universität wien

DIPLOMARBEIT / DIPLOMA THESIS

Titel der Diplomarbeit / Title of the Diploma Thesis

"Keepers of History, Children and Bathrooms: Parents in YA Time Travel Novels"

verfasst von / submitted by

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angestrebter akademischer Grad / in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Magistra der Philosophie (Mag. phil.)

Wien, 2018 / Vienna, 2018

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt / degree programme code as it appears on the student record sheet:	A 190 333 344
Studienrichtung lt. Studienblatt / degree programme as it appears on the student record sheet:	Lehramtsstudium UF Deutsch UF Englisch
Betreut von / Supervisor:	Univ.-Prof. Mag. Dr. Susanne Reichl

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Univ.-Prof. Mag. Dr. Reichl, without whose help this work would never have been possible, for her valuable suggestions and support. I would also wish to thank my family and friends, who encouraged me and listened to my ravings about time travel and YA novels.

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List of Abbreviations

YA	Young Adult
TDW	*The Door That Led to Where*
HK	*The History Keepers: The Storm Begins*

1. Introduction

Parents in YA literature are often absent and thereby allow their child the necessary space and time to grow. However, although absence can still be identified as an important and popular theme in recently published YA time travel novels, parents appear to be more complex figures and might serve a greater variety of purposes in these books. Time travel novels for young adults portray a multitude of mother and father figures with different jobs, relationships with their children, secrets, goals, weaknesses, and strengths. Teenagers in these books are raised in various environments and experience diverse family structures as well as parenting styles. The time traveling protagonists often make it their mission to rescue their parents or solve the riddle of their absence. In case they need a break from home, they are offered the opportunity to put great distance between their caretakers and themselves. In addition to walking out of the door, they can travel to different centuries. No matter how time travel is explained or what goal teenage protagonists have, parents in today's YA time travel stories seem to have a hand in the plot in some way or another.

Scholars have already explored the power structures and character dynamics in literary works for children and young adults. For example, Trites' book *Disturbing the Universe: Power and Repression in Adolescent Literature* provides a detailed overview of how teenage protagonists are restricted and can empower themselves in YA fiction. In one chapter, she explores the functions parents and substitute parents take on in YA novels. Nikolajeva's *Power, Voice and Subjectivity in Literature for Young Readers* investigates how authors find ways to assign power to characters in children's literature. Moreover, in her work *The Rhetoric of Character in Children's Literature*, Nikolajeva examines the roles and functions adult characters may take on. Despite all the major insights which have been gained in studies about characters and power in YA books, roles of parent figures in books in which teenage protagonists travel through time have been so far disregarded.

My research questions focus on how parents are characterized in YA time travel novels of the 21st century, which purpose they serve in the plot, and how power relations between them and protagonists change. I answer these questions with the help of insights gained in studies on parents, power, and genres in YA

literature. Since a great quantity of YA time travel novels has been published in the last few years, two books serve as examples for answering my research questions. The books I decided on are *The History Keepers: The Storm Begins* (2011) by Damian Dibben and *The Door That Led to Where* (2015) by Sally Gardner, as they offer a variety of characters and storylines. Narrative theory is applied to analyze the characterization and functions of parent figures as well as to observe changes of power and relationships between them and teenage protagonists in the chosen YA time travel novels.

This paper is divided into two main sections: theory and analysis. In the theoretical part, I review existing literature on parents, genres, and power to ease into the topic of parent figures in YA time travel novels. I will refer to presented authors and their insights in the analysis part of my diploma thesis. The first theoretical subsection gives an overview of researchers' findings on parent figures in literature for young readers and draws connections to YA time travel novels. I then move on to introduce scholars' results on power in literature for children and adolescents in chapter 2.2. Power Dynamics in YA Literature: On Mighty Parents and Children, in which the aforementioned insights from works by Trites and Nikolajeva are summarized. The final part of the theoretical section presents genre conventions of the *Bildungsroman*, the *Entwicklungsroman*, fantasy fiction, and the adventure story. These four genres have been chosen as they tend to involve the growth of protagonists and play with changes in power dynamics.

In the second section of my diploma thesis, I analyze the YA time travel novels *The Door That Led to Where* and *The History Keepers: The Storm Begins*. The purpose of this investigation is to report on the parent figures' characterizations, their functions as well as changes in terms of power relations between teenage protagonists and the grownups in their lives. The first subsection identifies characters that can be considered as parent figures in the novels. It is followed by an analysis of how parent figures, especially the protagonists' real parents, are constructed with the help of narrative devices such as narrative voice, focalization, narrative modes and representation of consciousness. The third subsection of the analysis, 3.3. Parents' Influence on the Plot, emphasizes the importance of parent figures as I describe which roles they take on and how this

affects the storyline. The last of my research questions is then answered with the help of insights gained in chapter 3.4. Changes of Power Relations and Relationships. It is divided into ten subsections as I display how the teenage protagonists in *The Door That Led to Where* and *The History Keepers* develop from being suppressed towards being empowered. Moreover, section 3.4.9. analyses how parents' and children's perspectives of each other change in both novels and what this means in terms of power. Section 3.4.10. investigates how power is distributed once the protagonists return to the home base of their adventure, which means that they are once again living with their parents.

2. Theory and Review of Literature

In this section, I summarize the key points researchers have made about parents in YA literature as well as children's literature because both genres share some similarities regarding parent figures. Moreover, I will examine conventions of genres which are frequently combined in YA time travel novels to make suggestions about the influence they have on the role of parent figures and their strategies of assigning power to protagonists.

2.1. Parents and the Topic of Time Travel in YA Literature

In literature for young readers, the presence of parents can vary considerably. They are frequently absent or play only a minor role in stories for children, thereby giving them the chance to go on their own adventures (Nikolajeva, "Adult Heroism" 198). Likewise, parents in books for young adults often cannot look after the young generation or they play only a minor role (Paone 230). Yet, there are novels which focus on "the frequently strained, sometimes painful, often loving relationships between teens and their parents" in a great variety of families (Paone 230). Today, children in this genre of book are often brought up by a single parent or a guardian as these family constellations are common in the real world (Paone 231). Therefore, I agree with Eccleshare that YA novels "are an excellent vehicle for exploring all kinds of relationships with other members of the family or other age groups" (391). Like literature for adult readers, literature for children and teenagers has the potential to capture current themes which are of interest to its readership.

Parents may take on typical roles in books for young readers. In my thesis, I argue that parents in YA time travel novels are often supporting characters in these books because they are necessary for the development of the plot (Nikolajeva, *Rhetoric* 112). Nikolajeva observes that no matter whether or not characters are crucial for the plot, the author always has the choice to portray them as stereotypes (*Rhetoric* 114). As examples of stereotypical adult characters, she mentions "a restrictive parent, an overprotective parent, an evil teacher, a model teacher, a hypocrite neighbor, and a helpful neighbor" (Nikolajeva, *Rhetoric* 115). Traditionally, for example in folktales, parent figures are assigned one of two parts: They might serve as "dispatchers", "donors" or

“guardians” (Nikolajeva, *Rhetoric* 117). As dispatchers, they initiate their offspring’s leave-taking from the security of their home by telling them to go directly or in indirect cases because they die or are not at home (Nikolajeva, *Rhetoric* 117). They are called donors when they help protagonists gain something that is vital for their adventure (Nikolajeva, *Rhetoric* 117). Another role they tend to play, even when they are absent, is helping their children to complete their adventure as guardians (Nikolajeva, *Rhetoric* 117). This often goes hand in hand with being a donor (Nikolajeva, *Rhetoric* 117). The analysis of the parent figures in the novels *The History Keepers: The Storm Begins* and *The Door That Led to Where* will show which stereotypical roles and extraordinary twists to characters may be found in today’s time travel stories for young adults.

Authors do not seem to be limited when it comes to the creation of their characters. Nevertheless, we often encounter similar types of figures and themes while reading a certain genre. Nikolajeva observes that while “parents of the rich, privileged children are cold, indifferent, authoritative and often of low morals” in YA and children’s literature, caretakers of “underprivileged children are warm, concerned and understanding” (*Power* 78). However, what both types of these parents have in common is that they have arguments with their children or at least represent controversial ideas and opinions; issues which are often revisited by authors of children’s and YA books (Nikolajeva, *Power* 78). In this thesis, I suggest that while conflicts with parents still lie at the heart of modern YA books about time travel, parent figures in these novels, although sometimes cliché-ridden, do not tend to consistently show the stereotypical behavior which Nikolajeva mentions.

Parents in today’s time travel novels can have many faces and be multilayered, but they nevertheless share certain similarities. In these books, there are birth, deceased, and adoptive parents as well as substitute parents, like a guardian or a nice old lady living next door. They may be dead, missing or alive, but as they either take or took on the role of a parent, they will be treated as parents in my analysis. Some are great caretakers but overprotective, while others show no interest in their children. Moreover, a great assortment of character traits has been attributed to them. Authors also put their creativity on display when it

comes to their characters' occupations. Jobs range from world-famous scientists to well-traveled painters and incompetent plumbers. However, many parents in YA novels have one thing in common; they have or had secrets. Most of them share a second feature as well: They have weaknesses which the reader clearly sees from the beginning of the novel onwards, even though the protagonist might not have noticed them yet.

One question readers might ask themselves in the middle of a YA time travel novel when protagonists are sucked into a spine-crawling adventure is: "Where are their parents?!" Like in other YA novels, books in which protagonists travel through time deal with problems, questions, and themes that are alike. One topic which is frequently at the center of these stories is the protagonist looking for members of his or her family (Paone 231). Parents regularly go missing, are kidnapped or trapped in time. There are many reasons why they are absent and why their children must come to their rescue. Children and teenagers might enjoy reading a book with incompetent or missing parents as this allows protagonists to demonstrate that they can act independently and keep themselves alive (Nilsen et al. 129). These situations often put the young protagonists in a superior position to the adults, help them gain a powerful feeling and develop greater self-confidence.

Scholars agree that parents in children's and YA novels are authoritative and possess power. Antero describes them as a "powerful presence": They might be instructors or act as a "controlling force" with whom children ought to regularly "check in" (66). Development of the protagonist is then triggered when parents find themselves helpless or cannot be there for their children. Antero argues that the "passivity of adults" in YA novels influences teenage characters as well as readers: Both have to learn that they themselves are in charge of shaping their lives (133). Moreover, disobedient behavior of protagonists, sparked by the powerful position of parent figures, has the power to stir the novel in a direction which is vital for the plot in literature for teenage readers (Antero 66). Overall, in moments when parents are absent or in need of help in YA novels, they appear to open up a gap which gives adolescents space for development and discovering their own strengths.

2.2. Power Dynamics in YA Literature: On Mighty Parents and Children

Having given a broad overview of parent figures in literature for young readers, I will now focus on scholars' findings on how power negotiations work in these stories. The works of Roberta Seelinger Trites, *Disturbing the Universe: Power and Repression in Adolescent Literature*, and Maria Nikolajeva's *Power, Voice and Subjectivity in Literature for Young Readers* as well *as The Rhetoric of Character in Children's Literature* provide especially interesting insights into the complexity of power in literature for young readers.

There is a slight difference between the presence of parents in YA and in children's novels, but they also differ in terms of power structures. According to Trites, this can be observed when looking at the way "social power" in portrayed in literature for young readers (2). While children's books are concerned with protagonists who move on towards experiencing their "immediate environment" as safer and in a more positive way, central characters in YA literature are required to discover and reflect about "the social forces" which influence them every day of their lives (Trites 2-3). Families are likely to reunite and give "a sense of security" after the protagonist has had time to develop in children's literature, while parents in books for young adults tend to cause discord and are "more likely to repress than to empower" (Trites 55-56). After this constraint has been recognized, protagonists must "learn to negotiate the levels of power that exist in the myriad social institutions within which they must function" and of which their parents are a part (Trites 3). Protagonists ought to find out where they are positioned in the power structure and how to challenge institutions which influence them such as family, identity politics, government, school, and religion in order to agree on a new distribution of power with adults and to have their own share of power which lets them grow towards adulthood themselves (Trites x). In her introduction, Trites clearly voices her opinion that the topic of power is more significant to YA novels than growth, as she reasons that protagonists in these books need to encounter "graduations between power and powerlessness" in order to develop (x). The chapters of her book, which include numerous examples, confirm her view. In short, in contrast to child protagonists, who are allowed to return to their stable life without having to worry about power after their adventure, central characters in YA novels must reintegrate

themselves within the system they live in, as their worlds are getting bigger and more complex while they are on their way to becoming adults. Thus, because growth and change are central themes of YA novels which are initiated by power negotiation, this struggle is certainly more demanding for teenage protagonists than for younger ones.

In YA literature, power inevitably seems to relate to the thought of fitting into a system. In the beginning of her book *Disturbing the Universe: Power and Repression in Adolescent Literature*, Trites examines how scholars like Foucault, Butler, and Lacan define power and selects elements of those descriptions to clarify what power means in literature for young adults (3-7). Foucault's ideas are referred to because he argues that teenagers have no other option than to grow up in a strict system "created by the institutions that constitute the social fabric constructing them" which has always been around (Trites 7). As suggested by Butler, precisely those powerful systems shape children and lead them to bring forth "their own sense of subjectivity" (Trites 7). Since those children are "acting subjects" themselves, they accept their role and status in society without questioning, which is a thought proposed by Lacan (Trites 7). Thus, playing with power in YA literature is inevitable, as protagonists "are repressed as well as liberated by their own power and by the power of the social forces that surround them" (Trites 7). This, according to Trites, is the reason why stories for young adults feature "potentially out-of-control adolescents" finding their own place within social institutions (7). The prevalent systems in YA novels are the reason for protagonists to go on an adventure which includes ups and downs of powerfulness as they want to be an accepted member of a society, no matter how complex it is. Even time travelers are no exception: In the end, they need to fit in somewhere to be happy, may that be a secret society of time travelers, their family, a group of friends or a completely different century.

Fictional circumstances allow young protagonists to become empowered in the first place in novels for young readers. According to Nikolajeva, literature for children permits readers to experience a life in which characters their age "become strong, brave, rich, powerful, and independent—*on certain conditions and for a limited time*", while they would be "oppressed and powerless" in reality

(*Power* 10). One of these circumstances is “the physical dislocation and the removal, temporary or permanent, of parental protection, allowing the child protagonist to have the freedom to explore the world and test the boundaries of independence” (Nikolajeva, *Power* 10). This means that children need to be separated from their parents in order to discover their powers. In children’s literature, protagonists are likely to find themselves in dangerous adventures which allow them to take on powerful and strong positions in order to enhance their experience of empowerment (Nikolajeva, *Power* 10). The same situations allow teenage protagonists to start questioning the power dynamics they have lived in for all their lives.

As already mentioned, parents are usually part of the system which the teenage protagonist has to challenge, or they are the main force against which main characters have to rebel in YA literature, no matter whether the caretakers are physically present or not. Although multiple forms of power are identifiable in YA stories, Trites has highlighted the connection between parents and their children, as it portrays how stories for young readers reflect teenagers’ wishes for a stable position within society (54). Trites claims that teenagers “themselves often create repressive parental figures to dominate them” which they can then oppose in authority to discover what they can accomplish on their own (54). In this way, challenging parent figures leads young protagonists towards freedom and independence (54). Hence, she concludes that parent figures are crucial to the genre of YA literature, as protagonists always either need to have “an actual parent figure to rebel against” or have to invent “a symbolic parent” (Trites 55-57). Consequently, parent figures are vital for the growth and development of protagonists in many YA novels; not because they excel at being instructors and role models but because they are the spark that makes teenagers question authority and aim for a higher status than the one they have as the child of their parents. Parents can be so powerful at some points in these stories that they do not even need to be present to have influence over their children. The absence of parents seems to create chances to grow and gain more power for the protagonists in YA novels. As Trites explains, the “physical absence” of parents “creates a psychological presence”, which is portrayed as a feeling of restraint, against which the central character

can protest (56). This means that no matter how far away parent figures might be in YA literature or how insignificant or even hindering their presence might seem, they cannot be completely left out for the sake of the adolescent protagonist making progress towards gaining power.

Different terms are used in the analysis of YA literature to describe the rebellion of a teenager against various kinds of parent figures and thus diverse power dynamics. Trites proposes the separation of parent-child relationships and conflicts in YA novels into three categories which she calls *in parentis*, *in loco parentis*, and in *logos parentis* (57-69). *In parentis* refers to the "involvement of the actual parent in the adolescent's development" (Trites 57), *in loco parentis* is used to describe the central character revolting against a "substitute parent" (Trites 60) and *in logos parentis* is when the teenager challenges "imaginary parents" (Trites 61). Nikolajeva praises Trites' classification and uses the three terms to write about various parent figures in children's literature (*Rhetoric* 117). She observes that while parents who are present restrict the protagonists' "physical and spiritual" independence and thereby their ability to develop, those who are *in loco parentis* tend to be of more use to the central characters (Nikolajeva, *Rhetoric* 118). In YA novels in which parents are absent or completely incompetent, other figures take on their role. These "substitutes" are frequently members of their real or foster family (Nikolajeva, *Rhetoric* 118). Their roles tend to include "providing food as well as care and love" (Nikolajeva, *Rhetoric* 118). Moreover, substitute parents serve "as a transitional object" in order to ensure the detachment from the parents is "less painful" and "less offensive" (Nikolajeva, *Rhetoric* 118). Nikolajeva agrees with Trites that central characters in adolescent literature "are in greater need of parents" compared to protagonists in children's literature, as teenagers have to challenge them (*Rhetoric* 119). She concludes that this means that substitute and imaginary parents too are more vital in YA literature (Nikolajeva, *Rhetoric* 119). In the analysis part of my paper, I will illustrate that Trites' concepts of *in logos parentis* and *in loco parentis* appear to be a crucial part of today's YA time travel novels.

Although power negotiation is a central theme in YA as well as children's literature, it has been argued that child protagonists can only temporarily be in

possession of a more powerful position than that of their caretakers. Even though the “power hierarchy” which puts adults above children is not up for negotiation in real life, power struggles are dealt with in stories for children and teenagers (Nikolajeva, *Power* 203). Nikolajeva writes that grownups will never have a lower position “in terms of social conditions” than children (*Power* 203). However, although a protagonist sometimes experiences “triumph”, this can usually only be achieved with the help of grownups and cannot challenge or deconstruct adult normativity in general (Nikolajeva, *Power* 203). In the analysis section of this paper, I investigate how time travel adventures for young adults might end in terms of power dynamics between parents and teenagers.

An important task when writing about power in YA literature, connected to the relationships between parent figures and their children, is investigating how power and the related struggle is presented in the way sentences are constructed and arranged. Because authors, who are usually grownups, are the ones responsible for “the repressive relationships that ultimately prove liberating to adolescent characters”, the “narrative structure of a text” and its effect on the readers must be analyzed (Trites 54-55). References to narrative theory in the analysis part of my thesis will provide crucial insights for answering my research questions.

