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“She Gives Power to the Powerless”: Dynamics and the Subversion of Power in Roald Dahl’s Matilda

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UNIVERSITÉ DE ROUEN NORMANDIE

INSPE – ACADÉMIE DE NORMANDIE

UFR Lettres et Sciences Humaines

Master « Métiers de l'Enseignement, de l'Éducation et de la Formation »

Mention 2

Année 2020-2021

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Sous la direction de **DOUGLAS** *Virginie*

Résumé

La littérature de jeunesse a tendance à placer un enfant impuissant faisant face à des ennemis tout-puissants dans le rôle du héros. Ce travail de recherche propose une étude de *Matilda* de Roald Dahl à travers le prisme des dynamiques de pouvoir et de leur subversion, afin de déterminer la nature du message que Roald Dahl veut transmettre dans son roman. Ce travail se concentre sur la manière dont Matilda et les autres enfants de l'histoire reprennent le pouvoir et renversent l'ordre établi face à des adultes cruels et violents, et sur la manière dont ces derniers (et en particulier la tyrannique Miss Trunchbull) affirment et abusent du pouvoir qu'ils possèdent naturellement. Cette étude est suivie d'une réflexion sur l'introduction d'extraits d'œuvres littéraires anglo-saxonnes en classe de 5^{ème} à travers l'exemple de *Matilda*, qui a tant à dire sur le système scolaire et les relations de pouvoir enfants-adultes. Une séquence pédagogique construite autour de l'axe « École et société » tente ensuite de proposer une utilisation d'extraits authentiques du roman à travers la dichotomie « good teacher / bad teacher » incarnée aux yeux des enfants par Miss Honey et Miss Trunchbull. Je reviendrai enfin sur la mise en place de cette séquence et proposerai des pistes de remédiation possibles afin de faciliter au maximum l'étude d'extraits authentiques de *Matilda* en classe de 5^{ème}.

Mots-clés : pouvoir, subversion, Roald Dahl, Matilda, anglais

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INTRODUCTION

She gives power to the powerless, help to the helpless, and disaster to those who deserve it. (“Matilda Trailer.” *YouTube*, originally released in 1996)

Literary bodies of work aimed at children have been around from as long as literature itself, but it was not until the middle of the 18th century that it emerged as a conscious and distinct separate genre, and eventually established itself as one of the main branches of literature in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. However, stories told to and enjoyed by children precede the written word itself: fairy tales, folktales and simple works of poetry from the oral tradition, which have been shared, adapted and reinvented for contemporary audiences by word of mouth, are known sources of inspiration for a large number of fairy tales, stories and other works of fiction that nowadays fall under the label of “children’s literature”. Books of manners for children existed before the 18th century, but they were meant for children’s self-improvement rather than enjoyment or instruction, and it might be argued that the target of these volumes were the parents themselves rather than their children. Indeed, what we now refer to as “children’s literature” encompasses a large number of written bodies of work: novels, poems, plays, picture books, pop-up books, and so on, with different themes, motifs and styles of which the only certain recurring element is that they have been consciously written *for* children. John Newbery’s 1744 *A Little Pretty Pocket-Book* is widely recognised and accepted as the first children’s book, and it is interesting to take a look at its characteristics because it is a perfect illustration of the genre: it is written in simple English, there are woodcuts to illustrate it and, as its full title suggests, it was “intended for the amusement” of young children. The balance between instruction and delight however appeared to shift rather drastically towards merriment when Lewis Carroll, to whom we owe the beginning of what is now referred to as “the Golden Age of children’s literature”, revolutionised the genre by releasing in 1865 the world-renowned – and arguably the most famous children’s book – *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*. Originally illustrated by John Tenniel, and first told as a story to young Alice Liddell and her sisters, *Alice* also meets some of what seem to be the requirements of a children’s tale and remains today one of the most renowned works of literature ever written.

Heir to Carrollian nonsense, British writer Roald Dahl (1916-1990) is no stranger to such characteristics since they are inherent in his works. One of the most celebrated children's authors, if not *the* most celebrated of them, Roald Dahl, was born in Wales in the Cardiff district of Llandaff on September 13th, 1916 and died on November 23rd, 1990 in Oxford, England. The innovative aspect of his works can perhaps be explained by the singularity of the path that brought him to become the renowned British writer he is today. Dahl never attended university and first attempted writing by telling about his World War II adventures in the Royal Air Force. His first book, *The Gremlins*, was published as a children's story in 1943 even though it was not originally planned to be aimed at a young audience, and it was not until 1961 that Dahl published his first work intentionally written for children: *James and the Giant Peach*. This publication marked the beginning of a three-decade long career that lasted even after his death with the publication of *The Vicar of Nibbleswicke* and *The Minpins* in 1991.

Despite his fame and the importance of his literary legacy, his somewhat dark humour and sometimes violent stories have not always been met with praise and acclaim. Especially at the time of their original release, critics have repeatedly written and debated about whether or not Dahl's books were "suitable" (Culley) and appropriate for children, especially when it comes to issues such as violence, death, sexism and racism. The only work of his Dahl revised after its publication following criticism was his 1964 novel *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, for which the portrayal of Oompa-Loompas, described as African pygmies, was deemed racist by critics and the general public alike. Dahl recognised his mistake and released a revised version in 1973, in which the Oompa-Loompas were rewritten as little fantasy creatures from an imaginary land whose rosy-white skin and golden-brown hair are nothing like their controversial counterparts. Critics, especially in North America, have also often condemned – and even censored – a great number of Dahl's novels, mostly for selling kids the idea that they could disobey authority, adults, and get revenge on the powerful and those who do them wrong. Eleanor Cameron, a fellow children's author, was vocal in her criticism of the original depiction of the Oompa-Loompas, among several other things. Between 1972 and 1973, she published a series of essays entitled "McLuhan, Youth, and Literature" in *The Horn Book Magazine*, a magazine dedicated to reviewing children's literature. In the first of these essays, she explains what she particularly dislikes about Dahl's *Charlie and the*

Chocolate Factory, which she makes clear is what she thinks of the author's entire bibliography:

What I object to in *Charlie* is its phony presentation of poverty and its phony humor, which is based on punishment with overtones of sadism; its hypocrisy which is epitomized in its moral stuck like a marshmallow in a lump of fudge — that TV is horrible and hateful and time-wasting and that children should read good books instead, when in fact the book itself is like nothing so much as one of the more specious television shows. (Cameron)

Modern critics, however, generally tend to agree on the importance of Dahl's legacy, and on some of his books' status as classics of children's literature. Such criticism seems to only be reflective of the time it was given.

By depicting them as heroes having to stand-up to and fight adult-sized villains, Dahl has given generations of children what they always wanted but never had: power over those who usually hold power over them. This particular aspect of Dahl's works parallels the way society has evolved when it comes to its treatment of children and childhood. In that perspective, one might call the author's bodies of work empowering to the children. This constant siding with the child heroes and justification of their deeds against adults, who are presented as bullies, is so recurrent to Dahl that it seems intrinsic to his writing: "defining the acceptably unacceptable" (Hunt, *Criticism* 191) is part of — one might even suggest core to — his writing style and process, and potentially one of the reasons he is so remarkably popular among children, and even among adults.

A very clear illustration of these ideas is Roald Dahl's 1988 penultimate novel, *Matilda*, a book which has not been met with as much criticism as its older siblings, and which tells the story of a young girl whose "mind was so nimble" and whose "ability should have been obvious even to the most half-witted of parents." (10) that she eventually "decide[s] that every time her father or her mother [i]s beastly to her, she w[ill] get her own back in some way or another" to "help her to tolerate their idiocies and [...] stop her from going crazy" (29). In the following line, the narrator reminds the reader that "it is not easy for somebody as small as that to score points against an all-powerful grown-up," which will serve as a guiding thread for the rest of the book, as Matilda is faced with an additional adult villain, the almighty Miss Trunchbull, as well as a guiding thread for this analysis. It is worth noting that as the story progresses and unfolds, Matilda develops telekinetic powers on top of her

extraordinary abilities in reading and mathematics, which she uses to help her and all the children (and adults) of Crunchem Hall get revenge on “the giant” (104), “the Gorgon” (142), the “gigantic” (141) and tyrannical headmistress, Agatha Trunchbull. She herself is said to hold power over children and adults alike, parents and teachers without distinction, and power imbalance indeed exists between more than just children and adults in the rest of the novel too. Indeed, dichotomic notions are, throughout the book, constantly fighting a battle for who holds the most power: children versus adults, women versus men, young children versus older children, students versus teachers, children versus parents, “small” versus “big”, “smart” versus “dumb”, and so on. The 1996 film adaptation of *Matilda*, directed by Danny DeVito, even makes these dichotomies appear clearer to the audience: “Listen, you little wiseacre: I’m smart, you’re dumb; I’m big, you’re little; I’m right, you’re wrong, and there’s nothing you can do about it.” Dahl’s often simplistic, Manichaeic view of the world gives us an idea of who is supposed to be the winner of these fights, and the conclusion of the book suggests a rather obvious answer, but are these assumptions true to what the text actually tells the reader?

Defining the issue at stake

Bearing all the elements and ideas previously mentioned in mind, the notion of power, its dynamics and its subversion emerge as the main principles conducting the story of *Matilda*. Although these notions can be analysed through any lens for any body of work, the story itself seems to be a commentary on them. What does the analysis of these dynamics of power and the attempted or successful reversal of the established order teach us about Dahl’s vision on who holds the most power? What is *Matilda*’s core message and how is it relevant to educators and children alike?

Power being a highly polysemous notion, it is rather important that I work towards defining the keywords of this thesis (“power”, “dynamics” and “subversion”) to make sure the extent and limits of this analysis are made clear from the beginning.

Oxford’s *Lexico* online dictionary defines power as “the ability or capacity to do something or act in a particular way” (“Power,” def. 1). *Matilda*’s power of telekinesis falls under this definition: she has the power to move things with her eyes by the end of the story. Another definition of power would be to define it as “the capacity or ability to direct or

influence the behaviour of others or the course of events” (“Power,” def. 2). This definition is particularly important in social science and politics as it is key to understanding all interactions among individuals within a given society. Synonymous with “authority”, Miss Trunchbull’s power over the pupils of Crunchem Hall as both an adult and their headmistress falls under this category. A last entry that is relevant to this analysis characterises power as “physical strength and force exerted by something or someone” (“Power,” def. 3). A very obvious illustration of this understanding of “power” is Agatha Trunchbull’s characteristic physical strength, which is so inherent to her character that it is reminded through almost every adjective and verb of action used to describe her and her doings.

All these different definitions of power are the basis for most – if not all – interactions within the book, but they are also inherent in children’s literature itself, either as a central theme or an underlying motif.

The term “power dynamics” is most often used to describe how the perceived or actual levels of power (def. 2) between two or more people affect their relationship(s). The power dynamic between a child like Matilda and her parents is imbalanced as she is the less powerful of the two sides, being under their authority, younger and smaller. As the story of Matilda starts, the power dynamics follow a rather traditional pattern: children obey their parents, pupils obey their teachers, teachers obey the headmistress, and so on. What is of interest in *Matilda* is the way these dynamics are shifted and subverted. *Lexico* describes subversion as "the undermining of the power and authority of an established system or institution." Taking inspiration from its Latin roots *subvertere*, which means “overthrow”, my analysis on subversion in this context will focus on how the established social order and its structures of power are challenged (through reclaiming and resistance), reversed (through revenge and rebellion) and overthrown (through revolution) in Roald Dahl’s *Matilda*.

PART ONE: DEFINING THE ESTABLISHED ORDER: DICHOTOMIES AND POWER IMBALANCE IN *MATILDA*

Being very small and very young, the only power Matilda had over anyone in her family was brainpower. For sheer cleverness she could run rings around them all. But the fact remained that any five-year-old girl in any family was always obliged to do as she was told, however asinine the orders might be. (49)

I. “I’m right and you’re wrong, I’m big and you’re small, and there’s nothing you can do about it”: a story of children versus adults

As I mentioned in the introduction, dichotomic notions are at the centre of battles for power within the book: children and adults, pupils and teachers, women and men, younger children and older children, etc. Children’s literature in general has a tendency to tell stories about children who have to face clear-cut villains, and these evil wrongdoers most often happen to be adults. When it comes to Roald Dahl’s stories, the British writer himself never shied away from openly sharing his most important writing secret: telling stories about children conspiring against adults. In an interview with *The Independent* – as recounted by *the New York Times* in 1990 for the author’s obituary – Dahl said:

It may be simplistic, but it is the way. Parents and schoolteachers are the enemy. The adult is the enemy of the child because of the awful process of civilizing this thing that when it is born is an animal with no manners, no moral sense at all.

This statement seems to perfectly illustrate Matilda’s fight against those who hold power over her in her life: her parents – especially her dad, and the evil headmistress Agatha Trunchbull. By telling the story from a child’s point of view through the help of an adult narrator’s complicity, Dahl makes it obvious that he sides with children. But is Roald Dahl’s deliberate adult-child divide as black and white as it seems to be in *Matilda*? It is important to take a look at the power structures at play in the novel to define exactly the established

order that Matilda – along with several other characters, to lesser extents – seeks out to overthrow.

1. Children versus adults: a Manichaeian perspective on adult-child relationships

Oxford's *Lexico* defines Manichaeian as "relating to Manichaeism" ("Manichaeian," def. 1), before specifying that the term refers to anything which relates "to dualism or conflict between opposites; [something that is] dualistic." ("Manichaeian," def. 1.1). The term itself refers to a dualistic religious system which existed between the 3rd and 13th centuries and envisioned the world as being in a constant fight between light and darkness, respectively representing good and evil. Dahl's self-defined "simplistic" depiction of adults as the enemies and children as the heroes completely fits the main principle of Manichaeism. In *Matilda* specifically, it appears that the more power an adult holds over children, the more vilified they tend to be.

Harry Wormwood is the head of the household that consists of Matilda, her parents and her elder brother Michael. Mr Wormwood is the first villain to be introduced in the story, with Mrs Wormwood as a lesser villain, and her brother Michael as a rather passive character. While Mr Wormwood enforces power through violent language, Mrs Wormwood reinforces the power imbalance by siding with her husband, and morally being no better than him. When Matilda finally goes to school and is able to socialise with children her age and escape her home, she is faced with an even greater villain: Miss Trunchbull, the headmistress, who quite literally rules the school. Everything in her appearance, demeanour and speech makes it clear that she is the most powerful person in the story. Even the adults at Crunchem Hall seem scared of her, and her atrocities are such that no parent would believe their children if they talked about them. She is even referred to as "the Prince of Darkness" (109) by Hortensia, which is the term used in Manichaeism to refer to the principle of evil. By comparing her characterisation to Matilda's, it seems rather clear that the story is about good, powerless, innocent children against bad, powerful, ugly adults.

However, there are several instances throughout the book of adults and children who do not quite fit into the "good versus bad" narrative.

The first adult that Matilda meets to neither be criticised nor condemned by the narrator is Mrs Phelps, the village librarian. She is presented as a sweet old lady who is fascinated by Matilda's reading abilities, and she is the first person to help the little girl. Her characterisation is made in opposition to Matilda's parents: when Mr Wormwood refuses to buy Matilda a single book, Mrs Phelps introduces the girl to dozens of books. When she learns that Matilda's parents do not encourage reading books, she is appalled at the idea that they would expect such a young girl to stay alone at home watching television. Even though she is an adult herself, she "decid[es] not to interfere" (16) when she learns that no one is aware of the child's whereabouts. Even more so, she is presented as a good person in that she does not overreact when faced with Matilda's reading skills.

Almost anyone else witnessing the achievements of this small child would have been tempted to make a great fuss and shout the news all over the village and beyond, but not so Mrs Phelps. She was someone who minded her own business and had long since discovered it was seldom worthwhile to interfere with other people's children. (18)

Despite her status as an adult, Mrs Phelps does not seem to want to reclaim the power that she naturally holds over children, and is presented as completely harmless. Not only does she avoid questioning Matilda's decisions to come to the library on her own and read books meant for older readers, but she also allows Matilda to start her own empowerment through reading. Therefore, one might suggest that Mrs Phelps is presented as a good person for deciding not to use the limited power that she has.

The second adult that Matilda meets who is presented as a good person is Miss Honey. Unlike other characters, she is instantly given an age, a physical description, and a moral portrait. From the moment she is first introduced, there is no room for any doubt concerning her character: she is a good person.

Miss Jennifer Honey was a mild and quiet person who never raised her voice and was seldom seen to smile, but there is no doubt she possessed that rare gift for being adored by every small child under her care. (66-67)

The adjectives describing her parallel what I explained about Mrs Phelps: having limited power due to her age and gender, and choosing not to raise her voice, Miss Honey is shown to be no threat to children. Her characterisation is even such that she appears to be both an adult and a child. I will develop Miss Honey's ambiguous status as a woman-child further in PART ONE II. 2. "Power is not feminine: the masculine Miss Trunchbull, the

feminine Mrs Wormwood and Miss Honey, the woman-child". Mrs Phelps and Miss Honey are both very clearly depicted as weak adults, as opposed to the strong, evil ones.

On the other hand, throughout the book, children often do things that wouldn't be considered suitable, proper or nice to do. Matilda's tricks on her father, Bruce's cake theft, Hortensia's chokey-worthy misbehaviour, Lavender's scheming with the newt... such episodes all feature children doing things that should be considered bad, but do not make them seem like inherently bad people in the story. They are given excuses and allowed redemption because of their state of helplessness and powerlessness. Adults, on the other hand, cannot do anything bad without becoming villains. This is why Mrs Phelps and Miss Honey are passive characters: they are not allowed to fight the powerful adults that terrorise the children of the story since they themselves are grown-ups. The latter is even given a tragic backstory that further demonises Agatha Trunchbull to make up for her state of adulthood. Harry Wormwood and the Trunchbull, on the other hand, are mean, tyrannical monsters. Everything they do and say is cruel and nothing in their past or in their actions can explain or excuse it; they are not allowed to exist outside of a one-dimensional representation of badness. Other bad adults like Mrs Wormwood or the cook only exist to reinforce the power of a greater adult villain.

The 1996 film adaptation tends to reinforce this Manichaeian view on the one hand, with children being depicted as completely innocent, inherently good people. Even though in the book, when mentioning the chokey, Hortensia claims she was "in there six times" (104) before explaining the things she has done, she states in the film that she has been sent there twice. The viewer does not know why she was sent to the chokey, probably to accentuate the randomness of Miss Trunchbull's villainy, but this also has the effect of emphasising the child's innocence. In the same film, Lavender's "plan of battle" (139) with the newt becomes a spontaneous move rather than a premeditated trick. Nonetheless, on the adults' part, Matilda's parents are presented in a different light: they seem to actually care for each other, but also to have cared about Matilda all along, and they accept to let her stay with Miss Honey only because it is the apparent right thing to do. The almighty Miss Trunchbull, of whom every character is afraid, sees her status of the one true villain of the story therefore emphasised.

Taking a look at this adaptation can help the reader realise that even though there are limits to Manichaeism in *Matilda*, with children being sometimes bad and some adults being good, the character of Miss Trunchbull is so much beyond redemption that the few tricks Matilda or anyone plays on her are instantly justified. The same comments can be made about Dahl's original depiction of Mr Wormwood, to a lesser extent. One thing is however clear: the story focuses on the conflict between children and adults, and attempts at either reinforcing, maintaining or destroying power imbalance. The lack of balance in adult-child power dynamics is made pretty clear for the child reader through a characterisation that is at the very least reminiscent of Manichaeism, and at most blatantly Manichaean.

