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Zásady pro vypracování

Závěrečná diplomová práce se bude věnovat dětské literatuře, specificky fenoménu antropomorfismu v díle Roalda Dahla. V úvodu práce studentka stručně nastíní historii dětské literatury, především s ohledem na antropomorfní rysy, a bude definovat relevantní teoretické koncepty (např. antropomorfismus, personifikace, alegorie, typizace postav, apod). Zvoleného autora a jeho díla do tohoto kontextu zařadí. Jádrem práce bude analýza vybraných děl, v níž se diplomantka soustředí na zvířecí postavy (případně neživé předměty) s lidskými rysy/ chováním. Zamyslí se nad účelem užití antropomorfismu, nad různými podobami i literárními prostředky, které jsou k tomuto účelu využity. Svá tvrzení bude vhodně ilustrovat primárními texty a opírat o sekundární zdroje. Závěrem své analýzy přehledně shrne, díla porovná a vysloví obecnější závěry o způsobech použití, účelech a proměnách antropomorfismu v tvorbě Roalda Dahla.

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ANNOTATION

The diploma thesis examines anthropomorphism in Roald Dahl's works. The theoretical part explains the term anthropomorphism as well as other terminology that is connected to it, defines children's literature and its history, and describes Dahl's writing style and his opinion on animal rights. The selected works for the analytical part of the thesis are *The Enormous Crocodile*; *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me*; *Fantastic Mr Fox*, and *James and the Giant Peach*. Roles of individual anthropomorphic characters in the works are analysed, as well as the degree of their anthropomorphism, their characteristic traits, and their connection to animal symbolism.

KEYWORDS

anthropomorphism, children's literature, Roald Dahl, animals, anthropomorphic characters

NÁZEV

Antropomorfismus v dílech Roalda Dahla

ANOTACE

Tato diplomová práce zkoumá antropomorfismus v díle Roalda Dahla. Teoretická část vymezuje pojem antropomorfismus a další pojmy s ním spojené, popisuje dětskou literaturu a její historii, a objasňuje dílo Roalda Dahla a jeho názory na práva zvířat. Dahlova díla kterými se tato práce zabývá v analytické části jsou *Velikananánský krokodýl*; *Žirafa, pelikán a já*; *Fantastický pan Lišák*, a *Jakub a obří broskev*. Jednotlivé antropomorfní postavy jsou analyzovány z hlediska jejich role v příběhu, úrovně antropomorfizace, charakterových rysů, a podobnosti k zvířecím symbolům.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

antropomorfismus, dětská literatura, Roald Dahl, zvířata, antropomorfní postavy

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Introduction

Anthropomorphism in children's literature is a very commonly used literary device. Talking animals, animals that behave and think as if they were human, or even inanimate objects that are humanised, are often present in literature for children. There are numerous questions one is bound to eventually ask, starting with possible reasons why authors write about animals with human traits rather than about actual humans, continuing with questions about animal symbols and stereotypes, such as the cunning fox or the proud peacock, and whether anthropomorphic characters are portrayed in literature for children according to these stereotypes. In addition, there are questions about the connection between natural behaviour of animals and behaviour of anthropomorphised animal characters, and questions about the origin of these stereotypes and about the difference between human and humanised characters as to their behaviour, language, personality, knowledge, morals, and even their clothing. These questions, among others, will be answered throughout this paper, which will focus on Roald Dahl's books for children that feature anthropomorphic characters.

Anthropomorphism has already been studied by literary critics, psychologists, psychiatrists, philosophers as well as teachers and students of philology and literature. There are works such as *Anthropomorphism, Anecdotes, and Animals* by Robert Mitchell et al., which offers a scientific approach to differing traits between anthropomorphic animals and animals' natural behaviour in the form of articles written by experts in the field of behaviourism, anthropology, psychology etc. Another significant contribution to the study of anthropomorphism is a book titled *Animals with Human Faces: A Guide to Animal Symbolism* written by Beryl Rowland, which focuses on personality traits that have been attributed to specific animals throughout centuries and the reasons why it is done so, and lastly Tess Cosslett's *Talking Animals in British Children's Fiction, 1786-1914*, which centres on the nineteenth-century children's literature and differences between child readers and adult readers. Most importantly, Cosslett studies anthropomorphism in connection to the nineteenth century assessment that subjectivity and the ability to speak is what separates animals from humans. There are more studies that analyse anthropomorphism in general and provide an objective overview of anthropomorphising, but they seldom focus on specific works to analyse their particular distinctiveness.

However, there are several bachelor and diploma theses on anthropomorphism that analyse one or a few authors, or a selection of works, or focus on certain animals in

anthropomorphic stories in order to create a more specific conclusion at a lower risk of being overly generalising, starting with *Anthropomorphic Imagery of Animals (Dragons and Horses) in the Works of Michael Ende and C. S. Lewis* by Ágata C. T. Salgado, which, as its title suggests, is centred on anthropomorphised horses and dragons in *The Neverending Story*, in *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Horse and His Boy* and in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*. Secondly, Birgitta R. Garðarsdóttir wrote a thesis called *Animals with Voices*, focusing on anthropomorphic characters in *Black Beauty* and in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Lastly, there is an analysis of 10 most common anthropomorphised animals in children's literature in *Talking Animals: A Literature Review of Anthropomorphism in Children's Books* by Elisabeth A. Dunn. As there are several more works studying and analysing anthropomorphism in literature, this listing could continue further, though it should be stated that there is none that would focus specifically on anthropomorphism in Roald Dahl's books.

Nevertheless, it is vital to point out that some analyses focusing on Dahl's life and literary career, such as Jeremy Treglown's *Roald Dahl: A Biography*, mention animal characters in Dahl's books for children, but they do not study those characters. For that reason, this diploma thesis is centred on the anthropomorphism in Dahl children's books in order to provide a new perspective on Dahl's unique writing style and the way he creates anthropomorphised animals and incorporates them into the story. The selected texts that will be analysed in this thesis are *James and the Giant Peach*; *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me*; *Fantastic Mr Fox*; and *The Enormous Crocodile*.

As for the structural organisation of this diploma thesis, it is divided into two main parts. The first part clarifies literary terminology connected to the topic of anthropomorphism, provides information about Roald Dahl and Quentin Blake and gives an overview of the history of children's literature. It also explains psychological studies and views on anthropomorphism in literature. The second part is focused on an in-depth analysis of the degree of anthropomorphisation of Dahl's characters as well as on the first interaction of human and anthropomorphic characters in Dahl's books, on the names of anthropomorphic characters and on the causes of animal characters becoming anthropomorphised in the stories. However, the main focus of the practical part is to examine the anthropomorphic characters according to the theory of archetypes and according to animal symbolism, and to prove their significance in the works of Roald Dahl.

In essence, the aim of this paper is to provide an in-depth analysis of anthropomorphic characters in children's literature in the selected texts by Roald Dahl, to distinguish the degree

of anthropomorphism, and to depict the human characters' reactions to anthropomorphised characters.

1 Anthropomorphism, Children, and Children's Literature

First and foremost, this chapter will provide a definition of the key terms connected to the topic of this thesis, the most important ones being anthropomorphism, allegory, personification, and children's literature. Additionally, the chapter will continue with an overview of the history of children's literature with the main focus on anthropomorphic features within said literature.

However, in order to write about the history of children's literature, one must first consider the changes of perception of children throughout history as well as the historical background behind the creation of the notion of childhood, which is tightly related to the beginnings of children's literature. Therefore, this chapter will also describe concepts of childhood and perceptions of children as they changed with time. Lastly, since anthropomorphism has been somewhat criticised and some objections were and still are being propounded, some of the more prominent criticisms will be addressed in this chapter.

1.1 Definition and History of Anthropomorphism

In children's literature, anthropomorphism is a common occurrence. Be it animals or non-living objects, stories for children often use them instead of human characters. The reason behind that is, however, unclear. It could be for the reason that animal sounds and their physical distinctiveness is one of the first things babies are taught about the world, as C. Neil Macrae et al. writes.¹ Animals appear in board and pop-up books and their sounds are used in many children's toys, and by producing simple animal sounds babies learn how to talk. Hence using animals as characters in children's books is a logical continuation of teaching children more about the world via characters that they already know and are used to seeing and hearing. It could also be for other psychological reasons, such as readers' ability to distance themselves from the characters and yet feel a connection with them through the story. Yet another possible explanation is that the anthropomorphic characters are sometimes being shown as one-dimensional, having one trait or one vice and representing only that, and so the mental processes needed from readers to interpret the meaning of the story is less demanding. And the last possibility suggests that juvenile readers would presumably be less afraid of animal antagonists than of human antagonists since the anthropomorphised characters would feel more made-up and otherworldly.

¹ C. Neil Macrae, Charles Stangor, and Miles Hewstone, *Stereotypes and Stereotyping*, (London: Guilford Press, 1996), 104.

This diploma thesis will try to put some light into the aforementioned matter, with the usage of probative analysis of Dahl's works, and try to arrive at a conclusion that would be more sufficient and clear than the one already provided by the majority of people, which is simply that, after all, children like animals and they enjoy reading about them, as is nicely encapsulated in *The Continuum Encyclopedia of Children's Literature*:

throughout the history of children's literature animals play a significant role. They entertain, touch hearts, help readers identify with emotions, values, and relationships, and inform about the interdependency of the natural world (...) and suggest the significance of animals for all readers.²

First of all, it needs to be explained what the term anthropomorphism really means. As was mentioned in the introductory part of this thesis, it is a method of attributing human traits, emotions and behaviour to non-human entities. This method has been used countless times throughout the centuries in all types of storytelling. Initially, as Cullinan and Person note, anthropomorphism was used in oral folktales and fairy tales, with a representative example being the tale of *Little Red Riding Hood*, which introduces a cunning humanised wolf, who is able to talk to people and plan a trap in a very human-like way. Eventually, anthropomorphism was also present in a written form in the earliest children's literature, e.g. bestiaries and fables,³ such as Aesop's *Fables*, which introduced fairly short stories about animals in protagonist as well as antagonist positions in order to teach moral lessons to children and adults alike.

In the course of time, anthropomorphism became even more sought after, and so there were more books with anthropomorphic characters, as is the case of *The Jungle Book* by Rudyard Kipling, in which there are many notable animal characters that talk, teach, scheme, and overall act in a human-like fashion, such as Baloo the bear, Bagheera the black panther and Akela the wolf. Anthropomorphism is nowadays also present in television shows for children. In the Czech Republic, there is a bedtime story called *Maxipes Fík* with its protagonist being a talking dog of the same name, and in the United Kingdom, there is a TV show called *Peppa Pig* about a family of humanised pigs. Lastly, anthropomorphism is present even in songs and musical storytelling, for example in the English-American musical *Cats* or in the Russian ballet story of *The Nutcracker*. These are only few glimpses of the vast extent of examples of anthropomorphism in storytelling. However, humanisation of animals and objects can be seen even outside storytelling because it is an inherent part of our lives.

² Bernice E. Cullinan, and Diane G. Person, *The Continuum Encyclopedia of Children's Literature* (London: The Continuum International Publishing Group Ltd, 2003), 36–38.

³ Cullinan, and Person, *The Continuum Encyclopedia of Children's Literature*, 36–37.

In fact, it is so commonly used that people nowadays do not pay attention to it and notice it only when it is pointed out to them. For example, anthropomorphic creatures are shown in television advertisements, in which animals promote various business companies or their products, such as a fox that propagates ČMSS⁴ or a bear that advertises Müller Riso yoghurts.⁵ Anthropomorphism in advertising has another psychological purpose, and that is to coax children into wanting certain toys because they are cute and funny and they can speak and describe how they are to be played with, which is of course practised later by children as well as their parents when they play with those toys at home.

Additionally, the process of humanisation of inanimate objects does not necessarily mean that one has to imagine the objects talking or thinking like humans, it suffices that people humanise objects in a way that they approach and interact with the objects as if the things were alive. And since people are social creatures that tend to create emotional bonds to feel happy and less alone, it is no surprise that there are actually studies (such as *Attachment to Objects as Compensation for Close Others' Perceived Unreliability* or *Emotional Attachment to Objects Mediates the Relationship Between Loneliness and Hoarding Symptoms*) which show that people get emotionally attached to their possessions, which then manifests in giving them names, talking to the objects or crying when they are broken or lost. The method of anthropomorphising is so inherent and so old that it is practically impossible to pinpoint when or where exactly anthropomorphism began.

On the other hand, when talking about anthropomorphism in storytelling in Europe, it could be argued that the anthropomorphic stories which have influenced all the following ones in Europe are the famous *Fables* by Aesop written in the sixth century BC. *Fables* are absolutely crucial when talking about stories featuring anthropomorphic characters, since the characteristic traits and vices of the main characters of *Fables* are attributed to animals even today. Foxes are almost always depicted as cunning, lions as brave, peacocks as proud, snakes as evil, lambs as innocent and so on. Connecting animals to various attributes in literature has become so significant that writers use animals as symbols of the attributes that are usually connected to them.

To elaborate, symbolism as a method can be simply defined as seeing connections between two or more objects, ideas, or qualities; it is a device that enables one thing to represent

⁴ “ČMSS – hledá se liška,” Youtube, posted April 18, 2016, Youtube video, 0:20, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h-OICw3S4Hc>.

⁵ “Muller – Rice Rice Baby (Advert Jury),” Youtube, posted July 30, 2013, Youtube video, 0:29, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q4h1POqGoG8>.

or stand for another, and so animals in *Fables* and in modern day idioms usually represent one attribute. According to Jung:

everything can assume symbolic significance: natural objects (like stones, plants, animals, men, mountains and valleys, sun and moon, wind, water, and fire), or man-made things (like houses, boats, or cars), or even abstract forms (like numbers, or the triangle, the square, and the circle). In fact, the whole cosmos is a potential symbol.⁶

There are qualities ascribed to almost every animal in existence, even to the already extinct dinosaurs, who are in children's literature usually shown as clumsy, friendly and silly, like in the book *Tiny T. Rex and the Impossible Hug* by Jonathan Stutzman or in *Dinosaur Kisses* by David E. Stein. This attribution of human traits to animals can also be reversed, meaning that there are idioms, or rather similes, used to describe people by likening them to animals, and whilst some of them are based on a real behaviour or a characteristic trait of animals, e.g. 'as blind as a bat' or 'as busy as a bee,' there are also some similes that are based on animal symbols that represent human traits, and these are for example 'as sly as a fox' or 'as brave as a lion.' Regardless, one important detail must not be forgotten. The degree of anthropomorphism within a story can vary.

To clarify, some anthropomorphic characters can talk, think, dress and behave just like people. They can cook, play the instrument, ride a bicycle, drive a car, go to school etc. Besides their physical appearance, those animals are behaviourally indistinguishable from humans since they even deal with the same daily issues and concerns that humans have, such as buying food or paying the rent. And yet in other stories anthropomorphic characters can only think and feel like humans, but not act or talk like them. One example could be of *The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein, in which the tree can feel human emotions and move its branches at will, but it cannot walk or do other things humans do.

Furthermore, some stories combine different levels of anthropomorphising, so there are animals that are anthropomorphised as well as normal animals behaving realistically according to their nature in the same story. The result is for example a humanised duck riding a horse in Walt Disney's animated children's story about Donald Duck, in which that horse's purpose is only to be a means of transport and so it is not given its own human-like personality and voice. Another example is within the story of *Fantastic Mr Fox* by Roald Dahl in which anthropomorphic characters eat chickens, and since chickens are in the story only as food and prey to animals and humans, they are not given a human-like personality either. The reason for the combination of anthropomorphic and normal animals is somewhat simple and yet

⁶ Carl Gustav Jung, *Man and His Symbols* (New York: Doubleday, 1964), 232.

psychologically interesting. Authors presumably choose it to avoid juvenile readers having subliminal thoughts about animal cruelty or about cannibalism, because if all animals were to be anthropomorphised, then they would all have their own feelings, families and lives, and it could lead to a reader's conclusion that the main protagonist cannot be good and moral if they are treating other sentient beings as if they were inferior or as if their life's sole purpose was to be food for someone else. On the other hand, some authors do this in order to distinguish the main character, making him or her more special than the non-anthropomorphised characters.

In addition, stories with anthropomorphised characters can be set either in a world where humans do not exist, or they can be set in a world in which the anthropomorphic characters can co-exist with humans. It is always the author's decision whether their characters co-exist in peace or if, for example, the anthropomorphic characters hide from humans. That is why another part of this thesis will be dealing with the first interaction of anthropomorphic characters with people. Additionally, there is usually a difference between the child and adult character's reactions to an anthropomorphic character, the difference being that the child is more willing to accept it and quickly move on whereas the adult is more surprised, doubtful and even resentful towards the anthropomorphised animal. Therefore, in this thesis reactions of child characters to anthropomorphic characters will be compared to reactions of adult characters to anthropomorphic characters.

Hence another important issue which must be addressed is the language of anthropomorphic characters, since there are several options concerning the ways of communication. First, they could communicate via some kind of special animal language that is specific to each species, which would mean that for example monkeys would understand each other but they could not talk with crocodiles or other animals. Second, it could be that animals simply use some human language, and specifically which language that would be would be the author's decision. For example, in *The Twits* by Dahl the monkey family is originally from an African jungle and so they speak a different language than the English birds who do not understand them when the monkeys try to warn them about the Twits. However, when the Roly-Poly Bird from Africa flies to England for a holiday and saves the family of monkeys, they talk to each other without difficulties. Furthermore, the Roly-Poly Bird, as a keen traveller, learnt foreign languages and can translate the Monkey's warning to English for the other birds.⁷ On the other hand, an interesting thing that needs to be pointed out is that the monkeys who speak only their native African language can understand Mr and Mrs Twit who speak only English,

⁷ Roald Dahl, *The Twits* (London: Cape, 1980), 46–48.

which is probably due to the fact that the Twits have been training the monkey family for years in the circus, which would mean that although the monkeys could not speak English themselves they could still understand it.⁸ The third alternative which has to be taken into consideration is whether anthropomorphised animals can speak with non-anthropomorphised animals. The last possibility is whether all animals can talk to each other via their normal voices, i.e. a dog would say ‘woof woof’ out loud but it would be translated into something different and meaningful in other animals’ minds, which would provide an explanation to human characters’ incapability to understand animals. The last two listed possibilities are seldom addressed in stories with anthropomorphised characters and the answer therefore is dependent entirely on reader’s interpretation and imagination.

In history, the function of animals in storytelling has evolved. According to Cullinan and Person, in antiquity and the Middle Ages animals and anthropomorphic characters were utilised to conform to the moral code or religious beliefs of that time and culture, and animals in those stories were usually to be feared or defeated. In the eighteenth century animal stories became more popular and their function slightly broadened, because humorous features were added, animal characters became less scary and more human-like, and some stories were written as satires on human behaviour, but their core moralistic nature still remained. The new motif which was added to the morality was that the stories also began to advise against cruelty to animals, as is the case of Anna Sewell’s *Black Beauty*.⁹

Later, in the 19th and early 20th century, children’s literature with animals and anthropomorphised characters became even more diverse, as some authors started to write adventure stories about animals, such as Rudyard Kipling’s *Jungle Books*, and some authors, such as Beatrix Potter or A. A. Milne, chose to write humorous and easy-to-read stories for younger children. As the 20th century progressed, according to Cullinan and Person, animal and anthropomorphic stories were increasingly more popular and diverse. Some authors tried to create a realistic representation of animal lives in fictional literature in order to inform readers about the natural life of animals, like Marjorie K. Rawlings’s *The Yearling*, and some writers opted to write a fictional animal story based on their own experience, for example Theodore Waldece or Harold McCracken.¹⁰ Overall, this period of time enabled authors and readers to explore the beauty of nature and animals, be more whimsical with animal characters and give the stories a profound message of love, friendship and power of imagination.