One question which I consider vital for working on the power dynamics of parents and teenagers in YA literature is what allows teenagers to have power in YA novels other than being removed from their parents’ influence. Trites expresses her astonishment at the multitude of novels that simply solve the issue of power negotiation by protagonists ending up as adults (79). According to her, knowledge is a strong factor which can empower adults as well as children and seduce them to exercise power over less proficient characters (Trites 79). Teenagers in YA novels often discover their parents’ secrets, but they sometimes have to keep their own secrets during their adventure. This could be a portal to a different world or time, a quest or a secret object or person. The protagonists have wisdom of something about which their parents might have no knowledge. This can further empower the teenagers. However, there are other ways for children to challenge their parents’ power. Nikolajeva observes that many authors “create a temporary state of empowerment” for

their protagonists by combining different genres, “such as fairy tales, dystopia, or adventure as well as particular themes and devices, including cross-dressing, metamorphosis, and animal disguise” (*Power* 203-4). These genres allow writers to throw their characters into situations in which they can show their strengths and develop. In the next section, I will show how certain genres which are represented in many YA time travel novels shape the power dynamics between parents and children.

2.3. Parents’ and Protagonists’ Empowerment in Different Genres: *Bildungsroman*, *Entwicklungsroman*, Fantasy Fiction, and Adventure Story

When reading children’s or teenage literature, different genres typically portray specific parent figures or functions (Nikolajeva *Rhetoric* 119). When I first conducted my research about roles parents take on in certain genres, I have to admit that there was little existing research to be found. However, I believe that one can draw conclusions about the role of parents and children withdrawing from their influence when looking at the characteristics of genres that appear in time travel novels for young adults. Nikolajeva claims that literature for young readers “has the potential to question the adult as a norm” with the help of genres like fantasy, adventure, and dystopia (*Power* 11). Authors use certain settings (for example, the Robinsonnade) as well as characters (such as superheroes, animals or monsters) which are typical for these genres to facilitate the protagonist’s empowerment and rebellion against adult authority (Nikolajeva, *Power* 11). Therefore, this section attempts to give an overview of parents and the way protagonists approach power in the genres of the *Bildungsroman*, the *Entwicklungsroman*, fantasy fiction (especially time travel fiction) and the adventure story.

2.3.1. *Bildungsroman* and *Entwicklungsroman*

Although the genres of the *Bildungsroman*, “coming of age novel”, and the *Entwicklungsroman*, “novel of development”, are rather similar, the terms have to be carefully assigned to books as there is a difference in “power and growth” (Trites 13). Novels for young readers are often called *Bildungsroman* because they involve characters that grow, but this is also true of *Entwicklungsromans*

(Trites 10). Trites criticizes this overuse of the term and states that a clear distinction needs to be made to talk about today's YA novels without causing confusion (10). In addition, she argues that differentiation is crucial as it allows for a greater focus on "the relationship between power and growth that shapes adolescent literature" (Trites 13). Books for young adults have their roots in the genre of the *Bildungsroman* which ends with the protagonist being a grownup (Trites 10). The concept was first introduced in the period of Enlightenment to "describe novels of education, of self-discovery, of individual development, and of youth" (Pettigrew 161). In contrast to *Entwicklungsromans*, protagonists in *Bildungsromans* "self-consciously" decide on "a quest to achieve independence" (Trites 10). However, the most crucial distinction between the *Bildungsroman* and the *Entwicklungsroman* is that young main characters are not yet adults on the last page of novels of development (Trites 10). Thus, the structure of a *Bildungsroman* leaves the protagonist with a higher position of power in society than an *Entwicklungsroman* (Trites 19). The *Bildungsroman* can be found in children's as well as YA literature, but while the reading material for children often ends when the problems are solved, protagonists are safe, and "normality is restored", books for teenagers cannot end like this as characters have grown, becoming different (Hunt, *Criticism* 127-28). In the *Entwicklungsroman*, a crisis is overcome because of the central character's development (Trites 14). They often deal with "postmodern questions about authority, power, repression, and the nature of growth" (Trites 19). Most YA books can be classified as stories of development as they end with teenagers still not fully grown-up and "enfranchised within their culture" (Trites 19). In order to approach the stage of adulthood, protagonists must accept the position of power that is open for them "in the social institutions with which they must interact to survive" (Trites 20). Even time traveling protagonists have to make sure they adapt well to society in order to reach their goals and to survive, even though they might temporarily be free of their parents' custody.

2.3.2. Fantasy Fiction

Since my diploma thesis focuses on YA time travel novels, I will begin this subsection by summarizing relevant conventions of fantasy fiction before exploring its great appeal to teenage readers and its opportunities for power

negotiation. Grenby defines fantasy fiction as portraying “things which are contrary to prevailing ideas of reality” (145-46). By referring to various books, he shows that these stories contain both “supernatural” and realistic elements “in various proportions and combinations” (Grenby 150). According to Hunt, literature for young readers and fantasy fiction are frequently linked, even though they do not “have a natural connection”, since authors who create fantastical universes are grownups (*Introduction* 3-4). He points out the paradox that although these fantastic worlds appear to offer an escape from the “arbitrary, adult-controlled restrictions” which dominate young readers’ lives, they entail “even more arcane restrictions” (Hunt, *Introduction* 4). Grenby also agrees that although fantasy stories give teenagers an opportunity to escape the limits of their powers in their normal lives because regular “laws and limits do not apply” in them, the societies portrayed are also “rule-bound and hierarchically ordered” (157). This is an interesting thought, especially when thinking about YA time travel novels in which protagonists travel back or forward to a time. Parents, society, and government might have even more authority over them than in the world they come from. Children and teenagers enjoy reading time travel stories anyways. Maybe imagining someone being even worse off helps them tolerate the control parents have over their lives or it might also inspire them to work on becoming more independent. I agree with Grenby’s suggestion that young readers might enjoy reading fantasy especially when problems to which they can relate are dealt with in a world that is not their reality (165-66). It may also be because children’s relationships with adults in that fictional place are unlike the ones readers have experienced. Nikolajeva claims “the best examples of fantasy for children use the fantastic form as a narrative device, as metaphor for reality”, and adds that the genre brings up “important psychological, ethical and existential questions in a slightly detached manner” that appeals to teenagers more than “straightforward realism” (*Fantasy* 62). Thus, fantasy allows readers to view their own struggles (for example, a strained relationship with their parents) from an unfamiliar perspective. Hunt writes that fantasy is always related to reality because it is created by real people who have “knowledge of this world” (*Introduction* 7). Therefore, he concludes, “alternative worlds must *necessarily* be related to, and comment on, the real world” (Hunt, *Introduction* 7). Consequently, even though teenagers slip

into a parallel universe or the past when opening a fantasy book, the context, which includes problematic, powerful parents, is likely to be connected to the young reader's everyday reality in one form or another.

Although there is the possibility that teenagers like reading fantasy because they see aspects they can relate to their own lives through different lenses, the power dynamics which tend to shift to the benefit of the central character seem likewise appealing. The genre provides an ideal situation for protagonists to challenge who they are because they are separated "from the structures that locate and bind them into a particular role" within social institutions (Grenby 164). Eventually, they manage to go back to their place and time of departure "with a stronger sense of themselves" (Grenby 164). Nikolajeva states that the fantasy genre allows protagonists to gain power "through transportation to a magical realm, through the possession of a magical agent (object or helper), and through the acquisition of a set of heroic traits or magical force" (*Power* 41-42). However, after the adventure is over, they might not be able to have the same amount of power that they were able to achieve during their quest (Nikolajeva, *Power* 42). Even though protagonists might not have the same amount of power, they usually have developed important skills and changed their self-perception compared to the beginning of a novel. Because they have developed, their relationships with their parents cannot be entirely the same.

When protagonists in YA novels happen to travel through time, they often realize that their power positions in the world have been reshuffled. Grenby observes that the contrast between being a child and being an adult is frequently addressed in "time-slip novels" (165). He defines time-slip fantasy as "[a] text in which protagonists find themselves transported to a different time", voluntarily or not, "or in which a character from the past or future appears in the main characters' present" (Grenby 214-15). Occasionally, time travelers are able to move from one time to another and multiple time periods can be depicted at the same time (Grenby 214-15). In recently published books, young time travelers "from the present-day […] enter a precise historical or future time and place" and start learning about themselves at a different place and time ("Fantasy: Introduction" 556). When protagonists travel back in time, they often realize their indispensability to society, which lets them feel powerful and gives

the readers joy (Grenby 166). They have certain skills or characteristics that are vital for saving the world. Moreover, as already mentioned above, knowledge of the future or the past allows time travelers to have a higher position in terms of power. Nikolajeva argues that tales about time travel would appear to offer the possibility to overthrow adults' power position because protagonists, at least when they travel back in time, have the advantage of knowing what has happened at that time (*Power* 45). Because of their knowledge of what will happen and how to be careful, they could "gain supremacy over adults" (Nikolajeva, *Power* 45). However, ending up in an unfamiliar time with no idea how they got there or how to return to their own present can also take power from travelers (Nikolajeva, *Power* 45). Thus, time travel is no guarantee of immediate power in the unfamiliar environment, but it will come eventually. Sometimes this feeling of being more valuable in a different area or decade results in the protagonists playing with the thought of staying there as life seems much better than before (Nikolajeva, *Power* 45). This leads characters and thus readers to reflect in depth upon their situation in both worlds. Such a thought process often also includes an evaluation of their relationships with their parents or concerns about them.

In fantasy fiction, characters do not tend to break out of their assigned roles. Nikolajeva states that common figures in fantasy fictions are unlikely to "demonstrate complexity" ("Adult Heroism" 196). This means that they serve "constant functions in the plot and are thus presented totally in black and white" ("Adult Heroism" 196). While this appears to be true of many characters in YA time travel novels (there is usually a smart friend, an evil adult villain etc.), parents in recently published books seem to be good for surprises. They may reveal hidden talents and are able to grow themselves in a sense that allows their relationship with their children to improve as they accept their offspring's development.

2.3.3. Adventure Story

Genre borders are often blurred. Grenby notes that the adventure story in children's literature is difficult to define regarding intended readership and because it might be hard to tell "the line between fiction and reality" when stories have been inspired by real-life events (170-71). Moreover, the adventure

story frequently overlaps with other genres, as it often contains elements of history, myths, and fantasy (Grenby 172-73). Therefore, it appears that adventures serve as a "frame" in novels for young readers, while most of these adventure stories are filled with fantasy fiction (Grenby 172-73). Adventure stories frequently share a similar scaffold which has been investigated by multiple researchers. For example, Joseph Campbell wrote about the structure of the mythological hero's journey in the first part of his book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, which was originally published in 1949 (39-215). Nikolajeva compares the typical structure of fiction for young readers with Campbell's findings and concludes that "the mythological hero is a major source of inspiration for all children's writers" (*Rhetoric* 28-30). Grenby summarizes the typical stages of young adventurers' journeys in *Children's Literature*: First, the central character experiences a "domestic crisis" which leads him or her to go out into the world (183). Next, protagonists have to show what they are made of during a "minor adventure" in order to find "the quest which will provide the main excitement for the rest of the novel" which itself consists of multiple challenges (Grenby 183). Customarily, the hero of the adventure story receives or has always had a "special asset" (Grenby 183). The said asset may be a talent, an animal or an item which can be used for defense (Grenby 183). In some novels, this "asset" initiates the protagonists' adventure (Grenby 183). The "asset" plays an important role in the beginning of YA time travel novels: Protagonists discover they have the ability to travel through time, for example, with the help of an object, a technical device or owing to their genes. Obviously, parents are the ones responsible for protagonists' genetic material, but frequently they also provide the time traveler with an important object for the adventure to come.

Power distribution in adventure stories can change rapidly. In children's literature, the central character in the typical adventure story is often an outsider (Grenby 173). Before protagonists are thrown into venturous situations, they are characterized as "powerless and dependent" (Grenby 173-74). Then, suddenly, they need to fight danger and become heroes (Grenby 174). Consequently, protagonists gain great power. This explains why children like to read these adventure stories: They allow young readers to "imagine themselves as influential and important" (Grenby 174). As potentially deadly adventures are at

the center of most YA time travel novels, protagonists must put on their best performances for books to end on a positive note. Therefore, they usually have multiple opportunities to gain power and discover their strengths by managing obstacles bravely and rescuing other characters.

Young protagonists in adventure stories are able to make use of their youth or have an advantage over adults because of their age. Grenby observes that while children in adventure stories have great power and knowledge, they occasionally have to make use of the fact that they are children when they are dealing with parents in order to be able to save people or the whole world (176). He argues, "[f]rom the reader's point of view, this two-facedness is important in maintaining their fantasy of empowerment" (Grenby 177). This means that readers need to be reminded of the young age of the central character to be able to identify themselves with him or her despite the heroic deeds portrayed in the story. Another way not to disturb readers' imagination is also connected to the conventions of fantasy fiction: The special skill or object a child possesses sometimes works best for them because of their youth. Adults' strengths are frequently limited or have faded, while protagonists are at the height of their power.

Friendships, at least in the middle of novels, tend to be more at the center of adventure stories than relationships between children and parents. At times, children in adventure stories feel like they are unable to cope with the responsibility and power imposed on them and wish they could go back to their lives as a "normal" child (Grenby 177). Addressing this inner conflict and doubts seems to be a vital step towards gaining power in books for young adults. Since going back home is never really an option, protagonists need help to master their adventures. Parents are not likely to fill this position: In typical adventure stories, they often get into the way of their children's adventures by establishing rules such as requiring them to be home for dinner and to look presentable (Nikolajeva, *Rhetoric* 119). They do not help teenage protagonists and do not influence the plot greatly other than being obstacles. However, it is likely that protagonists in adventure stories do not have to succeed alone but with "a faithful companion" (Grenby 183). This helper can be "a surrogate parent" who takes on the role of an instructor but also intimidates and challenges the hero or

heroine (Grenby 183). In addition, or instead, the protagonists might find new friends who are not grownups yet but who might have more experience or complementary talents and thus teach and help the central character to complete the mission and develop their powers.

Friends, helpers, and other characters surrounding the protagonist are crucial for an enjoyable adventure story. Nikolajeva argues that a secluded central character "does not allow much variety in terms of actions and interactions" and thus the story might be boring to read (*Rhetoric* 111). Therefore, like in fantasy fiction, the adventure story for young adults allows the protagonists to meet many good and bad figures (Nikolajeva, *Rhetoric* 111). These acquaintances depict a broad variety of "functions as well as complexity" (Nikolajeva, *Rhetoric* 112). Since protagonists in YA time travel novels are usually new to the business, they seem to need helping hands to be able to fully develop their skills. Responsibilities can be split up between numerous characters, as my following analysis of *The Door That Led to Where* and *The History Keepers: The Storm Begins* shows.

3. Analysis

In this section of my diploma thesis, I analyze the YA time travel novels *The Door That Led to Where* (2015) by Sally Gardner and *The History Keepers: The Storm Begins* (2011) by Damian Dibben to investigate which parent figures there are, how they are characterized, which functions they serve, and how power dynamics change during the story. I compare the parent figures in the chosen novels to traditional roles parents have been assigned in YA literature and look at how genre conventions influence the change of power relations. Moreover, I show how choices regarding the narrative situation and modes, the portrayal of consciousness of characters as well as character construction can affect the portrayal of characters and their power in literature.

3.1. Meet the Parents: Parent Figures in *The Door That Led to Where* and *The History Keepers: The Storm Begins*

There are multiple parent figures which take on various tasks in Sally Gardner's *The Door That Led to Where*. While Jan, AJ's mother, is first described as ill-tempered, unloving and even a violent "red reptile" (TDW 1), she has a complete change of heart when AJ leaves after a fight, starts living his own life and ends up in a hospital. A crucial step towards a better relationship with her son and changing her attitude is when she ends her relationship with Frank, her boyfriend. He is described as a "slug" (TDW 2) who sits on the couch all day, drinks beer and cannot stand AJ at all. He could fill the hole in AJ's life which his father left, but he refuses to take on a fatherly position and only complicates the protagonist's relationship with his mother further. During the novel, AJ learns a lot about his real father, Lucas Jobey, about whom he does not have any information to start with (apart from the fact that he is dead) because his mother has never told him anything. Having no knowledge of his father is a painful experience for AJ and reduces his power and self-confidence greatly. AJ's neighbor Elsie takes on the role of the quirky but caring godmother and thereby functions as a substitute parent: She takes in AJ when he needs to leave his own flat and helps him and his friends as best she can. Moreover, she also appears to have a hand in the reconciliation between AJ and his mother. Most of the adoptive or real parents of other characters in the story are not

portrayed in a favorable light and families generally appear “broken” (TDW 17). Leon’s father “died of booze” (TDW 190) and his mother is a drug addict who has Leon’s brother taken away from her and eventually dies of an overdose. She is described as a loving but useless mother: “His mum was more use as a living vegetable than a bleeding corpse” (TDW 85) as Slim puts it. Slim has “a family wardrobe stuffed full of relatives, distant, near, and a lot in between” (TDW 17), but he still seems lost. The reader only knows that he lives with his uncle and aunt. They expect him to be in prison after he has disappeared into the 19th century. The man who Esme thought was her father for most of her life had the woman whom she believed to be her mother sent to a madhouse. She seems relieved when her adoptive father dies and later finds out that her real father was sentenced to many years of hard work in Australia. This was because of his behavior at the execution of her actual mother who herself was accused of having murdered AJ’s father and his relatives. Later, her housekeeper, Mrs Meacock, who is supposed to take care of her now that her father is dead, wants to have her put in the madhouse as well as she tries to blame her for her father’s murder. Even though people who should look after their children are mainly obstacles, there are multiple ersatz parents in *The Door That Led to Where* who act *in loco parentis* in different centuries. They take on smaller roles than Elsie but are nonetheless vital for the story to end on a happy note for AJ and his friends. Characters like Ingleby, his mother, and the Professor help AJ discover the door, provide him and his friends with shelter as well as clothes and help them survive. Moreover, the display of the relationship between Ingleby and his mother creates humorous situations and serves as an example of what happens when a son never leaves the nest with his magpie.

In contrast to the many broken families and hard lives portrayed in *The Door That Led to Where*, Jake, the protagonist in *The History Keepers: The Storm Begins* is raised in a loving environment by his mother, Miriam, and his father, Alan. They are both described as fun and affectionate and seem ordinary at the beginning of the story: They own a bathroom shop in London, which they run without much success. Jake’s relationship with them is good, but since his brother’s supposed death, Miriam and Alan are occasionally gone for a couple of days under the pretense of attending Bathroom Conventions. In fact, they are

looking for their elder son who, like them, belonged to a secret society called History Keepers and disappeared on a mission. They believe he might still be alive and want to find him but do not tell Jake. Over the course of the novel, Jake and the reader have to realize that his parents, who appeared as innocent albeit a little clumsy at the beginning of the novel, are famous agents of the History Keepers with incredible fighting skills and sharp minds.