2. Younger children versus older children: emulating adult-child power dynamics

When analysing the power dynamics between the pupils of Crunchem Hall and their teachers, one character other than Matilda seems to stand out: Hortensia. Being an older child, it appears that she tries to reproduce adult-child power dynamics in her relationships with younger children – here, Matilda and Lavender.

Hortensia's relative badness as a child is first shown in her appearance and demeanour. Bad adults in the story tend to have nasty habits (such as watching the television), to be physically described in negative terms with characteristic flaws (Mr & Mrs Wormwood, Miss Trunchbull), and to use derogatory terms when addressing children. Hortensia checks all three boxes: she has a boil on her nose, eats crisps, and is quite far from being the quiet, polite, brilliant child Matilda is.

Matilda and Lavender [...] were approached by a rugged ten-year-old with a boil on her nose, called Hortensia. "New scum, I suppose," Hortensia said to them, looking down from her great height. She was eating from an extra large bag of potato crisps and digging the stuff out in handfuls. (102)

The imbalance of power between this older child and her younger classmates is also continuously reminded in the text through their difference in height, as if to emphasise the difference between the two age groups, similar to the way Dahl does with adults. The "great height" of the ten-year-old "giant" (102) is therefore opposed to the "the two tiny ones" (102) – whose small size is constantly reminded and reinforced by Quentin Blake's illustrations –

as a way to deepen the gap between older children and younger ones. Dahl makes it clear that this divide is intentional, by adding that “being very small, they were inclined to mistrust any creature that was larger than they were, especially senior girls” (104).

Similar to the way Mr Wormwood is depicted as way less bright than he believes to be, Hortensia also thinks her age makes her naturally superior to – and brighter than other children, when it is not quite the case:

“But you’re too small and stupid to have read the *Just So Stories*, aren’t you?”

“I’ve read them,” Matilda said.

“You’re a liar,” Hortensia said amiably. “You can’t even read yet.” (105-106)

Lavender even takes Hortensia as a role model when the ten-year-old tells the story of the tricks she played on the Trunchbull, the way an impressionable child trying to imitate an adult would: she plans to trick the Trunchbull herself.

Another ten-year-old child in the story is Matilda’s brother Michael, introduced in the book as “a perfectly normal boy” (11). As he does not interact with children in the book, it is hard to know exactly where he stands. He does not contribute to Matilda’s bullying, but he does not do anything to shift the power imbalance towards the children either. However, it is interesting to take a look at the difference of treatment between Michael and Matilda by their parents. While Michael is called “my boy” (50), Matilda is constantly yelled at and belittled. The young Mike indeed benefits from a special treatment for being the older son who will “be going into business with [his father] one day” (50). Despite having the characteristics of the good child character, as shown by his size and lack of negative moral and physical portrait, he still unintentionally maintains the status quo. The difference in characterisation is even highlighted and emphasised by the height difference between the two ten-year-olds in Quentin Blake’s accompanying illustrations:



Figure 1: Michael and Matilda (47) – Quentin Blake for *Matilda*, originally released in 1988, colourised for <https://www.roalddahl.com/>



Figure 2: Matilda, Lavender and Hortensia (105) – Quentin Blake for *Matilda*, originally released in 1988, colourised for <https://www.roalddahl.com/>

Age and size therefore seem to be the inherent key to holding power: the younger and the smaller a child is, the more powerless he or she naturally is. The older a child gets, the more inclined they are to either abuse power (Hortensia) or to remain neutral in situations of injustice (Michael), mirroring the way adults have previously been shown to relate to adult-child power dynamics. Even though an older child like Hortensia is presented as a naughty trickster, and therefore depicted as morally grey, she remains on the children's side due to the extent of Miss Trunchbull's tyranny – her actions thus justified.

3. “Although you look like a child, you are not really a child at all”: Matilda Wormwood, the exception to the rule?

Defining Matilda’s place in the existing adult-child dichotomy is a rather tricky task. It is made very explicit from the beginning of the novel that the eponymous Matilda is exceptionally different from other children her age, older children, and even adults. She is first described as “extraordinary”, “sensitive” and “brilliant” (10), and the narrator then demonstrates why such a choice of words was used:

By the age of *one and a half* her speech was perfect and she knew as many words as most grown-ups. [...] By the time she was *three*, Matilda had taught herself to read by studying newspapers and magazines that lay around the house. At the age of *four*, she could read fast and well and she naturally began hankering after books. (11)

Her natural “ability” (10) is what appears to be the reason for her being so precocious, and her parents had nothing to do with their child’s exceptional development. On the contrary, they are presented as being an obstacle to her unquenchable thirst for reading and general intellectual development. Not only has Matilda learned skills way faster than a regular child would – and all by herself, she also happens to show signs of maturity, self-awareness, emotional intelligence and composure that go beyond that of the adults in the story. When the grown-ups of the novel swear, belittle, bully the weak, and easily lose their temper, the young girl reacts completely differently. In one particular instance, in the chapter entitled “The Ghost”, Mr Wormwood bursts into a fit of rage over Matilda reading too many books for his liking. The narrator states very openly that “the man felt some kind of jealousy” about Matilda “enjoy[ing] reading books when he couldn’t” (41). As opposed to her father’s apparent rage and violent choice of words, Matilda remains perfectly calm and composed despite her father’s highly symbolic destruction of a library book:

Most children in Matilda’s place would have burst into floods of tears. She didn’t do this. She sat there very still and white and thoughtful. She seemed to know that neither crying nor sulking ever got anyone anywhere. (41)

Although she is a child, Matilda has the power to control her own emotions, which makes her neither fully child nor completely adult – especially considering the lack of maturity and composure coming from the actual adults of the story. However, there seem to be limits to this sense of adult maturity. Indeed, Matilda decides to take revenge on the adult

bullies by playing tricks on them, which is something one might consider childish. Moreover, it is only because she feels “so unbearably angry that something [i]s bound to explode inside her very soon” (164) as she faces Miss Trunchbull’s unfair accusations in the chapter entitled “The First Miracle” that she is able to access her telekinetic powers. She also ends up defeating the almighty Trunchbull in the fight for who holds the most power – a characteristic which is supposed to belong to adults – thus gaining the title of the most powerful character of the book. Dahl himself provides an answer to the question of Matilda’s place within the adult-child dichotomy, as Jennifer Honey declares, near the end of the story:

“You are so much wiser than your years, my dear,” Miss Honey went on, “that it quite staggers me. Although you look like a child, you are not really a child at all because your mind and your powers of reasoning seem to be fully grown-up. So I suppose we might call you a grown-up child.” (195)

Matilda’s status as a “grown-up child” (195) therefore provides her with all the qualities of an adult – or at least the few Dahl considers worthy: courage, intelligence, empathy, maturity, independence – while still being a small, innocent child. Interestingly, none of the qualities which make Matilda the hero that she is are traits that are typical of children. It is almost as if Matilda were an adult in a tiny girl’s body – the only person capable of putting an end to power imbalance, and to reverse the established order.

Some critics, however, tend to highlight the limits to the extent of Matilda’s actual power: would the little five-year-old girl have been able to defeat Miss Trunchbull without borrowing Magnus Honey’s adult male voice?

II. Gender dynamics of power: a traditional depiction of women and men?

Before addressing critics’ comments on the limits to Matilda’s power, it is important that I focus on analysing and describing the depiction of women and men in the story to better understand how gender power dynamics function in the story.

The approach of this part will follow the principles of feminist criticism that Perry Nodelman described in a 1988 article entitled “Children’s Literature as Women’s Writing” for *Children’s Literature Association Quarterly*.

Feminist criticism is not a new approach to children’s literature. In its most basic and least persuasive form – the consideration of stereotyped gender roles in relation to the effect they might have on young readers – it has become a staple of the field. Even the most ingenuous of beginning students in introductory courses in children’s literature knows for sure that one of the things all responsible adults have an obligation to do is to consider children’s books in terms of whether they are guilty of encouraging traditional definitions of masculinity and femininity. (Nodelman 32)

In an effort to avoid any anachronistic reading of *Matilda*, I decided to select a definition published on the same year as Dahl’s novel despite there being more recent, complete definitions of the principle.

1. "What the heck’s the matter with you, woman?": the Wormwoods as a traditional family

Matilda’s family is rather stereotypical in its assignation and depiction of gender roles. The family being a microcosm of society, taking a look at the power structures at play within the family sphere can help us better understand the power dynamics at play within the novel. In terms of the place each member occupies in society and within the family circle itself, it indeed follows a traditional pattern. The father is the sole breadwinner of the household and an angry, active character. He embodies and enforces authoritative power as the head of the family. The mother is in charge of cooking (whether or not she does actually cook) and is relatively passive compared to her husband. While every major character in the story has a first name, she does not even have a name of her own and is only known as “Mrs Wormwood”. She is feminine and believes looks are more important than books (98), especially for a little girl whose role is not to be smart but only to find a good husband (99). The older brother is a normal young boy who gets all of the father’s love and attention. Matilda is at the bottom of the Wormwood hierarchy for being both a girl and the youngest. While Mr Wormwood considers the exceptional Matilda “too stupid” (22) to understand his deception and crookery, he is very keen on teaching his rather average older son everything he knows since Michael is the one who will eventually join his business.

“You must be very clever to find a use for something that costs nothing,” [Matilda] said. “I wish I could do it.”
“You couldn’t,” the father said. “You’re too stupid. But I don’t mind telling young Mike here about it seeing he’ll be joining me in the business one day.” (22)

This traditional depiction of gender roles can also be found through the language the father uses to address his wife and children. While he uses terms of endearment to address his son, he uses rather harsh language when addressing his wife and daughter either to belittle them or to discredit them when he feels he is losing control over the power he wields. In the chapter “The Platinum-Blond Man”, for instance, he can be seen verbally dismissing his wife and using her gender as a sort of insult in the sentence “What the heck’s the matter with you, woman?” (61) before ordering her around “‘Get me a mirror!’ the father yelled. ‘Don’t just stand there shrieking at me! Get me a mirror!’” (62). I will comment on Harry Wormwood’s treatment of Matilda further in PART TWO I. 1. “Mr Wormwood as Matilda’s first bully”.

Studying interaction and relationship patterns within the Wormwood family seems to tell us everything we need to know about the gender power structures at play within the novel. However, one might point out the fact that the tyrannical Miss Trunchbull – a woman – is far more powerful than any other male character of the story, therefore subverting stereotypes. Even Matilda, the young girl, is the hero of the story and successfully defeats the evil headmistress in the end. Whether Dahl’s depiction of the Wormwoods as a traditional family of which the head is a sexist, violent man is a mere commentary on what he deems is wrong with society or an unconscious bias on the author’s part can only be clarified by analysing the key female characters of the novel: Miss Trunchbull, Miss Honey and Mrs Wormwood first, and young Matilda herself second.

2. Power is not feminine: the masculine Miss Trunchbull, the feminine Mrs Wormwood and Miss Honey, the woman-child

Reading *Matilda*, one might get the impression that power is presented as a masculine trait. Harry Wormwood embodies male power – even though he is very often ridiculed – and society appears to be designed around male superiority. Female characters, such as Miss Honey and Mrs Wormwood, are presented as innately powerless. It is true that Agatha

Trunchbull, a woman, is the adult who holds the most power in the book, but her characterisation makes it very clear that she is not your typical woman.

She was above all a most formidable female. She had once been a famous athlete, and even now the muscles were still clearly in evidence. You could see them in the bull-neck, in the big shoulders, in the thick arms, in the sinewy wrists and in the powerful legs. (82-83)

The Trunchbull's first physical portrait introduces her as a "female", not a woman, and this distinction is essential: she might be biologically female, but she does not possess the physical (and moral) characteristics which are assigned to femininity and womanhood. In her gender expression, Miss Trunchbull is more of a man than she is a proper woman. But it was always Roald Dahl's intention to portray Miss Trunchbull as a scary, manly villain. In a 2015 article entitled "Roald Dahl Used Power of Words to Waltz His Matilda", journalist Elizabeth Fortescue told the readers of *The Daily Telegraph* about a mail exchange that occurred between *Matilda*'s author and the director of a stage adaptation of his novel in 1989. She quotes Dahl himself:

"I believe you are casting for Matilda around about now. I hope you are considering the question of casting a man in the part of Miss Trunchbull. If you got the right one it could be awfully funny. Yours sincerely, Roald Dahl."

A week later, Dahl wrote again.

"Dear Mr Watkins. How wonderful that you have cast a giant male in the part of Miss Trunchbull.[...]" (Fortescue)

And interestingly, *Matilda the Musical* had already featured male actors playing the role of Miss Trunchbull before the private conversations were even unearthed and made public. This shows how everything about the Trunchbull's characterisation is so obviously masculine that the reader is highly likely to picture a man when trying to imagine the headmistress in their minds – but she still has to remain a woman. Hortensia supports this idea by referring to the woman as "the Prince of Darkness, the Foul Serpent, the Fiery Dragon" (109), thus describing her evilness and the extent of her power through overall masculine terms. Such a representation of the tyrant suggests that power, to Dahl, is something inherently masculine. This idea is supported by the way other women are represented in the story.

Mrs Wormwood is Matilda's neglecting, TV-obsessed mother who serves as a minor antagonist in the story. Contrary to her husband, she does not appear to wield much power over Matilda, seeing how Mr Wormwood is the primary target of the young girl's vengeful

schemes. In terms of gender performance, she is Miss Trunchbull's opposite: while Agatha is an overly-masculine woman working and giving orders to adults and children alike, the mother is an overly-feminine housewife who receives orders from her husband and only has limited power over her children. Mrs Wormwood is so caricatural in her performance of femininity that it seems to be her sole personality trait. When meeting Miss Honey, she makes the distinction between the two women very clear:

"I said you chose books and I chose looks," Mrs Wormwood said. "And who's finished up the better off? Me, of course. I'm sitting pretty in a nice house with a successful businessman and you're left slaving away teaching a lot of nasty little children the ABC." (98)

However, the narrator describes the mother at the beginning of the story, and it appears that she is not the pretty woman she thinks she is. Her being ridiculed minimises the extent of the already limited power she has.

She was a large woman whose hair was dyed platinum blonde except where you could see the mousy-brown bits growing out from the roots. She wore heavy makeup and she had one of those unfortunate bulging figures where the flesh appears to be strapped in all around the body to prevent it from falling out. (27)

Miss Honey, on the other hand, is presented as a beautiful woman with a "lovely pale oval madonna face" (66). I have already mentioned how the bad characters in *Matilda* are presented as ugly, mean and sometimes fat while the good characters are described as beautiful, slim and lovely, but it is even more interesting to analyse how gender comes into play in the equation.

In an article written for *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* in 2008 entitled "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly: Resistance and Complicity in *Matilda*", Kristen Guest, professor in the Department of English at the University of Northern British Columbia, highlights the issues that come with the "good" and "bad" dichotomy previously described, and how it has had a problematic history when it comes to gender representation:

Characterizations of women according to the logic of "good" and "bad" recapitulates patterns of gender associated with fairy tales, in which female characters are constructed as passive/unconscious or active/narcissistic – good or evil. [...] Both the "monstrous" Miss Trunchbull, who has assumed a life of action as a star athlete and working woman, and the narcissistic Mrs. Wormwood, who is figuratively entombed by the mass media images she embraces, indicate the disfiguring effects of the gendered scripts available to women in the late twentieth century. (Guest 247)

But unfortunately, being a good character is not enough to subvert the power dynamics present in the story. It even appears to be a requirement for a good character to be powerless. Jennifer Honey's powerlessness is even stated by the narrator himself when first describing her: "Her body was so slim and fragile one got the feeling that if she fell over she would smash into a thousand pieces, like a porcelain figure" (66). And indeed, the twenty-three-year-old (66, 196) teacher's entire characterisation mirrors that of the other powerless, helpless, innocent characters in the story: the children of Crunchem Hall. Even her name sounds as sweet as honey, while Miss Trunchbull's sounds as disagreeable to the ear as the character is. It is almost as if an adult woman has three choices in life: she can either be manly and cruel (Miss Trunchbull), feminine and cruel (Mrs Wormwood), or nice, but powerless, and not really an adult at all. Guest comments on this specific part of Miss Honey's characterisation by opposing it to Matilda's ambiguous adult-child status:

Describing Matilda as a "grown-up child" not only allows Miss Honey to claim a confidante but also to identify herself as the converse: a childish adult, whose helplessness derives from her position as a "good" woman. (Guest 248)

Therefore, Miss Honey is only allowed to be both an adult *and* good by being complacent in her child-like powerlessness. However, being as unable to face the adult villains of her life as any child would, Miss Honey has to be rescued from her evil aunt by Matilda, thus emphasising her role as a "fairy tale heroine" (Guest 249), and putting the child in a position of power over all the adults of the story. But does Matilda actually subvert patriarchal expectations and transcend the established gender power dynamics?

3. "No one in the world could give the right answer just like that, especially a girl!": subverting patriarchal expectations

Matilda seems to be the only instance of a female character being equal – and even superior – to men in the novel. The story however starts differently, with Matilda being like "any five-year-old girl in any family": "always obliged to do as she [i]s told, however asinine the orders might be" (49). It is only through her quest for revenge and reclaiming power that she is able to rise above society's expectations for girls and women.

Even though she is smarter than all of the cruel adults that she meets, Matilda is constantly being dismissed by them because of her age and gender. They all even refuse to acknowledge the extent of her intellectual abilities.

“Don’t give me that rubbish!” the father shouted. “Of course you looked! You must have looked! No one in the world could give the right answer just like that, especially a girl! You’re a little cheat, madam, that’s what you are! A cheat and a liar!” (55)

However, Miss Trunchbull sees Matilda and little girls in general as greater threats than little boys. Despite it potentially suggesting that girls are more of a threat to the power she wields than their male counterparts, the monstrous headmistress still shows that she is no ally to the female cause.

I have discovered, Miss Honey, during my long career as a teacher that a bad girl is a far more dangerous creature than a bad boy. What’s more, they’re much harder to squash. Squashing a bad girl is like trying to squash a bluebottle. You bang down on it and the darn thing isn’t there. Nasty dirty things, little girls are. Glad I never was one. (85-86)

Some critics, like Guest, have also pointed out the limits to Matilda’s power when reading the book through a feminist lens. Indeed, it appears Matilda was able to successfully defeat the Trunchbull by borrowing Magnus’s voice.

Dr Honey’s final words – “I am watching you Agatha” – aligns a male voice with supernatural powers of surveillance that restore proper domestic order. Beneath this expression of masculine authority, however, we recognize that the real source of “power” is both a child and a girl. (Guest 248)

Still, as Guest points out, Matilda is the one who eventually defeats Miss Honey’s malevolent aunt, thanks to powers that she developed herself, and to restore (or finally get to) the natural order of things: Miss Honey gets her house and money back, Matilda finds a loving family in her teacher, and the children of Crunchem Hall are now able to study in a normal school. Nonetheless, as for Miss Trunchbull’s replacement, “the excellent Mr Trilby was appointed Head Teacher in her place” (228), which could suggest that the natural order of things involves a man at its head. Moreover, the narrator makes it rather clear that the passive and powerless Miss Honey is the adult female model little girls should value and emulate. Even though it is not made obvious what the message of the book is when it comes to women and power, one thing is for certain: Matilda does transcend gender expectations and show qualities that no other female character in the book possesses. She is a powerful, brilliant,

empathetic little girl who subverts the gender power dynamics and social expectations at play within the book almost entirely by herself.

Matilda getting rid of the villains of her life as an initially powerless character indeed makes it seem like the established order of adults versus children and male power versus female powerlessness which I have just defined ends up being reversed. But what exactly is it that makes the adults the villains that they are? How do Mr Wormwood and Miss Trunchbull express and assert their power and dominance? Before moving on to the analysis of the reversal of the power structures at play in *Matilda*, I shall first turn to the study of the subtleties of what makes these two particular characters power-crazed bullies.

