. Pro Bachtina byl ve spojení s tímto žánrem důležitý i pojem chronotop, který skloubí prostor a čas do konkrétní jednoty, která hrdinu následně ovlivňuje. Jako prototyp Bildungsrománu je uváděno dílo Johanna Wolfgang von Goetheho *Viléma Meistera léta učednická*, příběh o mladíkovi, který se nechce spokojit s budoucností, jež je pro něj připravena, a tak se vydá na cesty, aby našel své místo ve světě. Důležitým aspektem pro tuto diplomovou práci jsou i specifika britského Bildungsrománu. Hrdina britských vývojových románů má cyklickou povahu a často se vrací ke své původní společenské identitě, dále je pak může být často zklamán z přílišných očekávání a je mnohdy nucen vypořádat se s určitým traumatem.

Druhá kapitola uvádí do širšího kontextu autora *Knihy hřbitova* Neila Gaimana, který je známý pro své romány, které často nesou stejnou signaturu - vytvoření paralelního či nadpřirozeného světa, který se nějakým způsobem prolíná s tím naším. Klasickým případem je román *Nikdykde*, kde se můžeme setkat s Podlondýnem, jež je plný nadpřirozených bytostí a jeho pravidla se řídí systémem londýnského metra. I *Knihy hřbitova* obsahuje tento aspekt, ovšem zde je to interakce mezi světem živých a mrtvých. Gaiman je uznávaným tvůrcem komiksů (série *Sandman*), scénáristou (několik epizod *Pána času*) a tvůrcem knih pro dospělé (*Američtí bohové*, *Anansiho chlapci*, *Hvězdný prach*). Oblíbenost si ale získal i svou tvorbou pro děti a mladé dospělé a jedna z jeho nejslavnějších knih tohoto typu, *Koralina*, se dočkala i filmového zpracování.

Třetí kapitola uvádí *Knihu hřbitova* do žánrového kontextu, poskytuje stručný obsah děje a pojednává o souvislostech s *Knihami džunglí*. Gaimanův román je zaměřen především na dětské a mladistvé čtenáře. Typ literatury pro mladé dospělé, do kterého kniha spadá, je vcelku novou záležitostí, která vznikla po druhé světové válce, kdy si společnost uvědomila důležitost jakou období dospívání má. Román z velké části spadá do fantasy žánru pro své nadpřirozené prvky, ať už v podobě hlavních postav či v přítomnosti nadpřirozených prvků. Kniha také zčásti zasahuje do hororu především díky přítomnosti duchů, ghúlů a smrtelně nebezpečného řádu, který se nezastaví ani před vraždou batolete. Předchůdcem hororu byl gotický román z období preromantismu a právě duchové a jiné nadpřirozené bytosti a okolnosti v prostředí starých hradů či jiných záhadných a zpusťšených místech byli a jsou jeho hlavním atributem. *Knihy hřbitova* je tedy žánrově jen těžko vymežitelná byť se řadí do obecnějšího pojmu populární literatury. Ovšem nejvýraznějším prvkem románu je jeho spojitost s Kiplingovou *Knihou džunglí*, na jejímž intertextu je založen. Neil Gaiman sám řekl, že Kiplingův román řazený mezi světovou klasiku je jedna z jeho oblíbených knih a tím, že příběh transformoval do modernější verze, skládá světoznámému klasikovi hold. *Knihy hřbitova* se dá samozřejmě číst bez jakékoliv předešlé znalosti Kiplingova románu, ovšem pro znalce je to příjemné osvěžení románu a pro dětské čtenáře, kterým je kniha předně určena, se jedná o dílo dalece vhodnější dnešním požadavkům dětské literatury, a to jak po jazykové a vyprávěčské stránce, tak i díky modernějším dějovým linkám. Gaiman přebírá příběh Mauglího a zasazuje ho do prostor viktoriánského hřbitova v moderním Londýně. Děj *Knihy hřbitova* je episodický a tři kapitoly z knihy jsou věrným převyprávěním Mauglího dobrodružství. Oba romány mají i obdobný konec, kdy se hlavní hrdinové navracejí do světa, do kterého právoplatně náleží.

Mauglí se vrací k lidem, kdežto Nik se vydává do světa živých očekávající širokou škálu možností, které ho v budoucnu čekají.