Other parent figures in *The History Keepers* are either horrible, absent or not important. Kant uses his son for his experiments and as a free employee. Topaz's mother is supposed to be even more vicious than her brother, Zeldt, whom Jake has to fight. In addition, no one knows who Topaz's father is. While Paolo likes to talk about how his mother would be worried about him if she knew what he was up to, the reader never actually meets her. Nathan's parents, who are also Topaz's foster parents, have no big part to play; they just let their children go on secret missions. Rose, Jake's aunt, cannot be perceived as a substitute parent because she is characterized as a world-traveling and disorganized hippie who is still a teenager at heart herself. Instead of adults, Jake's new friends, Nathan, Charlie, and Topaz, act *in loco parentis* until he does not need them anymore, having gained knowledge and grown to be a brave agent himself.

3.2. Ordinary Shopkeepers, Red Reptiles, Secret Agents and Worried Mums: Different Perspectives on Parents

In the two books under analysis, parent figures are constructed in several ways: The reader is informed about them by the narrator, the protagonist, other characters, and by the parent figures themselves in form of actions, speech, comments, descriptions, and thoughts. According to Nikolajeva, "the adult as a norm" can be challenged in literature for young readers with the help of "narrative devices such as voice, focalization and subjectivity" next to genre, which I have explained in the last section (*Power* 11). Thus, I argue that defining the *narrative situation* helps us trace how protagonists are empowered in YA literature. A narrative situation is composed of the narrator and the degree of *focalization* (Bal 18). The *narrative voice* answers the question "Who speaks?", while focalization provides insights into "who sees" (Lethbridge and Mildorf 56). The narrative voices in *The Door That Led to Where* and *The*

History Keepers are those of so-called *heterodiegetic* narrators, since they are not characters in the story (Genette 244-45). Depending on the narrative voice, readers perceive stories differently. For example, a narrator who is not part of the story is able to "offer panoramic descriptions and observations about events occurring simultaneously in the story world" (Keen 41). This can be observed in *The History Keepers* as the narrator alternates between reporting on events which happen at the same time but in different places at the climax of the novel. The readers follow Nathan and Charlie stopping the carriage with deadly books as well as Jakes, his parents, and Paolo's journey to Cologne. The reader can assume that both events take place simultaneously as, similar to the climax of a movie, the reader is alternately allowed to catch short glimpses of what happens to both teams. Focalization changes faster than before due to the agents' serious time pressure, which is the reason why they split up (see chapter 27 in *The History Keepers: The Storm Begins*). The narrator in *The Door That Led to Where* only gives an account of AJ's experiences. In addition to being heterodiegetic, the two narrators share the same "degree of personification" (Keen 42). Both are *covert narrators* as they use "speech tags", give "indications of settings and temporal movements", and describe figures and their deeds in a way that is barely perceptible (Keen 42). Because the narrative voice is well camouflaged in both texts under analysis, readers are made believe that they are given a true account of what happens. Thus, it is easy for readers to identify with the teenage protagonists AJ and Jake. While covert narrators are more likely to be honest than overt ones (Keen 45), who make statements about themselves (Keen 42), there are still the focalizors, AJ and Jake, who can influence the portrayal of characters and events. Stories, whether invented or not, are constantly depicted from a subjective, the focalizor's, viewpoint (Bal 145). Events described in novels can never be presented objectively (Bal 145). Therefore, it is important to question who gives information about parent figures and how the informants are connected to them.

Typical focalizors in today's YA time travel novels are teenage characters in the story who cannot, as mentioned above, be objective. When it comes to investigating the focalizor, diverse types can be distinguished (similar to the characterization of narrators). Bal uses the term focalization to refer to the

connection “between those who see” and those doing something as well as to distinguish between them because it is often not the same individual who sees and portrays what is happening (145-46). She argues that *subject*, “the point from which elements are viewed”, and *object* ought to be examined individually to understand their connection (Bal 149). Both *The Door That Led to Where* and *The History Keepers* have *internal* focalizors because readers see the story through the eyes of characters who are part of the story (Bal 152). AJ in *The Door That Led to Where* is the sole focalizor throughout the novel. This helps the narrator stay in the background and allows readers to perceive the story as immediate and truthful, although they only get to see the protagonist’s perspective. However, focalization can be passed on from figure to figure, “even if the narrator remains constant”, like in *The History Keepers* (Bal 151). Sometimes an event is not viewed from Jake’s perspective but by other members of the History Keepers (Nathan and Rose) if the protagonist cannot be present himself, but the event is nevertheless important to the plot. In this way, different views of events or important occurrences which take place simultaneously and at various places can be presented (Bal 152). According to Bal, a “character-bound focalizor”, an internal one, has “an advantage over the other characters” as readers perceive events from his or her perspective and thus are likely to “accept the vision presented” (149-50). This is the case in *The Door That Led to Where* and *The History Keepers*. Moreover, internal focalizors lead readers to become more engaged in the story (Lethbridge and Mildorf 61). Because focalizors in *The Door That Led to Where* and *The History Keepers* are usually teenagers with different relationships with parent figures, their characterization of these adults must be carefully examined.

As already mentioned above, the parent figures in the two YA time travel novels under analysis are characterized with the help of different techniques. Writers can create their characters either *directly*, using utterances voiced by the narrator or a character, or *indirectly*, meaning that characteristics have to be inferred “from actions, speech, or context key traits of the character” by readers (Keen 65). When information is provided by the narrative voice, we speak of *authorial characterization*, while the term *figural characterization* describes information given by a character (Pfister 184). Figural characterization in prose,

in case it is explicit, is usually a *commentary by others*, meaning that another character provides the reader with insights on a figure (Pfister 184-85). Implicit-figural characterization distinguishes between *verbal a*nd *non-verbal* as characters are constructed by their utterances as well as by the way they look, behave, and "the context within which" they act (Pfister 190). Parent figures in *The History Keepers* and *The Door That Led to Where* are characterized using a blend of all of these techniques.

The first pages of *The Door That Led to Where* allow the reader to gain an impression of AJ's mother, her boyfriend, and their relationship with the protagonist. Various *narrative modes*, required by the different techniques of characterization, are used to create pictures of characters in readers' heads. Narrative modes "are the kinds of utterances through which a narrative is conveyed" (Lethbridge and Mildorf 63). They may influence the reader to different degrees (Lethbridge and Mildorf 67). Texts either *show* or *tell* the reader what happens in a story: The term *mimesis* refers to "the direct presentation of speech and action", while *diegesis* is "the verbal representation of events" (Lethbridge and Mildorf 63). Bonheim distinguishes between four narrative modes which can be found in novels and arranges them from their qualities of "showing" to "telling": speech, report, description and comment (Bonheim 20-32; Lethbridge and Mildorf 63). All of these can be found in the beginning of *The Door That Led to Where*: The novel immediately throws the reader into the story and gives them an impression of AJ's mother by allowing them to witness an uncomfortable conversation he has with her. She is mad that her son only received "[o]ne bleeding GCSE" and tells him that he "will never amount to anything" and is "[a] bloody waste of space" (TDW 1). With the help of implicit-figural characterization, the reader is directly shown how she treats her son. Straightforward showing of what a character said, direct speech, "is the most mimetic narrative mode" and is closest to pretending an "unmediated" portrayal (Lethbridge and Mildorf 63). Readers are likely to immediately dislike AJ's mother because her words appear harsh and real. Her fury is even enforced by the use of implicit-authorial characterization as her actions are displayed by the narrator: She is "drumming into him the heavy-metal sentence of failure" (TDW 1) while "slamming a cupboard door and

clanking the frying pan down on the stove" "as if the pots and pans were personally responsible" (TDW 1). In this passage, narrator comment is mixed with description and report. A report "informs the reader about events and actions in the story" (Lethbridge and Mildorf 65). It can be hard to distinguish between report and description, which tells the reader what "can be seen, heard or felt in some way" and thereby gives information about time, place, and characters (Lethbridge and Mildorf 65-66). The last mode, the comment, often appears between descriptions and reports and may destroy their neutrality by revealing who speaks (Lethbridge and Mildorf 66). In *The Door That Led to Where*, the combination of description, report, and comment reinforces the empathy readers feel for AJ, the focalizor, whose perspective they are given. It is easy for readers to imagine the uncomfortable confrontation between mother and son in their kitchen and the annoying background noise of aggressively handled kitchenware. Because Jan's fury seems unmediated and obvious as all the sentences have the purpose to convey her anger to the reader, the narrator is barely noticeable. Through more unobtrusive descriptions, the reader learns that AJ is used to his mother's outbursts of anger as he knows that his "only protection was to imagine her as the monster from the depths of despair, a red reptile with a poison tongue" (TDW 1). This strategy helps AJ to keep calm when his mother abuses him verbally, since the red reptile "could cause serious damage" (TDW 1). By comparing Jan to an animal, the author makes her seem less human. As a result, readers are further obstructed from questioning why she acts so contemptuously. Readers too feel the resentment AJ has towards his mother. It keeps growing as she continues to snub AJ: "You've been nothing but trouble since the day you were born. Well, don't you think that Frank is going to let you slouch round the flat doing nothing" (TDW 2). On this clue, the narrator describes Frank as AJ sees him: "He was a huge, blancmange slug-of-a-man who left a slimy trail of beer cans, bacon sarnies and spittle fag ends behind him" (TDW 2). Frank, like Jan, is visualized as an animal, namely a slug. Disgust towards him is caused by explicit-authorial as well as implicit-figural verbal characterization as can be seen in Frank's own words: "Tell him he can bugger off. What about that beer, Jan?" (TDW 2). With these two sentences, it becomes clear to readers what the slug thinks of AJ and what kind of person he is. Surprisingly, the narrator does not mention any bad feelings AJ has following

Frank's words. It might indicate that those are the usual utterances coming from the slug. Instead, the narrator conveys AJ's feeling of hope to the reader: "AJ felt a flicker of hope. This might be the moment he could devaporise and disappear into the world outside. After that it was down five flights of stairs to where freedom awaited him in the comforting wheeze of London, the siren wail of calm. Sorted" (TDW 2). In this passage, narrator description mixed with two different ways of representation of consciousness enables readers to understand how AJ perceives his life at home. AJ's feeling of hope is first described and then further explained using *narrated monologue*. Narrated monologue makes use of "the tense and person of the narrator's language" to show what a figure is thinking and to make the reader believe that they are hearing the protagonist himself (Keen 62). The utterance "Sorted" could be categorized as *quoted monologue*, which "presents the character's mental discourse" in present tense and makes use of "the first person of thoughts" (Keen 62). In general, "the representation of a character's consciousness" gives readers the impression of having "firsthand and inside knowledge of a character" (Lethbridge and Mildorf 69). In *The Door That Led to Where*, narrative situation, modes, characterization techniques as well as representation of consciousness work together to show and tell the reader how AJ feels towards the people who should take care of him. His mother uses abusive language towards him, destroys his self-confidence, and gives him the impression that she has never loved him while the slug simply wants him gone as he does not seem to care about him at all.

Jan is further characterized by her behavior. The reader is convinced that Jan cares more for Frank, who does not seem to do anything other than watch TV and drink beer, than for her son. She could also be too weak to challenge Frank. While she seems able to exercise power over her son by forcing him to go to a job interview, she does not seem to be strong enough to get the slug off her couch. When AJ talks back to Frank who rudely demands another beer ('Jan—my beer—where is it?' (TDW 3)), she throws the can at her son. Thus, because Jan's actions are reported by the narrator, implicit-authorial characterization is used to show that "violent" and "uncontrolled" are other characteristics which can be added to her personality. Readers are led to

assume that this is not the first time AJ had to flee from a potentially dangerous situation at home as the narrator provides insights into AJ's mental "reptile-handling manual: in the event of attack, the best course of action is to run for it" (TDW 3). Luckily, there is AJ's neighbor, Elsie, to protect AJ and to take him in.

As already mentioned, Elsie serves as a substitute parent for AJ. Implicit-figural as well as explicit-authorial characterization support this claim. AJ and Elsie's harmonious relationship is displayed with the help of direct speech before her character is further commented on. She says: "Come in, love, I've another book for you to take back to the library, if you wouldn't mind" (TDW 3-4). The narrator's description of their shared past informs the reader about the key role Elsie plays in AJ's life: "Elsie Tapper had been AJ's savior since he was old enough to walk down the stairs on his own. She had taken him in, even kept him for weekends when Jan wanted to have a break. AJ, in return, called her Auntie, as did his mates, Leon and Slim" (TDW 4). This passage shows that AJ does not only have a relationship with Elsie like a child would have with a relative, he also refers to her as "Auntie". In contrast to his mother's insults, Elsie tells him that she thinks he is "a clever lad" (TDW 4) and wants to help him get the job at the law firm by providing him with her deceased husband's clothes. I argue that Elsie acts as a *foil character* to contrast AJ's mother. A foil character's attributes serve the function of stressing another figure's characteristics "by providing a sharp contrast" (Auger 114). The ersatz parent's kindness towards AJ emphasizes Jan's flaws as a mother and makes her appear even more sinister.

Although AJ has Elsie as a compensation for his unsupportive mother, he is not only afflicted by his mother's bad opinion of him but also feels guilty about their troubled relationship. This becomes evident throughout the novel when he thinks of his mother. For example, when he needs suitable clothes for his new job, her reaction to getting it in the first place ("'You can start paying for your board and keep,' she said. 'Don't think I am a bleeding hotel'" (TDW 14)) keeps him from asking her for "a loan for a suit" because he knows "she would say: 'Do you think I am made of money?'" (TDW 14). The use of direct speech when he thinks of what his mother's reaction would be like makes the words more vivid and thus lets her appear more dominant and powerful. These passages, in

which AJ hears his mother's voice in his head, show how he further creates an image of her, *in logos parentis*, which he can rebel against. Short remarks about Jan which have the same effect can frequently be found in *The Door That Led to Where*. Another example of her influential presence in his mind can be observed shortly before AJ has his job interview and looks at "an oil painting of a gentleman": "He could almost hear him say in a voice of brass and wind, 'You will never amount to anything, AJ, Flynn. Not with one GCSE'" (TDW 7). These are the same words his mother used right at the beginning of the novel, which shows how painful they must have been for the protagonist. She has succeeded in destroying his self-confidence before the job interview. This becomes evident in the question "What in all the dog's-dinner days had given his mum the crazy idea of writing to this law firm?" (TDW 7), which is presented in narrated monologue as it uses AJ's way of expressing himself. In section 3.4.5., I will further illustrate how Jan's powerful presence in AJ's mind relates to the protagonist's process of empowerment.

Even though Jan is mainly described from AJ's perspective, occasionally, the reader is allowed to catch a glimpse at her through another character's utterances. For example, Baldwin, the lawyer, presents another view of Jan. Baldwin, who knew Jan when AJ's father was still around, describes her as "a pretty little thing" (TDW 24). This is difficult to picture for AJ:

> It was hard to imagine that *the red reptile* was ever a pretty little thing. […] How had *his mum* come to make such a huge impression on Mr Groat and Mr Baldwin that seventeen years down the line they still remembered her? It would have helped if *the red reptile* had been more talkative on the subject but like so much of her past it belonged in *the deep freeze of things unsaid*. (TDW 24; emphasis added)

As can be seen in the quoted passage, narrated monologue conveys AJ's thoughts. With the help of words which the protagonists would use, the reader learns that AJ is dissatisfied with his relationship to his mother and that it is hard for him to imagine that she could leave a lasting good impression on someone. For example, instead of referring to Jan as "his mother" or by her name, she is called "his mum" and "the red reptile." The first sentence in the passage could either be a comment by the narrator or a representation of AJ's thoughts. The voices of narrator and protagonist blend and are united, which is called *dual voice* by Pascal (32). Consequently, the "impression of immediacy" is produced

for the reader (Lethbridge and Mildorf 71-72). The metaphor “the deep freeze of things unsaid” again confirms the reader’s impression of AJ and his mother’s relationship as distant. Because the narrative voice reports AJ’s thoughts, Jan is characterized implicitly. She does not like to share information about her past with her son. In my opinion, this could be interpreted as her strategy to continue exercising power over him. Withholding knowledge about his family allows her to make him feel smaller and weaker. She uses personal information which only she and few other people have to repress her son. Moreover, she is not well-educated or particularly smart and thus probably does not have a high status in society herself. This could be the reason why she wants to feel more powerful by bullying her son. The reader does not know what her current job is, but she used to work as a cleaner. Orthography is clearly not her strength as Mr Groat mentions when talking about the letter she wrote: “She writes of her great disappointment—spelled incorrectly—that you didn’t do well in your other exams” (TDW 9). Thus, when AJ continues to find out more about his past during the novel, her power fades bit by bit.

In contrast to Jan’s poor relationship with AJ, she treats her daughter well. This leads the reader to perceive her as an even worse mother. AJ is aware of how unfairly he is being treated. This can be observed in a conversation AJ has with his friends about asking Jan to help him out financially: “‘Are you a comedian?’ asked AJ. ‘Roxy needs new trainers and the wheel fell off her scooter so Mum is buying her a proper one from the bike shop.’ Roxy was AJ’s half-sister, the apple of Jan’s eye. The word ‘no’ never applied to her” (TDW 17). Here, commentary by another figure as well as explicit-authorial characterization is used to add to the reader’s picture of Jan. AJ’s words alone do not convey his bitterness about Jan giving Roxy preference, but the information added by the narrator strongly suggests that it does indeed bother him.

The depth of AJ’s hatred towards his mum becomes evident towards the middle of the novel when he thinks about her death. A narrated monologue shows that he thinks he might not grieve about her passing: “Strange, thought AJ. If her old dad is about to hang up his clogs forever, shouldn’t she be a tad more upset? She seemed so calm. He tried to think how he would feel if the red reptile was on her deathbed. Yep. Maybe he would be sitting there just like this girl, staring

out of the window, *loving the sun of a new day*" (TDW 66; emphasis added). Here, readers are given a direct insight into AJ's mind. He understands why Esme is not upset about her father lying on his deathbed. His thoughts appear provocative because of the strong end of his train of thoughts. In my opinion, this is an indicator that the relationship between the two of them cannot get any worse in the story. How their relationship changes will be examined in section 3.4.