PART TWO: ADULT BULLIES AND THE ABUSE OF POWER

Miss Trunchbull, the Headmistress, was something else altogether. She was a gigantic holy terror, a fierce tyrannical monster who frightened the life out of the pupils and teachers alike. (67)

I. “*Shut up!*”: Silencing and insulting to assert power through language

Not only do adults naturally wield all the power in *Matilda*'s social system, but they also constantly abuse it. Indeed, they repeatedly and unabashedly belittle children to the point that it goes far beyond mere bullying. It is interesting to take a look at how both Harry Wormwood and Agatha Trunchbull assert their power through similar methods: insulting whoever crosses them in a fit of rage, and persistently silencing them and shutting them down.

1. Mr Wormwood as Matilda's first bully

Mr Wormwood is the first villain the reader is confronted with. The narrator makes it clear that the girl's parents are neglecting and emotionally abusive in the first few pages of the book.

Occasionally one comes across parents who take the opposite line, who show no interest at all in their children, and these of course are far worse than the doting ones. Mr and Mrs Wormwood were two such parents. They had a son called Michael and a daughter called Matilda, and the parents looked upon Matilda in particular as nothing more than a scab. (10)

A popular saying claims that “the parent is the child's first bully”. In *Matilda*'s case, it appears that such a statement might not be an oversimplification, but a reality. Mr Wormwood's neglect in particular is quickly revealed to be one of his character's numerous flaws. When addressing Matilda – and not her brother, as I have previously pointed out – Harry has a tendency to shut her down and very overtly silence her. Here are a few instances

of such a behaviour being made evident: “The parents, instead of applauding her, called her a noisy chatterbox and told her sharply that small girls should be seen and not heard” (11), ““That’s because you’re an ignorant little twit,’ the father said. His speech was never very delicate but Matilda was used to it” (22), ““Be quiet!’ the father snapped. ‘Just keep your nasty mouth shut, will you!’” (37), ““Shut up,’ the father said. ‘Stop guessing and trying to be clever.’” (54)

It appears silencing is a means for Mr Wormwood to assert his own power. By using coarse language and the imperative mood, the father makes sure he remains in a position of power over the other characters, and especially little Matilda. But if we analyse the situations during which he uses his bullying, silencing ways to shut down his daughter, it clearly seems as if he were doing so because someone other than him is actually wielding the power, or tipping the balance of power towards them. It is suggested by the narrator in the humorous tone used which very often ridicules the man, and it is also plainly stated on a few occasions:

There seemed little doubt that the man felt some kind of jealousy. How dare she, he seemed to be saying with each rip of a page, how dare she enjoy reading books when he couldn’t? How dare she? (41)

“Like Shakespeare,” Matilda had once said to him.

“Like who?”

“Shakespeare, daddy.”

“Was he brainy?”

“Very, daddy.”

“He had masses of hair, did he?”

“He was bald, daddy.”

To which the father had snapped, “If you can’t talk sense then shut up” (57)

Matilda’s first bully therefore appears to be inclined to assert and enforce – even abuse his power in situations in which he is actually powerless – or less powerful than the other (in Matilda’s case, the power of knowledge is most often what the father lacks). This is reminiscent of the way he actually occupies both physical space and sound space. Mr Wormwood has to “make his appearance felt immediately by creating a lot of noise and clatter.” (59) when he enters a room, and the narrator informs the reader about what might go on inside the man’s head:

One could almost hear him saying, “It’s me! Here I come, the great man himself, the master of the house, the wage-earner, the one who makes it possible for all the rest of you to live so well! Notice me and pay your respects!” (59-60)

Silencing those who do not assert or reinforce his own power is the other side of the coin. Anyone or anything that goes against his own vision of himself as a powerful “great man” has to be shushed. This characteristic of Mr Wormwood is also present in the character of Miss Trunchbull.

2. Miss Trunchbull’s insults as a means to belittle and bully the weak

Miss Trunchbull does silence and order the children of Crunchem Hall around, but the most characteristic part of her tyranny lies in the colourful insults which she utters every time she appears in the book. She plays with sound and word associations so much that she always finds a new degrading way of addressing the pupils of her school. Here are a few notable examples that she uses to address Wilfred near the end of the novel:

“You blithering idiot!” shouted the Trunchbull. “You festering gumboil! You fleabitten fungus! That is the three-times table! [...] Can’t you see that, you stagnant cesspool!” (218)

“You bursting blister!” yelled the Trunchbull. “You moth-eaten maggot! [...] What is the difference between three eights and eight threes? Tell me that, you mangled little wurzel and look sharp about it!” (218)

Heir to Carrollian nonsense, Dahl takes inspiration from Lewis Carroll’s characteristically colourful, inventive, at times violent use of language. The way the headmistress plays with sounds mirrors her own last name, which is supposed to sound harsh, and unpleasant to the ear. But why is it that she feels the need to insult children in such a manner? In his *Dictionary of Literary Devices*, Bernard Dupriez distinguishes three different types of insults, based on the work of one of his peers:

R. Edouard, in the introduction to his *Dictionnaire des injures*, distinguishes insults from reproaches (which are well-founded criticism), threats (which are future-oriented), and outrageous attacks (which are cruelly wounding). He reduces the power of insults by attributing them merely to “illogical and momentary fits of irritation” or to the “need to attract attention”, that is, to the expressive and phatic functions of communication. (Dupriez 235)

Miss Trunchbull does use threats, such as saying “I’ll very soon rub you out if you try getting clever with me” (152), but she most of the time uses outrageous attacks as a means to belittle and scare pupils, and is yet to be seen expressing well-founded criticism. In Edouard’s perspective, the child-like repeated use of insults from Miss Trunchbull would therefore place

her as an illogical, attention-seeking villain – thus sharing numerous characteristics with the children she so despises and bullies. In that sense, one might suggest that her need to silence and belittle children comes from a need to do the exact opposite: amplify her own voice and magnify herself, in order to appear mightier, bigger and scarier. Her insults are just another tool in her fight for wielding the most power, but the abuse unfortunately does not stop at the mere utterance of cruel words. This idea is reminiscent of the way violence is at the very least as much linguistic as it is physical in nonsense literature.

II. Trunchbull’s tyranny: the reign of a power-crazed character

“The supreme commander” (66) of Crunchem Hall Primary School is a tyrant whose character is made to be hated by the reader, mainly because of the way she abuses power. She is indeed not allowed to exist outside of her extreme cruelty. Her status as headmistress and the inherent authoritative power that comes with it are not the sole source of her power – everything about the Trunchbull’s character emphasises her monstrous might: her use of language, her physical and moral features, but also the extent of her absurd murderous villainy.

1. Physical and psychological power: how the Trunchbull *“frightened the life out of the pupils and teachers alike”*

Miss Trunchbull’s characterisation is such that every element added makes her appear scarier and more powerful than she was before. The narrator makes it clear as soon as she is first introduced that the Trunchbull’s demeanour leaves no doubt as to where she stands in the hierarchy of power, mainly using the lexical fields of militarism and war, which are every so often reused throughout the book.

There was an aura of menace about her even at a distance, and when she came up close you could almost feel the dangerous heat radiating from her as from a red-hot rod of metal. When she marched — Miss Trunchbull never walked, she always marched like a storm-trooper with long strides and arms aswinging — when she marched along a corridor you could actually hear her snorting as she went, and if a group of children

happened to be in her path, she ploughed right on through them like a tank, with small people bouncing off her to left and right. (67)

But her demeanour is not the only thing that makes the Trunchbull scary, since every part of her physical description is meant to emphasise her power and meanness – so excessively that it becomes humorous. After describing her as physically powerful for being a former famous athlete, the narrator paints a rather exaggerated picture of the woman: “Looking at her, you got the feeling that this was someone who could bend iron bars and tear telephone directories in half” (83). She is supposed to embody physical power, and is almost both its allegory and its cautionary tale (67). Her physical strength is also emphasised by the depiction of children as tiny, vulnerable creatures. Quentin Blake’s illustrations (see *figures 4-9*) greatly contribute to this discrepancy between the headmistress and the pupils she loathes. However, children are not the only victims of the Trunchbull’s scare tactics. What makes the Trunchbull such a powerful villain is the way both other teachers and the children’s parents fail to put an end to her reign of terror: “She was a gigantic holy terror, a fierce tyrannical monster who frightened the life out of the pupils and teachers alike.” (67)

One teacher in particular remains especially powerless in front of Miss Trunchbull’s villainy: her niece Jennifer Honey. And this child-like fear comes from both physical and psychological abuse that the teacher suffered as a child which helps trap her in her role of a woman-child as a young adult. Indeed, young Jenny was beaten by her aunt a child, and even confesses to Matilda: “I wasn’t allowed to cry in front of her. But I lived in fear.” (199)

Fear is one of the main ways in which Miss Trunchbull holds on to the power that she wields, and as Miss Honey’s conversation with Matilda at the end of the book suggests, it mostly comes from the fact that the Trunchbull’s physical power is not only expressed in her appearance and demeanour, but also through her actions. She is a violent, physically abusive character who punishes and even quite literally tortures children in order to scare them into obedience. And it is thanks to this fear that she holds both physical and psychological power over the children of Crunchem Hall, Miss Honey and the other teachers. Belittling and bullying them only adds to the psychological hold and influence Agatha has over everyone.

When it comes to parents, it appears Miss Trunchbull’s secret lies exactly in the way she abuses her power to a point that it becomes unbelievable to any adult. The bright Matilda is the one to put it into words best halfway through the novel:

“Your story would sound too ridiculous to be believed. And that is the Trunchbull’s great secret.”

“What is?” Lavender asked.

Matilda said, “Never do anything by halves if you want to get away with it. Be outrageous. Go the whole hog. Make sure everything you do is so completely crazy it’s unbelievable.” (117)

And for the ones who might believe their children anyway, it is also stated earlier that “she treats the mothers and fathers just the same as the children and they’re all scared to death of her” (116). This dimension of Miss Trunchbull contributes to the impression that she is somewhat of an absurd villain.

2. From violence to death: Agatha Trunchbull, an absurd villain?

Oxford’s *Lexico* defines the adjective “absurd” as referring to something “wildly unreasonable, illogical, or inappropriate.” (“Absurd,” def. 1) and “arousing amusement or derision; ridiculous.” (“Absurd,” def. 1.1). It wouldn’t be an overstatement to describe the humorous tone of the story as relatively absurd at times, even borrowing from Carrollian nonsense in the way logical reasoning and language conventions keep being subverted. This tone borrowed by the narrator might be the reason why Miss Trunchbull’s violent and unfair behaviour is so normalised that the reader sometimes does not even question the more bizarre elements of the story. Matilda’s telekinetic powers aside, there is one thing which does not feel so reasonable and logical yet is presented as truthful and realistic: the fact that children remain alive after being flung out windows, force-fed enormous cakes and/or thrown in a stifling, tiny cupboard filled with glass shards. This is what makes Miss Trunchbull’s evilness so absurd – not only is she ridiculously scary physically, she also resorts to inappropriate and ridiculous means to assert and abuse her power. The chokey, as Hortensia describes it, is:

“... a very tall but very narrow cupboard. The floor is only ten inches square so you can’t sit down or squat in it. You have to stand. And three of the walls are made of cement with bits of broken glass sticking out all over, so you can’t lean against them. You have to stand more or less at attention all the time when you get locked up in there. It’s terrible.” (104)

The Trunchbull’s chokey is quite literally an instrument of torture. But it is only fitting that a school called Crunchem Hall (“crunch ‘em all”), whose headmistress has a name which sounds like a portmanteau of “truncheon” (a stick carried by police officers) and “bull”, would

have room for such a cupboard. The reader understands that *Matilda* is not meant to be entirely realistic, and that all these abnormal elements are borrowed from the low fantasy genre; nevertheless, they still help depicting Miss Trunchbull as an absurd villain.

Even though she does not actually kill any of the children she manhandles, Agatha Trunchbull is an actual murderer. Indeed, the story more than suggests that Dr Magnus Honey did not kill himself, but was rather killed by his late wife's sister. Matilda, who in the story is always proven right and whose power of reasoning is such that anything she says is presented as the truth, is the one to suggest it: "‘I know what you're thinking,' Matilda said. 'You're thinking that the aunt killed him and made it look as though he'd done it himself'" (198). Dahl's power of words, with the help of his third-person omniscient narrator, helps bring together this over-the-top, comically absurd, caricatural antagonist. She checks all the figurative boxes of what makes a villain, so much that it becomes absurd. No one in the book matches her might and cruelty, not even Mr Wormwood who should naturally hold more power over his daughter, as the child's father.

The family is a microcosm of society, and the first hint of a social order a child encounters. The second one a child usually experiences is school, a larger microcosm of society. And in both cases in the novel, the adults in charge are power-driven, megalomaniac bullies. Could it be that Dahl believes the adults in charge in any given context in our society are innately bound to be evil and cruel? Now that the established order has been defined, and the extent of the power abuse exercised by the adults of the story studied, I shall now finally focus on analysing the attempts and successes at reversing the established order both *in* and *through* the book.

PART THREE: REVERSING THE ESTABLISHED ORDER: WHEN POWER CHANGES SIDES

You must remember that she was still hardly five years old and it is not easy for somebody as small as that to score points against an all-powerful grown-up. Even so, she was determined to have a go. (29)

I. Empowering the child: the adult's responsibility?

Empowerment is defined by Oxford's online dictionary *Lexico* as "authority or power given to someone to do something" ("Empowerment," def. 1), as well as "the process of becoming stronger and more confident, especially in controlling one's life and claiming one's rights" ("Empowerment," def. 1.1). In the context of *Matilda*, and in regards to the dynamics of power, empowerment could therefore be described as a transitory process of going from a place of relative powerlessness to a place of power and control over one's own life. Such a definition would make the novel a story of empowerment in more ways than one. Indeed, young Matilda becomes stronger as she takes control over her own life and reclaims the power held by the adults of the story, and she also literally empowers herself as she develops telekinetic powers in the process. One question remains: who is the person supposed to be giving the authority or power (def. 1) to Matilda? The natural answer is her parents, as they are the ones supposed to raise her, but it is obviously not the case for the young girl. Dahl's story of a neglected child empowering herself despite cruel parents and an evil headmistress might just be the greatest lesson on empowerment: children can do it themselves. Dahl himself might thus be empowering the child readers of his book.

1. "It's a funny thing about mothers and fathers...": a lesson on good parenting and bad parents

Matilda begins with what could be described as a parenting lesson from the narrator, who instantly presents what the story will be about: parents, children, school, and the way each of these notions relates to the others.

It's a funny thing about mothers and fathers. Even when their own child is the most disgusting little blister you could ever imagine, they still think that he or she is wonderful. (7)

In this chapter, Dahl seems to suggest, through the narrator's humorous introduction, that there is nothing wrong with parents empowering their children, no matter how brilliant (or not) they are, as long as they keep it to themselves and do not brag about it. In fact, empowering their children is exactly what makes them good parents, in opposition to Matilda's own father and mother. What is even worse in Matilda's case is that she actually has the potential and brilliance that should make her parents keen on empowering such a nimble-minded child.

It is bad enough when parents treat ordinary children as though they were scabs and bunions, but it becomes somehow a lot worse when the child in question is extraordinary, and by that I mean sensitive and brilliant. Matilda was both of these things, but above all she was brilliant. (10)

It is therefore made rather clear that it is first and foremost the parents' role to give their children the power and confidence to take control over their own lives and claim the power that they should. It is interesting to take a look at the way Dahl characterises the bad parents of his novel, mainly because they serve as what Hunt would call a "moral tale".

[Dahl's] prejudices are well out in the open; his most successful book, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, is a robust moral tale, [...] with the fat and the greedy and the stupid being dealt with summarily. (Hunt, *An Introduction* 21)

His comments about *Charlie* are extremely reminiscent of the treatment of the villains of *Matilda*, but also of Dahl's characters in general. Through his narrators' tones and speeches, Dahl indeed constantly makes value judgements, even though said judgements can sometimes be considered unconventional. But most importantly here, *Matilda* seems to tell children who might be in a situation similar to the heroine's that they can empower themselves through reading on the one hand, and showing the qualities of a hero on the other – courage, independence, and empathy – despite the presence of villains, or the absence of others empowering them. But this moral tale goes beyond the words of advice to neglected children: it reaches even adults, who might either read the stories to children, or read the book themselves. As Hunt points out in his 1996 *An Introduction to Children's Literature*, *Matilda*'s readership is far more varied than Dahl might have intended:

Some of [Dahl's] books, such as his autobiographical *Boy* and *Going Solo* and the later books for children, notably *Matilda*, have crossed the adult-child divide in opposite directions – *Boy* has been published for children, *Matilda* is popular with adults. (Hunt, *An Introduction* 20)

Dahl therefore reminds adults and children alike that parents are the ones supposed to empower their children, but suggests that if a child ends up with parents like Matilda's, it does not mean they cannot empower themselves: they have the power to do so *within* them. In order to clarify the message sent by Dahl to his readership, I shall now take a look at Matilda's own empowerment, before further elaborating on the idea of Dahl empowering children through his own power of words in light of the book's actual reception.

2. Matilda's own empowerment: from reading books to telekinetic powers

Matilda's empowerment journey is singular in that she empowers herself both figuratively and literally, and it is through this figurative empowerment that she is able to develop her supernatural abilities. At first, in the opening chapter "The Reader of Books", reading appears to be her own escape from home.

The books transported her into new worlds and introduced her to amazing people who lived exciting lives. She went on olden-day sailing ships with Joseph Conrad. She went to Africa with Ernest Hemingway and to India with Rudyard Kipling. She travelled all over the world while sitting in her little room in an English village. (21)

But the very fact that Matilda goes to the library after being denied a book by her TV-obsessed father shows that reading is one way Matilda has found to start her self-determination journey. She defines herself in opposition to the adults that show her no love and abuse their power to silence her. There are however two adults who take part in Matilda's empowerment journey, but their contribution remains rather limited. Both Mrs Phelps and Miss Honey seem to be aware of power imbalance and Matilda's unfair treatment at home and at school, but they seem to be maintaining the imbalance of power by staying the passive, quiet, morally good characters they are described as. Their help in getting Matilda to read and finally be intellectually stimulated (or at least their attempts) are the trigger for Matilda's own empowerment, both literally and figuratively, but they were only able to passively empower the child because she was actively empowering herself, and without any adult help. Matilda

herself does not even seem to understand the source of her extraordinary abilities, as is shown by her answer when Miss Honey asks her:

“You mean you taught yourself?”

“I don’t quite know,” Matilda said truthfully. “It’s just that I don’t find it very difficult to multiply one number by another.” (73)

One odd thing about *Matilda* is that it resembles a story grounded in reality – even with Miss Trunchbull’s absurdly exaggerated villainy – but the eponymous heroine develops supernatural powers on top of her extraordinary inherent intellectual abilities. As an author, Dahl indeed has a tendency to hide the elements borrowed from fantasy behind technical terms such as telekinesis, in order to further ground the magical elements of his stories in reality. Miss Honey’s explanation at the end of the book as to where Matilda’s telekinetic powers might have come from offers the reader the hint of an explanation to the phenomenon. The teacher’s suggestion fits the book’s message of children having to pursue independence, self-determination and intellectual stimulation:

While you were in my class you had nothing to do, nothing to make you struggle. [...] There was tremendous energy bottled up in there with nowhere to go, and somehow or other you were able to shoot that energy out through your eyes and make objects move. But now things are different. [...] Your brain is for the first time having to struggle and strive and keep really busy, which is great. (229-230)

Such an explanation of the supernatural phenomenon makes Matilda’s telekinesis appear as an almost overt metaphor for empowerment itself – a sort of physical manifestation of the little girl’s desire for power and control over her own existence. This idea is not foreign to children’s literature, as it is often through magic that children are able to express their need for a power that they do not have in these stories. One example which echoes this idea and is very reminiscent of Matilda’s own powers is the way the little girl’s ability in Dahl’s *The Magic Finger* activates whenever she feels angry and powerless. In *Matilda*, as the book’s heroine, the young girl is supposed to give children an example to follow: the novel’s story might in fact just be a *mise en abyme* of the child reader’s own empowerment journey through reading.