⁸ Dahl, *The Twits*, 55.

⁹ Cullinan, and Person, *The Continuum Encyclopedia of Children’s Literature*, 36–37.

¹⁰ Cullinan, and Person, *The Continuum Encyclopedia of Children’s Literature*, 37.

Presently, as Cullinan and Person observe, since the late 20th century writers of animal stories also incorporate modern-day societal issues connected to animals, such as environmental issues, endangerment of species and animal abuse, and some stories use anthropomorphised characters to address problems concerning children themselves, such as issues with inclusiveness of divergent ethnicities in a society, the difficulty of coping with the finality of death, one's sexuality or with having estranged parents.¹¹

However, the method of anthropomorphising has also been criticised throughout the centuries. One of the first critics of anthropomorphism, and specifically anthropomorphism of mythological creatures and deities, were, according to a Classicist Werner Jaeger, Anaximander and Xenophanes, who both felt that anthropomorphising deities was wrong.¹² To clarify, ancient Greek mythology was based on the belief that gods of the Greek pantheon behaved, talked, looked, and felt emotions just like humans, but were immortal, had divine powers and were generally superior to humans. Besides the two Greek philosophers, other people who disapproved of or had objections to anthropomorphism were for example Francis Bacon, David Hume, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, or Stewart Guthrie, as is written in *Anthropomorphism, Anecdotes, and Animals*.¹³

This criticism, when applied to anthropomorphism as a literary device, is connected to the thought, as Peter Hunt writes, that children's books "tend to absorb their readers so thoroughly that some observers have seen them as a site of considerable danger."¹⁴ As a demonstration, American psychologists P. Ganea, C. Canfield, T. Chou, and K. Simons-Ghafari created a study focusing on the effect of anthropomorphising in literature on children, and their concluding findings were as follows:

an important factor in the development of anthropomorphism in childhood may be exposure to media (e.g., picture books, television) that commonly portrays animals and other inanimate entities with human-like characteristics. Such portrayals can lead children to think of entities in the natural world as imbued with intentions and human-like states. (...) Books that do not present animals and their environments accurately from a biological perspective may not only lead to less learning but also influence children to adopt a human-centred view of the natural world.¹⁵

¹¹ Cullinan, and Person, *The Continuum Encyclopedia of Children's Literature*, 37–38.

¹² Werner Jaeger, *The Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1947), 42.

¹³ Robert W. Mitchell, Nicholas Thompson, and H. Lyn Miles, *Anthropomorphism, Anecdotes, and Animals* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 51.

¹⁴ Peter Hunt, *An Introduction to Children's Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 4.

¹⁵ "Do Cavies Talk? The Effect of Anthropomorphic Picture Book on Children's Knowledge About Animals," *Frontiers in Psychology*, frontiersin, last modified April 10, 2014, <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2014.00283/full>.

This thought is further endorsed by the so-called Morgan's Canon, which is connected to comparative psychology, and it claims that "in no case is an animal activity to be interpreted in terms of higher psychological processes, if it can be fairly interpreted in terms of processes which stand lower in the scale of psychological evolution and development,"¹⁶ and as comparative psychology suggests that all things should be interpreted on the basis of empirical cognition, it inherently disallows the idea of anthropomorphism, because according to Morgan's Canon animals should be equated to humans only if a less advanced explanation of their behaviour does not exist.

On the other hand, Taylor Elgarten claims that anthropomorphic animals in literature are more relatable to young children than human characters. Anthropomorphism also adheres to a child's imagination and provides a subtle and humorous lesson on respect for people who differ from them. Lastly, Elgarten writes that anthropomorphism in literature allows children to distance themselves from the story and put it into perspective, and that the story with its morals and life lessons is far more memorable with anthropomorphic characters than if it contained human characters.¹⁷

Furthermore, M. Root-Bernstein et al. defend anthropomorphism in literature, as it can be used to support conservation, and so they propose that an appropriate way to anthropomorphise a species for conservation purposes is to

(1) emphasise the characteristic the species already possesses that people engage with during personal interactions that form the egomorphic, empathetic and charismatic bases for anthropomorphisation, and (2) give the species just enough recognisably human-like characteristics to make it a credible and positive social actor, given its intended role.¹⁸

They believe that anthropomorphism has a significant potential as to its influence on people's opinions on animals and therefore it should be used to improve human-animal relationships.

To conclude this exposition, anthropomorphism is ever-present in everyday life, in storytelling and particularly in children's literature, sometimes even without the readers' consciously noticing it being so, since people are used to anthropomorphism nowadays. Lists of children's books are easily dominated by animal stories, indicating either that many children prefer books with non-human characters or that writers prefer to write about animal characters.

¹⁶ Conwy Lloyd Morgan, *An Introduction to Comparative Psychology* (London: W. Scott, Ltd, 1894), 59.

¹⁷ "The Benefits of Talking Animals," RuneStone, *runestonejournal*, published May 29, 2018, <https://runestonejournal.com/benefits-talking-animals-taylor-elgarten/>.

¹⁸ "Anthropomorphised Species as Tools for Conservation: Utility Beyond Prosocial, Intelligent and Suffering Species," Springer Link, [link.springer](https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10531-013-0494-4), last modified May 25, 2013, <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10531-013-0494-4>.

In any case, authors make a deliberate decision to include talking animals in their stories. Given our knowledge of human nature and of children, of the aforementioned criticism and defence of anthropomorphism in children's literature, it certainly seems a justified decision.

1.2 History of Children's Literature in the UK

The societal perspective on children and on childhood as a created concept is connected to the way authors write stories for children. As is formulated by Peter Hunt in *An Introduction to Children's Literature*, "what a culture thinks of as childhood is reflected very closely in the books produced for its citizens (and) children's books very often contain what adults think children can understand, and what they should be allowed to understand."¹⁹ Authors of children's literature have adhered to the demands and requirements of the society of their time as to the correct way of writing for children, and since this 'correct way' has changed throughout time, it is necessary to briefly outline the evolution of children's literature in the United Kingdom, to see when it began and how it progressed through time. The reason for writing about it is that Roald Dahl's works would never have existed were it not for this evolution, which enabled him to hone his unique writing style and publish his stories for children.

The nature of children's literature in Europe has developed throughout centuries, and that is mainly due to the changes concerning the perception of children and childhood by adults. Firstly, as Šárka Bubíková states in *Literary Childhoods*, childhood has always existed in its biological sense. However, that does not mean childhood as a significant period of time was always recognised by adult society.²⁰ Hence it could be said that the perception of childhood as a separate period from adulthood is also a construct of society, and therefore it is susceptible to changes. The perception of childhood is a subjective matter and many historians argue even to this day in which century childhood as a concept actually emerged. As Jackie C. Horne writes in *History and the Construction of the Child in Early British Children's Literature*, some of the historians, including Philippe Ariès, believed that childhood did not exist prior to the early modern period. Others, such as Meir Shahar and Barbara Hanawalt, think that childhood emerged during the Middle Ages. However, there are also Viviana A. Zelizer and Carolyn Steedman, who both believe that the concept of childhood as a specific stage of life came into existence in the early twentieth century.²¹

¹⁹ Hunt, *An Introduction to Children's Literature*, 5.

²⁰ Šárka Bubíková et al., *Literary Childhoods* (Univerzita Pardubice: Pavel Mervart, 2008), 11.

²¹ Jackie C. Horne, *History and the Construction of the Child in Early British Children's Literature* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2016), 7.

In the Middle Ages, as Bubíková summarises, children were regarded simply as miniature versions of adults and were expected to work hard and act responsibly.²² Therefore, according to Carpenter and Prichard, children in Anglo-Saxon times had not many choices as to their reading material, since they were allowed to read basically only books of instruction either by Bede or by Ælfric. Reading for children was considered a matter of education and not a matter of enjoyment, and there were no books specifically written for child readers at that time.

Furthermore, Philippe Ariès points out in his *Centuries of Childhood* that until the 12th century there was no depiction of childhood in art, and since children were believed to be small adults, they were portrayed with deformed bodies, either with their heads smaller than they should be or with the musculature of an adult,²³ which was anatomically incorrect. Children in the Middle Ages were not considered to be worthy of notice to adults until they could walk, talk and work, or as Ariès puts it: “childhood was a period of transition which passed quickly and which was just as quickly forgotten.”²⁴ Additionally, in that time death caused by illness was more common and child mortality was high so parents never knew whether their children would survive and reach adulthood, and Ariès further explains that parents mourned the death of their child but were not devastated by it, as is clearly shown in Montaigne’s sentence: “I have lost two or three children in their infancy, not without regret, but without great sorrow.” The view on childhood as a phase of necessary uselessness before the child could start working lasted until the late Middle Ages when children started to be seen as a source of amusement, although that was mainly by women who took care of them.²⁵

In the 15th and 16th century, women tended to spend more time with children and even enjoy it. The lovable, innocent nature of children brought more attention to them. This, as Ariès writes, led to a castigating reaction of men at the end of the 16th century and in the 17th century. Pedagogues and moralists were critical of children and women who were pampering them, seeing no benefit in doing so and believing it harmful for the children, because the moralists believed that children would become spoiled.²⁶ For this reason people in the late 17th century still viewed childhood as an imperfect phase which had to be undergone or endured, but nonetheless childhood was distinguished from adulthood at last. As Bubíková writes, a new idea emerged that children were naïve and innocent, and therefore they needed time to develop

²² Bubíková et al., *Literary Childhoods*, 13–14.

²³ Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood* (New York: Random House Inc., 1962), 33.

²⁴ Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood*, 34.

²⁵ Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood*, 39–40.

²⁶ Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood*, 130–131.

before they could be expected to behave as adults. Thus, children needed to be taught, disciplined and trained in order to become adults.²⁷ The two approaches to upbringing, by education and by coddling, combined and became the ‘correct way’ to raise children.

Due to this new evolution in the perception of children, courtesy books were added to literature that was read by children in the 15th century. As Carpenter and Prichard write, books of courtesy taught children manners and proper behaviour in a society. In the 16th century religious texts became a regular part of children’s education and also inseparable from anybody’s life in general,²⁸ which means that literature read by children at that time consisted mainly of prayers and catechism, books teaching English and Latin, books teaching manners, and other books that helped children with their education, such as Chaucer’s *Tretis and the Astrolabie*.

However, according to Carpenter and Prichard, the true beginning of children’s literature in the United Kingdom is usually associated with the year 1744 and with the name John Newbery.²⁹ Newbery was a book publisher who is sometimes called the Father of Children’s Literature, because, as is said in a bibliography of the Newbery family called *John Newbery and His Successors*, his intentions were not to make children’s literature popular, but to “make a permanent and profitable market for them, to make them a class of book to be taken seriously as a recognised and important branch of the book-trade.”³⁰ In 1744 Newbery published his first book for children: *A Little Pretty Pocket-Book*. Afterwards, Newbery went on to publish many other stories for children such as *The Valentine’s Gift; A Pretty Book of Pictures for Little Masters and Misses* and *Goody Two-Shoes*. According to *The Oxford Companion to Children’s Literature*, Newbery and his successors published approximately 2,400 books in general, but they are most celebrated and known for publishing about 400 books for children. Newbery believed that children should be taught good behaviour not only via physical discipline but also by reading, hence most of his books for children are educative and yet amusing and enjoyable. The popularity of his publishing lay in constant advertisement, inventive usage of bright colours on book covers, and in adding various products for free to the purchased books. Since Newbery was a leading producer of children’s book of his time in the UK and had substantive influence on American children’s literature, too,³¹ the title Father of

²⁷ Bubíková et al., *Literary Childhoods*, 14–16.

²⁸ Humphrey Carpenter, and Mari Prichard, *The Oxford Companion to Children’s Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 2005), 220.

²⁹ Carpenter, and Prichard, *The Oxford Companion to Children’s Literature*, 220.

³⁰ Sydney Roscoe, *John Newbery and His Successors, 1740–1814: A Bibliography* (Wormley: Five Owls Press, 1973), 8–9.

³¹ Carpenter, and Prichard, *The Oxford Companion to Children’s Literature*, 375–376.

Children's Literature which was bestowed on him, as well as the award named after him seem to be both well-earned.

Newbery's opinion on children was influenced by the eighteenth-century philosopher John Locke, who thought of children as 'tabulae rasae,' in other words as blank slates. This was a revolutionary thought which envisioned children as innocent beings with their minds clear and void of any negative thoughts. As was mentioned above, Carpenter and Prichard state that until the 18th century it was believed that children should read only for educative purposes and not for their pleasure. On the other hand, even though there were practically no books written at that time whose aim was to be simply enjoyed by juvenile readers, there were still books that were already created and were enjoyed by children, such as Aesop's *Fables*, legends of King Arthur or Robin Hood, or *Guy of Warwick*. Locke in particular believed that children should be encouraged to read, and he endorsed reading not only the *Bible* but also Aesop's *Fables* and *Reynard the Fox*. Chapbooks continuously gained in popularity as they were cheap and their stories were adventurous and fanciful.³² As Bubíková writes, a major shift in perception of children took place in the 18th century and childhood was no longer a period to be quickly overcome but rather a time to be enjoyed and prolonged. A rise of interest in childrearing also meant that several types of institutions were created and built – children's hospitals, orphanages, and Sunday schools. All this eventually led to the modern societal scheme in which children are at the centre of a family.

All in all, Bubíková writes that the 18th century literature for children was mainly shaped by Locke's and Newbery's efforts to change the view on children and children's literature, as well as by a Romantic idea that adulthood is influenced by childhood experiences and therefore parents should devote more time to their children.³³ In *The Oxford Companion to Children's Literature* it is explained that the 18th century was a period of time in which books specifically for children's joy were first created and books not having been originally meant to be read by children influenced children's literature anyway. Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* is probably the first work that should be mentioned in this respect. The second author who ought to be mentioned is Jonathan Swift, who wrote *Gulliver's Travels*. Swift's story introduced magical creatures and imaginary societies as well as travelling through imaginary worlds to children's literature. The third well-known writer is John Bunyan, the author of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, a story full of adventure but with a moral undertone.³⁴ All three authors significantly contributed

³² Carpenter, and Prichard, *The Oxford Companion to Children's Literature*, 220.

³³ Bubíková et al., *Literary Childhoods*, 17.

³⁴ Carpenter, and Prichard, *The Oxford Companion to Children's Literature*, 220.

to literature for children by adding themes, motives, and plots that became very popular in the following years. As Carpenter and Prichard write, there were actual professional writers of literature for children by the end of the 18th century, Thomas Day and Dorothy and Mary Ann Kilner among them.³⁵

Overall, since the 18th century there was a significant rise of interest in children, their upbringing, and the literature they read. In the following two centuries books for children became not only more popular but also more defined and accepted as a separate, unique, and important type of literature thanks to writers like Ann and Jane Taylor, Charles Dickens, Robert Michael Ballantyne, Rudyard Kipling, Lewis Carroll, Robert Louis Stevenson, James Matthew Barrie, Beatrix Potter, Enid Blyton, Alan Alexander Milne, Edith Nesbit, John Ronald Reuel Tolkien, Clive Staples Lewis, and many others.

Many psychological studies focused on children and upbringing were conceived and carried out to achieve the goal of substantive improvement of child-care and childrearing. Those studies and scientific research have caused many changes to the approach to children and the view on childhood. As Bubíková writes, in the first half of the 20th century children were ideally to be protected and sheltered by their families so they could experience a joyful childhood. However, this attitude changed with time and then it was believed that children cannot be protected from reality. On the contrary, children were to be prepared for the difficulties of life early on in a suitable manner. Therefore, many children's books introduced topics such as parental divorce, death of a parent or sibling or growing up in a dysfunctional family.³⁶

Children's literature, as described by a British Scholar Peter Hunt in his book called *An Introduction to Children's Literature*, is

enjoyed passionately by adults as well as by children. (...) It involves and integrates words and pictures, it overlaps into other modes – video, oral storytelling – and other art forms. (...) It is arguably impossible for a children's book (especially one being read by a child) not to be educational or influential in some way; it cannot help but reflect an ideology and, by extension, didacticism. (...) Children's writers, therefore, are in a position of singular responsibility in transmitting cultural values, rather than 'simply' telling a story.³⁷

Additionally, Hunt also expresses his opinion that the characteristic trait of children's books being overly simplistic (simplified language, limited viewpoint, perfunctory characterisation) could be harmful to children who are acquiring not only language skills

³⁵ Carpenter, and Prichard, *The Oxford Companion to Children's Literature*, 221.

³⁶ Bubíková et al., *Literary Childhoods*, 23–24.

³⁷ Hunt, *An Introduction to Children's Literature*, 1–3.

through reading, but also improving their critical and logical thinking as well as other abilities, e.g. empathy.³⁸

As Hunt points out, literature for children became a separate type of literature by 1950 and since then it has greatly expanded, although it seems that the only characteristic attribute by which children's literature can be described nowadays is that it is written for children and read by children. However, even this definition is somewhat controversial, as many books that were meant for children are read mostly by adults and vice versa. Some of the common characteristics that distinguish children's literature from literature for adults are pictures, large print, focus on action, and children as protagonists, and on the other hand absence of explicit violence, sex and deep soul-searching.³⁹ Nevertheless, these characteristics are only features that occur often, they are not the defining traits of children's literature. Similarly, recurring features such as mutual respect between adults and children, cooperation, outsider/insider relationship, closure, security and a happy ending are typical for children's literature, but one must not forget that they are not an essential requirement or an indispensable necessity.

Nowadays children's literature is not only considered a separate and unique literary genre, but is also divided into many individual subgenres including nursery rhymes, moral tales, courtesy books, fantasy books, domestic tales, adventure stories, animal stories and picture books, and as Frederick J. H. Darton states in *Children's Books in England*: "children's books were always the scene of a battle between instruction and amusement, between restraint and freedom, between hesitant morality and spontaneous happiness."⁴⁰ The same thing could be said about the perception of children and their upbringing, which are both tightly linked to children's literature. Similar difficulties and controversial approaches have been encountered when trying to describe what exactly is childhood. Probably the most current and least controversial definition of childhood is the one based on Jean Piaget's findings, as Hunt writes, that childhood is a "period of life which the immediate culture thinks of as being free of responsibility and susceptible to education; (and) children are people whose minds and bodies have not yet matured."⁴¹ However, these descriptions of children and of children's literature are highly generalised, which could be the reason why children's literature and children's upbringing was so diverse, inventive, and again controversial, especially at the end of the 2nd millennium.

³⁸ Hunt, *An Introduction to Children's Literature*, 4.

³⁹ Hunt, *An Introduction to Children's Literature*, 4–12.