In *The History* Keepers, after being thrown right into a wild kidnapping scene that takes the reader across London, the reader learns about Jake's life and his parents in form of block characterizations. In block characterizations a lot of information on figures is presented when the reader encounters them for the first time (Lethbridge and Mildorf 50-51). Interestingly, information about Miriam and Alan Djones is initially given implicitly by introducing their home and habits. First, Jake's residential environment is described: "Jake Djones lived in a *small semi-detached* house in an *ordinary* street in an *unassuming* part of South London. The house had three *small* bedrooms, one bathroom and an *unfinished* conservatory" (HK 17; emphasis added). The use of adjectives as well as the description of the rooms in the house lead the reader to assume his family is rather unremarkable, normal and does not care about living in an impressive house. Then, his parents are introduced: "Jake's parents, Alan and Miriam, ran a bathroom shop on the high street. At the weekends Miriam would invent incredible dishes and Alan would attempt DIY. *All would invariably end in disaster*: *lopsided* soufflés, *burned* sauces, *burst* pipes and *unfinished* conservatories" (HK 17-18; emphasis added). In this passage, humor is used in form of a twist: While the first two sentences are not exciting but paint mother and father in typical roles, the last one changes that picture. The reader learns that all their attempts at activities which are prototypical for parents go wrong. This already suggests that they are not quite ordinary. In addition, adjectives are used to portray Alan and Miriam as parents who can be smiled at but not be seen in any way as admirable role models. They are neither good at projects they start at home nor at their jobs: "The bathroom shop was *not a success*. Jake often wondered *how the business continued at all*. His parents had started it up just after he was born and had *struggled* ever since. As one of the *many*

unsatisfied customers had pointed out: 'They just have *no instinct* for ceramic!'" (HK 18; emphasis added). Multiple narrative modes are used to give the reader an impression of how bad Alan and Miriam are at selling bathroom sets. First, the narrator simply states that their business is not going well. The meaning of this sentence is then enhanced with the help of the narrator giving insights into Jake's thoughts in form of *psycho-narration*, which is able to present a figure's thoughts without having to go into detail (Keen 61). In psycho-narration narrators usually sum up what has been going on in a character's mind by simply writing about the most important thoughts (Keen 61). As can be seen in the passage cited above, this technique of representing consciousness blends in well in a narration which is overt and looks at events from the outside (Keen 61). Therefore, the reader's imagination is undisturbed. In addition, the opinion of a "unsatisfied customer" is directly shown at the end of the paragraph. Each sentence emphasizes Alan and Miriam's lack of talent for running a bathroom shop in a different mode and with different words. The following paragraph gives precise information on why the bathroom shop is doomed to fail:

> Jake tended to agree. Miriam manned the store in a whirl of confusion, always losing papers and receipts, and sometimes entire bathroom suites. Alan worked mostly on sight overseeing the inevitable chaos of an installation. He was a big man, well-built and over six feet tall, and Jake always felt he just didn't fit into neat suburban bathrooms. Not just on account of his size, but also of his larger-than-life personality. (HK 18-19)

Explicit- as well as implicit-authorial characterization can be found in this passage: Alan's looks and personality are described, but it is the information given on Jake's thoughts and the report on Miriam's lack of organizational talent which explains why they are not made for the bathroom business. The descriptions of Miriam's and Alan's weaknesses and apparent unfitness for their job further add to the reader's impression of them as unskilled. Because of the first sentence in this paragraph, which allows the subsequent descriptions to appear as Jake's thoughts, the reader does not question the given information any further. This adds to the element of surprise later on in the story when Jake and the reader discover Alan's and Miriam's hidden talents.

The reader is misled into believing to know everything about Jake's parents because a detailed picture of them and their lives is painted at the beginning of

the story. Even an account of their looks is given in form of block characterization:

> She [Miriam] was an *attractive* woman with the air of *voluptuous warmth* and an *olive* complexion like Jake's. She had *big* eyes, *long, curling* lashes and a *honey-coloured* beauty spot just above the corner of her mouth. Alan was *rugged* and *fair-skinned*, with *thick blond* hair and the shadow of a beard. He looked as if he might give a *mischievous* grin at any moment. (HK 19; emphasis added)

Because of the numerous adjectives used and properties described in this paragraph, readers can imagine Alan and Miriam as likeable without having the feeling that key details might be withheld from them. In addition, the reader is persuaded to like them as they appear to be fun and relaxed people through their conversations as well as additional descriptions of their behavior. This, for example, can be observed when Miriam confronts Alan with a customer's complaint about the pipes he installed. Both end up laughing instead of having the argument the reader would expect. The conversation is presented in form of direct speech with little additional information provided by the narrator. This shows that verbal implicit-figural as well as explicit-authorial techniques are used here to characterize Alan and Miriam. Thus, the reader can observe their attitude towards unsatisfied customers, which might explain why their business is not flourishing. The narrator further explains their sense of humor later: "They both had an infectious sense of humour. Anything could set them off, but usually it was a certain type of person […]. They would rather laugh at things than let events get them down" (HK 20). Consequently, narrator description, direct speech as well as representation of Jake's thoughts are combined to introduce Alan and Miriam to the reader.

The close and affectionate relationship Jake has with his parents is conveyed when they tell him that they need to go to a bathroom trade event and will be gone for a couple of days. While other teenagers might be happy about their parents being out of town for a while, Jake's disappointment is clearly stated ("Jake had felt a pang of disappointment" (HK 20)) as well as shown ("Jake tried to nod, but it came out more like a shrug" (HK 20-21)). Alan and Miriam appear as good parents. They arrange that Rose, Jake's aunt, whom he likes, keeps him company while they are gone. Moreover, they say goodbye to him in a

loving and almost overly sentimental way and try to cheer him up before their journey:

> ‘We’ll be back on Friday afternoon!’ Miriam had smiled, *running her hands through Jake’s thick curls*. ‘And you’ll have our *undivided attention* then.’
>
> ‘We have *surprises* planned,’ Alan had chipped in. ‘Big ones!’
>
> Miriam had thrown her arms around her son and *squeezed him tight*. ‘We do love you so much!’
>
> […] his father also *grabbed him in a bear hug*. ‘Look after yourself, son,’ he’d told him, sounding *like a father in a Hollywood film*. (HK 21; emphasis added)

Alan’s and Miriam’s words and descriptions of their gestures display their affection towards their son. With the help of implicit-authorial and implicit-figural characterization, they appear as good parents. The narrator’s comment that Alan sounds like a character in a movie adds humor to the situation as it might be exactly what readers think at that moment. However, his parents’ words cannot console Jake right away: He gives them the cold shoulder as his intention is to “punish them” (HK 21). He feels bad about his behavior soon afterward and regrets his juvenile act of defiance. This might suggest that he and his parents do not often have conflicts: “It was not until an hour later that he’d had a change of heart. In an instant he’d forgiven them and felt a pressing need to get back before they left” (HK 21). All in all, Alan and Miriam appear as ordinary but caring parents who have a good relationship with their son.

Later in the story, the reader learns more about the Djones’ past, which allows them to feel empathy and to understand both Jake’s and his parents’ actions. The disappearance of Jake’s elder brother, Philip, has changed their family forever even though Alan and Miriam give their best to offer Jake a happy childhood. They are described as “strong” (HK 35) and creative when it comes to leisure time activities. However, narrated monologue reveals that Jake keeps on “feeling resentful that they had also thrown themselves into their work, frequently disappearing to those *blasted* trade fairs” (HK 35; emphasis added). Because the narrator uses Jake’s words to convey his feelings, the reader experiences the protagonist’s pain in a more immediate way. However, the reader does not solely take Jake’s side as the narrator’s descriptions of Alan and Miriam allow them to forgive his parents’ absence.

Jake's picture of his parents starts to change completely once he speaks to other members of the History Keepers. When he is introduced to agents as Miriam and Alan's son, he finds that his parents are popular and well-respected among the members of the secret society. Jake, like the reader, has had a wrong impression of Alan and Miriam. Well-meaning remarks about his parents by concerned members of the History Keepers lead readers to further emphasize with the protagonist as they are repeatedly reminded of the pain his parents' absence causes him as well as the shock he feels at discovering that they kept secrets from him. This can be seen in several instances of the novel: For example, Topaz tells him: "Please don't worry about them; they are the most resourceful agents in the service, as well as the kindest" (HK 38) when she first meets him. Gondolfino too tries to reassure Jake as he is confident of Alan and Miriam's expertise: "Everything is going to be alright. Your parents are survivors" (HK 103). Here, commentary by other characters is used to give the reader a diverging impression of Miriam and Alan. Remarks by other figures can create "a state of expectant suspense" when readers are "confronted with a number of different and contradictory outside commentaries" without having actually been able to observe characters directly (Pfister 186). Consequently, the reader becomes thrilled to finally encounter them to find out whether the view Jake and the narrator are providing on his parents or the History Keeper's opinion about them is accurate. However, comments like this do not have the intended effect upon Jake as he cannot picture his parents as talented agents yet: "For some reason Gondolfino's comment made Jake picture his parents in their kitchen at home. In his mind's eye they were no longer lost but waiting nervously for his return, clutching each other's hands as they stared at the empty garden path" (HK 103-4). In Jake's mind, his parents can still only take on the role of sitting at home and feeling concerned about him because that is the image he has constructed of them. While surprising comments about his mother by other characters do not have a great effect on AJ in *The Door That Led to Where* because the protagonist cannot imagine that his mother has ever been different, the comments by some agents in *The History Keepers* strongly prey on Jake's mind. In contrast to AJ, he has more evidence that what other characters say must be true. Jake is struggling with his parents' reputation as agents. As a result, the tables are turned. Now the child is the one who has to

worry about the parents. This is portrayed with the help of psycho-narration: “Although he found it amazing that so many people knew his parents, and reassuring that they thought so highly of them, every new mention brought a fresh spasm of anxiety about them” (HK 104-5). Later, the readers learn that in the Djones family, role distribution has always been unusual: “Since he had been a young child, Jake had always worried about his parents, but in the last three years, since his brother’s disappearance, his desire—his *need*—to help had increased a hundred-fold” (HK 115). Having the feeling that someone needs your help seems to me like an opportunity for gaining power, but it also restrains empowerment at the same time, as it involves feeling responsible for someone’s well-being, which is usually associated with having limits. While it tends to be the job of loving parents to be concerned about their children, here, the child cannot shake of his worry about the grownups. This already indicates that typical power roles are about to be altered in the novel.

When looking at the characterizations of the most obvious parent figures, which also go through the biggest transformations among adults in *The Door That Led to Where* as well as in *The History Keepers*, it can be observed that repetition is used to create a certain image. This image is then completely altered in the course of the novels. Bal writes that since readers usually do not take in and remember all the “qualities” of a character, authors present the important ones repeatedly in numerous ways to shape a character in readers’ minds (126). It is necessary that readers notice and memorize “a character’s most important characteristics” for changes to be clearly visible (Bal 127). In *The Door That Led to Where*, Jan is first characterized as an evil and bad mother through many shorter passages, while in *The History Keepers* information about Alan and Miriam being ordinary is quite dense. Once protagonists’ mental images of their parents have started to change, their astonishment about their caretakers’ transformation is emphasized. This allows readers to notice how characters change. Frequently, various techniques of characterization are used to ensure readers do not miss crucial information about parent figures. In both books, time travel is the reason why protagonists discover a side of their parents which has been unknown to them before. Comments by other characters prepare the reader for a better understanding of the characters’ transformations.

3.3. Parents' Influence on the Plot

In this section, I argue that the parent figures which have been identified in the YA time travel novels *The Door That Led to Where* and *The History Keepers* influence the plot, although the extent of their influence might vary. Real and substitute parents act as dispatchers and might be helpful to the protagonists. They all tend to take on stereotypical roles in both novels, but they also cater for entertaining surprises.

In Sally Gardner's *The Door That Led to Where*, Jan is the reason for AJ going on an adventure. She serves the function of a dispatcher as she sends her child away from home. She is the one who asks the law firm where she used to work as a cleaner to grant her son a job interview. Only because of her, he has the opportunity to find his father's key, which allows him to change his own life and that of many others for the better. Moreover, Jan seems to be one of the reasons AJ can find the key as she took it from Baldwin when her husband disappeared and gave it to Professor Edinger. Even before AJ travels through time, the talks he has at the law firm and their effects enhance his life tremendously: "He wondered if by going through the door that led to Baldwin Groat's chambers he had altered everything. He had gone in jobless, hopeless and nameless, and come out with a job, a glimmer of hope and a name he'd never heard before" (TDW 13). AJ leaves the building with a job and a real name, which make him feel empowered. Interestingly, these are two things which are typically associated with grownups. Adults earn money to care for their children and they give them their name to signify that they belong to their family. AJ gains a name of his own, one that also belongs to his father, and takes a step towards responsibility for his own livelihood. Therefore, he approaches adulthood and an improved life: "As he arrived back in Stoke Newington the name was beginning to fit him, although the mystery of why he had never been told it before had hung over him in a black cloud" (TDW 13). Even though Jan has always kept his full name to herself, she is the one who leads AJ towards gaining more power and discovering who he is.

Like Jan, the professor has a crucial role in *The Door That Led to Where* as he is also responsible for AJ walking through the door. Edinger has known AJ since the protagonist was a baby and appears in mysterious ways in moments

when the teenager needs him most, like a “guardian angel” (TDW 177). He has the roles of the dispatcher, the guardian, and the donor because he hides the key for the protagonist to find, tells him to keep it a secret, encourages him to try to find the door, and provides him with useful items. The professor compares AJ’s situation to Jack’s in the fairy tale *Jack and the Beanstalk*. In the story, Jack’s mother “is furious” (TDW 47) about the few beans, like AJ’s mother is about his one GCSE. The professor also uses the tale and the mystery around his pocket watch to arouse the protagonist’s curiosity. He wants AJ to solve the mystery of his father’s key. Like Jack, AJ then becomes “brave enough to take a chance […] [a]nd by doing so he changes his future” (TDW 47). In addition, the professor tells AJ exactly where the door is and is there for him once AJ returns from the past for the first time. He also sends AJ a book called *Useful Hints for Travellers* and some money, which allow the protagonist to manage well in the past.

Elsie takes on the role of the “helpful neighbor”, a guardian figure and a typical adult stereotype in literature for young readers, as mentioned in the theory section. In my opinion, while other ersatz parents are only occasionally there for AJ, Elsie would always come to aid him as the dual voice of AJ and the narrator suggests one time in the novel: “Dear old Elsie. London may tumble, St Paul’s might crumble but Elsie would always be there” (TDW 86). She influences the plot by helping AJ and his friends, for example, by providing them with clothes. The quirky old lady is like the fairy godmother in *Cinderella* as dressing in her husband’s clothes allows the protagonist and his friends to escape their positions in society: AJ has something to wear for his job interview and Leon’s disguise allows him to trick the police.

Ingleby and his mother are AJ’s helpers in the 19th century, although the son is clearly more vital for the plot. When AJ first steps through the door, Ingleby is already awaiting him. Like the rabbit in *Alice in Wonderland*, he guides him into the unknown era: “From his pocket he drew a silver watch on a faded ribbon and clicked it open. ‘Come on, Mr. Jobey,’ said the man. ‘The clocks are ticking’” (TDW 51). He and his mother provide AJ with clothes to allow him to blend in. In addition, Ingleby, either on purpose or accidentally, brings AJ to places which the protagonist needs to be at to gain information on solving the

mystery of his father's murder. It is through Ingleby that AJ meets Esme and can help her and her father. Ingleby aids AJ's friends as well: He gives Slim and Leon clothes, which allow them to have a good fresh start in the 19th century. AJ's guardian is also there to save him at the final confrontation with Mrs Meacock: "Ingleby stood filling the doorway, Leon and Slim behind him. 'Leave this to me,' he said. […] With one mighty push Ingleby freed him. […] Ingleby threw AJ over his shoulder" (TDW 243). Here, an adult has to step in to help the protagonist, although his two 17-year-old friends are also present. It might be argued that the author deliberately let an adult be the hero for a short time in the novel as, save Elsie, no grownup has truly proven to be reliable in *The Door That Led to Where* until then.

In *The History Keepers*, Jake's parents take on multiple roles. First, they are the dispatchers of their son. Their disappearance causes the History Keepers to kidnap Jake and to reveal their secret society to him, which leads to his journey across centuries. In addition, Alan and Miriam are initially the goal of Jake's adventure. During his search for his parents he develops into an agent of the History Keepers who does not back away from any challenge. Interestingly, although Jake has grown to be a real hero by the time he meets his parents again in Castle Schwarzheim, he is not the one to rescue them. They have already managed to escape by themselves and help their son and his friends out of Zeldt's deathly trap. Like in *The Door That Led to Where*, adult characters rescue the teenage protagonist in a dangerous situation. Then, Miriam and Alan also aid the young agents to prevent Zeldt's planned catastrophe in time. Thus, Alan and Miriam also serve as the protagonist's helpers in the novel. In a way, they might also be seen as donors: Without their genes, he would not be able to travel through time. However, perceiving them as donors extends the definition of the term by Nikolajeva because the incidentally inherited ability to travel through time does not fall into the traditional category of magical agents.

In both YA time travel novels under analysis, the protagonists need to finish jobs which were originally their parents'. AJ has to lock the door and Jake has to stop Zeldt's plan to destroy the Renaissance. In my opinion, this can be seen as another way of how parents influence the plot. AJ knows he must lock the door as his father could not do it: "'If the door is open it messes with history and

stuff like that. And anybody could get through if they found it. My grandfather and my father wanted it locked but were murdered before they could do it. It's down to me.' He paused. '*I owe it to my father*'" (TDW 183; emphasis added). AJ feels obliged to continue his father's quest. It is a hard step for him because locking the door to the past means that his two best friends will be gone from his life and have no possibility of returning to the 21st century. Because he succeeds, it seems that AJ has become more powerful than his dead father. In *The History Keepers*, Jake, although he first does not trust himself to be capable of finishing his parents' mission, also eventually sees that he has "*no choice*" (HK 178). He then manages to solve the riddle of his parents' message: "As Jake cautiously crossed the marble floor, a thought suddenly struck him: his parents' message had stated: *Confess, St Mark's, Amerigo Vespucci*. That wooden structure was surely a confessional box" (HK 181). In my opinion, both protagonists feel responsible to act because of their parents: AJ needs to finish what his father has started, and Jake must continue Miriam and Alan's mission in order to find them.

In this section, I have shown that parent figures in the two YA time travel novels under analysis are not useless at all but even serve multiple purposes. Their actions, their presence but also their absence affect the protagonists and the plot considerably. Real parents appear to be the dispatchers who first send their children away from home and towards adventure. While many characters acting as ersatz parents take on the tasks of guardians, protagonists' actual parents too can prove to be helpful, as can be shown in the roles of Alan and Miriam. The role of the donor is more difficult to assign to the parent figures in the novels. Both actual and ersatz parents are to some degree responsible for the protagonists finding out that they can travel through time, which helps them gain power. AJ discovers his father's key with his mother's and the professor's help, and Jake learns about the diamond shapes in his eyes, which he inherited from Alan and Miriam, with the aid of other members of the History Keepers. All in all, I believe it has become clear that without parent figures, ersatz or real ones, AJ and Jake would not be able to develop. I will give a more detailed analysis of how the protagonists' ersatz parents and friends shape the plots in section 3.4.8. of my paper.