3. The empowerment of the child reader through Dahl's power of words

At first sight, it appears rather obvious that *Matilda's* message is empowering to children, as I have previously demonstrated. By telling the story of a child hero standing up to adult villains, Dahl brings hope to children who might be in a similar situation to Matilda's, and by writing about both the figurative and literal empowerment of his child heroine, he proves that the writers themselves can empower children thanks to their writings. But what about children who are not inherently gifted, that the narrator comically imagines criticising in front of their own parents in the introduction? Were critics like Eleanor Cameron right to call the author's work "phony"? Dahl – who very often criticises the authority of parents and educators while himself being authoritative towards his readers – might actually be sending mixed messages to his young readership, and it is only by studying *Matilda's* reception that one might be able to clarify the message being sent to the writer's young audience, and therefore determine whether *Matilda* can truly be considered empowering.

In a research paper entitled "Children's Responses to Heroism in Roald Dahl's *Matilda*", researchers James Pope and Julia Round at Bournemouth University (U.K.) studied children's responses to both Dahl's 1988 *Matilda* and DeVito's 1996 *Matilda* film adaptation because "they provoke emphatic responses from adults, often commenting on the effects of Dahl upon young readers, and thus exemplify the uneasy interface between adult perceptions of children's literature and the child reader" (Pope and Round 257). In their research paper, they explain that their motivation to focus on *Matilda's* reception from children themselves comes from an effort to shed light on actual responses from the book's target audience rather than mere adult speculation. Their research has found that:

In discussing concepts of heroism and *Matilda* with young readers, [...] they were overwhelmingly able to see the "justice" in *Matilda's* acts. However, they were also aware that not everything *Matilda* does is heroic. They offered other solutions (for example that she should talk to her parents), but the majority felt that because *Matilda's* actions were justified, she was a hero. From this, we would argue that they responded much more to Dahl's sense of conservatism and justice than the anarchy and naughtiness or the crime and violence that some adult critics fear seeps through from Dahl's adult writing and contaminates his work for children. The children used sophisticated reasoning to argue that *Matilda* could remain a hero despite not always doing "the right thing" (Pope and Round 269-270)

Pope and Round’s research suggests that the child reader is aware of Matilda’s wrongdoings, and understands that she is not an example to follow. As the graph below shows – according to their study conducted in the United Kingdom in February 2013 with 150 children aged 7–11, in seven classes, in three different schools – younger pupils were even more critical of Matilda’s means to an end: out of sixty Year 3 pupils, forty-nine deemed Matilda to be a hero, while eleven thought she did not meet the requirements for being considered a hero, mostly because she is “mean to Trunchbull”. In Year 6, one hundred and five pupils out of one hundred fourteen believe that Matilda is in fact a hero, while only nine of them have doubts because of her being “naughty” and her “breaking and entering” Miss Trunchbull’s house in the cinematic adaptation.

Is Matilda a hero? (reasons)

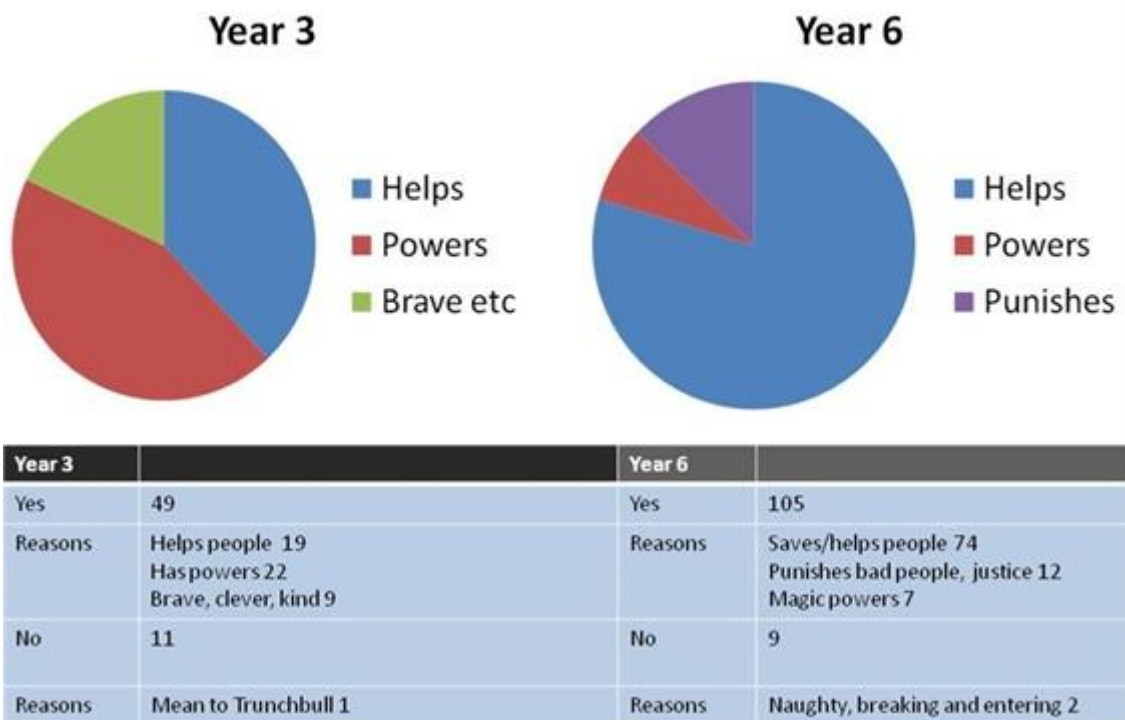


Figure 3: Tables of quantitative data (274) – Pope and Round

According to this research, it seems as if critics like Eleanor Cameron were wrong to think children could not tell right from wrong. It appears Matilda is deemed a hero *despite* her questionable actions rather than *because of* them, contrary to what some adult critics at the time of the original release of several of Dahl’s books feared and expressed. And when it comes to the limits to Dahl’s empowering message, I believe Elizabeth Hammill, founder of Seven Stories, the National Centre for Children’s Books, based in Newcastle upon Tyne –

Britain's first museum dedicated to collecting and celebrating children's literature – summarises Dahl's work in words which illustrate best his legacy:

[Dahl is] the most widely-read contemporary children's author whose popularity stems, in part, from his ability to realize in fiction children's innermost dreams, and to offer subversive, gruesomely satisfying, sometimes comic solutions to their nightmares. His heroes tend to be underdogs – the poor, the bullied, the hunted, the orphans – whose lives are transformed by the fantastic, sometimes disconcerting events of the stories. (Hammill 52)

Indeed, even though the themes and motifs of the British writer's books can sometimes be "disconcerting", Dahl has nevertheless given generations of children power over those who usually hold power over them. The child reader tends to identify with the child hero(es), even if some children – in *Matilda* to a small extent, but in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* especially – can be presented as flawed human beings deserving punishment. However, one might still regard some of the elements of his stories as furthering stereotypes – especially when it comes to gender – and as promoting violence and cruelty. Still, Dahl's heroes tend to embody the qualities of what he believes to be a good, almost perfect child. Children's literature is indeed a paradox in that the adult writers – as is the case for *Matilda* – try to either channel or emulate the voice of their own inner child. They most often write from a place of power about a state of infancy and a sense of child-like powerlessness that they themselves have lost. In *Matilda*'s case, as is customary in Dahl's works, the irony lies in the fact that although the hero of the story is a child around whom the story revolves, both the author and the story's narrator are adults, therefore belittling the child's voice by adding extra layers of adult voices between the child reader and the hero of the story. As Roderick McGillis wrote in his book *The Nimble Reader: Literary Theory and Children's Literature*:

Adults write children's fiction and evaluate it, and in doing this they take into account not children, but their conception of what children ought to be and ought to learn. Children themselves are powerless to create their own literature or to control what they perceive. [...] Adults want children to read certain books for social reasons. Consequently, children's books and the criticism of children's books are a form of social power. (McGillis 17-18)

Still, in *Matilda*'s case, the message of the story remains simplistic enough for the young readership to be empowered along the way despite this paradox.

Dahl's message of empowerment thus emerges clearly: children can subvert the established order, leading to a successful reversal of the power dynamics through revolution.

II. From challenging power to overthrowing it: “We are revolting children, living in revolting times!”

Before Matilda’s supernatural powers emerge, the young girl has to resort to quiet resistance to make her voice heard, but she quickly turns to revenge to shift the balance her way – until she eventually develops the power to revolt against the established order. This gradual evolution, which parallels her journey towards reclaiming her own power, might result in an ending that is rather underwhelming compared to Dahl’s intended effect.

1. Challenging authority: resisting adult power to better reclaim power

As the story starts, Matilda does not instantly play tricks on any of the adult bullies in order to reclaim the power she does not have. Still, there are some instances of the girl challenging authority. She first decides to go against her parents’ decision not to buy her books and to head to the library in secret all by herself. She also makes her voice heard on several occasions, by for example making sure her father knows she does not stand by his (im)moral principles: “It’s disgusting. You’re cheating people who trust you” (25). Moreover, she sometimes resorts to sarcastic and/or humorous comments to assert her power at her own child-sized scale, when she knows the balance is (temporarily) shifting towards her: “You must try to get those bits off your forehead, daddy. It looks as though you’ve got little brown insects crawling about all over you. People will think you’ve got lice” (37).

Matilda and her classmates do not confront the Trunchbull directly. They have to resort to quiet resistance and secret tricks to challenge her authority. However, in one instance in the book, the children collectively decide to overtly undermine the headmistress’ authority. In the chapter entitled “Bruce Bogtrotter and the Cake”, when the pupils of Crunchem Hall sense that Miss Trunchbull’s force-feeding of a cake might not reach the results that she had hoped – Bruce Bogtrotter begging for mercy – they all show their support to the boy until he eventually finishes the enormous cake.

Bruce Bogtrotter was three-quarters of the way through and still going strong. [...] What is more, he had now become very conscious of his audience and of how they

were all silently rooting for him. This was nothing less than a battle between him and the mighty Trunchbull.

Suddenly someone shouted, “Come on Brucie! You can make it!”

[...] As the very last mouthful disappeared, a tremendous cheer rose up from the audience and children were leaping on to their chairs and yelling and clapping and shouting, “Well done Brucie! Good for you, Brucie! You’ve won a gold medal, Brucie!” (130-131)

The scene is clearly presented as a battle between the young boy and Miss Trunchbull as a result of which Bruce ends up having the upper hand. Although it is surprising to see the pupils coming together to support their classmate when they usually fear the Trunchbull too much to act in such a manner, one might rather wonder why it is that they did not realise the strength they possessed as a group. Indeed, as the Trunchbull’s plan did not work out the way she had expected, the children won the battle this time. However, this victory proves to be temporary as Miss Trunchbull regains the power that she is losing by doing what she does best: physically assaulting a child. The fact that she storms out of the room after doing so still shows that the woman has lost control over the situation to an unforeseen extent, and that her power can sometimes have its limits.

Most of the time, in *Matilda*, children decide that overtly challenging the adults’ authority is too dangerous, and resort to sneakier ways of getting their revenge: they play tricks on them – a common way for children to express their power in children’s literature.

2. Reversing the power balance: from quiet revenge to early hints of rebellion

Some of the children in *Matilda* choose to turn to revenge against the “all-powerful grown-up[s]” (29) who bully them in an attempt to reverse the power balance in any way. The first child who does so is the heroine herself, who decides, after years of being bullied by her parents, to “get her own back in some way or another” “every time her father or her mother [i]s beastly to her” (29). The narrator even elaborates: “A small victory or two would help her to tolerate their idiocies and would stop her from going crazy” (29). As a powerless child, Matilda starts playing tricks on her parents, which involve putting glue on her father’s hat with superglue – which is, contrary to her, “very powerful stuff” (30) – borrowing her neighbour’s parrot to scare her family (38-48), and putting platinum blonde hair-dye in her father’s hair lotion (56-65). These tricks temporarily appear to have the intended effect:

The experience had clearly chastened Mr Wormwood and he seemed temporarily to have lost his taste for boasting and bullying. Then suddenly he struck again. (38)

Unfortunately for Matilda, they are not numerous and/or effective enough to reverse the power balance for good. At Crunchem Hall, some of the pupils also play pranks on the monstrous Trunchbull, but these tricks have the opposite effect: she becomes even more tyrannical and punishes children unjustly. Hortensia, who has put Golden Syrup on the Trunchbull's chair and itching powder in her underwear, among other things, becomes a hero to the young Matilda and Lavender, who "gazed in wonder at this goddess, and suddenly even the boil on her nose was no longer a blemish but a badge of courage" (108). The war metaphor through the lexical field of militarism here echoes the language used to describe Agatha Trunchbull when she is first introduced, but it is this time made clear that the children indeed feel at war with the headmistress:

"It's like a war," Matilda said, overawed.

"You're darn right it's like a war," Hortensia cried. "And the casualties are terrific. We are the crusaders, the gallant army fighting for our lives with hardly any weapons at all and the Trunchbull is the Prince of Darkness, the Foul Serpent, the Fiery Dragon with all the weapons at her command. It's a tough life. We all try to support each other."

"You can rely on us," Lavender said, making her height of three feet two inches stretch as tall as possible. (109)

This encounter with Hortensia is a turning point in the story, as she is the one to inspire Lavender to put a newt in the Trunchbull's water jug. The young girl regards both the older girl and Matilda and her "parrot job" (136) story as role models, and she believes it is "her turn now to become a heroine" (136). The newt in the water jug incident itself is the trigger for Matilda's "First Miracle" (159). After she tips the glass over, Matilda realises the extent of her power:

A strange feeling of serenity and confidence was sweeping over her and all of a sudden she found that she was frightened by nobody in the world. With the power of her eyes alone she had compelled a glass of water to tip and spill its contents over the horrible Headmistress, and anybody who could do that could do anything. (168)

Now that she finally feels powerful and in control, Matilda decides to get back at the headmistress by posing as her deceased brother in law to help Miss Honey and finally defeat Crunchem Hall's evil tyrant. Pupils and teachers alike are equally elated about the headmistress' fate, and it finally confirms Matilda as the most powerful character in the book

– so powerful that defeating the Trunchbull was no trouble to her at all: “It seemed as though she had hardly done anything, it had all been so simple.” (225-226)

One might wonder whether the book’s conclusion truly offers a successful revolution when it comes to the power balance at play.

3. “*Miss Trunchbull has fallen down!*”: a successful revolution?

The ending of *Matilda* is made to be satisfactory to children, but what does it tell the reader about the dynamics and subversion of power in the story? Are there limits to the seemingly successful revolution?

Miss Trunchbull is defeated by the very thing she profoundly detests: small children, and specifically a little girl. In the perspective of a story about children versus adults, one might indeed call the revolution at the end of the book successful. However, her replacement by a male teacher being clearly stated in the book appears to be a way for Dahl to show that order has been restored at last; in terms of power dynamics, this still places an adult in position of power, and a man on top of that. The ending of the 1996 film adaptation might be a little more satisfactory when it comes to its reversal of the established order: Miss Honey, the woman-child, becomes the new principal of a school that children enjoy so much it had to “add an upper school because children never wanted to leave” (DeVito). Miss Honey is the new headmistress at the end of the musical adaptation as well, supporting the idea that such an ending would have been more satisfactory to the child reader *and* the children of the story.

The fact that Matilda’s parents remain terrible parents without any sort of redemption or at least recognition of their ill treatment at the end of the story also makes the ending rather bittersweet. Matilda living with Miss Honey while her parents move to Spain seems to be a victory by default; they were not defeated by the little girl, but rather by their own crookery and flaws. In that sense, it still teaches children a lesson on the importance of good character and honesty, but it limits the impact of the reversal of the adult-child power dynamics at play. Moreover, the fact that the happy ending at the end of the novel expresses itself through the creation of a new family unit is quite disturbing in terms of dynamics of power as well: the child, Matilda, seems to be the powerful head of the family while Miss Honey, the adult, is

far more passive and holds far less power than the young girl. The story also appears to send the message that revenge might be the only way to get back at an adult, which critics have condemned for being a dreadful example for children to follow. In his book entitled *The Promise of Happiness: Value and Meaning in Children's Fiction*, Fred Inglis reflects on Dahl's recurring motif of revenge in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, which applies to *Matilda* to a certain extent:

Dahl has a vigorous feel for the raucous, crude vengefulness of children: he catches and endorses this nicely. But his book is stuck forever in the second and third stages – the legalistic, retributive stages – of Piaget's and Kohlberg's moral development. There is no way with him [...] of balancing the claims of one's childishness, one's morality, and the mysteries of the natural world. (Inglis 236)

Still, Matilda's revenge is persistently and thoroughly justified through the adults' awful personalities and actions, which sends children the message that retribution should be directed at deserving bullies. Dahl's message of empowerment rather lies in his advocacy for reading books, which prove themselves to be Matilda's real weapon. The fact that Matilda loses her supernatural ability at the end of the book however sends a mixed message. Even though the young girl will now be able to be intellectually challenged in a class which matches her level, she has lost the one most important thing which allowed her to defeat the almighty Trunchbull. Was she faced with a greater villain, or even one who would equal Miss Trunchbull's cruelty, it is not assured Matilda Wormwood would be able to defeat them as well without her supernatural powers. However, she would most definitely still outsmart them, as she remains the gifted, brilliant child that she was long before even having telekinetic powers.

Matilda therefore appears to send a paradoxical message: only a child seems to be both fit and allowed to reverse the established order and reclaim power, but can only do so by borrowing the characteristics of an adult, and another adult's voice. Rage, a feeling thus far attributed to the powerful, ghastly adults, is indeed the trigger to Matilda's literal empowerment. And in the end, when the people who abuse their power are finally defeated, children return to their intrinsic state of powerlessness, and adults remain in their natural position of power. However, one must bear in mind that the target audience of the book is children, and that the message of *Matilda* might be slightly simpler: powerless, bullied children can win against powerful, bullying adults.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of the dynamics of power at play in Roald Dahl's *Matilda* proves that dichotomies exist in the book, and that they follow principles close to that of Manichaeism. Through his writing, Dahl tells the reader what he believes embodies goodness, and which behaviours and actions he deems express bad character, through an extremely dualistic – sometimes exaggerated, or even absurd – characterisation of his heroes and villains. However, not everything is completely black and white in the book, as children are allowed to be naughty without being demonised, and some adults do manifest virtuous qualities.

Although the reversal of the established order proves to have its limits, especially in terms of gender power dynamics, and when it comes to the adult-child divide, the child heroine is still the victor at the end of the book and ends up with everything she wanted: a caring adult in her life, a loving home, intellectual stimulation – everything that makes an empowering environment, hence the loss of the powers she developed to cope with the lack of all of these. Miss Honey herself is able to return to her father's house and inherit Magnus' money, and the children of Crunchem Hall along with the adults of the story will not have to face the evil headmistress ever again.

