Degree Project

Education as an Act of Self-Fulfilment

A literary analysis of Holocaust narratives in the light of personal development and their utilization in the EFL Classroom

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Abstract

The aim of the present inquiry was to identify significant factors which had impact on the lives of Miriam Darvas and the protagonist Liesel Meminger, linked to the circumstances of the Holocaust in their respective narratives *Farewell to Prague* and *The Book Thief*. Through the investigation of the living conditions impacting the individuals, Maslow’s Theory of Motivation is applied in order to find the factors hindering the possibility for Miriam and Liesel to develop in their personal selves. Simultaneously, an educational aim followed the study in order to clarify the pedagogical possibilities of using the narratives in an EFL classroom.

The findings of the present inquiry indicate great similarities in the change of circumstances between Miriam and Liesel due to the war, which consequently impacted the individuals in their basis of developing their personal self. The results disclosed several instances in which the surroundings of Darvas and Meminger hindered their ability to develop and deprived them of the necessities needed, according to Maslow’s theory. However, they also disclosed indications of finding inner strength by self-improvement through education. Therefore, the findings from the present study supports an area of pedagogical possibilities using the narratives in the EFL classroom, such as enhancing the knowledge and understanding for the living conditions during the Holocaust, providing alternative reading suggestions to the commonly used Holocaust literature, as well as allowing collaborations between several subjects in high school.

Keywords

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1. Introduction

For young readers, the Holocaust comes in small doses, sometimes cloaked in fantasy. It’s mostly a story of personal loss and dislocation. Diaries and last letters are the preferred reading among adolescents because these are familiar, domesticated forms, which literally bring the wartime experience “home.” (Roskies and Diamant 24).

Celebrating this year’s 72\textsuperscript{nd} anniversary of the liberation of Jewish concentration camps, evidently, the rising concern of the decreasing survivors left from the Holocaust was in focus (Jacobson and Hayes). Simultaneously, the survivors battle groups with anti-Semitic attitudes, even including deniers of the events of the Holocaust (Davies 3; Jacobson and Hayes; Williams 234). Unfortunately, the presence of anti-Semitic movements in Europe have remained for over two hundred years and, according to the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), could be found in Germany as early as in 1873 (3).

To tackle the developing attitudes and the direction of the societies in Europe, enhancing knowledge for the future generations has been an approach adopted throughout the countries. The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) created a project in June 2006 which aimed to provide pedagogical foundations usable in learning situations to educate the learners of the atrocities of the Holocaust (FRA). Amongst the suggested pedagogical tools, literature in various forms connected to the Holocaust were presented (FRA). Literary texts, accessible in various sorts without charge at any state library, are information sources which occasionally become neglected in today’s society where the internet and two clicks on Google gives anyone access to anything they are searching for. There are additional worrying disadvantages to our generation’s endless sources of information found on the internet, i.e. the ongoing search for “fake news” – a subject sui generis – and the simplicity of contributions to the pool of information by, for instance,
adding incorrect facts (Davies 3; Williams 234). The development of inaccurate information as well as the supply of contradictory opinions such as Holocaust denials could further increase due to the declining number of survivors left to testify for the events (Davies 3; Williams 234).

The FRA and several researchers emphasize the advantages of using literature as an educational tool in order to engage the target group with a comprehensible source of information (Davies 3; Roskies and Diamant 12; Waxman 1; Williams 232). Likewise, The Swedish National Agency for Education argues for the importance of integrating literature into teaching English as a foreign language. The emphasis on the benefits of learning English through literature is shown firstly through the Agency’s integration of literature in various forms in the three levels of English taught at high schools in Sweden (“Syllabus for English 5,6 and 7”). Secondly, in the end of 1990 after the alarming findings from a report investigating the knowledge of the events of the Holocaust amongst Swedish students’, the project The Living History Forum was established by order from the Swedish government as a public authority with the aim “to teach about historic patterns” (Ammert 58). The Forum aspires to “equip people with knowledge for the future” with an emphasis on understanding our history, which they argue for achieving by “working for everyone’s equal value” (The Living History Forum). Additionally, The National Curriculum for high schools in Sweden states that all students should “establish respect for human rights and the fundamental democratic values” which affirms the close connection between the Curriculum and The Forum (Natl. Ag. For Ed. 4).