3.4. Changes of Power Relations and Relationships

In addition to influencing the plot, parent figures in YA time travel novels play a vital role in the development of the protagonists. Especially their real parents are the initial driving force, that leads protagonists to gather all their courage and strive for a more powerful position. As mentioned above, in their absence, as can be seen in many children's and YA novels, teenage protagonists develop and grow. Ersatz parents in YA time travel novels help the adolescents detach themselves from their parents, to complete whatever mission they assigned themselves and push them in the right direction. Later, when the teenage protagonist has already made progress and empowered him- or herself, real as well as substitute parents tend to become less important and instead love interests, Esme and Topaz in the novels discussed, serve as their incitement. In this section, I plan to show that there are multiple factors which influence the power dynamics and the relationships between parents and protagonists in *The Door That Led to Where* and *The History Keepers.* Moreover, this section then explores how characters' perspectives of each other and their relationships have changed as a result of their adventures, revealed secrets, and the empowerment of teenage protagonists. In the last section, I discuss how power is distributed at the end of each YA novel.

3.4.1. The Value of Being a Teenage Time Traveler

In the theoretical part of this paper, in section 2.3.3., I discussed that teenage protagonists frequently learn that their youth is an advantage. It helps them gain power easily and is contrasted with their previous experiences of feeling inferior to adults. In *The History Keepers*, Jake is told by Topaz that "younger agents, have the greatest *valour*" meaning they "can travel further in history and with greater ease", while older time travelers' "abilities usually weaken—the diamonds much less so […] but even their valour coalesces and hardens over time" (HK 96). Thus, teenage agents are entrusted with the dangerous task of saving history and humanity, while the grownups have to settle for less important assignments. Nathan's derogatory comment makes clear that former agents are not regarded with much respect anymore, as can be seen in the following quote: "'The has-beens,' Nathan teased" (HK 96). Since it is

impossible for most adults to travel through time as their valour weakens, they cannot even challenge the power held by the younger generation.

While children usually have to listen to adults, roles can be reversed without much explanation in fiction. In *The History Keepers*, Jake's parents take orders from Nathan who is a diamond like them but has the advantage that he has recently been more active in the service of the organization compared to Miriam and Alan. For Nathan, it seems natural that grownup agents follow his orders. When Topaz is abducted by Zeldt, Nathan suggests that he should be the group leader as he thinks Alan and Miriam are "not […] 'fully operational' at present" (HK 384). Even though Miriam's facial expression mocks Nathan ("Miriam rolled her eyes at her husband" (HK 384)), they do not object to their new group leader. Later, it becomes even more noticeable that the older agents truly value and respect Nathan's decisions. When Jake wants to rescue Topaz, Miriam explains why they cannot go after her: "Well, amongst other things, we have orders. Nathan Wylder was very clear: we were not to rescue Agent St Honoré" (HK 416). This situation demonstrates that the agents of the History Keepers do not adhere to a hierarchy which is based on seniority while they are on duty somewhere in history. Younger agents who have recently been on more missions are accepted as group leaders as well.

3.4.2. "Century Reset, My Life Reset"

While AJ and his friends are clearly treated as teenagers in the 21st century, they are regarded as adults in the 19th century and their status of power seems to adapt automatically. Interestingly, this fact is mentioned in a conversation the friends have even before they know time travel is an option for them: "'In the nineteenth century,' AJ said to Slim, 'we would've been considered men by now. Do you ever think that you were born in the wrong century? At the wrong time, to the wrong parents?'" (TDW 23). Even though AJ utters this thought, he is the one of his friends to whom the past offers the least at the end of the novel as his chances in life in the 21st century brighten considerably. Slim and Leon seem to be made for the 19th century: They behave like young gentlemen and succeed in their new lives within a brief time. When AJ visits Slim after a few weeks in the past, he observes that his friend has changed. Slim's answer displays that he has taken a liking to his new position in society: "That's stating

the proverbial obvious, bro. Think about it. Back in the land of Moses and his dead dog there are two kinds of men: those who are *mummy-fied* and don't grow up and those who are *villainised* who grow up too soon. *Here we are men. And I have the future in my pocket and tomorrow on the soles of my shoes*" (TDW 186). In Slim's perspective, his only chances in the 21st century were to either float with the current or to be seen as depraved. He simply wants to be perceived as an adult who can shape his own future and is optimistic that he can achieve this in the 19th century, as the last two sentences of the paragraph show. Slim soon finds a job working for a tea merchant and turns out to be a bargaining talent because he used to help his uncle at the market. While his skills do not appear valuable in the 21st century, they certainly are in his new life. Therefore, it is not surprising that he says: "Century reset, my life reset" (TDW 184). Leon too is in desperate need of a fresh start once the police has started looking for him:

> 'OK. Do I strike you as someone with a lot of choices? […] Mum used to say that me and you and Slim had a perfume to us. She said we smelled of fatherless boys. I think she was right. My father died of booze, yours—it turns out—was murdered and Slim's—well, who the hell knows? Not Slim. AJ, I have royally messed up here. Perhaps there—wherever there is—I'd have a chance to start again.' (TDW 190)

All his life, Leon thought he was not able to reach anything because he had no father. Not having or not knowing one's father gave AJ and his friends a harder start in life and automatically put them in a lower position in terms of power, also compared to other children. In the 19th century, Leon's background story is altered without any difficulty. He is introduced as a "well-educated gentlemen" (TDW 203) who has traveled "to distant lands" (TDW 204) and survived an attack by pirates. Without further questioning, Leon is warmly welcomed in his new home and quickly gains a respectable position which he does not want to trade for his old one: "Do you know what my value is in today's society? […] Nada. I'm under the radar, just another loser in a hoodie, the evil of the nation. That's how I'm seen" (TDW 190-91). While Slim and Leon end up staying in the past as adults, AJ decides to return to his life in the 21st century, which means he still lives with his mother for a while. However, his key still empowers him as he could always take the chance and leave for the 19th century. Moreover, AJ has become more independent than in the beginning of the novel as he has got

a prestigious job for a 17-year-old teenager. His power position has also altered because his mother does not suppress him anymore.

In contrast to the adolescent characters in *The Door That Led to Where*, the protagonist and other young agents of the History Keepers have never considered being regarded as an adult as important. Despite their youthful age, the agents of the History Keepers are independent as they travel through history without adult supervision. Moreover, they have powerful positions within their organization as shown by Nathan being in command over Jake's parents. It is even explicitly stated in the text that behaving like an adult is not necessary for Jake in his new group of friends. When the protagonist bursts into tears upon hearing that his brother might still live, Charlie, Nathan, and Topaz try to comfort him: "'You don't need to be grown up with us […]. We understand why you are upset'" (HK 120). This utterance by Topaz signals that although the three agents take on dangerous tasks, they are still aware of their youth and do not claim to be grownups. In my opinion, being perceived as adults in the past does not seem to be as essential to teenage characters in *The History Keepers* compared to the ones in *The Door That Led to Where*. This could be because they find themselves in circumstances which are more dangerous and in which their youth is an advantage, as discussed above. Nikolajeva observes that "[b]y placing a character in an extreme setting […] writers can initiate and accelerate a maturation process in a character, which would not be possible in an everyday surrounding" (Nikolajeva, *Rhetoric* 273). Because Jake finds himself in more life-threatening situations than AJ and because his family situation is different, he never thinks about wanting to be perceived as an adult. I believe that Jake is allowed to develop faster as it is a necessity, while AJ chooses to keep on investigating. Unlike Jake, AJ can always return to the 21st century and the life he knows, while the protagonist in *The History Keepers* is stuck in history.

3.4.3. The Advantage of Knowing About the Future

In the theoretical section of this paper, I mentioned that knowledge can be perceived as a source of power in YA novels. In *The Door That Led to Where*, their knowledge about history earns AJ and his friends respect in their new society. Moreover, they are able to protect their new acquaintances. For

example, unlike the residents of London in the 1830's, they know how people catch Cholera. Esme asks AJ whether he is a doctor, a prestigious occupation, when he shares his knowledge on the disease. Later, Slim ensures the water in the inn is always boiled and filtered before anyone drinks it. He even invents "an extraordinary system of filtering water" (TDW 205), which his employer wants to merchandise as it works so well. Leon too is aware that he can benefit from being from the 21st century. Since he has "seen the future" (TDW 201), he is convinced that he can profit from his knowledge about society, which to him is basically the same, no matter what time he is in. Having knowledge of historical events and inventions puts AJ, Slim, and Leon in a more powerful position. They can use this wisdom to their advantage and easily carry off the laurels.

3.4.4. Dress for Success

There are several changes of clothes in *The Door That Led to Where* that result in teenage characters gaining opportunities in the course of which they empower themselves. For example, Elsie's dead husband's and son's clothes play a vital role in the whole book. First, the borrowed garments (even though they do not look good on him) help AJ get the job at the law firm, which leads him to find the key to his past. A switch of outfit also allows Leon as well as Norris, Elsie's son, to start their lives over. Leon needs to dress up to be able to leave Elsie's apartment and to get to the door without being caught by the police. The fact that the old clothes of an adult, although they are outdated, fit him well can be interpreted as a sign that he has better chances in another time: "The clothes that hadn't fitted AJ made Leon look like a film star" (TDW 192). The same clothes are also the reason why they discover that Nonsuch is Norris Trapper. Leon and Norris trade not only clothes but also centuries. However, since Norris' clothes are those of a criminal, Leon has to change one more time into nicer garments provided by Ingleby and his mother: "When Leon reappeared, the transformation was surprising. He was the most handsome dandy in London town. Mrs Ingleby giggled. '*The young man was made for this century*. Sir, you will have half the ladies in the metropolis swooning at your feet'" (TDW 202; emphasis added). Again, clothes from the past fit Leon perfectly and signal what Mrs Ingleby then puts into words. Nice clothes elevate Leon immediately to a more powerful position in society. As already mentioned

section 2.2. on how power is gained by children and adolescents in literature for young readers, disguise is a popular element used by authors to empower their teenage characters. In *The Door That Led to Where*, Leon's elegant clothes give him a good start into his new life in the 19th century. Like Leon, Slim makes a charming impression in garments of the past. When he changes into clothes provided by Ingleby and his mother, he suddenly has "an air of elegance" and "[e]ven with two black eyes you could tell he was a man about town" (TDW 122). Newly clothed, he is ready to enter London's society and to become acquainted with people who make his life much more joyful than the ones he left behind. In my opinion, because AJ is the focalizor of the story, Leon's and Slim's transformations in the 19th century are more emphasized than the protagonist's. Moreover, this already signals that while his friends seem perfect for the past, the protagonist has better chances at a higher status and a happier life in the 21st century.

In *The History Keepers*, clothes and changes of looks play an important role in empowering the protagonist temporarily, but they also have further-reaching effects on his development and the success of his mission. Jake disguises himself as one of Zeldt's men when the other agents need his help. Nathan provides him with the necessary uniform and tells him to cut his hair short: "He [Jake] defiantly seized the silver scissors and started to cut his hair. The thick brown curls that *he knew his mother loved so much* dropped silently onto the dirty ground. Within a minute his hair was cropped: *he had transformed himself from a romantic into a young soldier*" (HK 178; emphasis added). In this passage, cutting his hair symbolizes that Jake is about to grow up. Because the curls, "which his mother loved so much", end up on "the dirty ground" within a brief time, the reader gains the impression that Jake has been ready for this development or must be so as he is in danger of being caught. The scene signals that he is no longer in need of his mother and the protection she provides for him but wants to prove that he can protect his parents and friends from now on. Moreover, the narrator's comment, "he had transformed himself from a romantic into a young soldier", assures the reader that the protagonist's sudden transformation is drastic as well as effective. Jake is allowed to empower himself within a brief amount of time, which is a feature commonly

found in adventure stories. His disguise works perfectly until he has discovered vital information for rescuing Alan and Miriam.

Later in the story, Jake, Topaz, and Charlie have to dress up as adults in order to be able to enter Zeldt's castle, where they hope to find Jake's parents and discover that they need to save history itself. Topaz and Jake steal the identities of a rich Russian couple, while Charlie takes on the role of their servant. The narrator emphasizes Jake's development from a boy to resembling an influential young man: "Topaz looked exquisite in her corseted gown and golden headpiece, *but it was Jake who had undergone the most startling transformation*: in his fine suit and neat moustache and beard, *he looked every inch the dashing young tycoon*" (HK 290; emphasis added). Here, with the help of the narrator's description and comment, the reader is directly told how authoritarian the protagonist looks. Because Jake has already gained more power since the beginning of the journey, he can gain even more for a short time with the help of disguise. Thus, tricking the villains seems easy. Dressed like powerful people, Topaz and Jake have no difficulties entering Castle Schwarzheim and discovering Zeldt's evil plan to destroy the world and history to come.

3.4.5. *In Logos Parentis* and *In Loco Parentis*

In the YA time travel novels under analysis, both protagonists have to rebel against the power of adults to empower themselves. The amount of control and the status of the protagonists' actual parents is mainly portrayed by the frequency and the way the teenagers think of them. AJ must rid himself of his mother's haunting presence in the back of his mind, which serves *in logos parentis*, as it restricts him. In contrast, Jake gains strength by imagining that his parents need him. However, they still serve *in logos parentis*. Even though their presence in his mind is perceived as positive as it depicts how much he cares for them, the reader gains the impression that he is quite dependent on them. In this sense, it can be argued that because of how often he thinks about them, his parents still restrict his actions. Jake has to stop imagining his parents in order to be allowed to become a bold hero. Because his actual parents are not there, Jake has to disregard decisions made by the adults in charge at the

History Keepers' headquarters, who act *in loco parentis*, to receive the chance to grow. In both cases, the protagonists need to free themselves of parental and adult influence to gain power.

In *The Door That Led to Where*, AJ gains strength because of the insults his mother frequently hurls at him. Jan's harsh words appear as her means or suppressing her son, but they push him towards rebelling against his mother. His rebellion can be seen immediately after the statements have been made or also when AJ recalls them in his memory. AJ being haunted by his mother's voice is first noticeable at the beginning of the novel. When AJ goes to his job interview at the law firm, the control she has over him becomes observable several times. The incident with the painting which speaks his mother's words has already been mentioned above in the section on how parent figures are portrayed in the novel (He could almost hear him say in a voice of brass and wind, 'You will never amount to anything, AJ Flynn. Not with one GCSE'" (TDW 7)). A few pages later, AJ again hears Jan's judgmental words: "His mum's words echoed in his head. 'You don't get to wear a suit to work, not with one GCSE'" (TDW 11). It seems to me that because direct speech is used in these passages, Jan's voice appears unmediated to the reader. The meaning of her words cannot be excused as they seem real and the reader feels pity for AJ because it must bother him greatly to hear the echoes of her insults. My personal view is that these sentences have the purpose of displaying that it is time for AJ to distance himself from his mother and the influence she has on him. This restriction that is caused by his mother is also visualized in form of the narrator's description of AJ's inner life: "'Will it be paid?' asked AJ, *hearing the red reptile breathing down his neck*" (TDW 12; emphasis added). The reader can easily picture his mother as "red reptile", hovering over him. AJ's recurring mental image of his mother insulting him serves *in logos parentis* and is necessary for him to put an end to her repressive behavior, which hinders him to grow. Because of the use of repetition of these situations, the readers' involvement is high, and they are pushed to wish AJ would ban his mother from his mind. Like in typical YA novels, AJ needs to free himself of his mother's influence to be able to grow and to gain more power himself.

The readers' anger about the unhealthy repressive influence Jan has over her son dissolves eventually when AJ's patience with Jan and Frank snaps in a violent scene and the protagonist eventually leaves home. When Jan shouts "I never bleeding well wanted *him*—that's for sure" (TDW 36) the protagonist has enough: "AJ thought about the straw that broke the camel's back: how much straw that camel had to carry before it realised it was too much. Too long had he put up with the crazy-paving pattern of violence. Seventeen years. Too long, far too long" (TDW 36). Narrated monologue changes over to interior monologue in this passage to convey the anger which AJ is feeling to the readers and to bring them to experience the same emotion. However, in my view, at the same time, AJ's own unleashed anger also gives the readers the hoped-for satisfaction as they already perceive him as stronger. The energy released in AJ is portrayed with the help of indirect discourse, narrated monologue, and descriptions of his surroundings: "He was so angry there was no way he could stop moving. It felt as if sparks of fire were flying off him, such was his frustration with his family, with all the shit that was his life. Fireworks exploded in the sky, sparks of gunpowder as red as his rage" (TDW 37). AJ's rage is easy to imagine for the reader as it is compared to bursting fireworks. From this moment onwards, AJ does not hear the repressing voice of his mother anymore and is able to gain power during his adventurous journeys through time.

In *The History Keepers: The Storm Begins*, a similar process of Jake's detachment from his parents can be observed, although his mental images of Alan and Miriam, which act as a different kind of *in logos parentis*, are perceived as positive. Thinking of his mother and father encourages Jake to challenge himself because he wants to rescue them and to have them back, while AJ's thoughts of his mother anger the protagonist and lead him to break with her. Like in *The Door That Led to Where*, repetition is used to enforce the reader's impression that Jake is dependent on his parents. Jake is frequently thinking of Alan and Miriam; starting from when he realizes that they are missing up to the moment when he decides to be brave and rescue them on his own. The journey to the History Keeper's headquarters is Jake's first minor adventure in the novel. Jupitus tells him he has to come with them "[f]or his parents' sake" (HK

40). Thinking of his parents' "warm, loving faces" helps him to overcome his fear of the uncertainty of the situation, which is visualized with the help of psycho-narration: "Jake felt as if he was on the edge of a precipice" (HK 40). Later, it becomes even clearer how important his parents are to him when he finds their passports in the suitcase they packed to pretend to go "to a bathroom convention in Birmingham" (HK 127):

> The familiar pictures of his mum and dad posing self-consciously in the photo booth at Greenwich station stared back at him. He remembered the day perfectly. They had been laughing so much it had taken five attempts […]
>
> As Jake looked from one picture to the other, it hit him more acutely than ever before…
>
> His parents were truly lost. (HK 127-28)

In this passage, psycho-narration is used by the narrative voice to summarize the protagonist's thoughts to let the reader know how he feels. The passports cause Jake to think of a happy memory he has with his parents. Because the beautiful recollection is contrasted with the sudden feeling of loss, the absence of his parents seems even more severe than when their disappearance was previously reported in the story. The anxiety which rises in Jake is then imparted to the readers with the help of interior monologue as well as descriptions of his actions: "[W]hat if they were imprisoned? What if they had been separated? What if they were already…? Jake ran over to the window, desperate for air" (HK 128). Because of the immediacy created in this passage, in which Jake's feelings are conveyed, the reader shares the protagonist's nervousness. His worries for his parents eventually give him the strength to decide to secretly come with the chosen team of History Keepers who go on a mission to save his parents, although he has been forbidden to accompany them. Once he has smuggled himself onto their ship, he doubts whether or not he is capable of coming along on the dangerous journey for a brief moment:

> 'This is ridiculous, I can't do it,' he said out loud as he emerged from Nathan's cabin. He went back up the stairs, then stopped, turned and came down again. He took his parents' passports out of his pocket and studied their pictures.
>
> 'What if they don't care enough about saving my family…?' he said to himself—and once again his mind was made up. (HK 132)

Jake's doubt is represented in form of direct speech and with the help of descriptions of his movements. In the end, he makes a resolution to come with

Topaz, Charlie, and Nathan to find his parents as his concerns are too big. Thus, his love and care for his absent parents eventually allow the protagonist to empower himself and rebel against the commands of the adults who should take care of him. His parents' passports as well as the mental images and memories he has of them aid Jake to find his own strength during their absence. Later, when the other agents leave him alone on the ship because they think the mission is too dangerous for him, he finds his parents' passports again in his pocket, looks at the pictures and longs for his normal life. He sees "his parents' smiling faces" (HK 166) and remembers them like the ordinary, even clumsy, people he has thought them to be.