In every sense, *Matilda* can be said to be empowering to its child readers and sends them a very important message: they can empower themselves with or without adult help, especially through reading, and good will always eventually prevail over evil, even when a weak, powerless child is faced with a strong, merciless adult. My intent was to clarify Dahl's message, but I believe the writer himself made it utterly clear in a recently discovered letter sent to a university student on August 2, 1989. In an article for *CNN* entitled "Roald Dahl's Secret to a Good Children's Book: Make Sure It 'Enthral the Child'", journalist Melissa Gray quotes the author:

Never shelter children from the world. [...] The "content" of any children's book is of no importance other than that it enthrals the child – and thus it teaches or seduces him or her to "like" books and to become a fit reader – which is vital if that child is going to amount to anything in later life. The book-reading child will always outstrip the non-book-reading child in later life. There are very few messages in these books of

mine. They are there simply to turn the child into a reader of books. (Dahl, quoted by Gray)

These comments appear to perfectly illustrate the message of the book. Dahl mentioning *Matilda* in the same letter, as well as his goal echoing *Matilda*'s first chapter "The Reader of Books" both seem to elevate the work as the very embodiment of the essence of Dahl's writing, and an elaborate metaphor for empowerment. Young Matilda is able to claim the title of the most powerful character in the book thanks to her love and appetite for reading, figuratively and literally empowering herself in the process.

Dahl refuses to be labelled as a children's author destined for educators; he rather defines himself in contrast to such expectations, hence the complicated relationship between children and school in his works. However, *Matilda* is – and has been since its release – a study topic in classrooms all over the world. Therefore, I shall now turn to a more practical exercise, which consists in the creation and justification of a pedagogical sequence aimed at French learners of English, revolving around the study of *Matilda*, and dealing with the Manichaeic "good teacher"/ "bad teacher" dichotomy which is so present in the book. My approach will follow the principles of differentiated pedagogy, which aims at tailoring instruction within the classroom in order to meet every pupil's individual needs. I cannot help but wonder whether Miss Honey using a similar approach in order to meet the needs of each and every child in her classroom – rather than focusing on the already extraordinarily brilliant one – could have changed the outcome of *Matilda*. Miss Honey would have definitely been a better teacher, and the children would have all felt intellectually stimulated, but what would have happened to Matilda's telekinetic powers if intellectual stimulation indeed triggered the loss? Who would have been able – and deemed suited by Roald Dahl – to defeat the almighty Trunchbull?

PARTIE DIDACTIQUE

I. Comment introduire et utiliser des extraits d'œuvres littéraires anglo-saxonnes en classe de 5^{ème} ? L'exemple de *Matilda*

Introduction

Bon nombre d'enseignant-e-s ont l'idée reçue qu'il n'est ni envisageable ni souhaitable de travailler sur des textes littéraires authentiques avec des jeunes élèves de collège. On préférera proposer l'étude et même la simple lecture de travaux littéraires aux élèves de troisième et surtout aux lycéens. Cependant, les programmes en disent autrement, et encouragent même l'étude d'extraits de romans, nouvelles et contes anglo-saxons dès la classe de 6^{ème}. Comment peut-on donc introduire et utiliser des extraits d'œuvres littéraires anglo-saxonnes en classe de 5^{ème} ? Je tâcherai d'apporter des éléments de réponse en commençant tout d'abord par présenter ce que les textes officiels suggèrent, avant de proposer des idées et des pistes de mise en œuvre à travers l'exemple de *Matilda* de Roald Dahl.

Ce que disent les textes officiels

En effet, les programmes du cycle 4, qui correspond aux classes de 5^{ème}, 4^{ème} et 3^{ème}, s'ouvrent sur un tableau présentant les compétences travaillées tout au long des trois années. Pour la compétence « Lire », selon *Eduscol*, les éléments à travailler sont les suivants :

- « Comprendre des documents écrits de nature et de difficultés variées issus de sources diverses. »
- « Développer des stratégies de lecteur par le biais de lectures régulières. »
- « S'appropriier le document en utilisant des repérages de nature différente : indices extralinguistiques, linguistiques, reconstitution du sens, mise en relation d'éléments significatifs. »

Dans ces mêmes programmes sont listées les compétences à travailler avec les élèves afin qu'ils contrôlent leur compréhension et développent des stratégies de lecture :

- « Comprendre des textes écrits de genres différents. »
- « Saisir la trame narrative d'un récit clairement structuré. »
- « Trouver des informations dans un texte abordant une thématique connue. »
- « Gérer une variété de supports écrits, en vue de construire du sens, interpréter, problématiser. »
- « Traiter les informations, les mettre en relation pour poser un questionnement. »

Afin de développer ces différentes compétences, les textes officiels proposent même plusieurs mises en œuvre possibles. L'une d'entre elle suggère de « mémoriser le lexique et des structures pour les reconnaître et les utiliser dans d'autres contextes » tels que les « textes littéraires dont le lexique est simple ». Bien qu'ils soient destinés à des enfants et adolescents natifs anglophones, les livres relevant de la littérature de jeunesse et même de la littérature adolescente correspondent parfaitement à cette catégorie : bien que beaucoup de mots de vocabulaire risquent d'échapper aux élèves apprenant l'anglais, ces livres sont en général au moins partiellement compréhensibles par des élèves de collège. C'est là où l'enseignant-e doit faire preuve de perspicacité et proposer des extraits littéraires qui en plus d'avoir du lexique connu par les élèves leur permettra d'élargir leur répertoire lexical, syntaxique et grammatical.

Le Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche a publié, en mars 2016, les déclinaisons culturelles des programmes du cycle 4. Dans ces documents mis à la disposition des enseignants sur le site *Eduscol*, énormément de ressources sont listées et classées par axe d'étude : sites, chansons, jeux de sociétés, extraits de films, de dessins animés et de séries télévisées, de *comics* et surtout, pour ce qui nous intéresse, des références littéraires. Voici une courte liste de livres nommés dans les déclinaisons culturelles qui me semblent au mieux illustrer le genre d'œuvres que les programmes conseillent (par ordre d'apparition dans les textes officiels) : *The Lord of the Rings* de J.R.R. Tolkien, *Oliver Twist* de Charles Dickens, *Animal Farm* de George Orwell, *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* de Jeff Kinney, *Twilight* de Stephenie Meyer, *On the Road* de Jack Kerouac, *Alice's Adventures in*

Wonderland de Lewis Carroll, *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* d'Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Chronicles of Narnia* de C.S. Lewis, *Harry Potter* de J.K. Rowling et *Percy Jackson & the Olympians* de Rick Riordan. Si l'on retrouve des œuvres aujourd'hui considérées comme des classiques de la littérature jeunesse comme *Alice* et même *Harry Potter*, il est intéressant de noter que les programmes ne limitent pas aux contes et romans pour enfants et proposent un classique tel que *On the Road* dont le lectorat cible serait plutôt adulte. Ainsi, les déclinaisons culturelles confirment l'idée suggérée par les programmes qu'il ne faut pas nécessairement qu'un·e apprenant·e de l'anglais puisse comprendre un texte dans son intégralité afin de le faire lire et étudier par les élèves. L'omniprésence d'œuvres relevant de la littérature de jeunesse nous apporte quand même un élément de réponse : les textes officiels conseillent d'étudier des textes principalement destinés aux enfants et jeunes adolescents anglophones.

Le problème qui se pose pour la classe de cinquième est qu'elle se trouve entre le niveau A1 et le niveau A2 du Cadre Européen Commun de Référence pour les Langues (CECRL), texte de référence cherchant à homogénéiser l'apprentissage, l'enseignement et l'évaluation des langues étrangères au niveau européen.

Comme les programmes du cycle 4 le rappellent, le niveau du CECRL attendu en fin de cycle 4 est le niveau A2 dans les cinq activités langagières (compréhension de l'oral, expression orale en continu, interaction orale, compréhension de l'écrit et expression écrite). Les élèves venant d'entrer en classe de 5^{ème} et de valider le niveau A1 en fin de 6^{ème} se retrouvent donc à un carrefour pour lequel l'étude de textes authentiques littéraires est censée être difficile.

Au niveau A1, les élèves doivent être capables de :

- « Repérer des indices textuels élémentaires. »
- « Isoler des informations simples dans un court texte narratif ou dans un énoncé informatif simple. »

Au niveau A2, les élèves doivent pouvoir :

- « Comprendre des consignes écrites (pour réaliser une tâche). »
- « Saisir la trame narrative d'un récit si celui-ci est clairement structuré. »

Aussi précis soit-il, le CECRL de 2001 ne détaille pas de critères pour ce qui est de la lecture de textes littéraires. Les seuls critères disponibles correspondent à la compréhension écrite globale, la correspondance, la lecture pour s'orienter, la lecture pour s'informer et discuter, la lecture d'informations et la lecture d'instructions. Ainsi, les programmes du collège révisés en 2016 et toujours en vigueur se basent sur les critères de compréhension globale de l'écrit.

Un volume complémentaire du CECRL, publié en 2018, détaille enfin des critères pour ce qu'il désigne comme étant la lecture « comme activité de loisir ». Ainsi, pour valider le niveau A1, nous savons désormais que les élèves doivent être capables de :

- « Comprendre de courts récits illustrés, au sujet d'activités quotidiennes et rédigés avec des mots simples. »
- « Comprendre dans les grandes lignes des textes courts d'histoires illustrées, à condition que les images [les] aident à deviner le contenu. »

Et afin de valider le niveau A2, les élèves doivent être capables de :

- « Comprendre suffisamment pour lire des histoires et des bandes dessinées courtes, mettant en scène des situations concrètes et familières et rédigées dans un langage très quotidien. »
- « Comprendre des histoires et des descriptions courtes au sujet de la vie de quelqu'un, si elles sont rédigées avec des mots simples. »

Grâce à ces précisions, il est désormais plus facile pour les enseignant·e·s d'anglais de situer le niveau de leurs élèves, mais également de savoir quelles compétences ces mêmes élèves sont censés maîtriser selon le cycle dans lequel ils se trouvent. Selon le volume complémentaire du CECRL, il faudrait donc, au collège, se tourner vers des histoires courtes, illustrées, et/ou au lexique connu des élèves.

Bien qu'absent des exemples cités dans les déclinaisons culturelles, *Matilda* de Roald Dahl répond en tout point à ces critères.

Idées et pistes de mise en œuvre à travers l'exemple de *Matilda*

Matilda est un roman incontournable pour l'enseignement puisqu'il a lui-même quelque chose à raconter et transmettre à ce sujet. En plus d'être illustré et de traiter de thématiques déjà étudiées par des élèves de collège (la famille, l'école), ce roman a connu plusieurs adaptations et peut donc facilement faire l'objet d'une séquence à part entière ; il sera en effet possible de faire travailler les élèves sur les cinq activités langagières de réception (écrite et orale), production (écrite et orale) et interaction. Des quatre axes d'étude au programme du cycle 4 (Langages, École et société, Voyages et migrations, Rencontres avec d'autres cultures), l'étude de *Matilda* semble idéale pour une séquence articulée autour de l'axe « École et société ».

Il peut être intéressant d'entamer une séquence pédagogique sur *Matilda* en tout début d'année de cinquième afin de faire la transition entre le cycle 3 et le cycle 4. Les axes « La personne et la vie quotidienne » (et sa déclinaison « Le portrait physique et moral ») et « L'imaginaire » (et ses déclinaisons « Littérature de jeunesse » et « Héros/héroïnes et personnages de fiction ») du cycle 3 correspondent parfaitement à l'étude de ce roman. Cependant, le fait que le roman soit rédigé au passé est un trop gros obstacle pour permettre une étude de *Matilda* qui prendrait en compte des extraits de l'œuvre originale de Dahl en classe de 6^{ème}. Le travail sur ce récit me semble donc être parfaitement adapté à une classe de cinquième, qui marque la première année du cycle 4. Il faudra également, comme les programmes le rappellent, accompagner les élèves dans le développement de leurs stratégies de lecture et de leur capacité à effectuer des repérages textuels.

Si l'on part du principe que la séquence sur *Matilda* serait la première de l'année et articulée autour de l'axe « École et société », plusieurs scénarios peuvent s'offrir :

- Partir du portrait (physique et moral) de la famille de Matilda en *warm-up* de début d'année puis basculer vers le portrait de ses camarades et de ses professeurs (notamment Miss Honey et Miss Trunchbull). Une fois les personnages introduits, le travail sur l'école en sera facilité.
- Partir en début de séquence d'un extrait de *Matilda* qui se passerait à l'école (de préférence un extrait de l'adaptation en film ou en comédie musicale afin d'accrocher les élèves) ou de la bande-annonce du film de 1996 et faire parler les élèves sur ce

qu'ils savent (description, portrait, âge, noms communs). Une fois cette étape passée, entrer dans la séquence autour de l'école et le travail sur des extraits du livre.

- Commencer la séquence par des généralités sur l'école et finir sur un travail plus poussé sur le milieu scolaire, les élèves et les enseignants dans *Matilda*. Revoir ou introduire le portrait physique et moral dans la séquence.

C'est à partir de ce troisième scénario que j'ai décidé de poursuivre ma réflexion et de proposer une séquence pédagogique intégrale dans la partie suivante.

II. Proposition de séquence pédagogique : “*British Schools: Good teacher / Bad teacher*” (Cycle 4, classe de 5^{ème})

Présentation générale

Dans le cadre de ce mémoire, et pour éclairer ma réponse à la question posée précédemment, je propose une séquence pédagogique articulée autour de *Matilda* et de l’axe d’études « École et société » des programmes du cycle 4. Cette séquence pédagogique s’inscrivant dans la perspective actionnelle, qui veut que l’élève soit acteur de son apprentissage, une tâche finale actionnelle présentée sous forme de mission est indispensable puisque la séquence entière est censée s’articuler autour. Selon la perspective actionnelle décrite dans le Cadre Européen Commun de Référence pour les Langues (CECRL), la langue n’est plus l’objet d’étude en tant que tel mais devient un outil pour réaliser cette tâche (qui s’inscrit dans une thématique culturelle et langagière de la langue cible). J’ai donc décidé de proposer deux tâches : une **tâche intermédiaire** ayant comme intitulé « *Imagine the world’s best or worst teacher. What does he or she teach? What are the rules in his/her classroom? What are his/her qualities/flaws? Why do you think he/she is the best or the worst teacher? »* (production écrite) et une **tâche finale** ayant à son tour pour consigne « *Miss Trunchbull is on trial: Why do you think she should be fired from her position as Headmistress of Crunchem Hall? As her pupil, you are asked to give your testimony. Describe her personality, give examples of incidents that took place at school and rules that you think are unfair »* (production orale).

Après présentation du déroulé de la séquence, je justifierai mes choix et introduirai les supports étudiés en classe. Tous les supports utilisés et mentionnés sont disponibles sur le Padlet de la séquence disponible à l’adresse URL suivante : <https://padlet.com/blina/matilda>. Une des activités, qui se base sur des extraits choisis de *Matilda* de Roald Dahl accompagnée des illustrations de Quentin Blake, et sur laquelle je reviendrai plus en détails en troisième partie, est disponible en annexe avec les documents associés à titre d’illustration.

Déroulé de la séquence

La séquence « *British Schools: Good teacher / Bad teacher* » est divisée en sept séances. L'organisation de celles-ci s'effectue de la manière suivante :

- Séance 1 : « *Welcome to Gateacre School!* »
- Séance 2 : « *The British School System* »
- Séance 3 : « *School Rules and Duties* »
- Séance 4 : « *What Makes a Good Teacher?* »
- TÂCHE INTERMÉDIAIRE : « *Imagine the world's best or worst teacher. What does he or she teach? What are the rules in his/her classroom? What are his/her qualities/flaws? Why do you think he/she is the best or the worst teacher? (EE)* »
- Séance 5 : « *When Teachers Abuse Their Power: Miss Trunchbull* »
- Séance 6 : « *When Teachers Abuse Their Power: Dolores Umbridge* »
- Séance 7 : « *Revolting Children: Enough is Enough!* »
- TÂCHE FINALE : « *Miss Trunchbull is on trial: Why do you think she should be fired from her position as Headmistress of Crunchem Hall? As her pupil, you are asked to give your testimony. Describe her personality, give examples of incidents that took place at school and rules that you think are unfair. (EO)* »

Afin de réaliser la tâche finale, les élèves vont avoir besoin de maîtriser différents outils langagiers, méthodologiques et culturels. Les sept séances précédant la réalisation de celle-ci ont pour but de leur apporter tous ces éléments afin qu'ils réussissent au mieux la tâche.

L'objectif des deux premières séances est de rappeler, introduire, consolider et fixer le vocabulaire en lien avec l'école en général afin de faciliter le travail autour de *Matilda* par la suite. En se concentrant sur une école britannique réelle du nom de Gateacre, les élèves ajouteront à leur répertoire le vocabulaire des lieux et équipements de l'école, des matières scolaires, du personnel de l'école, et ils sauront identifier les différences de fonctionnement entre les écoles françaises et britanniques afin de mieux en comprendre les enjeux (objectif culturel). Au niveau grammatical, l'opposition et la différence seront introduites à travers une

activité de pratique raisonnée de la langue (PRL) qui leur servira pour la tâche intermédiaire comme pour la tâche finale.

La troisième séance a deux objectifs majeurs : tout d'abord, il s'agit d'introduire ou de réintroduire l'histoire de *Matilda* aux élèves à travers une scène de l'adaptation filmique de 1996 (cf. bibliographie). Dans cet extrait, Miss Trunchbull enferme Matilda dans le « *chokey* » (« l'étouffoir » dans l'adaptation française du roman et du film) avant de se rendre dans la salle de classe de Miss Honey pour faire la classe. Cet extrait permet aux élèves de faire connaissance avec quatre personnages centraux à l'histoire : Matilda, Lavender, Miss Honey et Miss Trunchbull. Après l'exercice de compréhension orale, la séance se focalisera sur les règles de la classe (rappelées par Miss Honey et affichées sur les murs de la salle de classe). À la suite d'activités de fixation, une PRL sur les modalités afin d'exprimer la permission, l'interdiction et l'obligation permettra aux élèves d'acquérir plusieurs outils supplémentaires pour la réalisation des deux tâches. Les élèves devront ensuite, lors d'une activité en groupe, inventer les règles de l'école la plus « cool » ou la plus stricte du monde. De cette manière, ils pourront réinvestir le vocabulaire acquis lors de l'étude des règles de Crunchem Hall.

La quatrième séance, une compréhension orale autour d'une vidéo intitulée « *What Makes a Good Teacher?* » (cf. bibliographie), permettra aux élèves de s'interroger sur ce qui fait un bon professeur et d'acquérir plusieurs mots de vocabulaire, tournures de phrases et idées qui serviront pour les différentes tâches. À la suite de la compréhension orale, une activité de *matching* effectuée avec le site *LearningApps* viendra permettre aux élèves d'associer les différents adjectifs qualificatifs à Miss Honey, l'archétype du « *good teacher* » aux yeux des enfants-élèves, bien que son efficacité dans son rôle de professeur soit contestable, et à Miss Trunchbull, pour qui il serait réducteur de dire qu'elle n'est que l'archétype du « *bad teacher* ». Cette activité permettra de fixer le vocabulaire tout en associant les adjectifs vus en classe avec les personnages de *Matilda*. En parallèle à tout cela, un travail sur l'expression de l'opinion sera effectué afin de permettre aux élèves de nuancer leurs propos.

La tâche intermédiaire qui suit remobilise tout ce qui a été vu lors des quatre premières séances et permettra aux élèves de dresser un portrait moral d'un professeur avec une précision relative pour un niveau A2 (visé en fin de cycle).