In contrast to the majority of the informational sources, such as educational web pages and information from historical textbooks, Williams, an author of studies for Holocaust Literature, argues for the profound learning through this genre stating that “[u]sed correctly, both Holocaust fiction and autobiographical narrative can provide clear examples of these
moral complexities of “varying shades of gray,” insight often impossible to find in traditional archival documentation.” (234). To utilize personalized material provides the reader with a closer connection to the narrative, making the content relatable to the learners as well as adding an attractive force to the events presented, and this additionally grants other pedagogical outcomes (Roskies and Diamant 12; Waxman 89; Williams 234).

Considering the differences between the two narratives chosen for this study and their uniqueness in the historical evidence and depiction of the Holocaust, literature within this genre could be argued to offer individual experiences and specific examples of the events, such as changes in each society and the consequences of the war affecting individuals. As claimed by Ian Gregory, researcher in the field of Holocaust education, the Holocaust should therefore not be a subject for historical presentation or merely informed about as an event, it should to be taught, discussed and educated regarding its consequences for the younger generations to understand its impact on our present world (52). A project on Holocaust literature within the English subject could be expanded to include other subjects, such as history and social studies in order to create a foundation for further discussions on the theme of genocide.

The aims of the present study are twofold: to identify factors affecting the development of a personal self in accordance with psychologist Maslow’s theories, focusing on these processes in times of war, as well as search for pedagogical possibilities with the narratives that could provide material for several educational purposes. Hence, a specific material uncovering two young individuals and their personal experiences of the Holocaust was chosen for the study. The material for the present study consist of one autobiography by Miriam Darvas, a young girl with Jewish heritage forced to flee the war, and a fictional novel disclosing the young Liesel Meminger’s childhood during the Holocaust and her family’s sympathies with the Jewish population, written by a writer with family connections to the
Second World War émigrés. These narratives from the genre of Holocaust literature were chosen to present materials differing from the literature commonly used for teaching. Through a close reading and a thematic analysis, the chosen narratives were found to hold both differences and similarities, however illustrated two common themes throughout, consisting of the personal development of the individual as well as the impact from the circumstances of war.

Through these preconditions of the mentioned narratives, learners can be presented with the foundations for ethical, moral and psychological discussions of the consequences of war as well as the living conditions for the affected individuals. In addition, whilst studying the events of the Holocaust through these narratives, teachers have the possibility to further motivate learners to take part of Holocaust literature, linking the historical events to specific passages from the narrative, bringing the learners closer to the text and creating an intelligible learning foundation. Several pedagogical studies or suggested readings when working with the Holocaust mention literature such as *The Diary of a Young Girl* (1952) by Anne Frank or John Boyne’s novel *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* (2006) (Roskies and Diamant 24). However, nowadays when the students reach high school level, many of them may already be familiar with these narratives and while literature can be enjoyed by some through several readings, there appears to be a gap for further suggested readings suitable for pedagogical purposes for those students who wish for alternative reading materials within the genre.

Therefore, this study claims that *The Book Thief* (2016) by Markus Zusak and the autobiography *Farewell to Prague* (2015) by Miriam Darvas could stand as alternatives to the commonly used narratives in the EFL education representing Holocaust literature, due to their richness in details in the texts and their depiction of a personal development, based on Maslow’s theories, during severe times as the events of the Holocaust.
2. Holocaust Literature and The Development of a Personal Self

The scope of this essay is to investigate factors of the personal development of Liesel, the protagonist in *The Book Thief* (2016), and Miriam in her autobiography *Farewell to Prague* (2015) during the circumstances of the Holocaust and additionally, provide pedagogical suggestions for using the findings from these excerpts of Holocaust literature in the EFL classroom. In order to present the research used for the analysis depicting living conditions and circumstances of this historical period, a short historical overview will be included together with findings displaying commonly found influences on individual’s personal lives during wartime. This will further disclose examples of literature, research and testimonies providing grounds for discussing individual experiences and provide findings suggested for educational purposes of the current genre of literature. Moreover, theories discussing identity development, the influence on the personal self by the input from the surroundings, as well as theories displaying consequences of unsuccessful developments of the self, will be discussed in the second part of this section.

Recognized as one of the largest massacres and violations of fundamental human rights in history, the events of the Holocaust certainly point to the necessity of educating future generations on the possible consequences of the acts of oppression and discrimination. It additionally raises the question of how indefensible hatred towards a community could culminate to the events of the Holocaust, which the result we can now access through numerous testimonies and witnesses, without encountering any greater opposition (Gregory 55; Roskies and Diamant 27; Waxman 109). However, it is also important to highlight the nuances and individuality within the German people, which Marion Kaplan, the author of the book *Jewish Daily Life in Germany, 1618-1945* (2005) concludes (5). By studying the
testimonies, living conditions and development of the Jewish community in Germany during 200 years, Kaplan argues that throughout the period of study, differences in attitudes towards Jewish people could be found between villages and cities, and from German to German (5).