Although the protagonist's thoughts of his parents are to a degree helpful for the protagonist, he has to ban them from his mind in order to escape their control over him and to be able to strive towards a more powerful position himself. After Jake cuts off his hair, which his mother loved, an event which I reported on in the last section of my paper, his detachment from his parents seems to be completed: The narrator does not provide insights on Jake's thoughts about his parents until they are almost reunited again. It is Jake's time to discover what he is capable of. Because his parents played a crucial role before this scene of transformation, the reader perceives Jake as independent and empowered during the adventures, which lead him from Venice to Castle Schwarzheim.

As Jake does not rebel against the images of his parents in his mind but rather sees them as encouraging, he needs other adults to challenge. In *The History Keepers*, adults are on top of the hierarchy of the secret society even though younger agents tend to do the difficult jobs as they have a stronger valour. As mentioned in the theoretical part of my paper, strict rank orders are a common feature of fantasy fiction. When Jake wants to volunteer for the rescue mission, the adults at the conference belittle him: They whisper "in embarrassment" (HK 115), even "let out a tight little laugh" (HK 115), and eventually Galliana, the commander of the organization, politely but clearly refuses Jake's offer. Later, finding his parents' passports and realizing what is at stake gives the protagonist the strength to rebel against Galliana and the other adults: "Then a notion took shape in Jake's head: 'I could stow away,' he whispered to himself. […] Jake hated the idea of tricking people, but the alternative was worse" (HK

129). Jake needs to disregard the History Keepers' decision to make his first step towards growth. Thus, the adult members of the secret society serve *in loco parentis* for the protagonist in the novel.

3.4.6. The Power of a Name

Discovering his full name is the first instance in *The Door That Led to Where* which gives some power to the protagonist. Nikolajeva states that "[n]ames are closely connected with identity" and explains that, because protagonists in literature for young readers are frequently in search of who they are, finding names can be vital to their adventures and for their empowerment (*Rhetoric* 269). AJ learns about his own name during his interview at the law firm. When Mr Groat asks him whether he was Aiden Jobey, AJ is taken by surprise: "'I'm known as …' He stopped himself. Perhaps by claiming this new name that fitted his two initials he would at least sound like *someone*" (TDW 9; emphasis added). The name Aiden Jobey makes him *someone*, which greatly enhances his self-confidence. Later, it is further explained how important having a full name is for AJ: "All his life his mum had made no bones about telling him that A and J were just initials, nothing more. Those two *meaningless* letters had been a problem at school. He had stood out when *all he wanted was to fit in*" (TDW 13; emphasis added). The narrator gives the reader insight into AJ's inner life and his past. It becomes clear that the protagonist has the strong wish to be a fully accepted and well-integrated member of society. As I noted above, fitting into a society is connected to having a certain amount of power and is a common element of YA novels. In AJ's opinion, not being called by a name, and not even knowing what it was, made him "meaningless." His mother represses AJ by not sharing the knowledge of his name, which is also in part his father's name. Not having a real name appears to mean to AJ that he never had the chance of gaining power as there was no one whom it could truly belong to. Narrated monologue is used to convey the protagonist's amazement to the reader: "There it was again. That incredible name. Could it really belong to him?" (TDW 12). The short sentences indicate his excitement and make the readers believe that they can see directly into AJ's head. Having a real name is important to AJ as he believes it will change his life for the better. This is conveyed to the reader with the help of a narrated monologue in which the

narrator's and the protagonist's voices merge: "It felt as if it was a password to a future. In Aiden Jobey there was space to grow. AJ had always felt like a dead end" (TDW 13). Discovering what his mother kept from him for 17 years is AJ's first step towards more power.

In *The Door That Led to Where*, Slim too gains a first name, Tom. His first name is actually Toprak, but it has never been mentioned when he still lived in the 21st century. It is easy for Slim to change his name to "Thomas Slim, Esquire" (TDW 182), which seems more suitable for his better life in the 19th century. He has advanced to a smart businessman who is popular and entertains the inhabitants of the inn. This becomes evident when AJ visits Slim around Christmas. Tom is the center of attention when he is singing Christmas songs and AJ finds him changed: "This was a Slim AJ had never seen before" (TDW 181). AJ's thoughts indicate that not even his best friends knew some of the repressed sides of Tom Slim's personality back when he was only a powerless teenager. In contrast to the 21st century, where he was just his uncle's cheap helper at the market, his talents are valued in the past. Thus, having a name which he chose himself signals that his position within society has altered: He is someone who deserves to have a forename as well as a surname. In my opinion, Slim gaining name serves as a reminder for the reader that AJ too has discovered his full name and thus risen in terms of power.

3.4.7. Passing on Power

The protagonists in *The Door That Led to Where* and *The History Keepers* gain power within a community because of who their parents are. AJ is empowered because he inherited his father's looks. People tell him "You're the dead spit of your father" (TDW 129) and that he is "the very mirror in which your father's face is reflected" (TDW 57). Because he resembles his father, people who knew and respected Lucas Jobey, tend to treat AJ with respect as well. Thus, the position Lucas has earned (or which was passed on by his father in turn) is now partly transferred to his son when AJ first walks through the door. For example, Mr Stone, who is the Jobey family's lawyer in 1830, immediately flatters AJ when they first meet: "And if any querulous soul is in doubt of your paternity then the proof is the charm you have upon you" (TDW 57). Mr Stone's behavior leads the reader to presume that Lucas Jobey used to be an important client.

AJ soon realizes that Mr Stone cannot tell him what to do because “the key is rightfully” (TDW 62) his. No adult in the past has the authority to force him to lock the door and hand the key over. While he is at the bottom of the hierarchy at the law firm in the 21st century, he is now a respected client himself. Moreover, it is precisely the key which AJ inherited from his father, who in turn received it from his father, that opens the door to a whole new world and allows the teenage protagonist to gain power. In *The Door That Led to Where*, the key is the asset that starts off the protagonist’s unusual and exciting experience, as common in the adventure story. In the 21st century, the resemblance to Lucas Jobey does not put AJ in a more powerful position as only few people knew his father. Furthermore, he does not have the status which he holds in the 19th century because his family is not rich anymore. The key allows AJ to experience the power that relatives can pass on. For example, when AJ accidentally stumbles into the house of dying Mr Dalton, he observes that just because he looks like his father, the dying man is frightened: “The man in the bed pulled himself upright, his hands reaching out to Ingleby. Then he stopped and stared wide-eyed at AJ as if he’d seen a ghost. ‘Have you come for me?’ he shouted, pointing at AJ. ‘I tell you, I knew nothing of it, that is the honest truth. I asked for none of it. None of it’” (TDW 68). In this passage, AJ appears to Mr Dalton like one of the ghosts who visit Ebenezer Scrooge in Dickens’s *A Christmas Carol*. Mr Dalton’s reaction to his physical appearance is what finally excites AJ’s curiosity and aids him in the decision not to lock the door from the 21st century and to refuse to throw the key through the mail slot like Ingleby and Mr Stone recommend him to do. Thus, AJ’s adventure begins. It allows AJ to change his and his friends’ lives, prospects as well as position within society.

In *The History Keepers*, Jake, like AJ, has inherited a valuable asset as well as the respect of some people simply because of who his parents are. His aunt first tells him about his secret power: “You have an ability, Jake. A skill, you might call it. A *power* that few others possess. You have had it—without even knowing—since you were born. Your parents have it; I have it; and everyone on this ship, to a greater or lesser degree, has it” (HK 48). By telling him about his hidden talent, Rose makes him a member of the secret society. He learns that

he is not an average boy but that he is special. Shortly afterward, they discover that he is among the most powerful of time travelers:

> Rose grasped with excitement and clutched Jake's hand. 'Diamonds? Really? That's wonderful news! Wonderful! Were they sharp? Well-defined?'
> 'I think so, yes.'
> 'Grade one, no doubt!' Rose clapped her hands. '*Like your parents, and me*. It is not always inherited, you know. *It is rare, so very rare*.' (HK 49; emphasis added)

In this passage, Rose's agitation is shown as well as told to the reader with the help of narrator comment and descriptions of her actions. Moreover, because Rose's short utterances include many exclamation and interrogation marks, her excitement about the news becomes even more visible. Rose stresses how special Jake has been all his life and he never knew it. He shares this talent with his family. Therefore, he has the possibility of having the same amount of prestige within his newly gained community which his parents and his aunt enjoy. Rose explains to him that seeing diamonds "means that the power is purer" (HK 49) in him compared to other members of the History Keepers: "Diamonds are strong, the sharp ones the strongest" (HK 49). His parents have passed their talent to "travel *into history*" (HK 49) and to "visit *every* destination, near and far" (HK 49) on to their son. Rose's words "What Jupitus Cole wouldn't give for diamonds!" (HK 49) again emphasize that Jake has just acquired a position within the agents of the time traveling community which is even above Jupitus', the man who abducted him. As stated in the literature review, it is typical for assets in adventure stories to allow protagonists a higher rank in society.

Jake does not only acquire a higher position in terms of power because of his genes but also because of the good impression his parents left on the History Keepers. Once the protagonist arrives at the History Keeper's headquarters, he experiences that the other members treat him with kindness because of his parents' popularity. This becomes evident during his encounter with Gondolfino, which has already been mentioned in section 3.2. Gondolfino welcomes him warmly and tries to console him with reassuring gestures and words about his parents: "Gondolfino held Jake's hand firmly in his frail fingers and whispered, 'It's a pleasure to meet you. Everything is going to be all right. Your parents are

survivors'" (HK 103). He then also offers to provide him with new clothes. The readers' impressions that Jake's parents' popularity is the reason why Gondolfino is so friendly towards him is reinforced by the coolness with which the costume designer treats Nathan.

3.4.8. Substitute Parents and Friends

As reported in the theoretical section of the paper, protagonists in YA novels are often assisted by characters filling in for the role of the absent parent to ease the phase of detachment from their real parents. I believe that in YA time travel books, the part of the parents does not necessarily have to be substituted by an adult but can also be occupied by protagonists' newly gained friends who are teenagers themselves. While AJ has mainly ersatz parents who are grownups, Jake is only truly supported by the adolescent but experienced agents Topaz, Charlie, and Nathan during the absence of his parents.

In *The Door That Led to Where*, Slim, Elsie, the professor, and Ingleby help AJ to break down barriers that are in his way towards a more valued position in society. Slim helps AJ find a suit, which he needs to keep his job at the law firm. He brings AJ to his uncle who owns a laundry and dry-cleaner shop and leaves his precious skateboard, which is "his one and only possession" (TDW 14), there for a week as deposit until AJ has the money to buy it. Even though AJ is not a highly respected employee at Baldwin Groat, working as a clerk at the age of 17 turns out to reflect well on him during a conversation with the police: When an officer questions him at the end of the novel and discovers what kind of job AJ has, the protagonist himself experiences his new status. This is conveyed to the reader with the help of psycho-narration as well as narrated monologue: "He realized that in the eyes of the police officer he had suddenly risen from the pile of hopeless youth. He was *somebody*. He was a clerk in legal chambers" (TDW 249; emphasis added). Similar to having a full name, having a prestigious occupation makes AJ "somebody".

Elsie does not only act as a substitute parent for AJ, as shown above, but also helps his friends until they move on to adulthood in the 19th century. For example, she hides Leon in her wardrobe when the police searches for him. She even lies to an officer: "'What? Well, I never saw him come in.' She

laughed. ‘Get away with you. You’ve been at that knock-off rum down at the station’” (TDW 172). AJ has the chance to bring Leon to the door because the policewomen cannot find his friend and Elsie lends him clothes. She helps the friends on multiple other occasions as well, as I have shown above. However, although she is supportive, other ersatz characters play more vital roles in helping AJ, Slim, and Leon to gain more power.

The professor is an important substitute parent in *The Door That Leads to Where* as he aids AJ in discovering the door, provides necessary information about the past, and provokes the protagonist’s curiosity until the teenager has grown enough to continue his adventure on his own. At first, AJ finds it hard to accept the fact that the professor has stopped helping him:

> The professor wasn’t listening.
> ‘What’s your game?’ asked AJ. ‘You were the one who encouraged me to go through the door in the first place and now you seem completely uninterested.’
> ‘Remind me, did Jack have a friend he could phone to ask what he should do when he found the giant and the hen that laid the golden eggs? No. He just had to figure it out by himself.’ (TDW 176)

AJ is upset that the professor does not offer the same amount of advice and guidance as he did when they first met. Again, Professor Edinger uses the story of *Jack and the Beanstalk* to tell AJ to be strong. The reader understands that the teenage protagonist is now ready to solve all the mysteries by himself or with minor help. The last assistance the professor provides is when he helps AJ figure out whom he can rely on in the 19th century:

> ‘Who to trust?’ said the professor, mulling over the question. ‘I would say Ingleby is a good man.’
> ‘How do you know?’
> ‘He’s been a loyal servant to the Jobey family.’ (TDW 176)

Even though AJ has grown and met adults who have proved helpful, he still has issues trusting grownups. Because readers are allowed to observe the conversation between AJ and the professor directly and without much interference of the narrative voice in this scene, immediacy is created. There is no comment by the narrator about whether or not Ingleby really can be trusted. Only when Ingleby rescues AJ out of the burning house are the protagonist and the reader finally convinced that Ingleby is a good character, as I have already discussed in section 3.3.

Topaz, Charlie, and Nathan act as Jake's substitute parents in *The History Keepers*. They play this role until the protagonist is capable of looking out for himself as well as others. For example, when the three more experienced agents leave Jake behind on the ship in Venice, Topaz and Charlie speak like parents. Topaz says: "We'll be gone an hour—two at most" (HK 164), "Look after yourself" (HK 165) and "We shan't be long" (HK 165) when they say goodbye. Charlie, like a caring adult, worried that the adolescent could starve in their absence, tells Jake "I left you some spinach quiche in the galley" (HK 165). While Topaz and Charlie appear as the caring parents Jake might need in the absence of his real mother and father, it is Nathan who, like his parents involuntarily did, again has to take on the role of the dispatcher: "Listen to me—I'd slow you down, so you have to continue on your own. It's our only hope" (HK 174). When he returns, injured and without knowing what happened to his two colleagues, he provides Jake with orders and information which are necessary for him to be able to continue the search for his parents alone. Moreover, Nathan gives Jake clothes and scissors as well as some money and a flint lighter, which help the protagonist greatly during his adventure. With a fatherly gesture, he tries to encourage Jake before they separate: "Nathan put his hands on Jake's shoulders and stared at him gravely. 'Look, Jake, you seem like a good man. They say your *parents were two of the best agents this service ever produced*. *So you must be special*—do you understand me?'" (HK 174; emphasis added). Because direct speech is used to depict Nathan's message, the reader becomes even more aware of their predicament. Nathan puts pressure on Jake to be strong and brave by assuming that he takes after his mother and father. He reminds Jake that he is supposed to be a powerful agent because of his genes. His words seem to be effective as Jake remembers them when he is starting to doubt his ability to rescue his parents: "Nathan had told him: *Go to St Mark's Cathedral … It is our only hope*. Right, he would go there; he would discover a way to find his parents, to find the others" (HK 177). Finally, because he has the feeling that his friends count on him to come to their rescue, Jake is ready to become an agent himself.

During his journey from Venice to Castle Schwarzheim, Jake truly transforms into a talented and brave agent of the History Keepers, which is shown in form

of a dialogue with his friends: "'Shall we investigate?' Jake asked. Charlie stared at him, then turned to Topaz. 'How long has he been working with us …?' he asked. 'All of three days, and now, apparently, he's running the show'" (HK 341). Interestingly, there is no further narrator comment in this section. The reader is allowed to draw his or her own conclusions from the shown conversation. Therefore, Jake's transformation into a capable agent seems like the unmediated truth. This passage as well as the next one displays that Jake has managed to rid himself of his real and his ersatz parents. Thus, he is ready to take on the role of the adventurous hero himself:

> 'I'll look,' said Jake bravely. He grinned at Charlie. 'What's the worst that could happen? It's full of killer scorpions? Give me a leg up.'
> 'I think I prefer the old, unassuming, I couldn't-possibly-board-a-ship-without-my-aunt Jake,' said Charlie, making a cradle with his hands and hoisting his friend upwards. 'What about you, Topaz?'
> 'Actually, I think Jake was *always* brave,' said Topaz with a smile. 'That's what I like about him.' (HK 342-43)

In this paragraph, the reader observes another instance of Jake's braveness without being distracted by any narrator comments or many descriptions. Direct speech is used to draw readers into the story as it seems like they are allowed to directly observe what is happening. Jake even appears a little cocky. In my view, Charlie's teasing words are a sign that their relationship has changed into a real friendship. Of course, Topaz has known from the beginning that Jake is brave, but she too only accepts him as a team member after he has had his first adventure on his own. Eventually, Jake is regarded as an equal and a colleague. This becomes evident in a conversation, which is depicted with the help of direct speech and reporting phrases, when Jake, Nathan, Charlie, and Paolo are locked in Zeldt's labyrinth and the young Italian agent is starting to panic:

> 'Let's not talk about it,' Jake decided grimly. 'Let's just get out of here!'
> 'I like your style!' drawled Nathan.
> 'Spoken like a true History Keeper,' Charlie concurred. (HK 368-69)

Immediacy is created because of the use of direct speech and because the narrative voice is barely noticeable. Jake, just in time to meet his parents, has managed to be completely empowered and has found his position within the members of the History Keepers. He has turned into an equal colleague to the successful agents who have much more experience than he does. When his

parents meet him again, they have to admit that their son, who was so worried about the absence of his beloved parents, has transformed into an active and courageous young adult.