⁴⁰ Frederick Joseph Harvey Darton, *Children's Books in England: Five Centuries of Social Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), v–vi.

⁴¹ Hunt, *An Introduction to Children's Literature*, 5.

Subsequently, in the late 20th century, people started to be concerned about the disappearance of childhood. American child psychologist David Elkind published several books about the thought that parents and society in general in their attempt to hasten children's progress and help them cope with harsh reality have caused a phenomenon of disappearing childhood. These books include *The Hurried Child: Growing up Too Fast Too Soon; All Grown Up & No Place to Go* and *Reinventing Childhood: Raising and Educating Children in a Changing World*. Similarly, American cultural critic and theorist Neil Postman wrote *The Disappearance of Childhood*, in which he claims that children's clothing, games and mentality is forever gone and adults and children are becoming increasingly similar concerning their language, behaviour, attitudes, and clothing.⁴² Seemingly, childhood was at a brink of disappearance due to the new approach to childrearing, and the expansion of topics in children's literature was seen as one of the reasons why childhood was endangered.

However, the question whether childhood is or is not disappearing is not the main concern of this diploma thesis. Suffice to say that there are many opposing opinions on the correct methods of raising a child and on the appropriate literature for children. The gradual and continual evolution of the perception of children and of children's literature, together with a major societal change, lead to the complex variety, originality and broad range of literature that is available to children. In contrast with the strict censorship of the previous centuries, authors are now free to write children's stories whilst being limited only by few restrictions and requirements for the book to be considered children's literature. Therefore, the broadening and reduction of censorship towards the authors of children's literature, together with the gradual changes of perception of children in the last centuries, enabled Roald Dahl to write his stories which are certainly meant to be enjoyed by children.

1.3 Allegory, Personification, and Anthropomorphism

This subchapter will provide definitions and descriptions of literary terminology that is usually connected to anthropomorphism in literature. The terms allegory and personification will be explained, exemplified, and linked to anthropomorphism and to Dahl's works. This clarification is necessary in order to classify and fully understand Dahl's writing style. Furthermore, anthropomorphism has to be distinguished from personification, as the two terms have similar meanings and their definitions are fundamentally related, but the terms cannot be used interchangeably, since their utilisation greatly depends on the intention and aim of the author.

⁴² Neil Postman, *The Disappearance of Childhood* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1982), 3–4.

Firstly, allegory is described by Martin Procházka as a text whose “elements must imply a set of actions, circumstances or principles either commonly perceived or existing in another work, (...) a story referring to another to illuminate or satirize it, a concrete representation of an abstract idea,”⁴³ and as such, it always carries two meanings, one primary and the other secondary. To elaborate, John A. B. Cuddon further explains it via a fable about a frog and a scorpion, in which the scorpion wants to be taken across a river by the frog, they both agree that the scorpion will not sting the frog and the frog will not drown the scorpion. When the deed is done, the scorpion stings the frog. The primary meaning is the literal one on the surface level, and the secondary is allegorical, as the frog could represent good will and the scorpion could represent treachery. Similarly, if both the frog and the scorpion are substituted for people, the story could be a parable about the wickedness of human nature.⁴⁴

However, an allegory does not necessarily mean that the characters in the story have to be animals. Although the most well-known allegory is probably *Animal Farm*, whose plot represents the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the Stalinist era of the Soviet Union, there are books with human characters that can be described as allegorical too, e.g. *Pilgrim’s Progress*, which is an allegory of Christian salvation, *The Crucible*, which represents McCarthyism and the Second Red Scare, or *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, which can be perceived as an allegory of Christ’s crucifixion.

Three of the four books chosen for the analysis in this thesis do not have an allegorical meaning, but there is an allegorical meaning in *James and the Giant Peach*, where James and the anthropomorphised arthropods travel in the giant peach from England to America to start a new and better life, which is achieved at the end of the story. This is even mentioned by the protagonists themselves when they exuberantly shout: “‘Here we go, boys! The promised land! I can’t wait to see it!’”⁴⁵ Therefore the story could be interpreted as an allegory of the European colonisation of America.

Secondly, according to *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, personification is “the impersonation or embodiment of some quality or abstraction; the attribution of human qualities to inanimate objects.”⁴⁶ Additionally, X. J. Kennedy writes that personification of animals by giving them human traits is typical for satires that criticise those very traits and also typical for ironical reflections on human society, as is portrayed for instance

⁴³ Martin Procházka, *Literary Theory: An Historical Introduction* (Prague: Karolinum, 2008), 136–138.

⁴⁴ John Anthony Bowden Cuddon, *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 20.

⁴⁵ Dahl, *James and the Giant Peach*, (Falkirk: Puffin Books, 2016), 59.

⁴⁶ Cuddon, *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, 661.

in *Animal Farm*.⁴⁷ In short, personification is limited to key human traits that the object or animal has to have in order for the writer to communicate the intended meaning to the readers. In other words, personification creates imagery whereas anthropomorphism creates humanised personalities.

Thus, anthropomorphism of animals and inanimate objects is more thorough and elaborate than personification. The anthropomorphised animals or objects need to be perceived as humanised and human-like in multifarious ways and not only in one or few features in which they resemble and behave like humans. And as *The Enormous Crocodile*; *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me*; *James and the Giant Peach*; and *Fantastic Mr Fox* are not satires or ironical works that would comment on human or societal faults and misgivings, and the characters in them are attributed with many human qualities – they think, talk, dance, sing, clothe, work, etc. – the term which would be more appropriate in describing these books is that they contain anthropomorphism, and not personification.

To summarise, characters in the four Dahl's works selected for analysis cannot be defined as personifications, because they are not humanised to represent or point out something else, they are anthropomorphised to appear more human-like and therefore to appeal more to the child reader. Similarly, only one of the chosen works can be described as allegorical, but since it is a story for children, the allegory is only subtly implied and it depends solely on the reader whether they interpret the book as an allegory or not.

⁴⁷ X. J. Kennedy, *Handbook of Literary Terms: Literature, Language, Theory* (New York: Pearson/Longman, 2005), 113.

2 Roald Dahl, Quentin Blake, and Animals

Roald Dahl is one of the best and well-known authors of children's literature to this day, but he is also one of the more controversial authors, because literary critics as well as readers have entirely opposite opinions on his writing style. On the one hand, many people including Peter Hunt celebrate Dahl as a successful and intelligent author who "had a sharp eye for the less attractive sides of the human condition, and an edgy sense of humour.(...) His books are energetic, vulgar, violent, and often blackly farcical."⁴⁸ On the other hand, the one point on which many critics of Roald Dahl's works, e.g. Michele Landsberg or Eleanor Cameron, seem to agree is that his stories use needless and excessive violence as a means of funny and just punishment, and therefore are overly sadist, or in other words, as is written in *Continuum Encyclopedia of Children's Literature*: "In Dahl's stories for children, cruel, unloving adults dispense harsh treatment and, in return, receive appropriate retribution."⁴⁹ However, as Hunt claims, this criticism of Dahl is strangely dismissed as repressive and anti-popularist.⁵⁰

Nevertheless, the sadistic and retributive nature of Dahl's stories is one of the key features for which his work is so well-known as it plays a major part in Dahl's unique writing style. Conversely, as Cullinan and Person write, the opinion of Dahl's defendants compares Dahl's writing style and sense of humour to modern fairy tales in which protagonists defeat villains: "Dahl exaggerates the revolting characteristics of evil and magnifies the sympathetic nature of good characters, he combines fast action, mega-doses of nonsense, engaging word-play, and endings in which the good prevail with a vengeance."⁵¹

All in all, it cannot be argued that the majority of Dahl's works shares a certain propensity for a cruel and violent vengeance. Yet, Dahl also usually tries to compensate for this and balance it out by implying that the punishment was well-deserved and just. In fact, the balance of crime and punishment is realised through two features in Dahl's stories.

The first one is the basic outline of the story, in which at the beginning there is a depiction of all types of horrible things the villains or perpetrators are capable of, and who practise their wicked ideas on the main hero, who is at that point described as a suffering and oppressed being who usually longs for a change for the better. Subsequently, the change comes and the punishment is either realised as an initiation of the change, or it is realised at the end of

⁴⁸ Hunt, *An Introduction to Children's Literature*, 20–21.

⁴⁹ Cullinan, and Person, *The Continuum Encyclopedia of Children's Literature*, 216.

⁵⁰ Hunt, *An Introduction to Children's Literature*, 22–23.

⁵¹ Cullinan, and Person, *The Continuum Encyclopedia of Children's Literature*, 216.

the story as a necessary feat which would enable the change to be finished successfully. An example of the former is *James and the Giant Peach*, in which the two horrible aunts are run over by the peach and then the story ‘begins,’ as James and other characters travel from England to America to achieve happiness. An example of the latter is *The Twits*, in which the caged monkey family escapes and the married couple that imprisoned them is shrunk into nothingness and therefore cannot follow and recapture them or hurt any other animal again.

The second feature which makes the punishment seem less excessive and more deserved is realised through incessant hints and comments on the twisted nature of the antagonists and through continual reminders of the various ways the protagonists were oppressed and tormented. These two features are present not only in the aforementioned two books, but also in books such as *Fantastic Mr Fox*; *The Witches*; *Matilda*; *The BFG*; *The Magic Finger*; *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*; and *George’s Marvellous Medicine*.

Apart from the balance of crime and punishment and subsequent change for the better, many of Dahl’s books have one more significant thing in common. They have been illustrated by Quentin Blake. The collaboration of both artists has been described by one of Dahl’s prominent biographers, Jeremy Treglown. In fact, Treglown wrote Dahl’s biography with the help of Quentin Blake, as Blake has personally known Dahl and worked with him for many years, and so he provided valuable information based on his own personal experience with Roald Dahl.⁵² Dahl, according to Treglown, searched for a suitable illustrator for his children’s books for many years, and especially in the case of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, when Dahl’s personal matters, namely the death of his first-born child Olivia, deeply interfered with his work. It was difficult for Dahl’s editor to find an illustrator who would work with him on the book. Treglown mentions two illustrators who were initially considered for the job, and those were Schindelman and Sendak, neither of whom in the end collaborated with Dahl on the book due to different reasons. Schindelman did not because of Dahl’s unwillingness to contact him while he dealt with his sorrow, and Sendak’s reason was that he wanted more money than Dahl was willing to offer.⁵³ The search for an illustrator has been a continuous issue which Roald Dahl had to face and resolve many times.

In fact, as Treglown writes, Dahl had already published several books for children, but he never actually established a personal relationship with any of his illustrators, until he met Quentin Blake. Blake was introduced to Dahl in the late seventies by a well-known British publisher Tom Maschler. Blake and Dahl’s relationship had a troubling beginning. Blake had

⁵² Jeremy Treglown, *Roald Dahl: A Biography* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1994), ix–x.

⁵³ Treglown, *Roald Dahl*, 151–153.

reservations about Dahl's writing style, mainly concerning his tendency to write about harsh and cruel issues. Blake finally agreed to work with Dahl on *The Enormous Crocodile* after the editors made Dahl delete some of the more disconcerting parts. On Dahl's side, the issue he had with Blake was again about money, but in the end Dahl conceded and let Blake have approximately one third of the authorship royalties, which was still below the standard, since illustrators and writers of children's literature were considered of equal importance. After *The Enormous Crocodile* was finished they worked on three other books that followed.⁵⁴ Those were in chronological order: *My Uncle Oswald*; *The Twits*, and *George's Marvellous Medicine*. However, Dahl still kept his reservations about Blake. As Dahl worked on his comic poetry, he searched for another illustrator, as Treglown writes: "for illustrations less impressionistic and more fully representational than Blake's – preferably by a new, young artist, who might also, of course, be persuaded to accept less payment."⁵⁵ However, Dahl and Blake later cooperated not only on *Revolting Rhymes* but also on Dahl's most famous books, including *The BFG*; *The Witches* and *Matilda*.

Nevertheless, due to the immense popularity of Dahl's books for children, many of the books have been renditioned more than once with pictures by various illustrators. For example, *Fantastic Mr Fox* was originally illustrated by Donald Chaffin, and in the UK edition by Jill Bennett, and in later editions by Tony Ross, and then by Quentin Blake. Similarly, *James and the Giant Peach* was firstly illustrated by Nancy Ekholm Burkert, and then by Michael Simeon, Emma Chichester Clark, Quentin Blake, Lane Smith, and Jordan Crane. On the other hand, it is rather strange that other books like *The Enormous Crocodile*; *The BFG*; *The Twits* or *Matilda* have been illustrated only by Quentin Blake and have no further renditions. It is possible that since *The Enormous Crocodile* is a picture book, people got quickly used to Blake's version of the pictures, and had no reason to change them, but this reasoning cannot be applied to the other works. Therefore, the only other possible solution is that the readers and publishing houses were content with the already existing version and did not want to change its rendition. And for that reason, Quentin Blake is rightfully perceived as Dahl's main illustrator, because he illustrated first and later editions of almost all of Dahl's books.

2.1 Roald Dahl and Animals

Roald Dahl wrote 22 books for children and wrote or co-wrote 58 works in total. Many of those 58 works contain serious thoughts about animals, cruelty to animals, vegetarianism, or human

⁵⁴ Treglown, *Roald Dahl*, 225–227.

⁵⁵ Treglown, *Roald Dahl*, 227.

arrogance concerning animals. For example, even if there are no animals in *The BFG*, there is still an interesting insight into human nature and their treatment of animals made by the Big Friendly Giant, as he reveals the anthropocentric claim of humans that they are the best creatures on earth and they are above all creatures and therefore are entitled to do with others as they please:

‘Giants is not very lovely, but they is not killing each other. (...) Human beans is the only animals that is killing their own kind. (...) They is shooting guns and going up in aeriplanes to drop their bombs on each other’s heads every week.’ (...)

(Sophie:) ‘I think it’s rotten that those foul giants should go off every night to eat humans. Humans have never done *them* any harm.’

‘That is what the little piggy-wig is saying every day, (...) The human beans is making rules to suit themselves, but the rules they is making do not suit the little piggy-wiggies.’⁵⁶

Another argument which also addresses the issue of anthropocentrism and animal rights and feelings can be read in *The Magic Finger*, when ducks shoot at people:

‘Don’t shoot! Please don’t shoot!’

‘Why not?’ said one of the ducks. It was the one who wasn’t holding a gun. ‘You are always shooting at *us*.’

‘Oh, but that’s not the same!’ said Mr Gregg. ‘We are *allowed* to shoot ducks!’

‘Who allows you?’ asked the duck.

‘We allow each other.’ said Mr Gregg.

‘Very nice,’ said the duck. ‘And now *we* are going to allow each other to shoot you.’ (I would have loved to have seen Mr Gregg’s face just then.)

‘Oh, *please!*’ cried Mrs Gregg. ‘My two little children are up here with us! You wouldn’t shoot my *children!*’

‘Yesterday you shot *my* children,’ said the duck. ‘You shot all six of my children.’⁵⁷

However, contrary to the conclusion of *The BFG* in which giants are permanently imprisoned to never again eat humans, in the case of *The Magic Finger*, the ducks and humans make peace with each other, and the people promise not to hunt animals ever again.

Furthermore, the contrast between good and evil is especially prominent in Dahl’s collection of macabre short-stories for adults, which is called *Kiss, Kiss*. One of the stories is titled *Pig*, in which a lifelong vegetarian lady at the age of seventy was “as sprightly as a woman half her age, with a small, wrinkled, but still quite beautiful face and two lovely brown eyes that sparkled at you in the nicest way. (...) She was never bitter or gloomy or irritable; (...) and she wasn’t in the least bit jealous of other people,”⁵⁸ she is also the only willing relative to adopt and take care of a new-born orphaned baby boy. It might seem strange at first to make a connection between her attitude to killing animals, her physical appearance, and her marvellous

⁵⁶ Roald Dahl, and Quentin Blake, *The BFG* (New York: Scholastic, 1982), 78–79.

⁵⁷ Roald Dahl, and Quentin Blake, *The Magic Finger* (London: Penguin Group, 1995), 46–47.

⁵⁸ Roald Dahl, *Kiss, Kiss* (New York: Knopf, 1960), 247.

personality, but since vegetarianism is the focus of the whole story, and all the other characters are either irresponsible, immoral, or self-seeking, it seems as if she is the only nice person in the story, and the only one to set a good example for the readers as well as for the orphaned boy, whom she raises as a vegetarian, too. This thought seems to be even more justified after reading the whole story and finding out that not only do some of the other characters kill animals in a very sadistic way, they also have no objections to killing people and making business of it. The story culminates when the orphan accidentally eats meat and loves the taste so much that he visits a pig farm and is butchered there.

There are countless more signs in Dahl's stories of his opinion on human cruelty towards animals, or at the very least his intention to pass this opinion on to child readers, to whom his stories are dedicated. To name another evidence of this, a girl with magical abilities in *The Magic Finger* punishes a family for hunting ducks by changing their arms into duck wings and the ducks' wings into human arms in order to reverse their roles as hunters and prey, which makes *The Magic Finger* not only a partially anthropomorphic story but also a zoomorphic story, because not only do ducks behave like humans but humans act like ducks, when they build a nest at the top of a tree to have a place to spend the night.⁵⁹

Indeed, great number of Dahl's books have anthropomorphic features or characters, and those books include *James and the Giant Peach*, in which there are seven anthropomorphised arthropods, and *The Magic Finger*, in which people are turned into duck-like creatures and ducks into human-like creatures. Dahl also wrote a popular tale of *Fantastic Mr Fox*, with Mr Fox and his family as its main protagonists, and he wrote *The Enormous Crocodile*, which features almost exclusively animal anthropomorphic characters called the Enormous Crocodile, Roly-Poly the Bird, Humpy-Rumpy the Hippopotamus, Trunky the Elephant, and Muggle-Wump the Monkey. Furthermore, in *The Twits* a married couple treats miserably not only each other but also any animals, children, and anthropomorphic characters like Muggle-Wump the Monkey with his family. Other stories with animal and anthropomorphic characters are for instance *Revolting Rhymes*; *Dirty Beast*; *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me*; and *Rhyme Stew*.

However, Roald Dahl does not only advocate animal rights. He also strictly condemns any ill treatment or abuse of children. It could be concluded that Dahl in many of his stories defends the rights of the innocent and the oppressed, which is expressed usually in the merciless and violent punishment of the perpetrators. To exemplify, the aunts of James in *James and the Giant Peach* are rolled over by the giant peach at the beginning of the story,⁶⁰ the Twits are

⁵⁹ Dahl, and Blake, *The Magic Finger*, 30–35.