Notwithstanding, the actions during the events of the Holocaust question the capability of the human mind if such atrocious actions are feasible (Gregory 55; Waxman 109).

What the Nazi years show is how fragile this disinterested ethic is [of “how humans ought to be treated”], and how easily so many, not originally party to the violation of the claims of others, lent themselves to everything that followed in the wake of the breach of the ethic proclaiming the equality of human beings. (Gregory 55).

Due to the proportions of the ethical violations against fundamental rights and values perpetrated during the events of the Holocaust, several moral and psychological perspectives can add value and depth to the educational purpose. As Gregory argues, the educational aim of studying these events of our history should be grounded in the crucial idea of hindering a similar act of events in the future (50). Through the educational purposes of the Holocaust, the possible outcome of an increased sensibility towards similar attitudes and actions of those exemplified from the Holocaust is surely welcome.

Nevertheless, the events of the Holocaust do not solely represent the consequences of political and war time-actions, what is more is that this part of our European history not only lives on, it affects the development of our present society (Ammert 58). In Jessica Copley’s article comparing Holocaust literature and its representation of the events, she begins by questioning the post-war society and our ability to, with ethical correctness, represent the tragic events (2). She asks, “[h]ow can we represent the un-representable and speak the unspeakable? How can the world of the human represent the world of the inhuman?” (Copley 2). Ammert, the Head of the department of Education at Linnaeus University, however poses
a different take on our situation, claiming that there are advantages of our present post-war perspective. Ammert argues that our enhanced understanding of the abominable outcome of the Holocaust connects us to our past and allows us to “question the past” as well as “condemn the Holocaust” in its whole (58).

Due to the magnitude of the consequences of the Holocaust, several countries across the world have dedicated parts of their national school curriculum to establish the importance and educational purpose of the historical events, including countries such as the United States of America, the UK and Canada (Davies 4; Endacott 6; Rantala, Manninen and van den Berg 323-24). Additionally, a shift of focus on the essence of historical education has been critically evaluated in various countries, which has resulted in an evaluation of Sweden’s neighboring country Finland and their perspective on the learning outcomes in history teaching (Rantala, Manninen and van den Berg 323-24). Emerging from the traditional history teaching focusing mostly on methods of content learning, the development towards “inquiry-based” learning and historical empathy has increased rapidly (Endacott 10-11; Nygren and Vikström 52; Rantala, Manninen and van den Berg 323-24). In brief, these new approaches focus more on the understanding of human behavior, the ability to change perspectives and context as well as connecting closer to primary sources in order to engage the learners in the situation of those studied in the history (Endacott 10; Nygren and Vikström 51, 61; Rantala, Manninen and van den Berg 323-24). What could be interpreted as an adaptation to these pedagogical methods are the requirements in the Swedish Syllabus for the subject of English where it is stated that students should be given the opportunity to learn about the “[l]iving conditions, attitudes, values and traditions, as well as social, political and cultural conditions in different contexts” (Natl. Agency for Education 3). Even if it is not intended to follow the approach for historical empathy or connect closer to primary sources, this requirement for the subject of English could be combined with the new methods in order to enhance the empathy
for others in literature and narration (McAdams 131). Therefore, this study might provide examples of pedagogical approaches to integrate Holocaust literature in the EFL classroom.

2.2 Holocaust Literature

Literature and narratives representing the Holocaust have a significant value as primary sources for the educational purpose of investigating the historical events due to their unequalled presentation of personal experiences reflecting the war. In severe times in life, narration and literature have the power to provide comfort (Waxman 2). To others, it is a way of surviving or ensuring that their personal stories and experiences survive as well as representing the historical era in which they existed (Davies 3; Roskies and Diamant 46; Waxman 2).

Due to the broad definition of the Holocaust and its literature, consequently, the boundaries of the genre are rather porous and cross several disciplines (Williams 233). While practitioners working with teaching the Holocaust argue for the moral, democratic and critical pedagogical values of the events (Davies 3-5; Gregory 50-57; Shapiro 194; Waxman 1), Roskies and Diamant as well as Williams focus more on the significance of the personal experiences found in the literature. Researchers working with Holocaust literature however appear unanimous on the aspect of considering all evidence and testimonies from the Holocaust equally valuable and able enhance the understanding of the variety of effect on individuals’ lives during the war (Davies 3; Gregory 50-52; Roskies and Diamant 22; Waxman 89; Williams 234).