Praktická část této diplomové práce bere v potaz stanovené definice a aspekty Bildungsrománu a zkoumá, jakým způsobem Neil Gaiman zachycuje Nikovo dospívání na již dávno zavřeném hřbitově. Jedním z nejdůležitějších momentů knihy je Nikův náhodný útěk před vrahem své rodiny na blízký hřbitov. Tamní obyvatelé ho přijmou za svého a hlavní hrdina má tak možnost vyrůst s téměř čistým štítem v relativně bezpečném prostředí. Tento aspekt je také symbolicky zastoupen ve jméně, které hlavní hrdina dostane. Hrdina totiž nejdřív musí být Nikdo, aby se postupem času mohl stát někým. Nik obdrží Svobodu hřbitova, která ho před zraky smrtelníků dělá neviditelným a propůjčuje mu schopnosti, kterými obyčejně duchové disponují, např. schopnost mizet, vyvolat strach či vstoupit do snů. Nikovo jméno a Svoboda hřbitova jsou základními kameny, na kterých hrdina v průběhu knihy vystaví svou identitu.

Jedním z důležitých aspektů Bildungsrománu je proces učení, který analyzuje 5. kapitola. Nik prochází jak formální, tak i neformální výukou, ve které se učí skrze vlastní zkušenosti, které během svých dobrodružství sbírá. Nikova formální výuka se liší od tradiční školy. I když k první znalostem, které získá, patří čtení, psaní a počítání, styl výuky těchto předmětů je nanejvýše nezvyklý. Nik se učí psát a číst opisováním nápisů na náhrobních kamenech. Později mu jeho opatrovník Silas obstará učitele, staříčkého ducha univerzitního profesora, jehož metody jsou zcela zastaralé a také učitelku-vlkodlačici slečnu Lupescu, která nutí Nika učit se z paměti dlouhé seznamy pojmů. Hlavní hrdina se ovšem dostane i do lidské školy a zakusí tak i v podstatě tradiční výuku. Bohužel vzhledem k tomu, že je chráněn Svobodu hřbitova, učitelé i spolužáci mají tendenci na něj zapomenout ve chvíli, kdy jim sejde z očí. Nik tak není zcela součástí vyučovacího procesu, kolektivu svých spolužáků a vůbec celého klimatu školy. Nik nabývá znalostí i během svých dobrodružství, které mají cyklickou formu, hlavní hrdina získá na začátku určitou informaci, která je vitální pro jeho přežití, doplněná o Nikovu schopnost využívat okolního prostředí ve svůj prospěch. Dále k úspěšnému překonání překážek slouží i vedlejší postavy, které povětšinou času přispěchají protagonistovi na pomoc v ten nejvhodnější moment. Jak Nik dospívá, využívá schopností a znalostí nabytých díky předešlým událostem.

6. kapitola se zabývá existencionální otázkou, kterou protagonista řeší v průběhu celého příběhu, vyplývající ze skutečnosti, že zcela nepatří ani do světa živých ani do světa mrtvých. Obdobné téma lze najít ve většině knih psané v žánru Bildungsromán či v širším pojetí dětské

literatury, která se alespoň okrajově zabývá dospíváním. Nik se snaží najít své místo ve světě, což se mu logicky zcela podaří až v závěru knihy. Nikovým hlavním dilematem je, že hřbitov a jeho obyvatelé jsou stálou a neměnnou konstantou v čase. Jediným temporálním měřítkem tohoto světa je právě Nik, který díky tomu, že stále patří mezi živé, je schopen vývoje. Tento potenciál změny duchům zcela chybí a je hlavnímu hrdinovi neustále připomínán. Způsob jakým je Nik vychovaný způsobuje jeho lhostejný přístup ke smrti, protože ví, že existuje život po životě. Smrt tedy není pro protagonistu velkou neznámou, ba naopak. Více než smrti se Nik bojí ztráty identity. Po rozhovoru se Silasem si ovšem uvědomuje, že ve chvíli, kdy zemře, přestane se měnit, růst a vyvíjet, jinými slovy ztratí již zmiňovaný potenciál a následně i veškerou naději na budoucnost. Ve chvíli, kdy nastane čas pro Danse Macabre, tanec mrtvých s živými, Nik tančí jako jeden z živých. Ovšem ani do tohoto světa Nik tak úplně nezapadá. Veškerá interakce se smrtelníky končí tím, že okamžitě na protagonistu zapomenou. Jedinou výjimku tvoří Scarlett, dívka v Nikově věku, která hlavního hrdinu potkává v době, kdy je oboum kolem pěti let, a její čistá dětská mysl a fantazie je schopna přijmout realitu, ve které se protagonista nachází. Druhou výjimku tvoří muž Jack, hlavní antagonista příběhu, který byl na začátku knihy pověřen Nika zabít. Tento jev je způsoben Jackovou motivací dokončit to, co v minulosti začal.