So far, this section has shown that there are numerous ways how teenage protagonists may gain power in today's YA time travel novels. The perks of time travel and the influence of clothes, names, kinship, real parents, substitute parents, and friends have been demonstrated. The next two subsections of this chapter explore the effect which protagonists' rise in status has on their relationships with their real parents. Once parents and their children in the two novels under analysis are reunited, it becomes clear that they view each other differently.

3.4.9. Views of Parents and Children Change

At the end of *The Door That Led to Where* and *The History Keepers*, power dynamics and thus also the relationships between the protagonists and their real parents have shifted. Both, AJ and Jake, find their families restored because of the secrets that have been revealed and because of the transformation they have gone through. In this section, I will analyze text passages which can be seen as the initiation of changes or as a portrayal of an altered relationship between parents and protagonists. These passages convince the reader that there is more to the parents than they initially believed due to their portrayal (see section 3.2.).

AJ's relationship with his mother improves tremendously in *The Door That Led to Where*. Interestingly, he does not choose to stay in the 19th century, where he would already be considered an adult and would never be bothered by his family again. He chooses to return to his mother and step-sister in the 21st century. His mother starts to change for the better once AJ decides to leave home after the second fight he has with Jan and Frank in the novel. Elsie, who wants to reconcile them, serves as a mediator: "'But when you come back, *maybe you should go and see your mum*. Jan was down here yesterday *in tears*. She said to me she'd made a right royal mess of things.' Elsie lowered her voice as if Jan might have her ear glued to Elsie's front door. 'She said *the slug had moved out*'" (TDW 108; emphasis added). AJ's ersatz parent gently

suggests what he should do. Her careful phrasing displays that she does not intend to annoy him by telling him what to do. She tries to arouse compassion in AJ for his mother and knows exactly that mentioning that Frank has left the flat will facilitate the protagonist's attempt to make his peace with Jan. Elsie's endeavor seems to be of avail for a brief time: "He closed the front door and for a moment *tried to imagine his mum having any regrets at all*. In the dim morning light the concrete steps of the stairwell sparkled. When he was a little lad he had believed he and his mum were rich because the stairs had diamonds in them" (TDW 109; emphasis added). In this passage, the narrator informs the reader about AJ's inner response to Elsie's words by using psycho-narration. The choice of words in the first sentence displays the protagonist's doubt that his mother could be sorry about their fight. However, then AJ nostalgically thinks back to his childhood when he could still easily believe that his life was simple. This peaceful memory of his comforting childhood fantasy is then destroyed by two short sentences: "He could hear Jan shouting at Roxy. Things must be bad" (TDW 109). Here, the narrator's description is first used to let the reader deduce that Jan has not changed at all as she still acts like a red reptile. In the following sentence, the voice of the narrator and the protagonist merge to reassure the reader's impression. Thus, the reader can easily understand that AJ does not decide to go up to his mother's flat to comfort her. As in the typical adventure story, going home does not seem like an option to the protagonist. This is emphasized by contrasting a sad but beautiful childhood memory with the shocking reality of AJ's present. He has to have an adventure first before his relationship with his mother can improve.

Jan's behavior towards AJ first changes considerably when he is badly hurt after Moses and his dog attack him and he lies in hospital. He is surprised that she would visit him on his sickbed: "He drifted in and out of consciousness. At one point he saw his mum. *She sat next to him, tears running down her face*. *Later he wondered if he'd imagined that*" (TDW 156; emphasis added). AJ cannot believe that his mother would cry because he was injured. The reader shares the protagonist's feeling of doubt and surprise as, because of the information given about her so far, she rather seems to be the type of mother who would be angry at her son for having gotten into trouble instead of worrying

about him. However, AJ's mind appears not to have played a trick on him, since, when Jan visits him again, their way of speaking and treating each other has completely altered in contrast to the beginning of the novel. When AJ tells her that he does not want to be in hospital over Christmas, her facial expressions appear kind for the first time in the novel: "Jan smiled and her hard face softened" (TDW 159). The narrator's descriptions of Jan's countenance allow the reader to picture her not as red reptile anymore but as a human with feelings. In addition, Jan also surprises the reader and AJ by respecting his wishes. She arranges for AJ to be able to celebrate in Elsie's flat. This is a gesture AJ knows to appreciate: "AJ knew his mum's pride must have taken a tumble to agree to let him stay at Elsie's. He did something he had never done before. He took hold of his mum's hand and although it hurt him, he squeezed it a little" (TDW 159-60). In response to Jan's kind action, her son too shows her his affection for the first time in the book, which is emphasized by the narrator's explicit statement. The reader is convinced that AJ did not dream about his mother crying next to him because when he thanks her for the visit, she again displays her emotions: "Jan had a tear in her eye. 'Stop it,' *she said softly*. 'I don't want to go through an emotional car wash'" (TDW 160; emphasis added). The narrator describes the tone of her voice when she tells him not to thank her. It is important for the reader to know that her words are well-meant in order to be able to interpret her utterance. The scene in the hospital gives the readers hope that Jan is not the red reptile they imagined her to be but illustrates that she also cares for AJ. In my opinion, it prepares the reader for Jan's further transformation and already hints at the improvement of her relationship with AJ to come.

The relationship between mother and son rapidly betters from then on in *The Door That Led to Where*, but they must leave their past behind them to be able to live harmoniously. At Elsie's Christmas party, AJ and his mother still get along surprisingly well, as AJ's words, thoughts, as well as the narrator's input reveal. Again, Elsie appears as the fairy godmother because she encourages the healing process of the broken relationship between mother and son by inviting AJ's mother and step-sister over on Christmas Eve. The reader is given the impression that everyone is trying hard to make the Christmas party a

success: “His mum had made an effort, brought the wine and Christmas pudding. Roxy came dressed in a sparkly top and shirt. Elsie had on her party frock” (TDW 165). When looking at the first sentence of this passage, it seems to me as if the thoughts of the protagonist are represented. Instead of Jan’s name, “his mum” is used and the fragmental sentence structure, which is more characteristic of spoken discourse, too indicates that the narrative voice is sharing AJ’s thoughts. Contrastingly, the descriptions of Roxy’s and Elsie’s outfits rather seem to be conveyed by the narrator. In the following paragraphs, a pleasant atmosphere is created with the help of descriptions of the decorations, Jan appreciating them and Elsie laughing. Because of the evoked peacefulness, which the reader can feel, AJ’s retrospection of past Christmas dinners is even more shocking: “AJ had vivid memories of grim Christmas family fights, of Mum screaming at the top of her voice at Roxy’s dad. The worst one was when Roxy’s dad had pulled the tablecloth from the table just as Mum had started to carve the turkey. It was a right mess. Every year the same. Why anyone bothered, AJ had never known” (TDW 165). This flashback, portrayed with the help of psycho-narration and narrated monologue, makes it even clearer for the reader that the tranquility of the Christmas party at Elsie’s flat is unusual. It is repeatedly emphasized that AJ is amazed at how enjoyable this Christmas dinner is: “This was the first Christmas he could remember when there hadn’t been a row before the food reached the table” (TDW 165-66). After the party, AJ even tells Elsie: “‘I think,’ said AJ, ‘this has been the best Christmas ever’” (TDW 168). In my opinion, because Dickens’s *A Christmas Carol* is mentioned multiple times in *The Door That Led to Where*, it is not surprising that Jan, like Ebenezer Scrooge, simply changes overnight and becomes a completely new person who has put the ghosts of her past behind her. It becomes evident that she makes her peace with AJ’s father. When Elsie and her guests are about to “drink a toast to absent loved ones” (TDW 166), Jan does something which surprises AJ very much. She says: “I would like to add to that. To Lucas, wherever he is” (TDW 166). The reader is then informed that “AJ had never, ever heard his mum mention his father’s name” (TDW 166). When reading this passage, the reader gains the impression that Jan transferred her angry feelings towards her vanished husband on their son.

Because she seems to have forgiven AJ's father, her relationship with her son can improve from then on.

After AJ's adventure, all secrets have been revealed. As a result, power dynamics are altered. Because AJ has found out everything about the murder of his father and rescued Norris and Esme, and Jan too has learned about what happened to her husband, they are completely reconciled. Suddenly, because all the secrets that held them apart are gone, they are able to display affection: "This is a first, thought AJ, hugging her. He couldn't remember the last time such a thing had happened" (TDW 252). When AJ asks his mother why she never told him anything about his father, the pain she felt over losing her husband becomes clear. First, she emphasizes how much AJ's father meant to her:

> Jan bit her bottom lip and then said so quietly that AJ wasn't sure he'd heard her, 'I *loved* your dad. To tell you the truth, I never *loved* anyone like I *loved* him. *He was all the lights on the Christmas tree—but brighter*, if you know what I mean.' She sniffed. 'We were married and *I'd never been so happy*. You know, I thought I was *the luckiest* girl *in the whole of this block of flats—in the whole bleeding world* […]'. (TDW 253; emphasis added)

In this passage, Jan repeatedly uses the word "loved", the superlative, exaggeration as well as comparison to describe her feelings for AJ's father. Because of the intensity of her emotional outbreak, the reader notices that she has changed and has been suppressing her grief for a long time. In addition, since her emotions and facial expressions are described by the narrative voice, the reader gains the impression that Jan is truly not a red reptile anymore. Rather, she has become vulnerable. Because direct speech is used, the reader is given the impression of immediacy and is allowed to emphasize with Jan. When Jan continues with her story, she lets AJ and the readers understand why she treated her son badly:

> 'When he never came back *I thought I would break in two*. Then there was you. I didn't know I was pregnant when he left. *You were the only thing that kept me stuck together*. *You looked so like him, it hurt*. I thought the bastard had abandoned us, taken away my future and left me with nothing but a baby […] by the time I realised I would never see him again, all *the anger that had been churning in me had set like cement*'. (TDW 254; emphasis added)

Jan justifies her ill-tempered behavior towards AJ because of his similarity to his father and the anger which built up in her. However, she also tells him that he was “the one thing” that helped her get through the loss of her husband. Even though she could not display her love, this shows that she always cared for him. In my view, direct speech without interference of the narrative voice is used to explain Jan’s emotions to allow the reader to emphasize with her as they are given the impression of immediacy and intimacy. Jan realizes that she has made many mistakes and feels sorry for them: “I found the notebook in your room. It made me laugh. ‘The Red Reptile Handling Manual.’ I thought, I deserve that” (TDW 254). As a consequence of Jan sharing her feelings and talking about hitherto unsaid events, AJ and the reader can finally understand why she behaved like a red reptile. Thus, they are able to forgive her. The reader is assured that AJ and Jan are allowed a fresh start and that both make the most of it:

> AJ spent his time recovering at his mum’s flat. He had wondered how long her good mood would last. It could only be twenty-four hours—forty-eight at the most—before the red reptile raised his ugly head again. *He was genuinely shocked when after three days she was still cheerful*.
>
> ‘You all right?’ he asked her.
>
> ‘Never better,’ said Jan. ‘I feel I’ve been given a new start. You don’t think I’ve left it too late, do you?’
>
> ‘No,’ said AJ. ‘It’s never too late.’ (TDW 260)

As can be seen in this passage, the narrator informs the reader about AJ’s surprise that he and his mother still get along well after a few days. The portrayed conversation displays that AJ and Jan have forgotten all their past conflicts as both want “a new start”, which is also shown by their gentle way of communicating. Moreover, AJ now realizes that he has not treated his mother perfectly either as he did not have a sympathetic ear for her: “He wondered if Esme could have been the cause of his mum’s improved mood. She had a way about her that was calm. She listened to all everyone said, which was something that no one usually had time for” (TDW 260). AJ’s guess further excuses Jan’s behavior as he too has acted wrong. Thus, the main issue mother and son had, namely, not being able to communicate openly, which led to mutual misunderstandings, is revealed and understood only at the end of the novel when they both have learned to treat each other with more respect.

Like in *The Door That Led to* Where, the protagonist in *The History Keepers* must discover his family's secrets and forgive his parents in order for power dynamics to shift and for them to be able to live happily again. In the novel, the Djones' harmonious family life is endangered when the protagonist finds out that his parents have not always spoken the truth. Jake feels betrayed when he discovers that they have kept secrets from him and lied to him. His pain about their secrets is repeatedly expressed before he decides to ignore adults' orders, convinced by the realization that his parents truly are in danger. His feelings are well displayed, for example, when Jake is on his way to the History Keepers' headquarters for the first time:

> With the blanket wrapped around him, he now looked out at the rolling sea and the faint light on the horizon, and thought again of his parents. A strange mixture of feelings churned around in his head. Of course, he was worried sick, but he was also haunted by a sense of betrayal. They had *lied* to him, pretending that they were going to a bathroom trade fair in Birmingham, when they had actually been heading not just across Europe, but across the centuries. (HK 71)

First, the narrator's description of the setting already fuels the reader's expectations to hear about the protagonist's thoughts. The atmosphere presented is calm, thus enabling him to reflect on information received so far. The narrative voice's summary of Jake's feelings is then followed by an explanation why he feels betrayed by Alan and Miriam. Because the readers are given insight into the protagonist's emotions and thoughts, it is easy for them to emphasize with him. Later, Jake's disappointment is again mentioned in the form of psycho-narration: "Once again, Jake felt a stab of pain on hearing details of his parents' deception" (HK 111). Because of these passages, which stress Jake's negative emotions towards Alan and Miriam, the readers are led to wonder whether the protagonist will be able to forgive his parents. Only towards the end of the novel, the readers are reassured that Jake excuses his parents' dishonesty as he realizes on multiple occasions how important his family is to him. For example, when the young hero thinks he is about to die, he sees his family members before him: "In a flash, his mind filled with a kaleidoscope of visions: his mum and dad, his brother Philip, […] and again his mother, father, brother" (HK 227-28). Another incident which signals that Jake has forgiven his parents is reported on when he and his friends are about to find

them: "*Jake's face lit up at the thought of seeing his parents again*. They had only been gone four days, but *it seemed much longer*. He *had never missed them so much* as he had this week: their cheerful banter; their mischievous sense of humour; the display of affection that Jake had taken so much for granted" (HK 256; emphasis added). In this passage, Jake's gleeful anticipation is conveyed to the reader with the help of psycho-narration. The narrative voice emphasizes how much the protagonist has missed his parents by describing Jake's facial expression and the intensity of his longing for them. Moreover, the readers are reminded of all of Miriam and Alan's qualities. Thus, Alan and Miriam are perceived as good parents again. I argue that Jake has to realize that his parents are not perfect in order to be able to find the strength to empower himself in the process of trying to rescue them. He then also needs to be able to be forgiving towards them for the novel to end on a happy note.

Altered power dynamics between Jake and his parents can be observed when they are reunited. However, the way they treat each other has not changed. Both sides accept that they have underestimated each other. So far, the reader could mainly trust what the narrator reported on Jake's thoughts on his parents, as they were absent for most of the novel. Once Jake has found Alan and Miriam again, the reader is allowed to observe their actions as agents. These confirm what the other members of the History Keepers suggest: They might be terrible at selling and installing bathrooms, but they definitely know how to fight villains. Even though Jake's and the reader's views of his parents have changed drastically over the course of the novel, their loving and caring relationship remains the same:

> 'I thought I would never see you again,' Jake cried as he threw his arms around them and held them with all his might. […]
> 'How on earth did you get here?' said Miriam, wiping away tears of relief. 'To the sixteenth century of all places! Your father and I nearly died of shock when we saw you come through that gatehouse yesterday […].' (HK 381)

Unlike AJ and Jan, the affection Jake and his parents display to each other has not changed. As shown in the last paragraph, here too it becomes evident that Jake is not mad at his parents for lying to him about the bathroom conventions and keeping secrets from him about his brother and the History Keepers. Their words reveal that they were both terribly worried about the others' well-being.

Alan and Miriam immediately realize that their son has transformed upon seeing him again. Miriam says they "hardly recognised" (HK 381) him and notices with nostalgia that his hair is short: "She sighed as she ran her fingers through his short dusty hair (HK 382). In contrast to his wife, Alan appears to think that his son's transformation is marvelous: "'Well, whatever happened—however you got here,' added Alan proudly, 'you look every inch the adventurer now'" (HK 382). Later, his fatherly pride can again be observed when he says: "'You see, a hero!' declared Alan triumphantly, clapping his son on the shoulder. 'A bona fide hero! It's in his blood, Miriam—nothing we can do about it'" (HK 383). Because of the use of direct speech combined with the narrator's descriptions of Alan's tone of voice and gestures, the readers are convinced that Jake's father feels pleasure and satisfaction at seeing that his son has developed and gained more power.

When Jake first sees his parents on duty, his view of them as powerless shopkeepers is finally changed completely. The protagonist learns that his parents, whom he thought to be clumsy, are talented agents who are masters of martial arts, speak foreign languages, and seem to know every trick in the book. When they need to steal a ship to pursue the villains, Miriam and Alan display their expertise:

> 'Alan, what do you think? The damsel and the drowning child?'
> 'Perfect,' her husband concurred.
> Miriam pulled down her gown and loosened the laces of her bodice to give herself a more voluptuous air.
> Jake could hardly believe his eyes. 'Mum, what are you doing?'
> 'I'm the decoy—I need to have a certain …' She didn't finish her sentence but continued shaking out her hair and applying lipstick from a tiny wooden box. 'It's how we do things around here,' she told him. 'If we needed a male decoy, your father would do the same.' (HK 390-91)

This paragraph reveals that Jake's parents are a well-attuned team which has been working together to fight evil for a long time. The "damsel and the drowning child" is a trick they have used before and Miriam's words let them appear as bold professionals. Jake is shocked by the behavior of his mother, as portrayed by the narrator's summary of his thoughts, and witnesses even more surprises: "They all looked on as Miriam rushed up to the guards and started yelling in German, gesturing at the water, at the same time making sure she appeared as attractive as she possibly could" (HK 391). As already mentioned,

Alan and Miriam are professionals in martial arts. This can be seen in the following quote:

> She [Miriam] *delivered* two brutally efficient karate chops and *dispatched* them, one by one, into the torrent […] 'Here!' *shouted* Miriam, *tossing* him a rapier. He [Alan] *caught* it in one hand and *fought* off the second guard, *parrying with a flamboyance that left his son slack-jawed with amazement*. Finally he *knocked* his adversary off balance with the flat of his blade, *caught* hold of his ankle and *pitched* him into the river. (HK 392-93; emphasis added)

Because of the narrator's report of action in this scene, which includes a great multitude of action verbs, Miriam and Alan appear as acting subjects. In addition to narrator report, narrator comment can be found, for example, "parring with a flamboyance that left his son slack-jawed with amazement" (HK 392). These narrator comments as well as the choice of words let the reader picture the impressive skills of the two agents and understand the "amazement" their son feels.