⁶⁰ Roald Dahl, *James and the Giant Peach* (Falkirk: Puffin Books, 2016), 50–51.

shrunk to non-existence as a consequence of the revenge of the Muggle-Wump family,⁶¹ and the irresponsible parents are shot by the police in the short-story called *Pig*,⁶² all the witches in *The Witches* are turned into mice and consequently killed by hotel staff,⁶³ and the Enormous Crocodile is thrown into the sun.⁶⁴ However, it is important to point out that the protagonists, or the oppressed, do not usually kill the villains themselves. Although they are instrumental in the punishment, they are not the ones to kill the villains personally. For example, the narrator from *The Witches* changes witches into mice but does not kill them, the anthropomorphic animals in *The Twits* glue the couple by their heads to the floor but do not make them disappear into nothingness, and so on. Furthermore, Dahl never dwells on the concept of death and quickly moves on, almost as if it never happened. Other characters do not mourn, do not question the moral issues connected to it. On the other hand, the punishment is almost always presented as just and due, and perceived with joy by other characters, like in *The Twits*: “there he saw, on the floor of the living-room, two bundles of old clothes, two pairs of shoes and a walking-stick. There was nothing more left in this world of Mr and Mrs Twit. And everyone, including Fred, shouted... ‘HOORAY!’”⁶⁵

⁶¹ Roald Dahl, *The Twits*, 85–87.

⁶² Dahl, *Kiss, Kiss*, 242–245.

⁶³ Roald Dahl, *The Witches* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1983), 184–187, 204–206.

⁶⁴ Roald Dahl, and Quentin Blake, *The Enormous Crocodile* (London: Puffin Books, 2016), 32.

⁶⁵ Dahl, *The Twits*, 87.

3 Analysis of Anthropomorphic Characters in Dahl's Works

In this chapter there will be a detailed analysis of four of Dahl's works with anthropomorphism, and those are *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me*; *The Enormous Crocodile*; *Fantastic Mr Fox* and *James and the Giant Peach*. Each of these four books is meant to be read by children of different age groups, based on the length of the book, the language which is used and the overall structure of its narrative. To provide a rough estimate, according to an article about age levels for children's books, *The Enormous Crocodile* as a picture book with approximately 500 words should be appropriate for 3 to 5 year old children, *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me* is for six to nine year old children, *Fantastic Mr Fox* should be read by children between the ages 7 and 10, and children around the ages 8–12 will most likely enjoy *James and the Giant Peach*,⁶⁶ although there is certainly no rule which would dictate that younger or older people would not enjoy reading these stories as well.

Moreover, the four books have been chosen for this analysis because of their focus on anthropomorphic characters who are not only background characters but are the protagonists of these stories. The books will be analysed as to the names of anthropomorphic characters, the causes of anthropomorphism, the way the first meeting of human characters and anthropomorphic characters is described, and the degree of anthropomorphism. The anthropomorphic characters themselves will be further analysed according to different character archetypes and according to animal symbolism and connotations in order to find out whether Dahl conformed to this common literary practice or if he used it only sporadically when it was most convenient for his stories.

3.1 Animal Names

There are four different naming choices that Dahl used in his works with anthropomorphic characters. Firstly, it must be emphasised that anthropomorphic characters in Dahl's stories do not have regular personal first names, be it human names or pet names. On the contrary, their names are always descriptive, the same as the name of the animal they represent, which means that a crocodile's name is Crocodile and a giraffe's name is Giraffe. This naming strategy is not only simple and accurate, but it is also based on the taxonomic hierarchy in zoological nomenclature, particularly on the ranks of genus and species, since the similarity between the names of Dahl's anthropomorphised animals and the taxonomic names of the animals lies in

⁶⁶ "The Age Levels for Children's Books You Should Know," Journey to KidLit, published May 25, 2021, <https://journeytokidlit.com/age-levels-for-childrens-books/>.

the descriptive nature of the names. To elaborate, a scientific name of a fox with light grey fur is simply the grey fox. Similarly, Dahl names the crocodile that is large the Enormous Crocodile. Furthermore, the Latin name of the genus is capitalised and the whole scientific name is italicised so the grey fox is officially called *Urocyon cinereoargenteus*, and the word-for-word translation from Latin is the grey-silver fox. It almost looks like Dahl created the names of anthropomorphic characters to appear similar to scientific names of actual animals and by doing so inventing his own imaginary new species of animals. However, there are small modifications of names of anthropomorphic characters that appear in *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me*; *The Enormous Crocodile*; *James and the Giant Peach*, and *Fantastic Mr Fox*.

To begin with, the three humanised animals in *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me* are referred to as ‘the Giraffe,’ ‘the Monkey,’ and ‘the Pelican’ or ‘the Pelly,’ with a definite article and capitalised first letter of their name, although the definite article is not always present. For example, when the Monkey says “what Pelly’s *really* crazy about is salmon,”⁶⁷ when the Giraffe calls for the Pelican to fly down,⁶⁸ or when the Monkey encourages the Giraffe to “show him, Giraffey.”⁶⁹ Nevertheless, there are only 14 instances out of more than 150 when the definite article is not used when talking about or addressing one of the three anthropomorphic characters. Generally, the use of a definite article to refer to an animal means that people either want to talk about a specific animal, in which case the definite article could be replaced with a demonstrative pronoun ‘this’ or ‘that,’ or they want to talk about the entire species, in which case instead of writing ‘the’ plus the noun in the singular they could simply write the noun in its plural form. In Dahl’s story, the animal names have a definite article presumably because of the former reason, since they refer to a specific kind of animal, just as ‘His Grace the Duke of Hampshire’ is usually referred to as ‘the Duke’ in the story and meaning the one specific Duke, and the Duke’s wife Henrietta is mainly referred to as ‘the Duchess.’ Curiously, even the burglar that tries to steal her jewellery has got a nickname of a similar sort: “the Cobra, the cleverest and most dangerous cat burglar in the world.”⁷⁰ In fact, the only character who has a normal human name and is called by that name is Billy, the boy protagonist of the book. Identically, anthropomorphic animals in *James and the Giant Peach* are also addressed with a definite article and the name of the animal, e.g. the Centipede, the Ladybird, or the Earthworm, and the only human main character is called James. The three exceptions are Old-Green-Grasshopper,

⁶⁷ Roald Dahl, and Quentin Blake, *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me* (Falkirk: Puffin Books, 2016), 17.

⁶⁸ Dahl, and Blake, *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me*, 13.

⁶⁹ Dahl, and Blake, *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me*, 34.

⁷⁰ Dahl, and Blake, *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me*, 47.

for whose character is important that he is old and therefore wise; Miss Spider, for whom it is important that she is female because she is (along with another female character, the Ladybird) the most empathetic and caring character in the story, and Cloud-Men, who are not animals but supernatural beings literally living on clouds and creating all types of meteorological phenomena.

The second animal-naming strategy Dahl used is based on the same principle as the first one, but between the definite article and the proper name of the main anthropomorphic character in *The Enormous Crocodile* is a descriptive adjective with the first letter capitalised as a part of the name, so the main character is called ‘the Enormous Crocodile,’ although the book does not specify whether Enormous is his first name and Crocodile is his surname, as he is almost always addressed by his full name and only occasionally as ‘the Crocodile,’ and once the monkey calls him Crocky as a mockery.⁷¹ Furthermore, Dahl’s humour is present in this picture book, as he names the second crocodile in contrast to the first one – “one of the crocodiles was enormous. The other was not so big,”⁷² and his name is the Notsobig One. And as was the case with *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me* and *James and the Giant Peach*, the only character with a human proper name is a girl named Jill.

The third naming strategy is again a part of a character’s portrayal, but in a different manner than in the case of the previous three stories. For example, the Enormous Crocodile is named on the basis of his physical appearance, on his main external attribute, but Mr Fox’s name, or rather his title, is based on an internal attribute which is contrasted to the three antagonists of the story. To explain, in *Fantastic Mr Fox*, there are three male humans, and all three have nasty personalities. Therefore, they are only addressed by their surnames, i.e. “Boggis and Bunce and Bean,”⁷³ without an honorific. This would suggest that they are not worthy of the title Mr, as they are vicious and malicious, but the anthropomorphised fox is not, and so he is called Mr Fox, and his wife is Mrs Fox. Even the villains address him by this honorific when they threaten to kill him: “‘Did you hear that, Mr Fox!’ yelled Bean, bending low and shouting down the hole. ‘It’s not over yet, Mr Fox! We’re not going home till we’ve strung you up dead as a dingbat!’”⁷⁴ Therefore, just as the Enormous Crocodile is contrasted to the other characters as to his size, Mr Fox is compared to the other characters with his personality, intentions, attitude, and even his clothing, as he is dressed in a tailcoat like an

⁷¹ Dahl, and Blake, *The Enormous Crocodile*, 5.

⁷² Dahl, and Blake, *The Enormous Crocodile*, 1.

⁷³ Roald Dahl, and Quentin Blake, *Fantastic Mr Fox* (London: Puffin Books, 2009), 8.

⁷⁴ Dahl, and Blake, *Fantastic Mr Fox*, 29.

English gentleman. In fact, the only occasion on which the three antagonists are called ‘Messrs’ is near the end of the story, when all the anthropomorphic characters have a feast and Mr Fox laughs at the villains’ expense: “There was laughter and more clapping. ‘This delicious meal, my friends,’ he went on, ‘is by courtesy of Messrs Boggis, Bunce and Bean.’ (...) ‘And I hope you have enjoyed it as much as I have.’”⁷⁵ On that occasion Mr Fox speaks about the villains as Messrs to point out the irony of them wanting to kill him but being outwitted in the end themselves, and therefore not being worthy of the honorific.

The fourth and last naming strategy is atypical, as it involves a real name besides the usual descriptive animal name and the definite article which precedes it. The interesting part is that the ‘real’ names are based on the combination of rhyme, onomatopoeia and animal characteristics. These characters appear in *The Enormous Crocodile*, and they are Muggle-Wump, the Monkey; the Roly-Poly Bird; Humpy-Rumpy, the Hippopotamus; and Trunky, the Elephant. Furthermore, two of these characters are also special in a way that they appear in more than one of Dahl’s works, and they are the Roly-Poly Bird and Muggle-Wump, the Monkey. They both play a crucial part in *The Enormous Crocodile*, but also appear in *The Twits* as its main protagonists. The two stories by themselves are in no way connected besides these two characters, who do not meet in *The Enormous Crocodile*, which is set in Africa where the Roly-Poly Bird and Muggle-Wump both live, but in *The Twits* they act as if they know each other, as is evident from the following excerpt: “a truly magnificent bird flew down out of the sky and landed on the monkey cage. ‘Good Heavens!’ cried all the monkeys together. ‘It’s the Roly-Poly Bird! What on earth are you doing over here in England, Roly-Poly Bird?’”⁷⁶

The reason why Dahl used the same characters in different stories is unclear, although one of the possible reasons may be that he wanted those characters to be more memorable for the readers and therefore he gave them different names than to the other animal characters. However, there is another and probably more plausible reason for this, given Dahl’s tendency to write about and emphasise human cruelty towards animals (see subchapter 2.1 of this thesis). It may be that it was simply convenient because it would emphasise the wrongness of human behaviour towards animals, specifically that of the people working in circuses – they take animals from their natural environment and force them to live in captivity and do tricks that make them appear more human, but are not in their nature, as is explained in the following excerpt from *The Twits* about Mr and Mrs Twit: “Well, in the old days, they had both worked in a circus as monkey trainers. They used to teach monkeys to do tricks and to dress up in human

⁷⁵ Dahl, and Blake, *Fantastic Mr Fox*, 78.

⁷⁶ Dahl, *The Twits*, 48.

clothes and to smoke pipes and all the rest of that nonsense.”⁷⁷ By using the same two characters, in one story in their natural habitat and in the other story in captivity, Dahl enforces the idea of belonging and the importance of home and natural environment.

One last thing connected to names that is worth mentioning is the contrast between the names of protagonists and the names of antagonists, especially in *James and the Giant Peach* and *Fantastic Mr Fox*. In *Fantastic Mr Fox* the three human antagonists are called Bunce, Boggis, and Bean. According to the Surname Database website, which researches etymology of name origins and creates a database based on its findings, the three alliterative names are interestingly all derived from words like good (derived from the French word bon), friendly (from the French word bene), amiable (bene), and becoming (possibly from the Old English bogey).^{78,79,80} When compared to the real personalities of the three men, the names are certainly more ironic than truthful. On the other hand, the HouseofNames website which specialises in last name histories and Coats of Arms provides findings that are more thought-provoking. It seems that the names Bunce, Boggis, and Bean come from Old French, Old Norse, and Gaelic respectively.^{81,82,83} From this perspective it seems as if Mr Fox represents the English language. In the story Mr Fox successively takes chickens, ducks and turkeys from each of the three farmers, and so does English ‘take’ something from each of the three languages. And even though this interpretation was probably not Dahl’s real intention when he wrote *Fantastic Mr Fox*, it would please figures of literature such as C.S. Lewis or Barbara Wall who claimed that a good children’s literature should provide something of interest not only for children but also for adult readers.⁸⁴ Similarly, in *James and the Giant Peach*, the two terrible aunts are called Spiker and Sponge, which is a simple metaphor for their respective physical appearance, since Spiker is tall and thin and bony and Sponge is fat and flabby and soggy.⁸⁵

⁷⁷ Dahl, *The Twits*, 44.

⁷⁸ “Last Name: Bunce,” SurnameDB, surnamedb, Accessed May 25, 2021, <https://www.surnamedb.com/Surname/Bunce>.

⁷⁹ “Last Name: Boggis,” SurnameDB, surnamedb, Accessed May 25, 2021, <https://www.surnamedb.com/Surname/Boggis>.

⁸⁰ “Last Name: Bean,” SurnameDB, surnamedb, Accessed May 25, 2021, <https://www.surnamedb.com/Surname/Bean>.

⁸¹ “Bunce History, Family Crest & Coats of Arms,” House of Names, houseofnames, Accessed May 25, 2021, <https://www.houseofnames.com/bunce-family-crest>.

⁸² “Boggis History, Family Crest & Coats of Arms,” House of Names, houseofnames, Accessed May 25, 2021, <https://www.houseofnames.com/boggis-family-crest>.

⁸³ “Bean History, Family Crest & Coats of Arms,” House of Names, houseofnames, Accessed May 25, 2021, <https://www.houseofnames.com/bean-family-crest>.

⁸⁴ Hunt, *An Introduction to Children’s Literature*, 7.

⁸⁵ Dahl, *James and the Giant Peach*, 96–97.

To conclude, Dahl's naming strategies are not only interesting, amusing and inventive, they are also clever methods of depicting characters without using excessive words to describe them. The names are part of their identities, they are the first thing that outlines their appearance or personality, and sometimes the names even create a contrast between the names of protagonists and antagonists.

3.2 Causes of Anthropomorphism

There are two ways in which animals are anthropomorphised in the four Dahl's works which have been chosen to be analysed in this thesis. In other words, this subchapter will clarify the cause for the animal characters being anthropomorphised inside the story. The first cause, which appears in *James and the Giant Peach*, is due to a magical object that alters and humanises the animals, and the second cause, which is in the other three books, is actually that the animals are anthropomorphic from the very beginning of the story and it is not addressed why or when it happened.

However, the magic event that occurs in *James and the Giant Peach* is that James is given magical stones in a bag and

sure enough there was a faint rustling sound coming up from inside it, and then he noticed that all the thousands of little green things were slowly, very very slowly stirring about and moving over each other as though they were alive. 'There's more power and magic in those things in there than in all the rest of the world put together,' the old man said softly. (...) *Whoever they meet first, be it bug, insect, animal, or tree, that will be the one who gets the full power of their magic.*⁸⁶

Subsequently, James falls down and spills the stones on the ground under a barren peach tree. And consequently, a single peach appears, ripens and grows to inconceivable size all in one day, and during the same day 7 arthropods are also enlarged to the approximate size of a ten-year-old child, namely a grasshopper, a spider, a ladybird, a centipede, a glow-worm, a silkworm, and an earthworm. Nevertheless, even though the giant arthropods could talk and be otherwise human-like at the end of the day, the giant peach was still an ordinary non-anthropomorphised fruit, albeit bigger. On the other hand, all the other animals that appear in the story, namely the sharks and the seagulls, do not possess the ability to speak. Therefore, the anthropomorphisation of the arthropods can still be understood as a feat of the magic stones, but there is a slight possibility that the creatures were anthropomorphic their whole lives and only when they are enlarged by the stones can they talk to a human being. And if the latter is true, then *James and the Giant Peach* would also have an unexplained cause of

⁸⁶ Dahl, *James and the Giant Peach*, 12–16.

anthropomorphism, together with *The Enormous Crocodile*; *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me*, and *Fantastic Mr Fox*.

As for the three books in which anthropomorphism is unexplained, all animals in them are anthropomorphic from the beginning of the story. Moreover, the three anthropomorphic animals in *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me* certainly have been anthropomorphic long before the story began, as they introduce themselves as friends who run a window-cleaning business together, and who clearly have been running it for some time already, since they had enough money to buy a house at the beginning of the story.⁸⁷ Identically, the animals in *The Enormous Crocodile* also knew each other even before the story began, based on the fact that Trunky, Muggle-Wump, Humpy-Rumpy and Roly-Poly the Bird always know that the Enormous Crocodile is going to do something evil even before he says so, and they comment on it:

‘Oh, it’s you, is it, you beastly Crocodile. Why don’t you go back to the big brown muddy river where you belong?’

‘I have secret plans and clever tricks,’ said the Crocodile.

‘You mean you’ve *nasty* plans and *nasty* tricks,’ said Trunky. ‘You’ve never done a nice thing in your life.’⁸⁸

And again, animals in *Fantastic Mr Fox* are not being anthropomorphised within the story but are anthropomorphic from its beginning. However, in this case it is evident not only from the text but also from the illustrations accompanying it. Firstly, they are always wearing human clothes, Mr Fox has a bandanna and wears a tailcoat,⁸⁹ Mrs Fox wears a dress,⁹⁰ and their four children are dressed the same way as their parents – two in dresses and two in tailcoats with bandannas around their necks,⁹¹ and Badger wears a vest and a necktie.⁹² Secondly, their house is fully furnished and Mrs Fox cooks their dinners, as is evident from the illustration at the end of the book, when the animals are sitting at a large table and the roasted meat is on plates.⁹³

All in all, the cause of anthropomorphism in the four books is either magical or unexplained, and either way the anthropomorphism, be it of magical origin or innate, is accepted by other characters of the stories. For example, James is not very surprised to be given the magical stones and is only awaiting the magical changes after using them, but he is also knowledgeable of the supernatural, because he explains to the anthropomorphic characters who

⁸⁷ Dahl, and Blake, *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me*, 1–6.

⁸⁸ Dahl, and Blake, *The Enormous Crocodile*, 4.

⁸⁹ Dahl, and Blake, *Fantastic Mr Fox*, 38.

⁹⁰ Dahl, and Blake, *Fantastic Mr Fox*, 13.

⁹¹ Dahl, and Blake, *Fantastic Mr Fox*, 38.

⁹² Dahl, and Blake, *Fantastic Mr Fox*, 46.

⁹³ Dahl, and Blake, *Fantastic Mr Fox*, 74–75.

Cloud-Men are⁹⁴ and what a rainbow-paint is.⁹⁵ Furthermore, the anthropomorphised animals accept each other as anthropomorphised characters, they do not question why they are anthropomorphised, and in the case of *James and the Giant Peach* and *Fantastic Mr Fox*, they do not wonder why other animals are not anthropomorphic.