To offer a precise definition of the content in the genre of Holocaust literature, Roskies and Diamant state the following: “Holocaust literature comprises all forms of writing,
both documentary and discursive, and in any language, that have shaped the public memory of the Holocaust and been shaped by it” (12). Williams defines the genre with slightly more specific terms, concluding that it is “the localized, yet international, corpus of literary representation encompassing both fiction and nonfiction, that evokes, describes, or tries to come to grips with the events, experience, and/or after-effects of the Final Solution” (Williams 231-32). Therefore, it could be argued that any contributions dealing with content regarding the Holocaust, both fictional and autobiographical literature, which could enhance the educational purposes of the event, can be used in the EFL classroom.

Holocaust literature can additionally be used as an instrument to commemorate those who suffered and to empower those victims of oppression, those who fought for equal human rights, by utilizing their testimonies in the classroom. Various researchers emphasize the important role of the testimonies from the Holocaust, delivered through autobiographies, letters, fictional novels, diaries and so forth (Davies 3; Roskies and Diamant 12; Williams 232; Waxman 2). Researcher Waxman in particular argues for the crucial power of the testimonies, describing how several people who shared their experiences from the time period purposely used writing as a mean to inform the rest of the world (2). Personal experiences of severe oppression, horrendous living conditions, individual destinies and other signs of impact of the circumstances of war can be found in the numerous testimonies available today (Roskies and Diamant 30; Waxman 2).

It was through literature that the oppressed and silenced could express their anger and despair, and those survivors who wrote their testimonies several years after the end of the war could use narrative to process and find purpose to their traumatic stories (Roskies and Diamant 12; Waxman 120). As Roskies and Diamant conclude; “Holocaust literature was born and bred in the habitat of public memory” (12). Under these circumstances, countless survivors that turned to narrative in order to process the traumatic experiences they witnessed,
felt empowered by writing (Roskies and Diamant 43). Through their writing, the injustice and wrongfulness of the acts against communities of the country could be shared with the world and bear witness of the fight of those trying to resist the ideologies of the Nazies. Unfortunately, “[p]roportionately more paper was saved than human lives” Roskies and Diamant conclude (43).

Yet, there are also examples of excerpts from Holocaust literature where humoristic features and sarcasm are integrated within the narrative. Like Copley admits, some readers might find the idea of approaching the subject of genocide with humor repulsive, but diversion from the conventional form of writing could also bridge the gap between the reader and the text when dealing with tough subjects such as the Holocaust (3).

… the humour in fact heightens the effect of the traumatic moments in the text. By deconstructing the boundaries of conventional representation it brings the reader into the text, into the space between the languages of writing and drawing, and there we remain through the moments of horror and humour alike. (Copley 4)

The feature of adding humor to treat these subjects could be interpreted as questioning authorities or ideologies, empowering the writer or diminishing those in power, criticizing or simply a way of expressing the personal understanding of the events (Copley 4, 10).

Holocaust literature should, however, not be mistaken for a genre with a generalizing purpose or narratives with comparable value to others in the genre. Hence, the pedagogical aim of reading Holocaust literature should focus mainly on the contribution of each text, which also allows for a wider picture of the events through representations from individuals with different premises before and during the war. Thus, each testimony and personal experience solely represents that individual’s perception of the events and should be identified in its uniqueness and singular value, not as a representation of every person’s understanding of the Holocaust (Roskies and Diamant 15; Waxman 1). “To tell one story well requires that
one not try to tell every story” Roskies and Diamant conclude, as a reminder for those using Holocaust literature as extracts from depiction of the war (15). Depending on the geographical place in Europe in which the affected were situated, their family backgrounds, gender, age, place of birth, previous affiliations regarding both Germans and others, and the aspect of being at the ‘wrong’ place at the wrong time would come to matter (Roskies and Diamant 27-29; Waxman, 89).