How extraordinarily different Jake's parents' behavior is from what the reader expected, is again emphasized after fighting the guards: "'Mum, Dad…? Did you just …?' Jake's mouth was still open: could this really be his scatty shopkeeper parents?" (HK 392-93). Jake's surprise is conveyed to the reader with the help of direct speech as well as narrated monologue. The protagonist is further impressed by Alan's extensive amount of knowledge:

> 'Cologne Cathedral,' Alan said, gazing in wonder. 'At this moment in time, the highest building in the world.'
> 'Really?' said Jake, impressed.
> 'Oh yes—round about now Cologne is possibly the richest place in Europe. It's a "free city", its own sovereign state. That, along with its location on the Rhine, slap-bang in the centre of Europe, is the key to its success.'
> 'Your father is not just a pretty face,' Miriam teased. 'he's a mine of information.' (HK 402-3)

Despite Alan's lack of talent for installing pipes, he can tell Jake a lot about Cologne. Miriam's comment leads the reader to assume that Alan is generally intelligent, which is surprising for his son as well as the reader because it contradicts the picture of the "scatty shopkeeper parents". As noted in section 2.2. on power dynamics in YA literature, knowledge is able to ascribe power. Alan and Miriam, due to their many hidden talents, are perceived as more powerful at the end of the novel. When the Djones family returns from their

adventure, it is again emphasized that Jake's view of both his parents has changed: "Jake watched his parents on the deck of the *Mystère*; laughing, arm in arm, the wind in their hair, they seemed a million miles away from the shambolic bathroom shop in south-east London" (HK 449-50). In the end, Alan and Miriam are far from being portrayed as the clumsy shopkeepers.

The equal distribution of power between the agents in *The Door That Led to Where* is shown when Alan, Miriam, Paolo, and Jake diffuse Zeldt's bomb in a combined effort. There is no rivalry, they work together as a team. Jake is the one who climbs to reach the bomb in the first place. When an owl startles him, he drops it and his mother catches and diffuses it. However, she then needs to be rescued from falling to her death. Her husband is unable to reach her because of his weight. Then Jake again displays his braveness and his being equal to his parents when he does "not wait for permission" (HK 413) for helping his mother out of her predicament. Unfortunately, he too is too heavy to do so. Therefore, Paolo, who has not been particularly courageous in the story so far, is the only one who can come to Miriam's rescue: "He had never wanted anything more as to abandon this appalling adventure. Then something strange happened to him. […] Within him, Paolo felt a sudden surge of courage: he *could* be a hero. '*Not on my watch!*' he roared, and thrust out his hands" (HK 414-15). Suddenly, Paolo becomes fearless and simply decides to become a hero, like Jake did before when it seemed like he had no other choice because there was no one else to do the job. Within moments, Paolo gains great power which then allows him to feel confident for every new challenge to come in the service of the History Keepers. Thus, it can be observed that teenage characters in *The History Keepers* have the chance to develop and display their power in special situations and settings, like it is common in fantasy fiction and adventure stories.

After this shared adventure, it is time for Jake to once again prove that he has grown to be an independent and capable agent. He rebels against his parents' authority (they tell him not to try to rescue Topaz) and follows her on his own: "He took advantage of the sudden silence that followed his question. He had calculated that there would be resistance, and had already formulated a plan" (HK 417). These sentences show that Jake has learned to be one step ahead of

his parents and to act fast so that they cannot do anything but “helplessly” (HK 417) yell his name after him. Instead of the anger the readers expect, Alan has “a look of fatherly pride” (HK 417) on his face and he can also persuade Miriam to forgive her son for leaving them behind by reminding her that she too has put herself in enormous danger once to rescue him. They understand their son’s boldness as it reminds them of themselves: “History seems to be repeating itself” (HK 418). Conflict is avoided because of their parental ability to emphasize. Jake then manages to catch up with the *Lindwurm* all by himself, climbs on board and, with the help of Topaz, he survives a confrontation with Zeldt and Mina. In the end, he proves that he is a hero and a survivor even though his mission to rescue Topaz goes slightly wrong. When he returns to his parents, they are not mad at him for leaving them behind in Cologne. They accept that their son acts on his own and makes his own decisions now. Their relaxed reactions to their son’s risky behavior differ greatly from Jake’s image of the worried parents who sit at home.

In this subsection, I have shown that there is more to the real parents in the YA time travel books under analysis than readers were first led to expect. Jan, Miriam, and Alan are *multi-dimensional* because they have “a number of defining characteristics”, which sometimes even appear contradictory, and *dynamic* because they develop (Lethbridge and Mildorf 54). They are also *open-ended*, which means that the reader is allowed to observe “new and unexpected traits” while reading the novels (Chatman 132). AJ’s mother and Jake’s parents are good for surprises: The picture the reader initially has of them is completely altered in a persuasive way as their transformation is conveyed with the help of different narrative modes on multiple occasions.

The substitute parents in *The Door That Led to Where* and *The History Keepers* too are *multi-dimensional*, but they do not develop. Rimmon-Kenan uses the word *static* to refer to characters who show no development but states that they still do not have to be “limited to one trait” (41). In *The Door That Led to Where* and *The History Keepers*, characters such as Elsie, Ingleby, the professor, Nathan, Charlie, and Topaz are static, but they display more than one feature. For example, Elsie is a benevolent, apparently ordinary elderly lady, but she has no scruples about lying to the police. Ingleby too, although he still lives with

his mother and has a curious relationship with his magpie, turns out to know all the right people and does not back away from rescuing AJ out of a burning house. In *The History Keepers*, Nathan first appears as a bold hero who turns all girls' heads, but then the reader learns about his passion for fashion which contradicts the stereotypical image of pure manliness.

3.4.10. Returning Home

Another shift of power dynamics can be identified at the very end of both novels when the protagonists return home. AJ decides not to stay in the 19th century but to move in with his mother again, and Jake and his parents are welcomed at the History Keeper's headquarters. Consequently, both teenage protagonists need to reintegrate themselves into prevailing social structures. This implies that Jake and AJ have to subject to adult authority once again. Adults are in charge at the History Keeper's headquarters. Similarly, AJ is, in part, dependent on his mother again, since he lives with her. This is a traditional ending of fantastic YA novels which leaves the teenage protagonists with less power than they had during their adventure (sees section 2.3.2.). In my view, even though AJ and Jake were much more powerful and independent at the climax of the novel, it seems that both have still made progress and succeeded in gaining a better position in society compared to the beginnings of both novels. AJ still has the key which would allow him to empower himself again within a brief time by returning to the 19th century, and Jake, as an accepted member of the History Keepers who has proven himself to be talented, can now officially take part in missions. Furthermore, the protagonists' parents accept their children's development and treat them accordingly. Thus, AJ and Jake always have the chance to strive for more power.

In my opinion, power dynamics are perceived as harmonious by the reader at the end of the two novels under analysis. The two protagonists fit in within the structures of society and have been empowered. Moreover, readers are given the impression that the teenagers now have the chance to strive for more power, while they were rather limited at the beginning of the plot. In *The Door That Led to Where* and *The History Keepers*, parent figures, actual as well as substitutes, clearly contribute to AJ's and Jake's development. However,

changes of circumstance brought about by time travel too are responsible for the adolescent protagonists' change of status in both YA time travel novels.

4. Conclusion

The YA time travel novels under analysis, *The Door That led to Where* (2015) by Sally Gardner and *The History Keepers: The Storm Begins* (2011) by Damian Dibben, have allowed me to display how parent figures in this popular genre can be characterized. Adult normativity is challenged with the help of various narrative devices in both novels as they are employed in such a way that readers are drawn to take the side of the teenage protagonists. Both stories are told by heterodiegetic and relatively overt narrative voices and from the perspective of internal focalizors to allow readers to identify with the teenage protagonists and to understand their emotions. AJ is the sole focalizor in *The Door That Led to Where*, while in *The History Keepers*, although events are mainly viewed from Jake's perspective, other characters occasionally serve this function to give a full view on exciting twists. Because of the subjectivity created by the narrative situation, the way parent figures, particularly the real ones, are characterized in the two time travel novels had to be carefully examined. My analysis of key passages from both books has shown that parent figures are constructed with the help of explicit- and implicit-authorial characterization, implicit-figural characterization as well as comments by others. Thus, portrayal of speech, reports, descriptions, and comments work together to convey information about them to the readers. Characterization techniques, narrative modes and representations of protagonists' consciousness convincingly create a picture of the actual parent figures which is then completely turned around in both novels. Elsie is used as a foil character in *The Door That Led to Where* to emphasize Jan's shortcomings as a mother. Repetition is used in both YA novels to create apparently reliable pictures of the protagonists' parents. Changes of these images are first indicated by comments of other characters, which contradict what protagonists and readers know so far, to allow parents' transformations to be smoother. The findings of the analysis of parent figures in *The Door That Led to Where* and *The History Keepers* show that real parents can be called multi-dimensional and dynamic characters because they develop over the course of the story and display various contrasting qualities. In contrast, ersatz parents, even though they are multi-layered, do not grow or change, which means that they are static.

Moreover, my analysis of *The Door That Led to Where* and *The History Keepers* helped me demonstrate that parent figures may fulfill vital functions in YA time travel novels. AJ's and Jake's actual parents are the main characters' initial dispatchers towards adventure. However, the protagonists need another push by substitute parents (Professor Edinger and Nathan) later in the novels to finally take the chance to empower themselves. In *The Door That Led to Where*, multiple adults acting as ersatz parents (Elsie, the professor, Ingleby and his mother) can be considered AJ's guardians, which is interesting as many other adults, especially parents, are portrayed in a negative light. In contrast, Jake, who has a good relationship with his parents, masters most of his adventure in history without the help of adults. Instead, he is aided by his newly found friends and colleagues, Topaz, Charlie, and Nathan, who act as substitute parents until they are no longer needed. In my opinion, both real as well as substitute parents take on the role of donors as all are needed for the protagonists to discover their ability to travel through time. Moreover, because both AJ and Jake feel responsible to take on tasks which their parents set out for and are empowered on their way with the help received from ersatz parents, it becomes even clearer that it is not possible to imagine the novels under analysis without parent figures.

The last research question I proposed in my introduction focuses on how power relations between parents and children change over the course of YA time travel novels. The findings of my study suggest that, as it is common in YA novels, growth and change are central themes in *The Door That Led to Where* and *The History Keepers*. Power dynamics and relationships between parents and their children are influenced by several factors. Some of those empowerment strategies can be observed in both novels. Disguise, for example, allows teenagers to put themselves into powerful positions. Protagonists and their friends frequently dress in clothes originally owned by adults. These are either given to them by ersatz parents, like in *The Door That Led to Where*, or taken from foolish grownups, as is the case in *The History Keepers*. I have argued that the changing of looks symbolizes a character's development. Besides empowerment through makeovers, power can be handed down from one generation to another or can be gained with the support

of characters acting as ersatz parents to ease the protagonists' phase of detachment from their actual caretakers in both YA novels. In contrast to substitute parents, AJ's and Jake's real parents do not actually encourage or help their sons to empower themselves. Instead, the mental images which the protagonists have of their parents eventually lead them towards more powerful positions. Trites' concept of development of protagonists in YA literature through *in logos parentis* can clearly be assigned to AJ's process of detachment, while it takes on a slightly different form in *The History Keepers*: On the one hand Jake is empowered by thinking of his parents, but on the other hand it seems necessary for him to ban them from his mind to develop. In addition, Jake has to rebel against the adults in charge of the History Keepers, who serve *in loco parentis*, to take a step towards independence. Thus, like in other YA novels, teenage protagonists in books involving time travel must rebel against parent figures to be able to grow.

Other ways how protagonists empower themselves during their adventures have only been found in one of the two novels. In *The History Keepers*, for instance, even though adults are in charge at the time travelers' headquarters, Jake discovers that his youth is a valuable quality as it allows agents to go further back in history. Youth is frequently an advantage in adventure stories for young readers. In addition, experienced agents such as Miriam and Alan take orders from teenagers during missions. While the adolescent characters in *The History Keepers* are empowered on their travels through history because of the strength of their gift which depends on their youth, in *The Door That Led to Where,* AJ and his friends experience a boost of power by being regarded as adults in the 19th century. In contrast to the 21st century, their talents are valued in the past, and they are perceived as educated. Their knowledge of Dickens's time further increases their status in society. Thus, I could observe typical features of adventure stories and fantasy fiction in both novels under analysis: Protagonist receive a special asset, meaning they discover an object or a skill which allows them to travel through time, and thereby escape their lives to special settings in which they gain power. Because gaining power often has to do with finding out about one's identity, it is not surprising that AJ also feels more self-confident once he finds out about his full name. All in all, my analysis

of *The Door That Led to Where* and *The History Keepers* confirmed Nikolajeva's findings that temporary empowerment of teenage protagonists in novels for young readers is possible by employing a change of setting, genre conventions (which can be found in the frequently overlapping genres of adventure stories and fantasy fiction), disguise, and characters who help the young time travelers.

However, not only teenage protagonists undergo a transformation in the YA time travel novels under analysis. There are also surprises regarding changed power dynamics and relationships with parents. The reader joins AJ and Jake in noting that their picture of their parents was incomplete. AJ's mother turns out to be vulnerable and caring, while Jake's ordinary shopkeeper parents surprise their son with their talents acquired in the service of the History Keepers. Because the protagonists gain power as well as independence and discover secrets which allow them to realize their misjudgment of their parents, the relationships between children and caretakers change for the teenagers' benefit in *The Door That Led to Where* and *The History Keepers*. Both AJ and Jake end up less repressed compared to the beginnings of the novels. However, once they both return home, some of the power which they gained during their adventures is taken away from them because AJ and Jake have to fit into the adult-centered hierarchical structures of society again.

In conclusion, my diploma thesis has shown that parent figures in YA time travel novels appear to be crucial for the development of the plot and the teenage protagonists in these books and that they can be quite complex characters. While there are certain trends which could be observed with the help of the analysis of Sally Gardner's *The Door That Led to Where* and Damian Dibben's *The History Keepers: The Storm Begins*, I also showed that authors of YA time travel novels have many possibilities in terms of distributing functions, displaying power dynamics, and characterizing parent figures.

5. Abstract English

Parents in recently published young adult time travel novels are frequently absent in these books while other characters fulfill their parental roles. However, both actual and ersatz parents appear to be an essential part of these novels as they greatly influence teenage protagonists. Therefore, my diploma thesis investigates how parent figures are characterized in young adult time travel novels of the 21st century. Moreover, I explore which purpose ersatz and actual parents serve in the plot and how power relations and relationships between protagonists and their caretakers are altered. To answer these questions, the existing field or research on parents, power, and genres in young adult literature is critically examined. Two novels are analyzed in greater detail with the help of narrative theory and the insights gained from reviewed works of scholars. The books I chose for this analysis are *The History Keepers: The Storm Begins* (2011) by Damian Dibben and *The Door That Led to Where* (2015) by Sally Gardner. My research demonstrates that parent figures in today's young adult time travel novels influence the plot in multiple ways. Both actual and ersatz parents serve essential functions and are necessary for the development of the teenagers. Parents and their past are often the reason why teenage protagonists go on an adventure on their own and meet new people. These friends and substitute parents help them overcome challenges and detach from their actual parents' influence. Moreover, children's views of parents and their relationships with them tend to change as characters learn more about themselves, take on tasks which are usually the responsibility of grownups, and learn to understand their caretakers' pasts. Power is frequently gained by teenage protagonists with the help of typical elements of young adult fantasy fiction and adventure stories. At the end of each time travel adventure, negotiations of power between protagonists and their parents must have occurred and adults' secrets need to be discovered for family life to be harmonious.

6. Abstract German

In Zeitreiseromanen für Jugendliche sind die Eltern der ProtagonistInnen oft abwesend, während andere Charaktere elterliche Aufgaben übernehmen. Sowohl echte als auch Ersatzeltern scheinen ein essenzieller Teil dieser Romane zu sein, da sie großen Einfluss auf die jugendlichen Zeitreisenden haben. Daher untersuche ich in meiner Diplomarbeit, wie Elternfiguren in Zeitreiseromanen für junge Erwachsene, die im 21. Jahrhundert publiziert wurden, charakterisiert werden. Außerdem befasse ich mich mit der Frage, welche Funktionen Elternfiguren in den Handlungen erfüllen und wie sich Machtverhältnisse sowie Beziehungen zwischen Eltern und ihren Kindern im Laufe der Romane verändern. Um diese Fragen beantworten zu können, werden zuerst existierende Forschungsergebnisse über Eltern, Macht und Genres in der Jugendliteratur herangezogen und erklärt. Zwei Bücher werden im Anschluss mithilfe der Erzähltheorie und den aus dem Forschungsüberblick gewonnenen Erkenntnissen genauer analysiert. Für die Analyse habe ich mich für *The History Keepers: The Storm Begins* (2011) von Damian Dibben und *The Door That Led to Where* (2015) von Sally Gardner entschieden. Meine Untersuchungen zeigen, dass Elternfiguren in heutigen Zeitreiseromanen für Jugendliche die Handlung auf verschiedene Art beeinflussen. Sowohl echte Eltern als auch andere Figuren, die statt der Eltern für die ProtagonistInnen da sind, sind aufgrund der Zwecke, die sie erfüllen, und ihres Einflusses auf die Entwicklung der Jugendlichen aus diesen Geschichten nicht wegzudenken. Eltern und ihre Vergangenheit sind oft der Grund, wieso ProtagonistInnen Abenteuer erleben und auf neue Figuren treffen. Diese neuen Freunde und Ersatzeltern helfen den Jugendlichen, Hindernisse zu überwinden und sich vom Einfluss ihrer Eltern zu lösen. Außerdem ändern sich die Blickwinkel der Kinder auf die Eltern meist, da sie mehr über sich selbst herausfinden, Aufgaben von Erwachsenen übernehmen und die Vergangenheit ihrer Väter und Mütter verstehen lernen. Die ProtagonistInnen erlangen häufig durch einen magischen Gegenstand oder durch ein bisher unbekanntes Talent eine machtvollere Position, wie es in Fantasy Fiction und Abenteuergeschichten für junge LeserInnen üblich ist. Am Ende der Zeitreiseabenteuer müssen die ProtagonistInnen Geheimnisse ihrer Eltern gelüftet haben und die

Machtverhältnisse zwischen ihnen müssen neu verteilt sein, damit ein harmonisches Familienleben gelingen kann.

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