3.3 First Meetings and Human Reaction

Usually, children in the stories with anthropomorphism are less likely to ask questions about anthropomorphised characters and more likely to be adaptable to current situations about which they do not necessarily need to know the details. They do not need any kind of logical, physical or biological explanation since they can simply use their imagination to fill-in the missing information themselves and enjoy the present situation, as is shown by Billy when he first sees the monkey: “the monkey stood on the window-sill and did a jiggly little dance. (...) he danced wonderfully well, and I clapped and cheered and did a little dance myself in return.”⁹⁶ Additionally, child characters easily believe magical and supernatural characters and their abilities, whereas adult characters usually need evidence and do not believe what they are told neither by other human character nor an anthropomorphised character.

However, it seems that the type of anthropomorphised animal plays an integral part in the way it is perceived, because in *James and the Giant Peach*, when James sees the arthropods for the first time, his reaction is not so welcoming. On the other hand, his reaction could be also caused by the environment and the situation in which he meets them. To elaborate, before he meets the anthropomorphic characters, James already knows that magical things are going to happen because the magic stones, which he received from a strange old man, could have affected animals the same way they affected the peach tree. Furthermore, it is night-time when James explores the hole in the side of the giant peach, and he has not eaten the whole day, and when he enters the peach stone he is suddenly surrounded by several arthropods the same size as him whose first words to James are that they have been waiting for him and that they are hungry.⁹⁷ Therefore, his reaction is hardly surprising, as he is rightfully frightened:

James stopped and stared at the speakers, his face white with horror. He started to stand up, but his knees were shaking so much he had to sit down again on the floor. He glanced behind him, thinking he could bolt back into the tunnel the way he had come, but the doorway had disappeared. There was now only a solid brown wall behind him.

⁹⁴ Dahl, *James and the Giant Peach*, 103.

⁹⁵ Dahl, *James and the Giant Peach*, 117.

⁹⁶ Dahl, and Blake, *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me*, 10.

⁹⁷ Dahl, *James and the Giant Peach*, 30–36.

(...) Poor James was backed up against the far wall, shivering with fright and much too terrified to answer.⁹⁸

However, James becomes accustomed to the animals quickly enough, once they assure him they will not eat him and once he listens to their friendly bickering and banter. In fact, he is so at ease with these characters that by the end of the day he already thinks of them as his friends and is willing to sleep in the same room with them.

Additionally, as the books which are analysed in this thesis are for children, they contain illustrations, and the illustrator's name is usually listed as a second author. The words are tied to the illustrations, and the importance of these illustrations is clearly visible. For example, in *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me* the first appearance of an anthropomorphic character, specifically a giraffe, is not written in the text, but can be seen in the illustration. To be precise, the text simply states that: "I noticed that one of the windows on the top floor was slowly beginning to open outwards... Then a HEAD appeared at the open window. I stared at the head. The head stared back at me with big round dark eyes."⁹⁹ This text does not provide a description or even a mention of a giraffe. Indeed, it is possible that many readers would imagine something entirely different than a giraffe, be it another animal, some supernatural being or even a human character. It is only owing to the illustration which is above the text (and therefore seen before the text below is read) that readers may fully understand the text by connecting the two modes of communication, visual and linguistic, and interpret their joint meaning correctly.

As to the reaction of the child protagonist of *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me* to the giraffe and the other two anthropomorphic animals, his reaction is parenthetically interwoven with the text, in which it simply says that "of all the crazy things a gigantic white bird hopped out,"¹⁰⁰ and later with the first appearance of the monkey as well, as it says that "as if all this wasn't enough, the window on the *first floor* was now flung wide open and out popped a Monkey,"¹⁰¹ but Billy's surprise is quite short-lived and downplayed by Dahl, as the following sentences do not indicate any further feelings of shock, disbelief or other negative reactions. On the contrary, they show Billy's readiness to accept any kind of situation and preparedness to deal with any eventuality. This is even more noticeable when the Pelican emerges and it immediately starts singing about being hungry and wanting a fish. The human protagonist of the story reacts calmly to this unusual development. In fact, he simply responds that there is no

⁹⁸ Dahl, *James and the Giant Peach*, 33–36.

⁹⁹ Dahl, and Blake, *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me*, 8.

¹⁰⁰ Dahl, and Blake, *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me*, 9.

¹⁰¹ Dahl, and Blake, *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me*, 10.

sea nearby but a fish may be bought from a fishmonger.¹⁰² The rule which anthropomorphic stories seem to follow is that adult characters are much more sceptical and more afraid because they base their reactions and interactions on their own experience and their understanding of the world. In *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me*, the reaction of a main adult character to an anthropomorphised animal is simply negative, as can be seen in the next excerpt:

The Duke was staggered. He reeled back and his eyes popped nearly out of their sockets. ‘Great Scott!’ he gasped. ‘Good Lord! What’s this? Who are *you*?’ And now the Giraffe, with the Monkey dancing about on her back, emerged suddenly from the bushes. The Duke stared at them. He looked as though he was about to have a fit. ‘*Who are these creatures?*’ he bellowed. ‘Has the whole world gone completely dotty?’¹⁰³

Similarly, in *James and the Giant Peach*, when a ship captain spots the giant peach in the sky with all the anthropomorphic animals standing on top of it with James, the captain tells about it to his crew in astonishment and scarcely believing it himself:

‘Wait a second! There are *people* on it! I can see them moving! There’s a – a – do I have this darned thing focused right? It looks like a little boy in short trousers! Yes, I can distinctly see a little boy in short trousers standing up there! And there’s a – there’s a – there’s a – a – a – a sort of *giant ladybird!*’

‘Now just a minute, Captain!’ the First Officer said.

‘And a *colossal green grasshopper!*’

‘Captain!’ the First Officer said sharply. ‘Captain, please!’

‘And a *mammoth spider!*’

‘Oh dear, he’s been at the whisky again,’ whispered the Second Officer.

‘And an *enormous – a simply enormous centipede!*’ screamed the Captain.

‘Call the Ship’s Doctor,’ the First Officer said. ‘Our Captain is not well.’¹⁰⁴

Of course, the crew refuses to believe him and rather thinks that the captain has drunk too much whisky and is imagining things. Moreover, when the Giant Peach lands on the Empire State Building in New York, countless policemen and firemen go up to inspect it. When they spot the Centipede, however, they are all terrified and perplexed:

The policemen and firemen all started shouting at once. ‘Look out!’ they cried. ‘It’s a Dragon!’

‘It’s not a Dragon! It’s a Wampus!’ (...)

‘It’s a Manticore!’

Three firemen and five policemen fainted and had to be carried away. (...)

The Old-Green-Grasshopper poked his huge green head over the side of the peach, alongside the Centipede’s. Six more big strong men fainted when they saw him. (...)

Then Miss Spider’s large black murderous-looking head, which to a stranger was probably the most terrifying of all, appeared next to the Grasshopper’s. (...)

‘Oh, *please* why doesn’t someone help us to get down from here?’ Miss Spider called out. ‘It’s making me giddy.’

¹⁰² Dahl, and Blake, *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me*, 9–10.

¹⁰³ Dahl, and Blake, *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me*, 28–29.

¹⁰⁴ Dahl, *James and the Giant Peach*, 87–88.

‘This could be a trick!’ said the Head of the Fire Department. ‘Don’t anyone make a move until I say!’

‘They’ve probably got space guns!’ muttered the Chief of Police. (...)

Soon there were no less than *seven* large fantastic faces peering down over the side of the peach – the Centipede’s, the Old-Green-Grasshopper’s, Miss Spider’s, the Earthworm’s, the Ladybird’s, the Silkworm’s, and the Glow-worm’s. And a sort of panic was beginning to break out among the firemen and the policemen on the rooftop.¹⁰⁵

In fact, the people under the peach believe only James and only after he sings a praise to each of the seven arthropods, but the adults are still quite shocked. Nevertheless, in the end the anthropomorphic animals are all considered heroes and are welcomed into the city by the Mayor of New York.¹⁰⁶

Unfortunately for this analysis, the interaction of animals and human characters in *The Enormous Crocodile* is always limited and only one-sided. When the Hippopotamus, the Monkey, the Bird, and the Elephant, respectively, run and fly to rescue the children from being eaten by the Enormous Crocodile, they shout a warning and reveal the crocodile’s disguise as an ordinary object. However, the children either run away without a word, run away screaming, or simply stand still. Either way the humans understand the animals, because when the Roly-Poly bird warns a little girl not to go near the Enormous Crocodile, she actually listens to him and do as he suggests:

‘Look out, Jill! Look out! Look out! Don’t ride on that crocodile!’

Jill stopped and looked up.

‘That’s not a wooden crocodile!’ sang the Roly-Poly bird. ‘It’s a real one! It’s the Enormous Crocodile from the river and he wants to eat you up!’

Jill turned and ran. So did all the other children.¹⁰⁷

The same scenario is repeated four times, each time children are rescued by a different anthropomorphic animal, and the anthropomorphic animals always know the names of the endangered children. However, those are the only interactions between animals and people in the story.

Lastly, it is probable that the human characters in *Fantastic Mr Fox* do not know that the animal characters are anthropomorphised, whether it be their behaviour, their clothing, or even the furnished home of Mr Fox. These things are never mentioned by Boggis and Bunce and Bean, but sometimes the three villains comment on Mr Fox’s cleverness and they almost always address him with an honorific. In fact, Mr Fox never interacts with the villains of the

¹⁰⁵ Dahl, *James and the Giant Peach*, 135–138.

¹⁰⁶ Dahl, *James and the Giant Peach*, 144.

¹⁰⁷ Dahl, and Blake, *The Enormous Crocodile*, 20.

story apart from running and hiding from them, and so it is impossible to know how the human characters would react to the fact that he is an anthropomorphic animal.

In conclusion, the four Dahl's books depict the first meeting of anthropomorphic animals with humans differently, from a very clear reaction in *James and the Giant Peach*, a somewhat suppressed reaction in *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me*, a minimal reaction in *The Enormous Crocodile*, to an absence of reaction in *Fantastic Mr Fox* due to the fact that the anthropomorphic characters never speak to or even attempt to approach people. Furthermore, the human reaction always depends on the age of the particular human character. Usually, the child characters are more receptive of anthropomorphic characters and they get accustomed to the anthropomorphised animals quicker than adult characters, as is the case of James and many firemen and policemen in *James and the Giant Peach*, and Billy and the Duke in *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me*. In *Fantastic Mr Fox*, the three main human characters seem to despise all animals in general, be they anthropomorphised or not, and specially so Mr Fox, who steals from their stock. And as for *The Enormous Crocodile*, there are no adult human characters, but child characters usually run away as soon as they realise the Enormous Crocodile is near. Therefore, it could be said that generally in all four books most anthropomorphic characters are accepted by children but rejected by adults at first, and of course the anthropomorphised animals are friendly towards each other as long as the animals are kind and moral. The only obvious exceptions to the universal friendliness are the Enormous Crocodile from *The Enormous Crocodile*, partially Rat from *Fantastic Mr Fox*, and sometimes the Centipede or the Earthworm from *James and the Giant Peach*, because all four characters are unfriendly or even hateful towards the other characters.

3.4 Degree of Anthropomorphism and Advantages of Being an Animal

As was aforementioned in the chapter 1.1 of this thesis, the level of anthropomorphism within a story can vary, as is accurately illustrated by M. Root-Bernstein, L. Douglas, A. Smith, and D. Veríssimo:

a drawing of a horse with eyes facing forward (instead of on the side) is a smaller type of physical anthropomorphism than a horse with eyes facing forward and standing on two feet. The up-right horse could be further anthropomorphised by adding another type of anthropomorphism, such as the horse dressed in clothes or playing golf.¹⁰⁸

To elaborate, an anthropomorphised animal usually has not only human but also animal characteristics, which means that for example one anthropomorphic character can speak a

¹⁰⁸ "Anthropomorphised Species as Tools for Conservation: Utility Beyond Prosocial, Intelligent and Suffering Species," Springer Link, link.springer, last modified May 25, 2013, <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10531-013-0494-4>.

human language and have a job, but he does not wear human clothing and relies on his strong sense of smell or his hearing in every-day situations.

In other words, there are many things, small and large, that make people human, and the anthropomorphic characters usually do not embody all of them, as they retain a part of their animal identity within themselves. Dahl was able to create characters that were as original and incredible as they appeared real. As Cullinan and Person wrote, Dahl's stories are low fantasy, which means that he could include fantasy elements in a real-world setting.¹⁰⁹ This combination of reality and fantasticality is a proof of Dahl's intelligence and creativity, since he was able to make characters behave like humans but have their unique animal traits which would help them with normal human matters. Therefore, the following part of the thesis will analyse both the traits that make the animal characters anthropomorphic and the traits that make them animal-like or even beastly.

The human traits that are common for all the anthropomorphic animals in the four stories by Dahl are the ability to talk, which many of them mastered to the point that they are able to create impromptu songs and poems, the ability to reason, plan and think as humans, and the ability to feel all human emotions, such as sympathy, fear, kinship, protectiveness, anger, loneliness, regret, etc. However, there are human traits which are adopted by only a few of the anthropomorphic characters in the four books. These basic characteristics are living in furnished homes, wearing clothes, caring about physical appearance of oneself and of the others, having a job, enjoying and being able to produce art and music, cooking meals, and using tools. On the other hand, all of the anthropomorphic characters often make use of their animal instincts, abilities and their physical prowess. Additionally, normal animal characteristics are depicted as extraordinary and amazing, such as the ability to dig, hear and smell better than humans, or even the location of ears on one's body is described as unreal and magical. The analysis will be first focused on the traits that make the animals more human and then on the traits that distinguish them as animals.

Firstly, one of the things the anthropomorphic characters differ in is that not all of them are clothed and not all of them live in human homes. In fact, the only anthropomorphic characters who live in a furnished abode are the Foxes in *Fantastic Mr Fox*, although their home is still in a hole under a tree on a hill.¹¹⁰ Similarly, the clothed animals appear again in *Fantastic Mr Fox* (as aforementioned in part 3.2 of this thesis), but also in *James and the Giant Peach*, where there is for example a great importance ascribed to the Centipede's shoes, although only

¹⁰⁹ Cullinan, and Person, *The Continuum Encyclopedia of Children's Literature*, 216.

¹¹⁰ Dahl, and Blake, *Fantastic Mr Fox*, 7.

by the Centipede himself: “‘I *refuse* to show myself out of doors in my bare feet,’ the Centipede said. ‘I *have* to get my boots on again first.’ ‘For heaven’s sake, let’s not go through all that nonsense again,’ the Earthworm said,”¹¹¹ or when he falls into the sea: “‘my boots!’ cried the Centipede. ‘Just look at my precious boots!! They are ruined by the water!’”¹¹² or when he is covered in a quickly drying rainbow-paint: “‘My legs!’ he cried. ‘They are all sticking together! I can’t walk! And my eyelids won’t open! I can’t see! And my boots! My boots are ruined,’”¹¹³ and when they prepare to land in New York: “‘My goodness, I’ve forgotten to polish my boots!’ the Centipede said. ‘Everyone must help me to polish my boots before we arrive!’”¹¹⁴ These excerpts also show the Centipede’s preoccupation with his physical appearance, which is also one of the defining human traits.

Secondly, only the animal characters in *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me* and in *James and the Giant Peach* go to work and earn their living, although in the latter book it is only at the end, when the arthropods arrive in New York:

The Centipede was made Vice-President-in-charge-of-sales of a high-class firm of boot and shoe manufacturers.

The Earthworm, with his lovely pink skin, was employed by a company that made women’s face creams to speak commercials on television.

The Silkworm and Miss Spider, after they had both been taught to make nylon thread instead of silk, set up a factory together and made ropes for tightrope walkers.

The Glow-worm became the light inside the torch on the Statue of Liberty, and thus saved a grateful City from having to pay a huge electricity bill every year.

The Old-Green-Grasshopper became a member of the New York Symphony Orchestra, where his playing was greatly admired.¹¹⁵

Thirdly, there is only one character in all four books that is able to produce art, although there are others who are able to enjoy it, especially the Ladybird and Miss Spider. The one who can create musical sounds is Old-Green-Grasshopper from *James and the Giant Peach*, but it is thanks to his animal physique that he is able to do so, as the following excerpt proves:

the bow of the violin, the part that moved, was his back leg. The strings of the violin, the part that made the sound, was the edge of his wing. He was using only the top of his back leg (the thigh), and he was stroking this up and down against the edge of his wing with incredible skill, sometimes slowly, sometimes fast, but always with the same easy flowing action. It was precisely the way a clever violinist would have used his bow.¹¹⁶

Old-Green-Grasshopper then goes on to explain this ability:

¹¹¹ Dahl, *James and the Giant Peach*, 59.

¹¹² Dahl, *James and the Giant Peach*, 101.

¹¹³ Dahl, *James and the Giant Peach*, 116.

¹¹⁴ Dahl, *James and the Giant Peach*, 130.

¹¹⁵ Dahl, *James and the Giant Peach*, 147–148.

¹¹⁶ Dahl, *James and the Giant Peach*, 90.

‘I *am* a real violin! It is a part of my own body! (...) I happen to be a “short-horned” grasshopper. (...) And we “short-horns” are the only ones who play our music in the violin style, using a bow. My “long-horned” relatives (...) make their music simply by rubbing the edges of their two top wings together. They are not violinists, they are wing-rubbers. And a rather inferior noise these wing-rubbers produce, too, if I may say so. It sounds more like a banjo than a fiddle.’¹¹⁷

In addition, the Pelican from *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me* could be also mentioned here, as he can temporarily sing thanks to an extraordinary candy called Pishlets: “after he had put one of them into his beak and chewed it for a while, he suddenly started singing like a nightingale. This made him wildly excited because Pelicans are not song-birds.”¹¹⁸

Fourthly, in two of the books the animals cook meals or eat cooked meals, and those are the characters of *Fantastic Mr Fox* and the Centipede in *James and the Giant Peach*.¹¹⁹ The reason for the division between cooked and raw food seems simple. The raw food comprises of nuts¹²⁰ and walnuts,¹²¹ berries,¹²² leaves,¹²³ “pink and purple flowers of the tinkle-tinkle tree,”¹²⁴ salmon,¹²⁵ and carrots.¹²⁶ All this food is normally eaten raw by humans. Conversely, the food that is cooked or roasted in the four stories is simply meat, which is also normally eaten cooked or roasted by people.

Additionally, there are animals in *Fantastic Mr Fox* that are not anthropomorphised, namely chickens, ducks, geese, turkeys, and pigs. The main reason is evident and simple – those non-anthropomorphised animals do not have a role of characters in the story but a role of food and easy prey for the anthropomorphic animals. However, the story also features a family of anthropomorphised herbivores, but they are not in the story to be eaten, they are there as victims of the human villains and as friends of the omnivorous anthropomorphised animals.

Furthermore, the issue of Rabbits being a natural source of food for Foxes is never actually addressed in the story, and the only time the difference between the omnivores and herbivores is mentioned is when the main characters forage food for a feast for all of the anthropomorphic characters, and have already procured meat:

‘Let’s have a side of bacon! That big one up there!’
‘And carrots, Dad!’ said the smallest of the three Small Foxes.
‘We must take some of those carrots.’

¹¹⁷ Dahl, *James and the Giant Peach*, 90–91.