La séance 5 a pour but d'en apprendre plus sur le personnage de Miss Trunchbull. Après avoir revisionné la vidéo vue en séance 3 et avoir regardé la fin à la maison, une mise en commun sur ce qu'il se passe dans la vidéo permettra de faire émerger la notion d'abus de pouvoir : Miss Trunchbull ne devrait pas avoir le droit de traiter l'élève comme cela dans l'extrait. À la suite de cela, les élèves devront travailler sur la compréhension de six courts extraits de *Matilda* dans lesquels Miss Trunchbull fait preuve de violence, tyrannie et/ou injustice envers les élèves de Crunchem Hall (*Annexe A*). Les élèves étant en classe de 5^{ème}, il est bien trop ambitieux de s'attendre à ce que les extraits soient compris dans leur intégralité. Ainsi, à l'aide de repérages ciblés (verbes, noms, mots connus) à la lecture et relecture des extraits, les élèves seront capables d'associer chaque extrait à une illustration de Quentin Blake parmi six (*Annexe B*). À l'aide du support image, l'accès au sens des mots inconnus sera facilité et confirmé lors de la mise en commun. Des exemplaires de *Matilda* pourront être laissés à la disposition des élèves afin que ceux-ci vérifient leurs hypothèses d'association texte-image dans le livre. Tous ces exemples d'abus de pouvoir seront des clés pour la réalisation de la tâche finale (TF) lors de laquelle les élèves devront jouer les témoins du procès de Miss Trunchbull. Le travail lexical se concentrera sur les parties du corps et les verbes d'action, tandis que le travail grammatical se fera au niveau de la construction du prétérit régulier et irrégulier. À la suite de cela, les élèves devront trouver un titre à chaque texte comme présenté dans la première partie afin de se réapproprier le vocabulaire utilisé et le réinvestir dans un contexte connu. Enfin, il s'agira d'augmenter le niveau de difficulté en proposant aux élèves d'écrire leur propre récit d'incident à partir d'un modèle identifié en classe (*Annexe D*).

La séance 6 se concentrera sur une scène de l'adaptation filmique de *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* dans laquelle Dolores Umbridge punit Harry Potter en lui donnant une plume magique qui écrit « *I must not tell lies* » sur sa main quand celui-ci l'écrit sur papier. La construction des règles et de l'interdiction en anglais ayant déjà été étudiées dans la séquence, et Harry Potter étant un personnage emblématique probablement connu des

élèves, la compréhension de la vidéo en sera facilitée. De plus, celle-ci s'inscrit parfaitement dans le thème de la séquence « *British Schools: Good teacher / Bad teacher* ». Il s'agira tout d'abord de faire formuler des hypothèses aux élèves par rapport à l'apparence d'Umbridge en se basant sur les cinq premières secondes de la vidéo : « *she looks nice like Miss Honey, she looks polite, she seems friendly,* » etc. À la suite de cela, après visionnage du reste de la vidéo et travail de compréhension sur la situation observée, les élèves devront dresser le portrait moral du professeur. Enfin, le travail sur un *mock trial* (simulacre de procès) de Dolores Umbridge apportera aux élèves un exemple type de ce qui sera attendu en TF, cette fois-ci pour Miss Trunchbull.

En séance 7, le travail sur la vengeance de Matilda permettra d'apporter aux élèves une conclusion à l'histoire tout en retravaillant le vocabulaire et les autres tournures étudiées pendant la séquence et en apportant des éléments supplémentaires pour leur dernier travail. Ils seront capables de donner leur avis, justifier les actions de Matilda (ou non) en classe entière. De cette manière, les élèves auront toutes les clés en main pour la réalisation de leur tâche finale. La multiplication des activités de compréhension orale au cours de la séquence aura permis aux élèves de s'entraîner à l'expression orale en prévision de la tâche finale, qui se fera sous forme orale en salle informatique la séance suivante via le site *Vocaroo*. En deuxième partie de séance, il s'agira d'enseigner aux élèves des tournures et expressions réutilisables pour la tâche finale à travers un *acting challenge*. Dans un premier temps, les élèves identifieront les expressions lors d'un exercice de compréhension orale interactif fait à l'aide du site *Edpuzzle*, qui permet de mettre en pause une vidéo trouvée sur internet, ou téléchargée sur le site, à un ou plusieurs moments choisis, et de poser une question aux élèves, le tout de manière automatique. Ici, la vidéo sera une succession d'extraits de séries télévisées et films trouvés sur le site yarn.co, qui permet de rechercher des clips vidéo par citation ou phrase. Les phrases seront les suivantes : « *It's unacceptable!* », « *It's so unfair.* », « *She deserves it.* », « *This is outrageous!* », « *She's a monster.* », « *She's a tyrant who punishes children unjustly.* » (voir le lien « *Express outrage* » dans la bibliographie). Entre quatre et six extraits seront choisis pour chacune de ces phrases afin de proposer une variété d'accents et de tons différents. Il est également possible d'en ajouter d'autres : « *Enough is enough!* », « *She should go to jail!* », « *Fire her!* », etc. Si l'établissement permet aux élèves de disposer de tablettes, ceux-ci pourront regarder les extraits sur les tablettes en individuel pour essayer

de décoder les phrases, puis s'entraîner à les répéter à leur rythme. Si l'établissement ne le permet pas, il pourrait être demandé à l'ensemble des élèves d'écouter et répéter ce qu'ils entendent tous en même temps avant de décoder le sens de la phrase. Une fois les phrases comprises, les élèves devront à nouveau les répéter tous en chœur. Dans les deux cas, la fin de séance se fera sous forme d'un concours de mise en voix des phrases. Les élèves choisiront et éliront l'élève qui, selon eux, a le mieux articulé et mis en voix les six phrases. Le travail se fera sur la phonologie à différents niveaux : prononciation des phonèmes, ton, accentuation interne aux mots, accentuation interne à la phrase, articulation, ... Il s'agira également d'un exercice de mémorisation d'expressions authentiques en vue de la tâche finale.

La séance qui suit sera la dernière séance et se consacrera à la réalisation de la TF : un témoignage oral lors du procès de Miss Trunchbull. Les élèves seront en salle informatique, ou en classe sur des tablettes s'ils y ont accès, et devront enregistrer leur témoignage à l'aide de *Vocaroo*. Il leur sera accordé dix minutes pour écrire un brouillon avant de passer à l'enregistrement.

III. Retour sur la mise en place de la séquence pédagogique proposée

Présentation du contexte de mise en œuvre

Dans le cadre de mon stage d'observation et de pratique accompagnée de M2 MEEF non-alternant, qui a eu lieu tous les lundis au collège Louis Pasteur à Petit-Couronne, j'ai eu l'opportunité de créer et de mettre en place la séquence pédagogique présentée en deuxième partie pour deux classes de 5^{ème}. Articulée autour de l'étude de *Matilda*, celle-ci interroge plus largement les élèves sur les rapports de pouvoir entre les élèves et les professeurs dans les écoles britanniques. La première séance a eu lieu le 30 novembre 2020, et la séquence s'est terminée le lundi 29 mars 2021 avec la réalisation de la tâche finale. Les sept séances pédagogiques ainsi que la tâche finale se sont étalées sur douze cours de cinquante-cinq minutes chacun.

L'établissement dans lequel j'ai mis en place cette séquence pédagogique est un collège classé REP (réseau d'éducation prioritaire) qui est le seul collège de la commune de Petit-Couronne. À la rentrée 2020, on comptait 492 élèves au collège répartis dans 21 classes (5 classes de 6^{ème}, 5 de 5^{ème}, 5 de 4^{ème} et 6 de 3^{ème}). Il y a 39 enseignants au collège, dont 4 enseignantes d'anglais. Mon intervention s'est faite dans la classe d'une de ces enseignantes. Chaque classe a une salle de classe fixe qui lui est attribué pour la quasi-totalité des cours en vue des mesures sanitaires renforcées dans le contexte de la COVID-19.

Les deux classes de 5^{ème} dans lesquelles j'ai mis en place cette séquence sont deux classes de 24 élèves au niveau assez hétérogène. Dans la classe que j'appellerai 5^{ème} A, il y a trois élèves atteints de dyslexie (dont un élève autiste sans AVS) qui disposent d'un PAP (projet d'accueil personnalisé). Dans la classe que j'appellerai 5^{ème} B, il y a deux élèves atteints de dyslexie qui disposent d'un PAP. À part un groupe de trois à six élèves qui interviennent régulièrement à l'oral en fonction des activités dans les deux classes, le reste de la classe ne prend que très rarement, voire quasiment jamais la parole, à moins d'être activement et personnellement sollicité. Les deux classes sont connues dans l'établissement pour leurs bavardages et le manque de travail à la maison ; les enseignants ont dû avoir recours

à plusieurs reprises à des changements de plans de classe en 5^{ème} A afin de faire cesser ces bavardages un maximum.

Cette partie se concentrera tout d'abord sur la mise en place de la séquence dans son intégralité à travers les différences majeures entre ce que j'avais prévu et la réalité du terrain. Ensuite, je reviendrai plus en détails sur la mise en place de la cinquième séance du plan de séquence, qui correspond pour les deux classes aux cours n°8 et 9 sur douze au total, en me concentrant sur ce que j'aurais pu faire différemment afin de faciliter l'étude de *Matilda* à la lumière de la réceptivité ressentie des élèves sur la séquence. Ces retours et ces analyses se feront de manière chronologique afin de respecter la progression logique de la séquence et de la séance présentées.

Remarques et retours sur la mise en œuvre de la séquence

La séquence s'est déroulée telle qu'elle a été prévue, avec seulement quelques petits changements dans la présentation des documents ; j'ai dû réviser mes attentes et reformuler les consignes à plusieurs reprises, mais les supports sont restés les mêmes que ceux que j'avais initialement prévus. La réalité du terrain a fait que les activités envisagées lors des sept séances planifiées ont duré plus de temps qu'anticipé, ce qui m'a cependant permis de m'assurer que tout était bien compris, acquis et retravaillé si nécessaire afin de préparer au mieux la réalisation de la tâche finale. Chacun des onze cours qui ont suivi la séance introductive a commencé par des activités de *warm-up* présentées sous diverses formes : présentations à diapositives, activités ludiques avec *LearningApps*, *Quizlet*, *EdPuzzle*, etc, ou de simples questions posées sur ce qui a été fait au cours précédent.

Les élèves connaissaient déjà beaucoup de vocabulaire lié à l'école, et les deux premières séances du plan de la séquence se sont passées comme prévu et ont bien tenu un cours chacune. Lors de l'introduction de *Matilda* en séance 3, les élèves se sont montrés très motivés et engagés à l'idée de travailler sur ce sujet. Une grande partie de la 5^{ème} B avait étudié *Matilda* en cours de français l'année dernière, quelques élèves des deux classes connaissaient le film, et une élève de 5^{ème} A l'avait même regardé sur la plateforme de

streaming *Netflix* la veille. Ceci a visiblement motivé les élèves à chaque introduction d'un extrait ou élément qu'ils connaissaient et a facilité la compréhension des textes pour certains.

La tâche intermédiaire, qui proposait aux élèves de présenter le professeur le plus « cool » ou le plus strict, a énormément motivé les élèves, et ceux-ci ont fait preuve de beaucoup d'imagination. Cependant, sur les deux classes, une seule élève a décidé de présenter le professeur « le plus strict du monde ». Le reste a préféré imaginer un professeur, des matières et des règles « cool ». Au moment de la mise en commun, les deux classes entières ont donc été sollicitées à l'oral afin de donner des adjectifs et des règles correspondant à un professeur strict.

Le même engouement que pour l'introduction de *Matilda* a été retrouvé en séance 6 lors du travail sur *Harry Potter* et le personnage de Dolores Umbridge. La seule grande différence de réception se trouve au niveau de l'*acting challenge* en séance 7 (cours 11). Alors que les élèves de 5^{ème} A se sont pris au jeu dès la répétition des phrases et qu'une bonne partie d'entre eux a pris à cœur l'exercice de mise en voix des phrases avec ton, les 5^{ème} B ont eu l'air bien moins motivés. La seule différence entre les deux cours est que les 5^{ème} B sortaient d'une heure d'évaluation de mathématiques pour un cours d'anglais de 9h à 10h et que les 5^{ème} A rentraient de récréation de 10h à 11h. Les contenus ayant été présentés et proposés de la même manière, la différence de réaction a été selon moi causée par des facteurs extérieurs, d'autant plus qu'il n'y a pas de différences majeures de niveau ou de profils d'élèves entre les deux classes. En deuxième partie de cours, j'ai séparé les élèves en différents groupes de recherche afin de réaliser une fiche de révision commune à chaque classe qui a été mise en ligne sur leur ENT (environnement numérique de travail) ainsi que sur le *Padlet*.

La tâche finale a été réalisée en salle informatique tout le long du douzième cours pour les deux classes. Après rappel des consignes et critères d'évaluations que j'ai laissés affichés au tableau toute l'heure, les élèves ont eu dix minutes pour préparer leurs brouillons avant de devoir s'enregistrer. Les critères d'évaluations et compétences associées se trouvaient également sur le polycopié distribué aux élèves (consultable en *Annexe E*). Malgré le rappel des consignes présentées sous forme de *check-list*, et le travail sur la fiche de révision commune, une majorité d'élèves s'est retrouvée à ne répondre qu'à une partie des attendus

de la tâche. Un tiers de chaque classe a quand même réussi à répondre à tous les attendus pragmatiques.

En 5^{ème} A, la note médiane pour la tâche finale est de 9 et la note moyenne est de 11,4.

En 5^{ème} B, la note médiane est de 11 et la note moyenne est de 13,56.

Séance 5 : « *When Teachers Abuse Their Power: Miss Trunchbull* » : Pistes de remédiation et retour des élèves

La séance 5 me semble au mieux illustrer le travail effectué tout au long de la séquence, et c'est aussi celle-ci qui s'est concentrée sur des extraits du roman ; c'est pour cela que je souhaiterais revenir plus en détail sur son déroulé. Prévue pour tenir sur une heure de cours (voir le plan détaillé de la séance telle qu'elle a été prévue en *Annexe C*), celle-ci s'est en fait espacée sur deux heures de cours entières (cours 8 et 9). L'exercice qui a le plus posé problème lors de cette séance était l'exercice de compréhension écrite sur six extraits que j'ai choisis dans le roman *Matilda* de Roald Dahl pour leur richesse en vocabulaire pouvant être réutilisé pour la tâche finale (*Annexe A*). Afin d'apporter des précisions et corrections aux éléments de réponse précédemment apportés à la question « Comment introduire et utiliser des extraits d'œuvres littéraires anglo-saxonnes en classe de 5^{ème} ? », je vais revenir sur ce qui a relativement bien et moins bien fonctionné que prévu lors de cette activité en particulier, tout en proposant des pistes de remédiation possibles.

Le but n'étant pas de comprendre la totalité des textes, j'ai décidé de demander aux élèves de d'abord repérer les noms des personnages et les parties du corps dans le texte, ce qui a également introduit aux élèves quelques stratégies de repérage. J'ai poursuivi avec une étape de *matching* avec les illustrations de Quentin Blake présentes dans le livre afin que les élèves puissent se représenter visuellement les scènes décrites. À la suite de cela, je leur ai demandé de donner un titre à chaque texte. Les consignes (voir *Annexe A et B* pour les photocopiés distribués) se présentaient comme ceci et représentaient les trois grandes étapes de la séance (repérages/réception, *matching*, invention/production) :

1. Underline the names of the characters.

2. **Highlight the body parts in the text.**

[TEXTES A, B, C, D, E et F]

3. Match each text with the right picture.

4. Give a title to each text.

Afin d'éviter de mettre en difficulté une partie des élèves, j'ai essayé de simplifier un maximum les énoncés, de les numéroter et de décomposer un maximum les tâches. Cependant, un nombre important d'élèves s'est retrouvé en difficulté et il a fallu que je répète à plusieurs reprises ce qu'il fallait faire aux élèves en individuel, si bien que l'activité et la mise en commun ont duré près de trente-cinq minutes sur les quinze minutes initialement prévues. Au final, la quasi-intégralité des élèves a finalement compris ce qui était attendu et a réalisé la tâche avec succès, mais l'activité a eu du mal à se mettre en place. Voici l'en-tête de la feuille distribuée :

Incidents at Crunchem Hall: Miss Trunchbull's outbursts	
<p><u>1.</u> <u>Underline the names of the characters.</u></p> <p><u>2.</u> Highlight the body parts in the text.</p>	
TEXT A :	PICTURE:
<p>"Listen to this then," Hortensia said. "Only yesterday the Trunchbull caught a boy called Julius Rottwinkle eating Liquorice Allsorts during the scripture lesson and she simply picked him up by one arm and flung him clear out of the open classroom window. [...] Then the Trunchbull turned to us and said, "From now on, anybody caught eating in class goes straight out the window."</p>	

Afin de mieux décomposer les tâches et ainsi faciliter la compréhension de l'ensemble des élèves, j'aurais pu faire appel à de la couleur, à des flèches et à des précisions, ainsi que donner un exemple sur la feuille en elle-même. Ainsi, la mise en page ci-dessus telle qu'elle a été distribuée aux élèves aurait pu donner lieu à la présentation suivante :

Incidents at Crunchem Hall: Miss Trunchbull's outbursts

STEP 1: **Read** the texts.

↓

STEP 2: **Underline** the names of the characters.

↓

STEP 3: **Highlight** the **body parts** in the texts.

TEXT A :	PICTURE:
-----------------	-----------------

"Listen to this then," Hortensia said. "Only yesterday the Trunchbull caught a boy called Julius Rottwinkle eating Liquorice Allsorts during the scripture lesson and she simply picked him up by one **arm** and flung him clear out of the open classroom window. [...] Then the Trunchbull turned to us and said, "From now on, anybody caught eating in class goes straight out the window."

De cette manière, les élèves auraient pris moins de temps à essayer de comprendre les consignes et plus de temps à lire et déchiffrer les textes. En faisant apparaître les étapes (*steps*) et les flèches très clairement, plutôt qu'en numérotant les énoncés, les élèves auraient mieux compris qu'il s'agissait de trois tâches différentes, pour lesquelles le mot le plus important apparaissait en rouge. Je serais bien évidemment toujours passé dans les rangs m'assurer que tout était compris pour tout le monde. La décomposition des tâches aurait aussi pu se faire à mon niveau. En effet, je pensais que de faire apparaître les deux consignes 1. *souligner* et 2. *surligner* comme deux éléments distincts suffirait à venir en aide aux élèves dyslexiques et celles et ceux moins à l'aise avec les doubles-tâches, mais j'ai eu tort de lancer les élèves en activité sur ces deux tâches en même temps. J'aurais dû procéder moi aussi par étapes, en demandant d'abord aux élèves de lire les textes. J'aurais indiqué individuellement aux élèves ayant fini leur lecture qu'ils pouvaient entamer la deuxième étape (souligner les noms). Une fois que la classe entière aurait fini de lire les textes, il aurait été plus facile de passer à l'étape de soulignage tous ensemble (tout en montrant bien l'exemple sur la feuille et en faisant réexpliquer à un élève ayant compris ce qui était attendu) puisque les élèves se seraient déjà familiarisés une première fois avec les extraits. Je serais également intervenu auprès des *fast finishers* pour vérifier leur travail et les lancer sur la troisième étape (surligner les parties du corps), avant de passer à la mise en commun des soulignages. Une fois cette mise en commun

passée, c'est à ce moment que j'aurais fait passer l'ensemble de la classe à la troisième étape, plutôt que de faire une mise en commun pour les deux tâches comme je l'ai fait avec les deux classes. À la fin, je pense que les élèves seraient effectivement arrivés à une compréhension plus satisfaisante et large des supports proposés.