Furthermore, additional determining factors, which reoccurred in testimonies made by survivors mentioned by researchers, are memoirs of those who managed to live on “Aryan papers” and tried to survive on falsified identities as Germans (Roskies and Diamant 29; Waxman 89). This aspect, again, emphasizes the wide spectrum of people affected by the circumstances for the events. As Jewish people; believers and non-believers, half-Jewish and children from mixed families were all targeted equally by the Nazi regime and they were forced to live as outcasts in the society with a constant fear of deportation (Kaplan 287-88; Roskies and Diamant 29). Consequently, millions of people were forced to find alternative ways to survive and for those choosing to live under false identities, a life of continuous fear, threat, courage and isolation awaited:

Blending into one’s surroundings involved mastering a foreign culture, different mannerisms, speech habits, body language, and dress. Since Jewish life was outlawed, to survive meant to live on the run, with even the smallest mistake spelling one’s doom. (Roskies and Diamant 29).

Extracts from testimonies assembled in the book Holocaust Literature: A History and Guide (2012) disclose the isolation and hostility during these living conditions and the constant fear of being recognized, perhaps by an old friend from your childhood, as non-German (Roskies and Diamant 29). In the light of how Henryk Grynberg recounts living under these conditions; if you were to survive “you’d never want to be a Jew again” (Grynberg 5 qtd. in Roskies and
Diamant 29). As a result, numerous survivors experienced perplexity in the identification of themselves and their belonging in similar ways both during and after the Holocaust (Ammert 58; Kaplan 5). Germans and non-Germans alike, many citizens faced with the reality of the war were confronted with its battling moral qualms and need for flexibility, even in one’s own identity:

Individuals themselves demonstrated divided loyalties and fluid identities. After emancipation, a person’s circumstances often determined which identity - or combinations of identities - prevailed at a particular time, be it Jewish, German, Bavarian, student, mother, or veteran of the war of 1870. (Kaplan 5).

This again emphasizes the confusion and fear of living under these circumstances and reveals the width of the affliction reaching many different groups of people during the Holocaust. Accordingly, Roskies and Diamant conclude that “[t]here is no Library of Congress category for “Holocaust Literature: identity denial literature,” but there ought to be” (29) which again, emphasizes the themes of identity confusion and battle of personal development under these circumstances.

Regarding the broad population affected by the Holocaust, the circumstances for the youngest victims in the events might have been slightly different. Nevertheless, the immense impact on their childhood and development is stressed. Some researchers in the field argue that children in this situation were rather adaptable and experienced it as less troublesome to adapt to the new requirements forced on them by society (Roskies and Diamant 29). On the contrary, Kaplan describes how parents in many families chose not to inform their children about the circumstances in which they were forced to live, in attempt to save them from fear and misery (287). Nonetheless, the author argues that regardless of the verbal communication between the adults and children, the children sensed the disturbances in their surroundings which consequently affected their childhood (Kaplan 287).
Concluding this section, there is considerable research and evidence for the living conditions of individuals affected by the Holocaust and its representation in literature, and this is far from an exhaustive account of that. However, the mentioned research and described aspects of the consequences of this war indicate the immensely important study of the events and how an investigation of materials, such as narratives, can provide a deeper insight to the personal experiences. Holocaust literature can further create a foundation for discussions of ethics, morals and values through different life stories, which Roskies and Diamant argue as following:

To read ethically is to read in time. Our insistence on chronology rests on an ethic of unfolding, recovering, provoking, and revoking. Reading in time reveals the receding of narrative into past experience and history, the vertigo of the past recuperated or reinforced by language even as we continue to read fresh, as if from that time and place, and into this time and place. (Roskies and Diamant 24)

Literature tracing back to the events of the Holocaust can disclose the most unique individual understandings the Holocaust, providing the closest information possible (24). Through these narratives we, in the post-war society, are given a link to the past which provides us with generous opportunity to learn from history and an ability to prevent similarities in the future. Considering the great individuality of the experiences of the Holocaust, hence the nuances found in its literature, the value of personal understandings and life stories will be emphasized in the analysis of the narratives. The differences between the texts regarding style, background and premises of the individuals in the narratives will be acknowledged in the analysis. Furthermore, the common factors shared between Miriam and Liesel will categorize the analysis, such as gender, age, similar experiences due to the circumstances of war and its influence on the personal development.
2.3 Identity and Personal Development

During the Nazi rule, the living conditions and essential factors for a healthy human development were lost. Although actions by the Nazis first and foremost had its aim towards the minorities of the society, such as the Jewish and Roma communities, millions of other civilians were also affected greatly by the circumstances of war (Gregory 50; Kaplan 287). There were restrictions to all everyday duties outside of the household, including the supply and amount of groceries and the right to even enter a grocery store as a Jewish person. Detailed laws limiting marriage between those of “German blood” and those of Jewish and hours for curfew during the evening for all citizens are examples highlighted in testimonies (Kaplan 281, 287-88; Roskies and Diamant 28). Consequently, despite individual differences, the living conditions during war time were limited and thus affected many to lose some of their basic needs for a healthy personal development, in accordance with the theories by psychologist Abraham Maslow (372).