¹¹⁸ Dahl, and Blake, *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me*, 70.

¹¹⁹ Dahl, *James and the Giant Peach*, 63–65.

¹²⁰ Dahl, and Blake, *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me*, 55.

¹²¹ Dahl, and Blake, *The Enormous Crocodile*, 5.

¹²² Dahl, and Blake, *The Enormous Crocodile*, 7.

¹²³ Dahl, and Blake, *The Enormous Crocodile*, 4.

¹²⁴ Dahl, and Blake, *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me*, 52.

¹²⁵ Dahl, and Blake, *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me*, 56.

¹²⁶ Dahl, and Blake, *Fantastic Mr Fox*, 55.

‘Don’t be a twerp,’ said Mr Fox. ‘You know we never eat things like that.’
‘It’s not for us, Dad. It’s for the Rabbits. They only eat vegetables.’
‘My goodness me, you’re right!’ cried Mr Fox. ‘What a thoughtful little fellow you are! Take ten bunches of carrots!’¹²⁷

Lastly, only the animals in *Fantastic Mr Fox* are using human-made tools and utensils. Mr Fox climbs a ladder to reach a higher shelf in Bunce’s storehouse,¹²⁸ his children push carts to carry the food to their home,¹²⁹ and they all are using cutlery to eat the food.¹³⁰ The animals in other stories use their own abilities and bodies instead of man-made objects, which would make them less anthropomorphic than the aforementioned characters. These other animals are Trunky, who catapults the Enormous Crocodile into the sun with his trunk,¹³¹ the Pelly, who holds cleaning water in his beak instead of in a bucket,¹³² the Giraffe, who provides her neck as a ladder for the Monkey to climb on,¹³³ Humpty-Rumpy, who uses his head as a battering ram,¹³⁴ Mrs Fox, who licks Mr Fox’s wound to stop the bleeding,¹³⁵ and Old-Green-Grasshopper, who uses his legs and wings to play music.¹³⁶ This facilitation of human matters is what makes the anthropomorphic characters unique and Dahl’s choice of a particular animal justified. In fact, Dahl was brilliant at depicting actual animal characteristics, abilities, and behaviour as endearing and amazing, like in *James and the Giant Peach*, when the characters discuss where Old-Green-Grasshopper, crickets, and katydids have ears on their bodies, or when they move on to explain that the Earthworm aerates the soil, and how both Miss Spider and the Ladybird eat insects that are harmful to plants or irritate people.¹³⁷

Other animal virtues which the anthropomorphic characters use to solve problems or make their lives easier are, for example, the Monkey’s opposable thumbs and prehensile tail, which enables him to climb the Giraffe’s neck as if it was a tree,¹³⁸ Miss Spider’s and Silkworm’s ability to spin threads that serve as ropes throughout the *James and the Giant Peach* story and Glow-worm himself serves as a source of light.¹³⁹ Finally, probably the most animal-like character is Mr Fox, whose hunting abilities make procuring food an easy task: “‘Wait!’

¹²⁷ Dahl, and Blake, *Fantastic Mr Fox*, 55–56.

¹²⁸ Dahl, and Blake, *Fantastic Mr Fox*, 55.

¹²⁹ Dahl, and Blake, *Fantastic Mr Fox*, 56.

¹³⁰ Dahl, and Blake, *Fantastic Mr Fox*, 74–75.

¹³¹ Dahl, and Blake, *The Enormous Crocodile*, 30.

¹³² Dahl, and Blake, *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me*, 15.

¹³³ Dahl, and Blake, *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me*, 31.

¹³⁴ Dahl, and Blake, *The Enormous Crocodile*, 13.

¹³⁵ Dahl, and Blake, *Fantastic Mr Fox*, 15.

¹³⁶ Dahl, *James and the Giant Peach*, 90.

¹³⁷ Dahl, *James and the Giant Peach*, 91–95.

¹³⁸ Dahl, and Blake, *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me*, 31–32.

¹³⁹ Dahl, *James and the Giant Peach*, 43–44.

ordered Mr Fox. ‘Don’t lose your heads! Stand back! Calm down! Let’s do this properly!’ (...) Then Mr Fox chose three of the plumpest hens, and with a clever flick of his jaws he killed them instantly.”¹⁴⁰

Furthermore, Mr Fox uses his well-developed sense of smell to avoid being caught by the villains¹⁴¹ and to make an underground route from his home to three different storehouses.¹⁴² Additionally, together with his family, he is able to dig a tunnel quicker than the humans, who are once again unable to catch him.¹⁴³

However, the anthropomorphic animals in the four stories do not have to rely only on their physical abilities. They also usually use their instincts and animal nature whenever they are in danger or have to act quickly, and once again, this is mostly shown in *Fantastic Mr Fox*. For example, Mr Fox relies on his instincts when he has to leave the safety of his home, as can be seen in the following excerpt:

His black nose twitched from side to side, sniffing and sniffing for the scent of danger. He found none, and he was about to go trotting forward into the wood when he heard or thought he heard a tiny noise, a soft rustling sound, as though someone had moved a foot ever so gently through a patch of dry leaves. Mr Fox flattened his body against the ground and lay very still, his ears pricked. He waited a long time, but he heard nothing more.¹⁴⁴

To conclude, the level of anthropomorphism in the four stories is varied. The features that make the animal anthropomorphic are the ability to speak with each other and with human characters in English, their mental capacity to plan and decide, the ability to feel emotions and act upon them, the ability of conscious thought and self-awareness, their morality, sense of humour, and so on. These human characteristics help the animals to figure out solutions to problems, be able to decide and anticipate, feel sympathy for others, and cooperate with others. In other words, anthropomorphised characters are humanised as to their mental and psychological functions and abilities.

On the other hand, various animal virtues of the anthropomorphic characters are shown in all four stories, and these usually relate to the physical and physiological traits and abilities of the characters. Again, these virtues help the characters to solve their problems, such as Miss Spider’s ability to spin a thread, which is used as a rope when the Centipede falls off of the

¹⁴⁰ Dahl, and Blake, *Fantastic Mr Fox*, 40.

¹⁴¹ Dahl, and Blake, *Fantastic Mr Fox*, 8.

¹⁴² Dahl, and Blake, *Fantastic Mr Fox*, 37–61.

¹⁴³ Dahl, and Blake, *Fantastic Mr Fox*, 18.

¹⁴⁴ Dahl, and Blake, *Fantastic Mr Fox*, 12.

giant peach and has to be hauled back,¹⁴⁵ or the Pelly's ability of flight which he uses to catch a thief.¹⁴⁶

In essence, it could be said that the human part of the anthropomorphic characters thinks about an action that needs to be done and the animal part often performs the action. Therefore, both the human and animal characteristics are highly useful and frequently needed by the characters, and the two complement each other. If it were not for the human ability of complex processing and for the animal abilities, the characters would not be able to survive until the end of the story.

¹⁴⁵ Dahl, *James and the Giant Peach*, 98–100.

¹⁴⁶ Dahl, and Blake, *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me*, 39–40.

4 Archetypes and Stereotypes

In the following two subchapters Dahl's anthropomorphic characters will be analysed on the basis of two different concepts. The first one is based on the Jungian theory of character archetypes, for which there needs to be a clarification of what exactly an archetype as a term related to literature is. As is written in Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism*:

expanding images into conventional archetypes of literature is a process that takes place unconsciously in all our reading. A symbol like the sea or the heath cannot remain within Conrad or Hardy: it is bound to expand over many works into an archetypal symbol of literature as a whole. (...) Archetypes are associative clusters, and differ from signs in being complex variables.¹⁴⁷

Therefore, the role of anthropomorphic characters in Dahl's stories will be analysed in terms of these archetypes, e.g. the archetype of the caregiver or the warrior.

The second one will be an analysis of Dahl's characters on the basis of the animal characteristic traits which have been deep-rooted in the societal perception of animals for more than 2 millennia, but it is presumed their popularity was created or at least increased owing to the *Fables*, as Lucius Flavius Philostratus aptly describes:

(Aesop) puts animals in a pleasing light and makes them interesting to mankind. For after being brought up from childhood with these stories, and after being as it were nursed by them from babyhood, we acquire certain opinions of the several animals and think of some of them as royal animals, of others as silly, of others as witty, of others as innocent.¹⁴⁸

However, the animal symbols and 'stereotypes' are neither permanently unchanging nor universal, as will be further explained in the subchapter 4.2, in which the personalities of anthropomorphic characters from *Fantastic Mr Fox*; *The Enormous Crocodile*; *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me*; and *James and the Giant Peach* will be compared to the traits usually assigned to animals with the aim to find out whether Dahl conformed to these animal symbols when creating the anthropomorphised characters or not.

4.1 Character Archetypes

The theory of archetypes is an important part of many behavioural and literary analyses. The concept of archetypes is associated mainly with the Swiss psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung, but its origin may be traced back to the Classical period in Ancient Greece, namely to Plato and his theory of Forms, which suggested, as is explained in a study called *Plato's Middle Period*

¹⁴⁷ Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1971), 100–102.

¹⁴⁸ Lucius Flavius Philostratus, *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960), 495.

Metaphysics and Epistemology, that there are ideas, or Forms, that exist in the world independent of humans, all Forms are good and can be characterised by goodness, and they are self-definable, e.g. “Justice is just and the only thing Justice is is just.”¹⁴⁹ According to John Cuddon, many anthropologists and psychiatrists studied the archetypal Forms, including J. G. Frazer, Sigmund Freud, Maud Bodkin, Robert Graves, Richard Chase, J. Campbell, Philip Wheelwright, Northrop Frye, and Carl Jung.¹⁵⁰

In Jung’s conception of archetypes, the archetype is a tendency to form representations of a motif, “representations that can vary a great deal in detail without losing their basic pattern. (Archetypes) are without known origin; and they reproduce themselves in any time or in any part of the world.”¹⁵¹ This definition suggests that Jung believed that there is an infinite number of archetypes, because there are not only archetypal characters but also archetypal objects, concepts, structures, symbols, etc., and since the term archetype is, as Jung claims, almost impossible to define, it has proven impossible to write down a concise classification or an index of all archetypal characters. Furthermore, Jung perceived character archetypes from psychological point of view. He described and explained them by using people’s dreams, common personality characteristics and psychological traumata, and it was owing to the people who were inspired by his archetypal studies that archetypes as literary figures were distinguished. Thus, character archetype is described as such:

a basic model from which copies are made; therefore a prototype. In general terms, the abstract idea of a class of things which represents the most typical and essential characteristics shared by the class. (...) certain character or personality types have become established as more or less archetypal. For instance: the rebel, the all-conquering hero, the braggadocio, the country bumpkin, the local lad who makes good, the self-made man, the hunted man, the siren, the witch and *femme fatale*, the villain, the traitor, the snob and the social climber, the guilt-ridden figure in search of expiation, the damsel in distress, and the person more sinned against than sinning. Creatures, also, have come to be archetypal emblems. For example, the lion, the eagle, the snake, the hare and the tortoise.¹⁵²

As a result, the most popular character archetypes have been organised into separate groups based on their features and their cooccurrences. For example, in *The Writer’s Journey: Mythic Structure for Writers* Christopher Vogler described seven archetypes that appear in stories as the hero, mentor, herald, shapeshifter, shadow, trickster, and threshold guardian. Carl

¹⁴⁹ “Plato’s Middle Period Metaphysics and Epistemology,” Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, plato.stanford, last modified July 14, 2014, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/plato-metaphysics/#4>.

¹⁵⁰ Cuddon, *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, 54.

¹⁵¹ Carl Gustav Jung, Marie-Luise von Franz, Joseph L. Henderson, Jolande Jacobi, and Aniela Jaffé, *Man and His Symbols* (New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1964), 58.

¹⁵² Cuddon, *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, 53–54.

Jung himself focused in his works mainly on the archetypes of the mother, the child, the hero, the anima, the animus, and the trickster-figure. However, there is also the book *Archetypes in Branding* by M. Hartwell and Joshua Chen, which lists 60 different character archetypes divided into 12 archetype families. Possibly the most commonly used and analysed character archetypes are the following universal sixteen: the innocent, orphan, warrior, seeker, lover, hero, magician, outlaw, explorer, sage, creator, destroyer, ruler, caregiver, everyman, and jester; and possibly the most well-known group of archetypes related to literature is in the study of mythology and hero's journey by Joseph Campbell, which he published under the title *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. In his book, Campbell explores eight types of characters that play a part in the hero's journey, and those are the hero himself, the mentor, the ally, the herald, the trickster, the shapeshifter, the guardian, and the shadow.

However, it is sometimes difficult to differentiate character types according to the archetypes, because Jung writes that

those who do not realise the special feeling tone of the archetype end with nothing more than a jumble of mythological concepts, which can be strung together to show that everything means anything – or nothing at all. All the corpses in the world are chemically identical, but living individual are not. Archetypes come to life only when one patiently tries to discover why and in what fashion they are meaningful to a living individual. (...) One glides easily from archetype to archetype, with everything meaning everything.¹⁵³

To summarise, an analysis of characters in terms of character archetypes is based on the similarity of their goals, desires, virtues, and their reactions to different stimuli, such as fear, task or problem, and of any other attributes that are connected with the particular archetype. This means that a literary character cannot be a representation of two archetypes. One must always consider the whole individual, and not base the conclusion only on some of his actions. The personality of the character, including their intentions, goals, fears, etc. must be taken into account when applying the theory of archetypes.

Since this thesis is focused on anthropomorphised characters in children's books, the number of relevant archetypes can be slightly reduced. Therefore, anthropomorphic characters will be analysed on the basis of the eight archetypes that were defined according to nine distinct categories by Carol Pearson. These categories are the respective archetype's goal, their fear, their addiction, their virtue, their shadow side, the way they deal with a problem, how they respond to a task, what is their pitfall, and what is their most prominent feature. The relevant

¹⁵³ Jung et al., *Man and His Symbols*, 87–90.

archetypes for the analysis are the caregiver, fool, innocent, orphan, ruler, sage, seeker, and warrior.

First, the caregiver is the one who most often helps others, takes care of them, is compassionate, selfless, generous, and nurturing.¹⁵⁴ However, these traits can easily become twisted into addiction of enabling others to exploit the caregiver, which could prove harmful to the caregiver, who subsequently becomes a martyr and blames others for it.¹⁵⁵ The good side of the caregiver is present in *James and the Giant Peach*, namely in the characters of the Silkworm, Miss Spider, and the Glow-worm. All three are crucial to the other characters in various ways. The first two help their friends on many occasions by quickly spinning their threads into ropes, which they use to lift the peach from the ocean by fastening the ropes around the necks of hundreds of seagulls,¹⁵⁶ and with which they rescue the Centipede, when he falls into the ocean.¹⁵⁷ Both times they do it by spending all their energy and are left drained and exhausted: “‘Five hundred seagulls!’ he shouted, wiping the sweat from his face. ‘Silkworm says she’s running out of silk!’ yelled the Centipede from below. ‘She says she can’t keep it up much longer. Nor can Miss Spider!’”¹⁵⁸ And when they are finally done, “the Silkworm, looking white and thin and completely exhausted, came creeping out of the tunnel to watch this miraculous ascent.”¹⁵⁹

The Glow-worm, on the other hand, is helping the others by providing himself as a source of light throughout the whole journey, even after they tumble for several kilometres inside the peach stone and are all bruised, tired and tangled up in one heap: “Everybody was beginning slowly and painfully to disentangle himself from everybody else. ‘Let’s have some light!’ shouted the Centipede. ‘Yes!’ they cried. ‘Light! Give us some light!’ ‘I’m *trying*,’ answered the poor Glow-worm. ‘I’m doing my best. Please be patient.’”¹⁶⁰ The epitome of selflessness, however, is shown at the end of the book, when the Glow-worm replaces the light in the torch of the Statue of Liberty in order to save the City from having to pay for electricity.¹⁶¹

The second archetypal figure is the fool or the jester, which is represented by the Centipede in *James and the Giant Peach*. The Centipede is, equally to the archetype, fully enjoying himself, trying to turn everything into fun and ridicule, for instance when he

¹⁵⁴ Carol Pearson, *Awakening the Heroes Within: Twelve Archetypes to Help Us Find Ourselves and Transform Our World* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 1991), 10–11.

¹⁵⁵ Pearson, *Awakening the Heroes Within*, 16–19.

¹⁵⁶ Dahl, *James and the Giant Peach*, 79–82.

¹⁵⁷ Dahl, *James and the Giant Peach*, 98–100.

¹⁵⁸ Dahl, *James and the Giant Peach*, 81.

¹⁵⁹ Dahl, *James and the Giant Peach*, 83.

¹⁶⁰ Dahl, *James and the Giant Peach*, 57–58.

¹⁶¹ Dahl, *James and the Giant Peach*, 147.

spontaneously creates a satirical song about the cruelty and death of Spiker and Sponge,¹⁶² or when he sings about all the food he has ever eaten and compares it to the supreme taste of the peach.¹⁶³ The most important trait of the fool is that he attempts to view life, with all its dangers and difficulties, as positively as possible.¹⁶⁴ Simultaneously, this trait can lead to the character being irresponsible and cruel,¹⁶⁵ and this is shown in Dahl's book when the Centipede mercilessly mocks the Cloud-Men after being warned not to do so, which results in the protagonists being attacked by the Cloud-Men:

'For heaven's sake, Centipede, don't make so much noise.'
The Centipede roared with laughter. 'Those imbeciles couldn't hear anything!' he cried. 'They're deaf as doorknobs! You watch!' (...)
'Idiots!' he yelled. 'Nincompoops! Half-wits! Blunderheads! Asses!' (...)
'I'm not frightened of *them*!' shouted the Centipede, and to show everybody once again that he wasn't, he stood up to his full height and started dancing about and making insulting signs at the Cloud-Men with all his forty-two legs.¹⁶⁶

Third, the archetype of the innocent is defined by his fear of abandonment, his goal is to remain in safety, his virtues are trust and optimism. When he encounters a problem he denies it or seeks rescue, and if given a task, he will remain reasonable and loyal.¹⁶⁷ Furthermore, the innocent is spontaneous, naïve, and dependent on others, but also oblivious to his own weakness.¹⁶⁸ Dahl's characters that would most fit this description are the kits from *Fantastic Mr Fox*.

The kits are innocent victims of the villains' plot to hunt and kill their father, Mr Fox. The kits depend on their mother for safety and reassurance and on their father to provide a solution to their problems, but they are also helpful when Mr Fox is hesitant and loses hope, because they remain sensible and optimistic, and support their father mentally and physically:

'I've just had a bit of an idea,' Mr Fox said carefully. (...) then he stopped and sighed and sadly shook his head, He sat down again. 'It's no good,' he said. 'It won't work after all.'
'Why not, Dad?'
'Because it means more digging and we aren't any of us strong enough for that after three days and nights without food.'
'Yes we are, Dad!' cried the Small Foxes, jumping up and running to their father. 'We can do it! You see if we can't! So can you!'¹⁶⁹

¹⁶² Dahl, *James and the Giant Peach*, 96.

¹⁶³ Dahl, *James and the Giant Peach*, 65–66.

¹⁶⁴ Pearson, *Awakening the Heroes Within*, 10–11.