Afin de ne pas décourager les élèves, j'aurais également pu adapter les supports en eux-mêmes : soit en réduisant le nombre de textes de six à trois (+ un texte déjà surligné et souligné en guise d'exemple), soit en divisant la classe en six groupes de travail, chaque groupe ayant son propre texte à lire et annoter. Afin que l'ensemble des élèves lise un maximum de textes, j'aurais pu organiser des moments de correction ou vérification par les pairs : chaque groupe aurait fait passer ses feuilles au groupe d'à côté, qui aurait vérifié les éléments surlignés et soulignés par leurs camarades, et ainsi de suite, jusqu'à ce que chaque groupe retrouve ses feuilles de départ. De cette manière, les élèves auraient lu l'ensemble des textes sans avoir eu l'impression d'effectuer la tâche eux-mêmes à cinq ou six reprises.

Les stratégies mises en place pour faciliter l'accès au sens ne peuvent cependant être mises en œuvre efficacement que si celles-ci répondent à une logique de différenciation et prennent donc en compte un maximum de profils d'élèves différents.

Je souhaiterais revenir sur une définition qui, à mon sens, illustre parfaitement de quoi il est question lorsque l'on parle de logique de différenciation :

La pédagogie différenciée est une démarche qui consiste à mettre en œuvre un ensemble diversifié de moyens et de procédures d'enseignement et d'apprentissage pour permettre à des élèves d'âge, d'aptitudes, de compétences [différents et] aux savoirs hétérogènes d'**atteindre par des voies différentes des objectifs communs**.
(Gilles AUZELOUX)

Le fait de décomposer les tâches, comme je l'ai proposé précédemment, répond en lui-même à une logique de différenciation. La question que l'on peut se poser est donc pour qui et pourquoi différencier ? La différenciation peut malheureusement rapidement se montrer inefficace si celle-ci se focalise sur un seul profil d'élève pour lequel proposer des aménagements ou des cheminements différents. Il est crucial que l'enseignant-e différencie à plusieurs niveaux : au niveau du contenu même de la tâche, des modalités d'organisation, du

processus même, et des productions attendues. Il faut également se rappeler que différents profils d'élèves peuvent bénéficier de la différenciation : les élèves à besoins éducatifs particuliers et les élèves qui rencontrent des difficultés, bien entendu, mais pas uniquement. Il est important de garder à l'esprit que les élèves performants, les élèves travaillant différemment ou ayant des rythmes de travail différents, et les jeunes élèves peu habitués au système scolaire et à son degré d'autonomie requis (comme cela peut être le cas en classe de 5^{ème}) peuvent et doivent tous bénéficier de la différenciation.

Dans le cas de la décomposition des tâches, celle-ci peut bien entendu venir en aide aux élèves en difficulté, aux élèves à besoins particuliers et aux méthodes ou rythmes de travail différents, mais également profiter aux élèves performants. Cette décomposition en plusieurs « sous-tâches » peut faire gagner du temps à ces élèves sur le déchiffrage des consignes et leur permettre de se focaliser sur l'activité en elle-même ; ici, il s'agit du fait de lire et comprendre un texte littéraire authentique en langue anglaise. Pour les élèves en difficulté face aux tâches multiples, la nécessité de passer par une étape de division des consignes s'explique au niveau cognitif. L'attention est notamment sollicitée quand les tâches sont tout nouvellement introduites, c'est-à-dire non automatisées, et complexes. La mémoire de travail d'un individu ne peut en effet gérer que trois ou quatre informations à la fois. Si elle en reçoit plusieurs en même temps, le cerveau de l'élève, et notamment de l'élève dyslexique (et autres élèves dys) peut très vite se retrouver en état de surcharge cognitive : il est amené à exécuter plusieurs tâches simultanément, ce qui se fait quasi-systématiquement au détriment d'une des tâches. Mais si l'on décompose la tâche, ces élèves se retrouvent alors face à une succession de sous-tâches simples (dans le sens étymologique latin *simplex*, « formées d'un seul élément ») et numérotées, au lieu d'un seul énoncé complexe. La décomposition des tâches est un exercice qui peut même profiter à l'enseignant·e, puisque cela lui permet de mieux se représenter ce qu'il ou elle attend de ses élèves, et les différentes étapes nécessaires pour y arriver. Les élèves auraient ainsi pu concentrer leurs efforts sur la compréhension de *Matilda*.

Ce principe correspond tout à fait à la logique de l'étayage, introduit par Jérôme Bruner en 1983 comme étant « l'ensemble des interactions d'assistance de l'adulte permettant à l'enfant d'apprendre à organiser ses conduites afin de pouvoir résoudre seul un problème

qu'il ne savait pas résoudre au départ ». Dans son livre *Le développement de l'enfant : Savoir-faire, savoir-dire* (2011), Bruner définit les six fonctions de l'étayage : l'enrôlement (le fait de susciter l'intérêt), la réduction des degrés de liberté (comme c'est le cas dans la décomposition des tâches), le maintien de l'orientation (de l'élève dans les attendus de la tâche), la signalisation des caractéristiques déterminantes (afin d'éviter de s'éloigner de ce qui est attendu), le contrôle de la frustration (consistant à rassurer l'élève afin d'éviter un sentiment d'échec ou un abandon face à une tâche jugée trop compliquée), et la démonstration ou présentation des modèles (le fait de montrer un exemple de ce qui est attendu afin de s'assurer que l'élève sache ce qu'il ou elle doit faire). Selon moi, ces six principes sont inhérents à la logique différenciative, et le fait de décomposer une tâche est une partie intrinsèque et indéfectible du système de l'étayage. Avoir ces principes en mémoire au moment de la confection de l'activité de compréhension écrite m'aurait permis d'anticiper un maximum d'obstacles.

Malgré le manque de compréhension des attentes qui a fait que j'aie dû intervenir auprès d'une dizaine d'élèves par classe afin de clarifier ou réexpliquer les consignes, l'étape de mise en commun s'est déroulée sans problèmes pour les deux classes. Dans le cas de la 5^{ème} A, beaucoup d'élèves qui ne prennent jamais la parole ont participé activement et avec entrain lors de la mise en commun des repérages et de l'activité de *matching* texte-image qui a suivi. Dans le cas de la 5^{ème} B, seuls les habitués participants se sont portés volontaires pour partager leurs trouvailles au début de la mise en commun, mais après avoir sollicité quelques élèves ne levant pas la main, l'ensemble de la classe a pris confiance, et le nombre de main levées est resté entre neuf et treize jusqu'à la fin du dernier texte. L'activité de *matching* a rencontré le même succès que pour la 5^{ème} A.

Lors de l'activité qui suit, qui consistait à donner un titre sous forme de résumé en une phrase à chaque paragraphe, les élèves ont rencontré quelques difficultés que j'avais anticipées. J'avais envisagé trois scénarios possibles (comme décrits dans le plan de séance en *Annexe C*), du plus difficile au plus guidé :

1. On donne un titre au premier texte tous ensemble. Les élèves y arrivent sans trop de difficulté et je les laisse en autonomie en passant dans les rangs pour aider les élèves qui eux se retrouvent en difficulté.
2. Si les élèves ont majoritairement du mal à réaliser la tâche, je projette au tableau un *sentence builder/writing frame* (grille d'écriture) pour aider à la formulation des titres. Le titre est déjà dans l'ordre et la syntaxe n'est plus un problème : il s'agit de choisir les bons mots de vocabulaire pour chaque titre.
3. Si les élèves n'y arrivent toujours pas, je donne une liste de titres (dont certains qui ne correspondent à rien) et les élèves choisissent les bons.

Pour les deux classes, il n'a pas été suffisant de faire un exemple tous ensemble comme prévu pour le scénario numéro 1. Aucun élève n'a réussi à formuler de phrase correcte, et certains (environ cinq par classe) ont eu l'air de complètement baisser les bras devant la difficulté. Cependant, les élèves ont tout de suite compris ce qui était attendu et réussi en grande majorité lorsque j'ai affiché la grille d'écriture suivante au tableau :

Miss Trunchbull	grabbed	Julius Rottwinkle	's	hair	and held him dangling upside-down.
	hit	Wilfred		head	
	lifted	Bruce Bogtrotter		pigtails	round her head.
	caught	Rupert		ears	and lifted him out of his chair.
	held	Matilda Wormwood		ankle	out the window.
	flung	Lavender		legs	with a cake platter.
	pinched	Amanda		feet	
	threw	Hortensia		arm	
	swung	Miss Honey		body	

Afin de moins guider les élèves les plus à l'aise avec l'expression écrite, j'aurais pu prévoir des photocopies de cette grille d'écriture et la proposer aux élèves qui se retrouvaient en difficulté. Pour tout le monde, au tableau, j'aurais à la place pu afficher la grille d'écriture réduite suivante :

Miss Trunchbull	<i>V-ed</i>	<i>name</i>	<i>'s</i>	<i>body part</i>	and held him dangling upside-down.
					<hr/>
					round her head.
					<hr/>
					and lifted him out of his chair.
<hr/>					
out the window.					
<hr/>					
with a cake platter.					

De cette manière, j'aurais fait apparaître l'ordre syntaxique des éléments attendus dans la phrase sans pour autant pré-écrire les titres. Cela aurait poussé les élèves à relire attentivement les extraits de *Matilda* tout en sachant quoi chercher. Les élèves pour qui la structure seule n'aurait pas suffi auraient pu me demander la grille d'écriture complète.

Afin d'encourager les élèves en difficulté à s'éloigner de la grille d'écriture, j'aurais pu également proposer une autre manière de faire : il s'agirait de partir de la grille entière et de faire les titres à l'oral tous ensemble. À chaque fois que je validerais une proposition des élèves, je remplacerais une colonne de la grille complétée par la nature du mot attendu, jusqu'à arriver à la grille réduite ci-dessus lors de la dernière intervention d'élève. Cela justifierait également le besoin pour les élèves de relire attentivement les textes.

L'activité de fin de séance, qui a duré la totalité de la deuxième heure de cours, consistait en une production écrite par les élèves de leur propre récit d'incident (voir les consignes détaillées en *Annexe D*). Comme la séparation en deux cours de la séance m'a

permis de passer plus de temps sur la transmission de consigne et l'explication des attentes, j'ai passé une dizaine de minutes à travailler sur le modèle du récit afin que les élèves réussissent au mieux à le reproduire. Les questions posées aux élèves se basent sur les *WH-questions* avec lesquelles ils sont déjà à l'aise depuis le début d'année. Voici l'exemple supplémentaire (ajouté à celui de Julius Rottwinkle en *Annexe D*) que l'on a fait en classe tous ensemble avec la 5^{ème} B :

- **What did Miss Trunchbull do?**

Miss Trunchbull hit a pupil with a book...

- **Why?**

... because she didn't do her homework.

- **Which pupil did she harm? (Who?)**

The pupil she harmed was Lavender.

- **What did she say?**

"You must do your homework, you spoiled brat!", Miss Trunchbull yelled.

Sachant que les élèves avaient déjà travaillé sur *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* avec leur professeur (séquence commencée après et terminée avant la mienne), j'ai amené les élèves à (ré)utiliser le terme « *spoiled brat* » dans l'exemple (appris pour décrire le personnage de Veruca Salt) afin de leur faire comprendre que tout ce qu'ils apprenaient dans l'année pouvait être réutilisé et réinvesti dans d'autres séquences, et donc ici pour cette activité. Au vu de la difficulté ressentie de ce que je leur demandais, j'ai décidé de réafficher la grille d'écriture complète utilisée pour l'écriture des titres au tableau. Les élèves ont été très motivés par l'exercice et se sont montrés très investis dans les deux classes, malgré le manque de vocabulaire et les quelques erreurs de syntaxe et/ou d'orthographe que l'on peut attendre d'élèves de début de cycle 4. Une poignée d'élèves m'a quand même sollicité à plusieurs reprises pour des questions de vocabulaire, comme je l'avais proposé. Afin

d'automatiser cette demande d'aide, j'aurais pu instaurer un nombre de mots de vocabulaire à me demander au minimum. De cette manière, je me serais assuré que le lexique ne serait pas un obstacle à cet exercice d'écriture d'invention. J'aurais également pu anticiper et mettre à la disposition des élèves dans la classe des dictionnaires bilingues afin d'en normaliser l'usage.

Voici quelques exemples de productions d'élèves :

En 5^{ème} A :

Production A1

Miss Trunchbull pinched Lavender and Matilda's ears because they talking [sic]
in the class.
"Stop talking!", Miss Trunchbull said.

Production A2

Miss Trunchbull grabbed Rupert's hair because he has golden-coloured hair.

En 5^{ème} B :

Production B1

Miss Trunchbull flung W. (*nom d'élève*) out the window because he was playing
football in the classroom.
"Anybody caught playing football in the classroom goes straight out the
window," Miss Trunchbull said.

Production B2

Miss Trunchbull swung Bruce by the legs because he doesn't like her shoes.

Dans les deux classes, la majorité des élèves n'est pas allée jusqu'au bout de l'étape « *What did she say?* ». De ce que j'ai pu voir en passant dans les rangs, les productions A1 et B1 sont les seuls travaux d'élèves sur les deux classes qui témoignent d'une compréhension et acquisition de la structure du discours rapporté. Il est intéressant de noter que peu d'élèves ont suivi le modèle travaillé en classe et qu'ils ont pour la quasi-totalité préféré se baser sur la grille d'écriture. Cependant, on peut remarquer que la plupart des élèves (comme pour ces quatre productions) s'en sont en partie éloignés en proposant une raison qui ne se trouvait pas dans la dernière colonne de la grille d'écriture (« *because he doesn't like her shoes* » par exemple). Il était peut-être ambitieux de ma part de m'attendre à ce que les élèves puissent reproduire un récit en se basant sur un modèle tout juste introduit, et j'aurais dû, lors de ma préparation, penser à réutiliser cette même grille d'écriture en ajoutant des colonnes, à la suite de celles déjà connues des élèves, pour le discours rapporté. De cette manière, les élèves auraient retrouvé un modèle qui leur était en partie connu, et cela aurait permis de fixer cette structure en travaillant sur la mémorisation de celle-ci dans un contexte à risques réduits. Les élèves désirant prendre plus de libertés et s'en éloigner auraient été encouragés.

Conclusion

Pour conclure, je dirais que cette séance a été très représentative du travail effectué sur la séquence tout entière pour plusieurs raisons. Tout d'abord, elle est la preuve que l'enseignant·e ne peut pas tout anticiper et qu'il est rare qu'une séance se passe comme elle a été prévue et conçue : l'adaptabilité est au cœur du métier. Ensuite, elle témoigne du fait que malgré quelques erreurs persistantes, et le besoin de reformuler et préciser les consignes quasiment systématiquement, les élèves sont au final capables de comprendre ce qui est attendu et d'agir en conséquence. Enfin, elle nous prouve qu'il est possible de travailler sur une œuvre littéraire et de se servir d'extraits authentiques en langue anglaise, et ce même pour une classe de 5^{ème} qui vient tout juste de valider le niveau A1 du CECRL et que l'on pousse vers le niveau A2 attendu en fin de cycle 4.

Lors du travail sur des extraits authentiques d'œuvres littéraires, il n'est pas nécessaire de modifier ou couper des parties plus difficiles de ceux-ci afin de les rendre plus accessibles aux élèves. Le travail sur l'accessibilité se fait autour des textes et non à l'intérieur ; il s'agit

de donner aux élèves les bonnes étapes et de leur proposer le cheminement adéquat afin que les obstacles rencontrés pour la compréhension précise des extraits ne fassent pas obstacle à la compréhension globale des documents.

Les élèves ont exprimé leur satisfaction face à cette séquence pédagogique et ont pour la plupart apprécié travailler sur *Matilda*. À titre personnel, en plus du défi réflexif qu'a été la conception de cette séquence et de l'expérience de terrain que j'ai acquise, j'ai apprécié travailler avec des élèves sur cet ouvrage et son adaptation filmique qui ont bercé mon enfance.

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ANNEXES

ANNEXE A

Incidents at Crunchem Hall: Miss Trunchbull's outbursts

1. Underline the names of the characters.
2. **Highlight** the **body parts** in the text

TEXT A :

PICTURE:

"Listen to this then," Hortensia said. "Only yesterday the Trunchbull caught a boy called Julius Rottwinkle eating Liquorice Allsorts during the scripture lesson and she simply picked him up by one arm and flung him clear out of the open classroom window. [...] Then the Trunchbull turned to us and said, "From now on, anybody caught eating in class goes straight out the window."

TEXT B :

PICTURE:

"I don't give a tinker's toot what your mummy thinks!" the Trunchbull yelled, and with that she lunged forward and grabbed hold of Amanda's pigtails in her right fist and lifted the girl clear off the ground. Then she started swinging her round and round her head, faster and faster and Amanda was screaming blue murder and the Trunchbull was yelling, "I'll give you pigtails, you little rat!"

TEXT C :

PICTURE:

Suddenly the Trunchbull lunged forward and grabbed the large empty china platter on which the cake had rested. She raised it high in the air and brought it down with a crash right on the top of the wretched Bruce Bogtrotter's head and pieces flew all over the platform.

The boy was by now so full of cake he was like a sackful of wet cement and you couldn't have hurt him with a sledge-hammer. He simply shook his head a few times and went on grinning.

ANNEXE A

TEXT D :

PICTURE:

[Miss Trunchbull] had now stationed herself directly behind Rupert, and suddenly she extended a hand the size of a tennis racquet and grabbed all the hair on Rupert's head in her fist. Rupert had a lot of golden-coloured hair. His mother thought it was beautiful to behold and took a delight in allowing it to grow extra long. [...] She took a firm grip on Rupert's long golden tresses with her giant hand and then, by raising her muscular right arm, she lifted the helpless boy clean out of his chair and held him aloft.

TEXT E :

PICTURE:

Standing behind Eric, the Trunchbull reached out and took hold of the boy's two ears, one with each hand, pinching them between forefinger and thumb.

"Ow!" Eric cried. "Ow! You're hurting me!"

"I haven't started yet," the Trunchbull said briskly. And now, taking a firm grip on his two ears, she lifted him bodily out of his seat and held him aloft.

TEXT F :

PICTURE:

In two strides the Trunchbull was beside him, and by some amazing gymnastic trick, it may have been judo or karate, she flipped the back of Wilfred's legs with one of her feet so that the boy shot up off the ground and turned a somersault in the air. But halfway through the somersault she caught him by an ankle and held him dangling upside-down like a plucked chicken in a shop-window.