Vyústění příběhu je analyzováno v 7. kapitole, ve které se Nik a muž Jack potkávají poprvé od doby vyvraždění hrdinovy rodiny. V nadcházejícím souboji protagonista využívá veškerých znalostí a zkušeností, které během svého života získal. Touto dobou už si je zcela vědom kvůli čemu jeho rodiče a sestra zahynuli. Nikův osud byl před tisíci let zpečetěn v proroctví, které říká, že chlapec chodící na hranici světa živých a mrtvých způsobí konec pravěkého řádu s názvem Jackové všech řemesel. Nik si je vědom hrozby, která na něj ve světě živých číhá, ostatně je mu to neustále připomínáno. Také si uvědomuje, že pokud chce v budoucnu žít ve světě, kde mu nebude nikdo konkrétní usilovat o život, musí se svým nepřátelům postavit. Stojí tedy před rozhodnutím, zda-li obětuje svou nevinnost a zbaví se tak řádu jednou pro vždy výměnnou za bezpečnou budoucnost, nebo zda-li si ponechá svou bezúhonnost a nadále se bude schovávat na hřbitově. Rozhodne se pro první možnost a jako své bojiště si vybírá právě hřbitov, na kterém vyrostl. Je to chytrá volba, vzhledem k tomu, že terén velmi dobře zná. Využívá svých zkušeností a postupně se zbavuje zbývajících členů řádu. Posledním mužem, který zůstane, je právě muž Jack, vrah jeho rodičů. Ve chvíli, kdy se mu antagonista chystá prozradit jméno, které mu rodiče dali, si Nik uvědomí, že na této informaci nesejde. Toto uvědomění si sama sebe a přijetí vlastní identity je jedním z klíčových

momentů knihy. V tuto chvíli se Nikova osobnost stává celistvou. Hrdina přijímá vše, co ho za život ovlivnilo a díky tomu je schopen porazit muže Jacka, kterého pomocí svých znalostí přelstí.

Předposlední kapitola této diplomové práce popisuje úplný závěr knihy, kde Nikovy propůjčené schopnosti Svobody hřbitova postupně mizí. Nik přestává vidět duchy, vidět ve tmě a uvědomuje si, že konec jeho života na hřbitově se neúprosně blíží. Po rozhovoru se Silasem, který mu potvrdí, že hřbitov musí opustit, je ovšem plný optimismu a očekávání, která mu budoucnost nabízí. Plně si nyní uvědomuje, že je smrtelníkem, což mu umožňuje vydat se kamkoliv a dělat cokoli bude chtít. Hřbitov opouští s vyhlídkou neutuchajících dobrodružství a bezmezného počtu možností, které jako živý člověk má, připraven plně využít ten tolik opěvovaný potenciál.

Poslední kapitola se soustřeďuje na odchylky od tradičních interpretací Bildungsrománu. Součástí žánru povětšinou bývá milostná zápletka, která má vliv na hrdinův vývoj. Tento aspekt ovšem *Kniha hřbitova* nezahrnuje. Jedním z určujících aspektů je proces vývoje hrdiny od dětství po dospělost. Nik ovšem opouští hřbitov coby patnáctiletý chlapec. Současná společnost považuje adolescenty dospělými až ve chvíli, kdy dosáhnou 18. narozenin. Nik se ovšem těmto standardům vymyká, už jen z toho důvodu, že vyrostl v převážně viktoriánské (a starší) společnosti, která měla hranici dospělosti podstatně níž. Hlavní hrdina není ani teenager v pravém slova smyslu a jeho dospění proběhlo zcela a úspěšně byť o několik let dřív než se v současné době od mladistvých očekává. Posledním, a pravděpodobně nejdůležitějším, argumentem je, že Nik odchází do světa naprosto nepřipraven na moderní dobu. Odchován duchy v nadpřirozeném prostředí, kdy se o jeho lidské potřeby starali ostatní, není Nik zcela připraven na chod a návyky každodenního života. Tato skutečnost ovšem ustupuje do pozadí díky neutuchajícímu optimismu, který hrdina pociťuje při opouštění hřbitova. Nik se prokázal jako velmi inteligentní, chytrý a přizpůsobivý chlapec, který je schopný najít řešení v každé situaci. Sám si pravděpodobně uvědomuje, jak rozlišný svět ho za branami hřbitova čeká, a i přesto na něm čtenář nezpozoruje sebemenší pochyby nebo sobě samém. Je velmi pravděpodobné, že sám autor zamýšlel vznést tyto otázky především mezi dospělými čtenáři. Domnívám se, že se jedná o kritiku společnosti, která je skeptická a přespříliš ochranná ke svým dětem, a tudíž neschopná přijmout fakt, že se o sebe mladiství dokáží v současné společnosti postarat sami bez jejich pomoci. Nik představuje naději pro budoucí generace, naději, že se oni sami, plni odvahy, jednoho dne beze strachu vydají objevovat a změnit svět.

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