¹⁶⁵ Pearson, *Awakening the Heroes Within*, 65–66.

¹⁶⁶ Dahl, *James and the Giant Peach*, 106–107.

¹⁶⁷ Pearson, *Awakening the Heroes Within*, 10–11.

¹⁶⁸ Pearson, *Awakening the Heroes Within*, 15–19.

¹⁶⁹ Dahl, and Blake, *Fantastic Mr Fox*, 35–36.

Moreover, the kits are innocent, naïve and oblivious, which is shown mainly when they are starving in their home and Boggis teases them with a roasted chicken:

‘Can you smell this, Mr Fox?’ he shouted. ‘Lovely tender chicken! Why don’t you come up and get it?’ The rich scent of chicken wafted down the tunnel to where the foxes were crouching.

‘Oh, Dad,’ said one of the Small Foxes, ‘couldn’t we just sneak up and snatch it out of his hand?’

‘Don’t you dare!’ said Mrs Fox. ‘That’s just what they want you to do.’¹⁷⁰

The fourth archetype is the orphan, whom Pearson depicts as a victim of a problem, who is realistic, resilient, and empathetic, but also overly worrying. His goal is to regain safety and he often blames himself for being incompetent.¹⁷¹ On the other hand, the orphan is sometimes content with being powerless and therefore cannot achieve the status of a hero, because he revels in being a fragile victim, become cynical and chronically complain about his situation.¹⁷² These characteristics are remarkably similar to the character of Mrs Fox, who is shown as the victim of the villains’ strategy to starve Mr Fox: “Slowly, Mrs Fox got to her feet. She was suffering more than any of them from the lack of food and water. She was very weak. ‘I am so sorry,’ she said, ‘but I don’t think I am going to be much help.’”¹⁷³ Similarly, she is worrying over Mr Fox and her kits whenever they are about to leave the safety of their home or are otherwise endangered, as is shown in the following excerpt:

‘Now do be careful,’ said Mrs Fox.

‘My darling,’ said Mr Fox, ‘I can smell those goons a mile away.’ (...)

‘Yes, but just don’t get careless,’ said Mrs Fox. ‘You know they’ll be waiting for you, all three of them.’¹⁷⁴

Furthermore, the archetype of the orphan is also like the character of the Earthworm from *James and the Giant Peach*, as his major trait is his pessimistic view on life:

‘What absolute nonsense!’ cried the Earthworm. ‘Nothing is ever right in the end, and well you know it!’

‘Poor Earthworm,’ the Ladybird said, whispering in James’s ear. ‘He loves to make everything into a disaster. He hates to be happy. He is only happy when he is gloomy.’ (...)

‘If this peach is not going to sink,’ the Earthworm was saying, ‘and if we are not going to be drowned, then every one of us is going to *starve* to death instead.’¹⁷⁵

Moreover, whenever anything is all right, the Earthworm is uneasy: “‘What are you looking so worried about, Earthworm?’ the Centipede asked. ‘What’s the problem?’ ‘The

¹⁷⁰ Dahl, and Blake, *Fantastic Mr Fox*, 31

¹⁷¹ Pearson, *Awakening the Heroes Within*, 10–11.

¹⁷² Pearson, *Awakening the Heroes Within*, 15–19.

¹⁷³ Dahl, and Blake, *Fantastic Mr Fox*, 36.

¹⁷⁴ Dahl, and Blake, *Fantastic Mr Fox*, 10–11.

¹⁷⁵ Dahl, *James and the Giant Peach*, 61.

problem is...' the Earthworm said, 'the problem is...well, the problem is that there is no problem!'"¹⁷⁶

Fifth, the ruler archetype is represented by the character of Mr Fox, who when faced with the danger of losing his life as well as the lives of his family, is able to take full responsibility for his life as well as for the life of other animals and devise a plan to save them,¹⁷⁷ and by doing so he creates an opportunity to permanently improve their lives.¹⁷⁸ However, equally to the ruler archetype, Mr Fox too has the attitude of entitlement, believing that his stealing is justifiable and right:

'do you know anyone in the *whole world* who wouldn't swipe a few chickens if his children were starving to death? (...) Boggis and Bunce and Bean are out to *kill* us. You realise that, I hope? (...) But *we're* not going to stoop to *their* level. We don't want to kill *them*. (...) We shall simply take a little food here and there to keep us and our families alive. Right? (...) We down here are decent peace-loving people.'¹⁷⁹

Sixth, the sage archetype is characterised by his wisdom, knowledge, and nonattachment. On the other hand, this archetype can easily become judgemental, pompous, and overly critical. Identically, Old-Green-Grasshopper from *James and the Giant Peach* is knowledgeable and slightly judgemental when he tells James where his ears are and how he can produce violin sounds.¹⁸⁰ He is always trying to remain objective and unattached, like when he comments on James's fear and explains what is happening at the moment,¹⁸¹ and he shows pomposity when he says that he has never been a pest in his life, and that he is a musician.¹⁸²

Typical features of the seventh archetype, the seeker, are his autonomy, ambition, and self-centeredness, his attempts to search for a better life and fleeing from problems, but in the end keeping true to his deeper self.¹⁸³ These traits are represented by the Enormous Crocodile from *The Enormous Crocodile*. The Enormous Crocodile always avoids direct confrontation with the other animals¹⁸⁴ and is self-centred in his intention to kill and eat children.¹⁸⁵

And the last archetype is the warrior, who is described as a character that confronts his problems, is courageous, disciplined, and determined.¹⁸⁶ On the other hand, he can also be stoic,

¹⁷⁶ Dahl, *James and the Giant Peach*, 64.

¹⁷⁷ Dahl, and Blake, *Fantastic Mr Fox*, 35–36.

¹⁷⁸ Dahl, and Blake, *Fantastic Mr Fox*, 79.

¹⁷⁹ Dahl, and Blake, *Fantastic Mr Fox*, 58–60.

¹⁸⁰ Dahl, *James and the Giant Peach*, 90–91.

¹⁸¹ Dahl, *James and the Giant Peach*, 36.

¹⁸² Dahl, *James and the Giant Peach*, 39.

¹⁸³ Pearson, *Awakening the Heroes Within*, 10–11.

¹⁸⁴ Dahl, and Blake, *The Enormous Crocodile*, 20.

¹⁸⁵ Dahl, and Blake, *The Enormous Crocodile*, 3–8.

¹⁸⁶ Pearson, *Awakening the Heroes Within*, 10–11.

ruthless and arrogant.¹⁸⁷ Fitting examples of the warrior are for instance the four kind animals in *The Enormous Crocodile*, and those are Humpy-Rumpy, the Hippopotamus; the Roly-Poly Bird, Trunky, the Elephant; and Muggle-Wump, the Monkey. All four are stoic at the beginning of the story, as they simply tell the Crocodile that eating children is not right,¹⁸⁸ but as the story progresses, they become determined to stop the Enormous Crocodile from hurting children and they always succeed.¹⁸⁹ Furthermore, Trunky in particular is ruthless at the end of the story, when he kills the Enormous Crocodile by catapulting him into the sun.¹⁹⁰

To summarise, the classification of Dahl's anthropomorphic characters according to the theory of archetypes is possible owing to the fact that these characters do not evolve. The reasons for this could be for instance that the books are not so long and therefore there is not much space for a character development, or that the books are written for children, and so the plots need to be simple and the personalities of characters unchanging, or that the plots happen within 24 hours, which is a very short time for a character development.

The three archetypes that appear most often in Dahl's four books are the orphan, the caregiver, and the warrior. Most prominent positive features of Dahl's anthropomorphic characters are therefore compassion, generosity, willingness to help others, courage, determination, resilience, empathy, and ability to face and solve problems. On the other hand, the negative characteristic traits that occur most often are ruthlessness, stoicism, overworking oneself to the point of critical physical and/or mental exhaustion, self-centredness, cynicism and chronic complaining. Nevertheless, as the books are for children, the positive traits are more important, exalted, and nurtured than the negative ones. Therefore, stoicism is only temporary, self-centredness is punished, complaining is criticised, and overworking is advisable only in absolutely necessary situations.

However, not all characters from Dahl's works could be interpreted according to these archetypes. For instance, the three anthropomorphic animals in *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me* exhibit characteristic traits of three different archetypes. They have the role of the warrior because they confront their problems,¹⁹¹ they have the main trait of the fool, as they try to look at their lives and at world as optimistically and jovially as possible,¹⁹² and they also fit the archetype of the caregiver, since they selflessly help the Duke with catching a thief.¹⁹³

¹⁸⁷ Pearson, *Awakening the Heroes Within*, 16–19.

¹⁸⁸ Dahl, and Blake, *The Enormous Crocodile*, 3–8.

¹⁸⁹ Dahl, and Blake, *The Enormous Crocodile*, 13.

¹⁹⁰ Dahl, and Blake, *The Enormous Crocodile*, 30.

¹⁹¹ Dahl, and Blake, *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me*, 9–21.

¹⁹² Dahl, and Blake, *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me*, 30–36.

¹⁹³ Dahl, and Blake, *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me*, 39–47.

Similarly, the Ladybird from *James and the Giant Peach* can be categorised as the lover, because her main characteristic is that she is kind, and caring,¹⁹⁴ empathetic,¹⁹⁵ and is afraid of losing her loved ones,¹⁹⁶ but she also shows signs of being the innocent, as she is naïve,¹⁹⁷ optimistic,¹⁹⁸ but in difficult situations she stays calm and faithful and seeks rescue.¹⁹⁹ Lastly, the Badger from *Fantastic Mr Fox* is difficult to classify, because he is not only helpful as the caregiver,²⁰⁰ but also naïve as the innocent,²⁰¹ tender as the lover,²⁰² victimised as the orphan,²⁰³ and addicted to being inebriated as the fool.²⁰⁴

4.2 Animal Symbolism and Similes

Throughout the centuries, animals have often been connoted with specific character traits and abstract concepts, and these connotations can be most notably found in fables, bestiaries, animal stories, fairy tales, folktales, and in every-day conversations. The reason why the connotations and similes originating from them exist is that people have based these connotations on their own experience with animals or on the things they read or heard from other people. Be that as it may, many of the connotations did not remain unchanged. To illustrate, as Thomas F. Thiselton-Dyewr writes, owls in European culture have been in the past considered vile ill-omens, bringers of death, and monsters of the night,²⁰⁵ but now they are rather thought of as wise and vigilant.

The exact origin of these connotations is unknown, but most people associate them with Aesop's *Fables*. However, claiming that *Fables* is the sole source of these connotations would be inaccurate, if not mendacious. To elaborate, historian John Horgan claims that some of Aesop's fables are similar to the fables and proverbs of ancient Summer and Akkad.²⁰⁶ In fact, it is generally believed that Aesop collected and wrote down most of the fables and that just some of them could have been his own work.

¹⁹⁴ Dahl, *James and the Giant Peach*, 46.

¹⁹⁵ Dahl, *James and the Giant Peach*, 36.

¹⁹⁶ Dahl, *James and the Giant Peach*, 148.

¹⁹⁷ Dahl, *James and the Giant Peach*, 86.

¹⁹⁸ Dahl, *James and the Giant Peach*, 64.

¹⁹⁹ Dahl, *James and the Giant Peach*, 70–74.

²⁰⁰ Dahl, and Blake, *Fantastic Mr Fox*, 50.

²⁰¹ Dahl, and Blake, *Fantastic Mr Fox*, 58–59.

²⁰² Dahl, and Blake, *Fantastic Mr Fox*, 60.

²⁰³ Dahl, and Blake, *Fantastic Mr Fox*, 46–48.

²⁰⁴ Dahl, and Blake, *Fantastic Mr Fox*, 64–65.

²⁰⁵ Thomas Firminger Thiselton-Dyewr, *Folk-lore of Shakespeare* (New York: Dover Publications, 1966), 131–133.

²⁰⁶ "Aesop's Fables," World History Encyclopedia, worldhistory, posted March 8, 2014, <https://www.worldhistory.org/article/664/aesops-fables/>.

Moreover, even though people nowadays have access to detailed factual information about many animals, the animal connotations are still used, as people got used to them and because many of them are in fact based on a real behaviour of animals. For example, in *The Book of Beasts*, translated by T. H. White, the fox is described as an ingenious and fraudulent animal that is capable of pretending to be dead in order to outwit its prey. In that aspect the fox is likened to the devil who also entraps men by pretending to be less dangerous.²⁰⁷ Similarly, Beryl Rowland writes that foxes have always been viewed as dissimulating and crafty, and in literature they play the role of a trickster-hero.²⁰⁸ Therefore, the core meaning in both books is that the fox is a cunning and sly animal that depends more on its mental ability to think about a way to overcome difficulties and solve problems rather than on its physical abilities. In this regard, Mr Fox in *Fantastic Mr Fox* outwits the villains, who are waiting for him to crawl out of his hole to kill him, by devising a plan to build an underground village in order to never have to go outside and be hunted again by Bunce, Boggis, and Bean.²⁰⁹ Furthermore, in Aesop's fable *The Lion, the Bear, and the Fox*, Fox takes advantage of a situation in which a Bear and a Lion fight over a Deer and sneaks away with the Deer himself.²¹⁰ This would also point to the cunning and wit of Mr Fox, who takes advantage of Bunce, Boggis and Bean and all their servants not being in their homes to steal from their cellars and storehouses.

Similarly, Rat from *Fantastic Mr Fox* is alike the mouse from Aesop's *The Kite, the Frog, and the Mouse*, in which Mice are quarrelling with Frogs over a territory and are stopped by a Kite that snatches and devours them,²¹¹ and similarly, in *Fantastic Mr Fox*, Rat is very protective of 'his' cider cellar, and is only quieted when Mr Fox threatens him:

'Go away!' it snapped. 'You can't come in here! It's private!'
 'Good Lord!' said Badger. 'It's Rat!' (...)
 'Go away!' shrieked Rat. 'Go on, beat it! This is my private pitch!'
 'Shut up,' said Mr Fox.
 'I will not shut up!' shrieked Rat. 'This is *my* place! I got here first!'
 Mr Fox gave a brilliant smile, flashing his white teeth. 'My dear Rat,' he said softly, 'I am a hungry fellow and if you don't hop it quickly I shall eat-you-up-in-one-gulp!'²¹²

²⁰⁷ Terence Hanbury White, *The Book of Beasts, Being a Translation from a Latin Bestiary of the Twelfth Century* (New York: Putnam, 1954), 53–54.

²⁰⁸ Beryl Rowland, *Animals with Human Faces; a Guide to Animal Symbolism* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1973), 76.

²⁰⁹ Dahl, and Blake, *Fantastic Mr Fox*, 79.

²¹⁰ Aesop, Percy J. Billinghamurst, and Roger L'Estrange, *A Hundred Fables of Aesop* (New York: Gallery Books, 1984), 10.

²¹¹ Aesop et al., *A Hundred Fables of Aesop*, 8.

²¹² Dahl, and Blake, *Fantastic Mr Fox*, 62–63.

According to Rowland, rats are portents of evil, and in some cases black rats represent earthly pleasures,²¹³ and Rat in *Fantastic Mr Fox* is a habitual drinker who drinks Bean's strongest cider:

'Put that down at once! There'll be none left for me!' Rat was perched upon the highest shelf in the cellar, peering out from behind a huge jar. There was a small rubber tube inserted in the neck of the jar, and Rat was using this tube to suck out the cider. 'You're drunk!' said Mr Fox. 'Mind your own business!' shrieked Rat. '(...) Get out and leave me to sip my cider in peace.'²¹⁴

However, the similarity of the Rat to Aesop's fable is even more pronounced, because while the Rat argues with Mr Fox about the cellar, the owner's maid enters the room, which effectively ends their quarrel, although in the case of *Fantastic Mr Fox* none of the anthropomorphic characters is harmed.²¹⁵ Subsequently, the other characters comment on Rat's drinking problem and his behaviour as rude, saying that they have never met a polite rat.²¹⁶ There is no surprise that the rat is described this way because as Jack Tresidder writes in *Symbols and their meanings* rat is a symbol of destructiveness and avarice.²¹⁷

Interesting symbolism is also connected to the pelican, and that is, according to Tresidder, self-sacrificial love and charity.²¹⁸ In this regard, the Pelican from *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me* has these traits, as he selflessly saves the Duke's jewellery from being stolen and his beak is shot through in the process.²¹⁹ Moreover, the Pelican in *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me* can be to a degree interpreted according to Aesop's fables, specifically *The Peacock's Complaint*. In *The Peacock's Complaint*, the Bird asks a goddess if she will enable him to sing,²²⁰ and in *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me*, the Pelican is overjoyed when he gains the ability to sing, albeit temporarily.²²¹

On the other hand, the Monkey that appears in Aesop's *Fables* is not similar to Muggle-Wump, the Monkey, from *The Enormous Crocodile*, and neither to the Monkey from *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me*. However, as Beryl Rowland states, monkeys are often associated with human vagaries due to their similarity to people. Monkeys also denote curiosity and foolish joy,²²² and both monkeys in Dahl's books show a bit of those traits. The Monkey from *The*

²¹³ Rowland, *Animals with Human Faces; a Guide to Animal Symbolism*, 136.

²¹⁴ Dahl, and Blake, *Fantastic Mr Fox*, 65–66.

²¹⁵ Dahl, and Blake, *Fantastic Mr Fox*, 61–67.

²¹⁶ Dahl, and Blake, *Fantastic Mr Fox*, 72.

²¹⁷ Jack Tresidder, *Symbols and Their Meanings*, (London: Duncan Baird Publishers, 2000), 66.

²¹⁸ Tresidder, *Symbols and Their Meanings*, 75.

²¹⁹ Dahl, and Blake, *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me*, 40–50.

²²⁰ Aesop et al., *A Hundred Fables of Aesop*, 96.

²²¹ Dahl, and Blake, *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me*, 70.

²²² Rowland, *Animals with Human Faces; a Guide to Animal Symbolism*, 10.

Giraffe and the Pelly and Me introduces himself by performing a dance,²²³ and Muggle-Wump the Monkey foolishly aggravates the Enormous Crocodile by mocking him and wishing him harm.²²⁴

The Crocodile from *The Enormous Crocodile* is, similarly to the Crocodile of Aesop's *Fox and the Crocodile*, pretending to be something he is not to gain something else. In both cases it is unsuccessful, as Aesop's Fox sees through his lies²²⁵ and the animals from *The Enormous Crocodile* expose the Enormous Crocodile to the children.²²⁶ Furthermore, as Tresidder writes, "the crocodile is the leading symbol of destructive voracity – an agent of divine retribution, and lord of water and earth, life and death. Often an object of uninformed awe or moralizing hostility (...). Where it was known, it was treated with fearful respect as a creature of primordial and occult power over water, earth and the underworld."²²⁷ Identically, the Enormous Crocodile is destructive and hostile, but he is neither respected nor feared by the other anthropomorphic animals who stand against him.