3. Match each text with the right picture.

4. Give a title to each text.

ANNEXE B

PICTURE 1

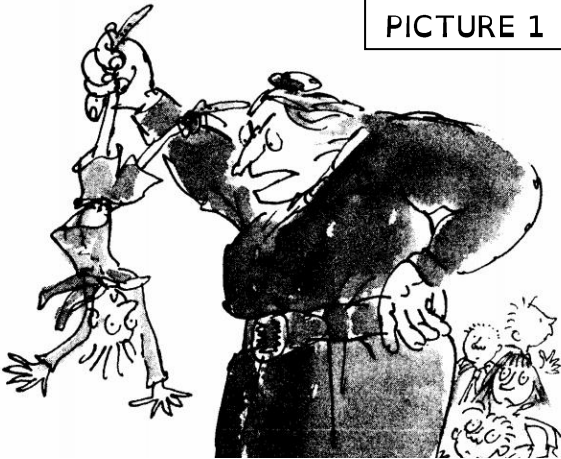


Figure 4: Blake, Quentin. *Matilda*, 1988. p.219

PICTURE 2

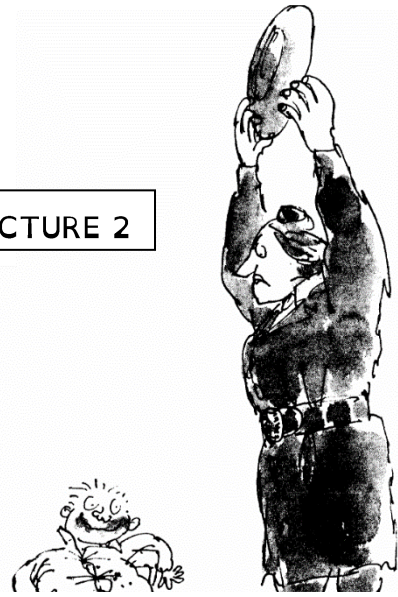


Figure 5: Blake, Quentin. *Matilda*, 1988. p.132

PICTURE 3

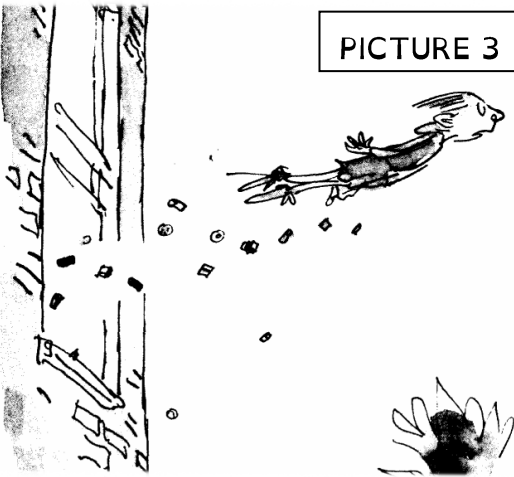


Figure 9: Blake, Quentin. *Matilda*, 1988. p.111

PICTURE 4

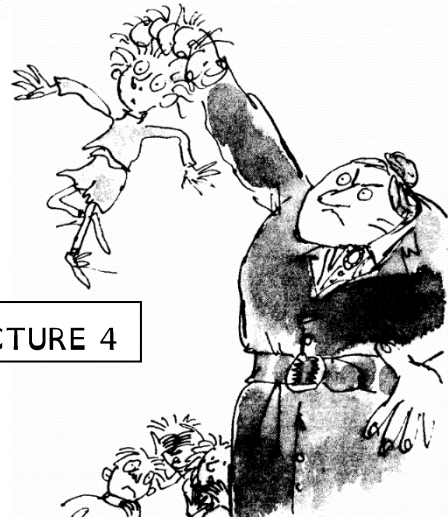


Figure 8: Blake, Quentin. *Matilda*, 1988. p.149

PICTURE 5

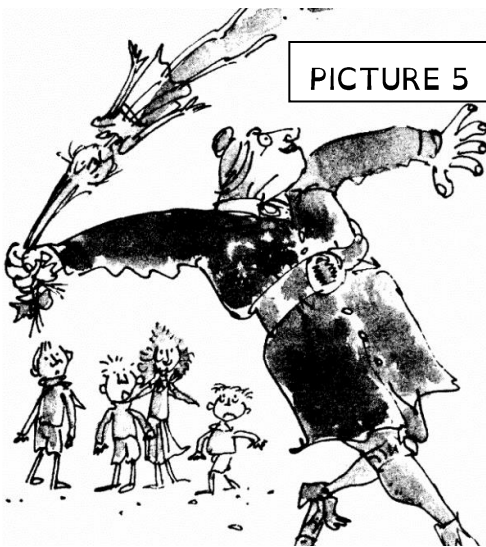


Figure 7: Blake, Quentin. *Matilda*, 1988. p.115

PICTURE 6

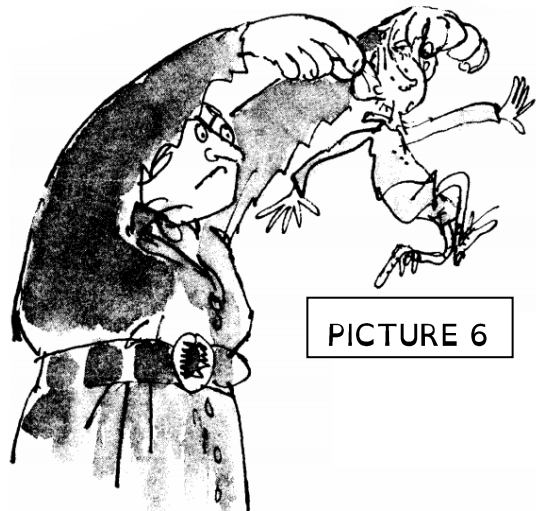


Figure 6: Blake, Quentin. *Matilda*, 1988. p.153

ANNEXE C

PLAN DÉTAILLÉ PRÉVISIONNEL DE LA SÉANCE 5 (séances 8 et 9)

JE FAIS	L'ÉLÈVE FAIT	ACTIVITÉS LANGAGIÈRES	CONSIGNES EN ANGLAIS
<p>Accueil des élèves.</p> <p>Pendant que ma tutrice de stage fait l'appel en ligne, je demande aux élèves de sortir leurs étiquettes de prénom.</p> <p>Je demande également à un élève la date du jour pour l'inscrire au tableau.</p>	<p>Les élèves entrent en classe, s'installent et sortent leurs affaires.</p> <p>Pendant ce temps, un·e élève indique la date du jour. Ses camarades écoutent et corrigent/aident si besoin.</p>	<p>/</p> <p>/</p> <p>(EO)</p>	<p>/</p> <p>« <i>Can you put your name tags on your desks please ?</i> »</p> <p>« <i>What's the date today?</i> »</p>
<p>J'interroge deux ou trois élèves sur la leçon / trace écrite à apprendre.</p> <p>Si la leçon n'est pas apprise, je ramasse le carnet de l'élève qui n'a pas appris. Ils ont été mis au courant puisque cela fait deux séances d'affilée que les devoirs ne sont pas faits pour la majorité des élèves.</p> <p>Si l'élève essaye mais a du mal, je peux afficher la trace écrite lacunaire au tableau pour aider à la prise de parole.</p>	<p>Les élèves (cahier fermé) participent et écoutent leurs camarades.</p>	<p>EO</p>	<p>« <i>What's your opinion on Miss Honey / Miss Trunchbull?</i> »</p>
<p>Je distribue les photocopiés (les deux feuilles de textes) et explique que l'on va passer à l'étude d'extraits de <i>Matilda</i> à propos de Miss Trunchbull. Je souligne l'importance de l'étude de ceux-ci en mentionnant la tâche finale.</p> <p>« <i>We know that Miss Trunchbull is violent, strict, mean, etc</i> (voc. de la séance précédente). <i>Today, we are going to see HOW.</i> »</p>	<p>Les élèves ouvrent leur cahier, recopient la date et collent les photocopiés dans leurs cahiers. Ils écoutent la justification de l'étude de ces textes.</p>	<p>(CO)</p>	<p>« <i>Write the date and stick the sheets in your copybook</i> »</p> <p>(J'utilise personnellement le terme « <i>exercise book</i> » mais j'utilise le même que ma tutrice pour ne pas créer de confusion)</p>
<p>J'affiche les consignes du photocopié au tableau à l'aide du rétroprojecteur.</p> <p>Je demande à un·e élève de lire les consignes (1 et 2) et je mime l'action de souligner et surligner.</p>	<p>Un·e élève lit la consigne à voix haute pendant que les autres suivent.</p> <p>Si ce n'est pas compris, les élèves peuvent se manifester</p>	<p>(CO / CE)</p>	<p>« <i>Can someone read the instructions?</i> »</p>

<p>Si les élèves ont l'air déconcertés, je donne un exemple de nom propre (Matilda) et de « <i>body part</i> » (« <i>nose</i> ») qui ne sont pas présents dans le texte pour illustrer.</p>			<p>« <i>Do you all understand?</i> »</p> <p>« <i>You have 5 minutes.</i> » (J'ai prévu 7 minutes pour cette partie mais j'ajouterai 2 minutes à la fin des 5 minutes pour que les élèves se concentrent).</p>
<p>Je passe voir les élèves à PAP et les élèves souvent en difficulté pour m'assurer que la double tâche (surligner & souligner) est comprise. Je passe dans les rangs pour m'assurer que le reste du groupe a compris. Si une majorité d'élèves ne trouve pas les parties du corps (appries lors d'une séquence sur les zombies avec leur enseignante), j'ai prévu une activité de <i>matching</i> image/mot avec <i>LearningApps</i> pour rappel.</p>	<p>Les élèves lisent le texte et effectuent les repérages demandés.</p> <p>(En vue de la difficulté des extraits de texte authentiques, il me paraît ambitieux de demander plus que cela comme première étape de compréhension. En effet, le CECRL prévoit pour le niveau A2 « Je peux lire des textes courts très simples. Je peux trouver une information particulière prévisible dans des documents courants... » et pour le niveau B1 « Je peux comprendre des textes rédigés essentiellement dans une langue courante ou relative à mon travail... ». Les élèves étant en tout début de cycle 4, le niveau A2 est toujours en cours d'acquisition. La compréhension des textes relevant plutôt du B1, les repérages ciblés semblent être suffisants en vue de la production prévue en fin de séance et pour la tâche finale.)</p>	<p>CO</p>	<p>« <i>You can start. You have 5 minutes.</i> »</p> <p>« <i>Do you need 2 extra minutes?</i> »</p> <p>« <i>Let's correct together now.</i> »</p>
<p>J'affiche le texte au tableau et je lis les phrases à voix haute les unes après les autres. Je surligne/souligne au fil des interventions des élèves</p>	<p>Les élèves m'indiquent quand il faut que je souligne ou surligne quelque chose. Ils soulignent/surlignent leurs textes pour compléter.</p>	<p>(EO)</p>	<p>« <i>Do I underline/highlight anything here?</i> »</p>
<p>Je distribue le photocopié avec les images. J'indique aux élèves qu'ils doivent matcher les images avec les extraits de texte.</p>	<p>Les élèves font correspondre les images avec les extraits correspondant.</p>	<p>(CE)</p>	<p>« <i>Match the pictures with the right text.</i> »</p>

Si je vois qu'ils ont du mal, nous ferons la première tous ensemble. Cela leur montrera la méthodologie (= identifier les parties du corps, genre de l'enfant sur l'image, verbes d'action)			
J'interroge les élèves pour qu'ils fassent correspondre les images avec une activité <i>LearningApps</i> . La tâche étant plus simple, je privilégie les élèves les plus en difficulté/qui n'ont pas réussi l'étape des repérages.	Les élèves donnent leurs réponses et suivent la correction.	(EO)	« <i>Let's correct together.</i> » « <i>Which text goes with this picture?</i> »
On passe à l'activité n°4 sur la fiche avec les textes : « <i>Give a title to each text.</i> » Trois étapes/scénarios possibles, en commençant : 1. On donne un titre au premier texte tous ensemble. Les élèves y arrivent sans trop de difficulté et je les laisse en autonomie en passant dans les rangs pour aider les élèves en difficulté. 2. Si les élèves ont majoritairement du mal à réaliser la tâche, je projette au tableau un <i>sentence builder/writing frame</i> pour aider à la formulation des titres. Le titre est déjà dans l'ordre et la syntaxe n'est plus un problème : il s'agit de choisir les bons mots de vocabulaire pour chaque titre. 3. Si les élèves n'y arrivent toujours pas, je donne une liste de titres (dont certains qui ne correspondent à rien) et les élèves choisissent les bons.	Les élèves donnent des titres aux textes. Ils peuvent s'aider des images et de leurs repérages.	EE	« <i>Give a title to each text.</i> » « <i>Let's do the first one together.</i> » « <i>Do you need a little extra help?</i> »
J'écoute les propositions des élèves et je prends en note leurs contributions. Je fais corriger les phrases incorrectes par les élèves.	Les élèves proposent leurs titres et prennent en note la correction des titres.	(EO)	« <i>What's the title for text X?</i> » « <i>Do you agree with X?</i> »
Activité <i>LearningApps</i> pour s'assurer de la compréhension du vocabulaire et mémoriser le lexique et les verbes (à particules notamment) utilisés dans les titres et présents dans les extraits de texte.	Les élèves participent à l'oral et répètent le vocabulaire pour le mémoriser (travail sur le lien graphie-phonie).	EO	(Consignes écrites sur <i>LearningApps</i> à faire lire par les élèves).
J'affiche les consignes de la production écrite qui va faire re-mobiliser les connaissances des élèves au tableau et je demande à un élève de lire. Je m'assure de la compréhension des consignes.	Un·e élève lit la consigne. Le reste de la classe suit et pose des questions si besoin.	(CE)	« <i>Write your own incident. What did Miss Trunchbull do? Why? Which pupil was harmed?</i> » « <i>The class will vote for</i>

			<i>their favourite story. »</i>
<p>S'il reste assez de temps pour que les élèves rédigent :</p> <p>Je passe dans les rangs pour m'assurer que tout est bien compris. Je donne des mots de vocabulaire aux élèves qui demandent. Au besoin, je ré-affiche le <i>sentence builder/writing frame</i> pour aider à la rédaction.</p> <p>S'il n'y a plus assez de temps pour que les élèves rédigent :</p> <p>Je demande à un·e élève volontaire d'en faire un à l'oral. Si l'élève a du mal, j'affiche le <i>sentence builder/writing frame</i> pour aider.</p> <p>Si la majorité des élèves est perdue, dans les deux cas, je fais un exemple moi-même à l'oral.</p> <p>→ Devoirs = finir ou écrire leur récit entièrement</p>	<p>S'il reste assez de temps pour que les élèves rédigent :</p> <p>Les élèves rédigent leur propre récit d'incident. Si besoin, ils me demandent les mots de vocabulaire dont ils ont besoin.</p> <p>S'il n'y a plus assez de temps pour que les élèves rédigent :</p> <p>Un·e élève volontaire propose une phrase, aidé·e ou non du <i>sentence builder/writing frame</i>.</p> <p>Les autres élèves écoutent et posent des questions si besoin.</p> <p>→ Devoirs = finir ou écrire leur récit entièrement</p>	<p>EE</p> <p>EO</p>	<p>« <i>You can start. You have 5 minutes. If you have a vocab question, raise your hand. »</i></p> <p><i>Extra minutes if needed.</i></p> <p>« <i>Who wants to try? / Let's try together. / I'll give you an example. »</i></p>
<p>S'il reste encore du temps, les élèves volontaires lisent leurs récits. Je prends en note en même temps sur un traitement de texte (non projeté). Après une demi-dizaine d'interventions, j'affiche les récits au tableau. La classe vote à main levée pour son récit préféré.</p>	<p>S'il reste encore du temps, les élèves volontaires lisent leurs récits. Je prends en note en même temps sur un traitement de texte (non projeté). Après une demi-dizaine d'interventions, j'affiche les récits au tableau. La classe vote à main levée pour son récit préféré.</p>	<p>(EO)</p>	<p>« <i>Which one is your favourite? »</i></p> <p>« <i>Who preferred this one? »</i></p>

ANNEXE D

Incidents at Crunchem Hall: Your turn!



Write your own incident.

What did Miss Trunchbull do?

Why?

Which pupil did she harm?

What did she say?

- Make 2-3 sentences.
- Ask your teacher if you have vocabulary questions (or use *WordReference* <https://www.wordreference.com/> if you're at home).
- The class will vote for their favourite story!

Example: Julius Rottwinkle (TEXT A)

What did Miss Trunchbull do?

Miss Trunchbull flung a pupil out the window...

Why?

... because she caught him eating Liquorice Allsorts.

Which pupil did she harm?

The pupil she harmed was Julius Rottwinkle.

What did she say?

"Anybody caught eating in class goes straight out the window," Miss Trunchbull said.

- Miss Trunchbull flung a pupil out the window because she caught him eating Liquorice Allsorts. The pupil she harmed was Julius Rottwinkle. "Anybody caught eating in class goes straight out the window," Miss Trunchbull said.

ANNEXE E

TÂCHE FINALE EO : MISS TRUNCBULL'S TRIAL

Séquence : « *British Schools: Good teacher / Bad teacher* »



Miss Trunchbull is on trial: Give your testimony.
*As her pupil, you are asked to give your testimony. Describe her **personality**, give examples of **incidents** that took place at school and **rules** that you think are unfair. In **your opinion**, why should she be fired from her job?*

CONSIGNES ET ATTENTES

Tu vas devoir témoigner contre Miss Trunchbull lors de son procès.

Tu vas devoir exprimer ton opinion sur sa personnalité et ses actions. Il te faudra réaliser son portrait moral à l'aide d'adjectifs de personnalité, donner des exemples d'incidents qui ont eu lieu à l'école (fictifs ou dans l'histoire de Matilda) et de règles que tu trouves injustes.

- ❖ adjectifs de personnalité (≥4)
- ❖ présent simple
- ❖ prétérit
- ❖ règles (≥3)
- ❖ vocabulaire des incidents
- ❖ expression de l'opinion

Pour cela, tu devras t'enregistrer en train de parler en continu en salle informatique.

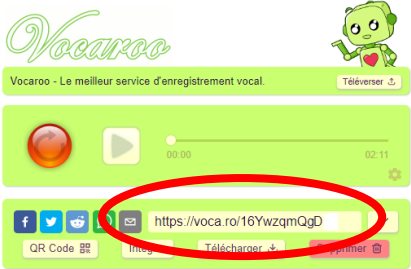
CRITÈRES D'ÉVALUATION

Pragmatique		Expression & Aisance		Grammaire & Syntaxe		Vocabulaire		Prononciation	
La tâche est entièrement remplie.	5	Le discours est clair et fluide.	3	Les règles de grammaire et de structure des phrases sont acquises.	4	Le vocabulaire est riche et approprié.	4	La prononciation est globalement correcte et les mots-clés sont prononcés correctement.	4
La tâche est partiellement remplie.	2,5	Le discours est compréhensible malgré des hésitations et des passages confus.	1,5	Les emplois sont satisfaisants malgré quelques erreurs.	2	Le vocabulaire est suffisant pour la compréhension du message.	2	Les quelques erreurs de prononciation ne sont pas un obstacle à la compréhension.	2
Les consignes ne sont pas respectées.	0	Le discours est incompréhensible ou trop hésitant.	0	Les phrases sont incorrectes et les règles ne sont pas acquises.	0	Les mots utilisés sont majoritairement incorrects, empruntés au français ou inventés.	0	La prononciation de la plupart des mots est incorrecte et est un obstacle à la compréhension.	0

ANNEXE E

DÉROULÉ

Tu vas devoir t'enregistrer depuis un ordinateur ou un téléphone portable à l'aide du site Vocaroo <https://vocaroo.com/> .

<p>Étape 1 : rends-toi sur https://vocaroo.com/ et enregistre-toi en train de parler en appuyant sur le bouton du micro.</p> 	<p>Étape 2 : Quand tu as fini de parler, appuie sur le bouton stop (le gros bouton clignotant).</p> 
<p>Étape 3 : Fais bien attention à ce que tout soit compréhensible et que l'enregistrement ait bien fonctionné. Tu as la possibilité de te réécouter.</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">Enregistrer et partager »</p> <p>Après avoir réécouté, clique sur « Enregistrer et partager » si l'enregistrement te convient.</p>	<p>Étape 4 : Copie le lien (l'adresse URL) de l'audio et colle-le dans l'espace dédié sur Arsène uniquement (pas d'envoi par mail).</p> 

COMPÉTENCES – CYCLE 4

Domaine	Compétence	Item	Niveau d'acquisition
SOCLE COMMUN – DOMAINE 1	Parler en continu	Présenter ou décrire : décrire des personnes ou des personnages	
		Expliquer une situation simple, une notion connue	
		Exprimer une opinion personnelle, une réaction, défendre un point de vue	
PIX – DOMAINE 2	Partager et publier	Partager des contenus numériques en ligne en diffusion publique ou privée	
PIX – DOMAINE 3	Développer des documents multimédias	Produire et enregistrer un document multimédia	