According to Tresidder, the symbols connected to the elephant are dignity, intelligence, prudence, peace, and good memory.²²⁸ In this regard, Trunky the Elephant in *The Enormous Crocodile* represents all of these qualities. Trunky has a good memory, as he remembers the Crocodile's previous deeds²²⁹ and he has dignity and shows prudence when he talks to the Enormous Crocodile and when he stops him from harming children.²³⁰ Lastly, he brings peace to the village when he defeats the Crocodile at the end of the story.²³¹ This is also connected to the ancient belief, as is written in an article by Jesse Brauner, that elephants were thought of as 'removers of obstacles,' and they symbolised military strength and triumph.²³²

Similarly, Brauner suggests that the hippopotamus is also a symbol of strength, as the creature itself is highly territorial and aggressive, even to the point of attacking other top predators such as crocodiles.²³³ Humpy-Rumpy, the Hippopotamus, shows this when he rams

²²³ Dahl, and Blake, *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me*, 10.

²²⁴ Dahl, and Blake, *The Enormous Crocodile*, 5–6.

²²⁵ Aesop et al., *A Hundred Fables of Aesop*, 108.

²²⁶ Dahl, and Blake, *The Enormous Crocodile*, 13–24.

²²⁷ Tresidder, *Symbols and Their Meanings*, 55.

²²⁸ Tresidder, *Symbols and Their Meanings*, 66.

²²⁹ Tresidder, *Symbols and Their Meanings*, 58.

²³⁰ Dahl, and Blake, *The Enormous Crocodile*, 4.

²³¹ Dahl, and Blake, *The Enormous Crocodile*, 24–30.

²³² "Elephant," Symbols, Signs, and Flags, symbols, accessed May 15, 2021, <https://www.symbols.com/symbol/elephant>.

²³³ "Hippopotamus," Symbols, Signs, and Flags, symbols, accessed May 15, 2021, <https://www.symbols.com/symbol/hippopotamus>.

the Enormous Crocodile with his head so hard that he “sent him tumbling and skidding over the ground.”²³⁴

Unfortunately, there is not much symbolism connected to invertebrate animals, and so only Miss Spider and the Centipede can be analysed in this regard. According to White, the spider’s web “is always tight. It never stops working, cutting out all loss of time without interruption in its skill,”²³⁵ and as Tresidder writes, spider’s thread is an emblem of bringing heavenly gifts.²³⁶ Moreover, as Jesse Brauner claims, the spider is in some cultures perceived as a creator figure because it can weave intricate webs, and in others, it assumes the role of a protector.²³⁷ Miss Spider from *James and the Giant Peach* is protective of her friends, helping them whenever they need, and besides ceaselessly spinning threads she also creates eight beds from her silky thread to sleep in.²³⁸ As is written in an article about spider symbolism, spiders are generally associated with patience, gentility, and feminine energy, but also with fear.²³⁹ The connection to fear is discussed in *James and the Giant Peach* when Miss Spider remembers her relatives being killed by people because of their fear,²⁴⁰ and as she is a female character, she is kind and empathetic towards James on many occasions.

As is written in *The Symbolism of Centipedes*, the Centipede is a carrier of peculiar symbolic meanings, because it symbolises resourcefulness and balance, due to the number of legs it has, but it also represents overthinking.²⁴¹ In *James and the Giant Peach*, however, the Centipede certainly does not represent balance, because he

begun dancing wildly round the deck during his song, had suddenly gone too close to the downward curving edge of the peach, and for three awful seconds he had stood teetering on the brink, swinging his legs frantically in circles in an effort to stop himself from falling over backward into space. But before anyone could reach him – down he went!²⁴²

On the other hand, he could represent overthinking, as he constantly brings up the issue of tying and untying his boots, and claims that he has 100 legs although it is not true.²⁴³

²³⁴ Dahl, and Blake, *The Enormous Crocodile*, 13.

²³⁵ White, *The Book of Beasts, Being a Translation from a Latin Bestiary of the Twelfth Century*, 191.

²³⁶ Tresidder, *Symbols and Their Meanings*, 113.

²³⁷ “Spider,” Symbols, Signs, and Flags, symbols, accessed May 15, 2021, <https://www.symbols.com/symbol/spider>.

²³⁸ Dahl, *James and the Giant Peach*, 41.

²³⁹ “Symbolism of Spiders (11 Surprising Meanings),” Symbolism and Metaphor, symbolismandmetaphor, accessed May 15, 2021, <https://symbolismandmetaphor.com/symbolism-of-spiders/>.

²⁴⁰ Dahl, *James and the Giant Peach*, 95–96.

²⁴¹ “Symbolism of Centipedes (11 Surprising Meanings),” Symbolism and Metaphor, symbolismandmetaphor, accessed May 15, 2021, <https://symbolismandmetaphor.com/symbolism-of-centipedes/>.

²⁴² Dahl, *James and the Giant Peach*, 98.

²⁴³ Dahl, *James and the Giant Peach*, 37–40.

In conclusion, animal symbolism is so intricate that it is also often present in Dahl's works. However, some animals are scarcely tied to any symbolic meanings, and those are usually invertebrate animals such as the grasshopper, the glow-worm, or the ladybird, but also mammals such as the badger or the giraffe. These anthropomorphic characters could not be fully analysed in this subchapter, but there are still several common sayings and similes about some of these animals that have something in common with the anthropomorphised characters in Dahl's books. For instance, the Badger from *Fantastic Mr Fox* is 'holed up like a badger' until his wife is almost starved to death, and only then he goes to Mr Fox to help him solve that problem.²⁴⁴ Similarly, the saying 'as tall as a giraffe' has something in common with *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me*, in which the Giraffe is not only naturally tall, but she can lengthen her neck even more.²⁴⁵ However, the fact that the other anthropomorphic animals are not connected to animal symbolism does not mean that the characters are in any way inferior, or that they cannot become symbols in the future themselves.

²⁴⁴ Dahl, and Blake, *Fantastic Mr Fox*, 46–50.

²⁴⁵ Dahl, and Blake, *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me*, 34–35.

5 Conclusion

This master thesis is focused on the depiction of anthropomorphic characters in the works by Roald Dahl. The topic was examined through a thorough analysis of Roald Dahl's four books, namely of *The Enormous Crocodile*; *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me*; *Fantastic Mr Fox*; and *James and the Giant Peach*. The aim of the thesis was to examine the way Dahl depicts anthropomorphised characters in his books for children and to analyse their individual personalities.

In the first half of the thesis, personification and allegory were defined, and Dahl's books were interpreted in this regard. One of the four chosen books was interpreted as allegorical, namely *James and the Giant Peach*, in which the protagonists travel from England to 'the Promised Land.' Additionally, the theoretical part also depicted common traits of Dahl's books and Dahl's opinion on animal rights was found in many of his works.

The analytical part of the thesis firstly described the naming methods Dahl used in the four books, and the conclusion was that the names play a major part of Dahl's storytelling, as the character names outline either their physical or psychic characteristics and contrast the protagonists with the antagonists. Next, the cause of animals being anthropomorphised in the selected stories was examined. The resulting deduction presented two alternations, the first one was that the cause of anthropomorphism in *James and the Giant Peach* was of magical origin, and the second one that the cause of anthropomorphism in the remaining three stories was never mentioned and the animals were anthropomorphic from the beginning, and therefore anthropomorphism in the three stories was natural or even innate.

The next part of the thesis provided a detailed analysis of the degree of anthropomorphism in the selected works. Anthropomorphic characters were analysed as to their semblance to humans, which is shown on the books by the individual characters' language skills, usage of tools, ability to reason, devise plans and make decision, ability of conscious thoughts about self, wearing clothes and caring about physical appearance of oneself and of others, living in a furnished home, having a job, enjoying and being able to produce art and music, and cooking meals. On the other hand, all anthropomorphic characters also retain a part of their animal nature, specifically their instincts, physical prowess and abilities, which are often enhanced. Thus, Mr Fox can escape death because of his well-developed sense of smell, Miss Spider can weave thread and use it as a rope to lasso seagulls, Trunky the Elephant uses his trunk to catapult the Enormous Crocodile into the sun, and the Pelican can imprison a thief in

his beak. This proves that the anthropomorphic characters, although they are humanised to some extent, still possess their animal traits, and they often use both their human and animal traits to solve problems. The humanised part of the characters devises a plan and decides on the next course of action, and the animal part implements and realises the plan. Therefore, there is a certain balance or even harmony to the anthropomorphic characters, as they have the best traits of humans and the best traits of animals in them.

Subsequently, the reaction of human characters to the anthropomorphised characters during their first meeting was examined and described. In many cases in the four books, adult characters were difficult to appease and befriend by the anthropomorphic characters, as they found the anthropomorphic characters frightening, unbelievable, fabricated, or even dangerous. In contrast, child characters were easier to calm down and persuade about the anthropomorphic characters' innocence and friendly nature, and so they accepted and befriended the anthropomorphic characters almost immediately. This could be explained by the fact that children have rich imagination, are spontaneous and optimistic, and less afraid of the unknown, whereas adults are more sceptical, distrustful, and vigilant.

The next two parts of the thesis analysed individual anthropomorphic characters, firstly according to the theory of archetypes and secondly according to symbols that are usually connected to animals. The archetypes that appear most often in the four books show that the most positive typical characteristic traits are compassion, generosity, willingness to help others, courage, determination, resilience, empathy, and ability to face and solve problems, and all of these are rewarded or highly praised in the stories. On the other hand, the negative traits include ruthlessness, stoicism, overworking oneself to the point of critical physical and/or mental exhaustion, self-centeredness, cynicism and chronic complaining, but all of these are either condemned or punished. This also proves that Dahl's works have a strong moral undertone.

Lastly, animal symbolism is shown in the four books, most prominently in *Fantastic Mr Fox*, whose plot revolves around Mr Fox being cunning and cleverly devising a plan how to outfox the antagonists, but also in *James and the Giant Peach*, in which for instance Miss Spider and the Ladybird are both gentle and kind females that help James emotionally deal with difficult situations. Furthermore, a realisation of animal similes and sayings can be observed in the books, such as being as tall as a giraffe or being holed up like a badger.

Overall, anthropomorphism in Dahl's *Fantastic Mr Fox*; *James and the Giant Peach*; *The Enormous Crocodile* and *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me* plays a crucial role, as it portrays most animals as friendly, harmless, and helpful to people. It also shows real animal traits and abilities to child readers without lecturing or being overly factual.

Resumé

Cílem této diplomové práce je analyzovat díla Roalda Dahla s ohledem na antropomorfní charaktery které se v nich objevují, a také jakým způsobem jsou tyto charaktery popisovány. Tato analýza se zaměřuje na čtyři knihy pro děti, a to jsou jmenovitě *Jakub a obří broskev*; *Fantastický pan Lišák*; *Velikánanánský krokodýl* a *Žirafa, pelikán a já*. Tato díla jsou vybrána na základě odlišných věkových kategorií jejich čtenářů. *Velikánanánský krokodýl* je určen svou podstatou obrázkové knihy pro nejmladší děti od tří do pěti let, zatímco *Žirafa, pelikán a já* je míněna spíše pro děti ve věkové kategorii od šesti do devíti let. Pro sedmileté až desetileté děti je určen *Fantastický pan Lišák*, a *Jakub a obří broskev* se svými 23 000 slovy je kniha nejvíce vhodná pro děti mezi osmi a dvanácti lety. Neméně důležitou podstatou těchto knih je také to, že ve všech čtyřech dílech jsou klíčovými postavami zvířata, která mají lidské vlastnosti a vystupování, a tudíž jsou antropomorfizována.

Antropomorfní postavy figurující ve vybraných jednotlivých dílech jsou analyzovány dle jejich chování a smýšlení, a to na základě teorie archetypů a na základě nejznámějších symbolů spojených se zvířaty. Dále tato práce klasifikuje antropomorfní postavy podle toho do jaké míry jsou antropomorfizovány.

Tato diplomová práce je rozdělena na dvě části, a to teoretickou a praktickou. Každá z těchto částí je dále rozdělena na jednotlivé kapitoly a podkapitoly. Teoretická část je především zaměřena na vymezení pojmu antropomorfismu a dalších pojmů s ním souvisejících, jako je např. pojem alegorie nebo personifikace, na identifikaci způsobu psaní Roalda Dahla a jeho názoru na zvířata, kterým se ve svých knihách často zabývá, a v neposlední řadě také na historii dětské literatury a její definici, jelikož analyzovaná díla patří do literatury pro děti. Na teoretickou část navazuje část praktická, která předkládá rozbor vybraných děl Roalda Dahla.

První kapitola se dělí na tři podkapitoly, z nichž první se věnuje definici antropomorfismu. Hlavní zaměření této podkapitoly je na užití antropomorfismu jak v běžném životě, tak v literatuře. Důraz je kladen také na historii antropomorfismu, která ovlivnila jeho užití v dnešní literatuře. V druhé podkapitole je nastíněna historie dětské literatury ve Velké Británii a její komplikované pojetí v moderní době, díky kterému mohl Dahl vytvořit svá často kontroverzní díla. Třetí podkapitola vysvětluje pojmy alegorie a personifikace s ohledem na to jakým způsobem jsou používány v literatuře. Personifikace je také vymezena vůči antropomorfismu, jelikož jsou si oba pojmy vzájemně podobné, ale nejsou totožné.

Druhá kapitola zevrubně seznamuje čtenáře s podstatou způsobu psaní Roalda Dahla a s kontroverzní reakcí literárních kritiků na jeho díla. Také zmiňuje Quentina Blakea, ilustrátora, který spolupracoval s Dahlem na jeho knihách pro děti, a je tudíž mnohdy uváděn jako jeho spoluautor. V neposlední řadě je ve druhé kapitole popsán Dahlův názor na práva zvířat, na týrání zvířat a na vegetariánství, což se vše často projevuje v jeho knihách, které jsou v této části uváděny příkladem.

Třetí kapitolou s názvem *Analysis of Anthropomorphic Characters in Dahl's Works* začíná praktická neboli analytická část práce. Tato kapitola je rozdělena na čtyři podkapitoly, z nichž první se věnuje symbolice jmen antropomorfních postav ve vybraných knihách, druhá popisuje příčiny antropomorfismu v Dahlovo dílech, třetí se zabývá způsobem, jakým je v knihách popsáno první setkání člověka s antropomorfní postavou, a poslední podkapitola poskytuje podrobný rozbor úrovní antropomorfismu jednotlivých postav. První podkapitola nejprve kategorizuje Dahlovo postavy na základě jejich jmen, která mnohdy vystihují jejich charakterové či fyzické rysy. Druhá podkapitola, která se zabývá dvěma možnými příčinami antropomorfismu, zjišťuje, že Dahl v jednom díle uvedl příčinu antropomorfismu jako magickou, a v ostatních dílech, kde jsou zvířata antropomorfní již od úvodní kapitoly, se příčinou vůbec nezabýval, a tudíž se dá říci, že je v nich antropomorfismus přirozený či dokonce vrozený.

Třetí část třetí kapitoly se zabývá setkáním lidských postav s postavami antropomorfizovanými a předkládá na základě analýzy vybraných děl teorii, že dětské postavy akceptují antropomorfní postavy mnohem rychleji než postavy dospělých lidí. Poslední podkapitola detailně vypisuje jednotlivé charakterové rysy, ve kterých jsou Dahlovy postavy polidštěné, a poté i charakterové rysy které jsou spíše spojeny s jejich zvířecí přirozeností.

Ve čtvrté a poslední kapitole se práce nejprve zaměřuje na analýzu antropomorfních postav na základě teorie archetypů podle Carol Pearsonové, která rozděluje základní literární typy postav na dvanáct archetypů podle jejich chování a jiných charakterových rysů. V této kapitole jsou uvedeny příklady osmi archetypů, které se vyskytují ve vybraných dílech Roalda Dahla, a to jsou jmenovitě archetypy pečovatele, sirotka, mudrce, bojovníka, šaška, nevinného, hledače, a vůdce. V druhé části poslední kapitoly jsou antropomorfní postavy porovnávány s lidově přijímanými přirovnáními zvířat na základě lidských charakterových rysů, jako je například bystrá liška, nebo hádavá myš.

Z podrobné analýzy čtyř vybraných děl Roalda Dahla vyplývá, že jejich zvířecí postavy jsou záměrně polidšťovány metodou antropomorfizace, nikoli personifikace, která je spíše užívána pouze za určitým účelem. Antropomorfismus je naopak použit, pokud chce autor

zvířatům přiřadit větší škálu lidských vlastností z toho důvodu, aby se se zvířecími postavami mohl čtenář snadněji ztotožnit a přitom aby nebyly postavy pouze a přímo lidské. Tato metoda prokazatelně pomáhá dětským čtenářům nejen k tomu, aby zvířecí antropomorfní postavy měli rádi, ale také aby měli nadhled a dokázali si případné ponaučení vyplývající z děje sami implementovat do reálného života, aniž by si nutně spojovali postavy a děj s konkrétními reálnými lidmi. Antropomorfní postavy jsou mimo jiné i mnohem lépe zapamatovatelné než postavy lidí.

Co se týče studie konkrétních antropomorfních postav, z analýzy čtyř vybraných děl lze usoudit, že jsou například polidštěná jen do určité míry, konkrétně jsou polidštěná v rámci jejich psychických a mentálních procesů a schopností, a tudíž mohou přemýšlet, chápat a rozhodovat se jako lidé, mohou mluvit a dokonce i zpívat či básnit, mohou cítit různé emoce a na jejich základě i jednat, mohou se vcítovat do ostatních a vytvářet plány. Na druhou stranu jim zůstává jejich zvířecí přirozenost, a to hlavně jejich vrozené instinkty a fyzické dovednosti, jako je například pavoučí soukání nití, liščí schopnost hrabání, nebo samozřejmě ptačí schopnost letu. Lidské rysy jsou kombinovány s rysy zvířecími v mnohých situacích, ve kterých by například lidské postavy sice dokázaly vymyslet hypotetický plán řešení, ale nedokázaly by ho uskutečnit, zatímco čistě zvířecí postavy by sice měly příležitost k vyřešení problému, ale s největší pravděpodobností by ho nedokázaly vymyslet.

Dále je z analýzy postav jisté, že Dahl se při tvorbě antropomorfních postav, ať už úmyslně či neúmyslně, mnohdy řídil zvířecí symbolikou. Postava lišáka je tedy tou, která vymyslí chytrý plán jak přelstít nepřítele, a postava žirafy je tou, která je i na žirafu neobvykle vysoká. Některé Dahlovy antropomorfní postavy se až nápadně podobají zvířecím postavám z *Bajek* od Ezopa, ale jelikož se jedná jen o pár případů, nelze rozhodně tvrdit, že by Dahl byl neoriginální.

V neposlední řadě je výsledkem této práce zjištění, že Dahl vybíral zvířata do svých děl pečlivě a vhodně, tedy podle jejich přirozených fyzických schopností a vlastností, místa výskytu, a typu stravy. Na základě těchto kritérií by bylo nevhodné, kdyby například místo postavy žirafy, která má dlouhý krk, ale je schopná svůj krk ještě více prodloužit, byla postava jiného zvířete. Jiné zvíře které by si prodlužovalo krk by na jejím místě působilo spíše děsivě než magicky a zajímavě. Proto je Dahlův výběr jednotlivých zvířecích postav opodstatněný, a jeho postavy jsou jak založené na pradávnejší symbolice, tak jsou originální a zajímavé.

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