For the pedagogical purposes of learning the individual differences in the impact of the war, an identification of the factors which were prominent in affecting or stagnating a normalized personal development, can be carried out with the help of Maslow’s established theory. Maslow’s theory of motivation, or the Hierarchy of Needs as it is more commonly known, is based on the idea that the individual requires a set of fundamental needs in order to continue his or hers personal development. This idea might seem quite self-evident and could therefore also be argued to make the theory utilitarian. From the standpoint of psychological theories, this overview and usage of its content might be slightly superficial, however for the purposes of the current inquiry, the principles of the ideas provide an adequate analytical tool. Since the Hierarchy of needs, in accordance with theorists such as Kenyon, shows the
important aspects of the surroundings and its influence on the human being when deprived of the fundamental elements, the theory can thus highlight the impact of severe circumstances such as war time (Kenyon 23; Maslow 374).

The most ‘pre-dominant’ elements for the personal development and fulfillment are the physiological needs in which water, food and rest are included and are naturally also those needs which an individual needs to fulfill first (Maslow 372-373).

What this means specifically is, that in the human being who is missing everything in life in an extreme fashion, it is most likely that the major motivation would be the physiological needs rather than any others. A person who is lacking food, safety, love, and esteem would most probably hunger for food more strongly than for anything else. (Maslow 373)

When the individual however has had the needs met for thirst, hunger and sleep, the motivation to fulfill the higher needs increases, which are more of a psychological nature.

“[H]uman needs are organized into a hierarchy of relative prepotency” Maslow explains, and this is further the theory that concludes the steps of development of the personal self (374-75). “Secondly, it is too often not realized that culture itself is an adaptive tool, one of whose main functions is to make the physiological emergencies come less and less often” Maslow concludes, stressing the positive factors which society can contribute to the personal development (374). Accordingly, Kenyon, a researcher in Gerontology, states the direct effect of the surroundings on the individual’s identity development stating that “a human being, or more precisely, a person, is not separated from the physical world… nor is one individual separated from other persons” (Kenyon 23). Nonetheless, the degree of comfort which society offers and the decreasing situations of emergencies can also cause distress and eliminate the same comforting needs in circumstances of war or oppression.
In addition to the primary needs of food and water, the fundamental right to have a home or place where one feels safe, as well as belonging with someone and living in the company of other individuals, are essential rights for a human being. The mentioned needs are part of Maslow’s higher category of needs, which concludes their necessity for the human development (376). The elements included in these psychological needs are the feeling of safety, security and love by others and to others. The drive for belonging and having other individuals in your surroundings with which you are comfortable with and trusts are mentioned in this category (Maslow 376).

However, these important factors mentioned are not part of all individual’s lives, in particular for those living under the circumstances of war. Maslow even argues that the necessity of safety could be claimed to imprint and concur the physiological needs in order for the individual to feel safe (376). He argues that the physiological needs can even be interpreted as “primarily safety-seeking tools” in the fashion of the human mind often focusing on future needs, such as feeling safe, and it can therefore be traced into all seeking of needs (Maslow 376). This also emphasized his claim of the importance of feeling safe for the individual’s ability to develop (Maslow 376). Maslow additionally mentions the child as being exceptionally sensitive to deprivations of safety, giving examples of short instances of insecurity as being lost from one’s parents for a shorter time or experiencing illness without the comfort of a caregiver (378). This sensitivity shows the dependence on safety for individuals and especially younger children.

The final and highest needs of the hierarchy are aspects that might be thought of as characteristics when discussing identity development, and thus can be used as examples of accomplished self-fulfillment and to conclude that an individual has developed a firm personal self. Regarding the aspects of these needs, such as self-confidence and individuality, it can also be concluded that individuals expressing these characteristics have found stability
in their fundamental needs (Maslow 381). Other researchers and philosophers dealing with the theory of a self and identity development might argue that this category is the one that more commonly symbolizes the identity and development of a personal self in other theories (i.e. Daniel Hart; Kenyon 23; McAdams 133). Contrasting Kenyon’s and Maslow’s claim on the dependence of the identity development on its surroundings, the psychologist Daniel Hart argues for the higher importance of the inner reflection of the individual. The identity development instead tackles the individuality and uniqueness of itself, Hart claims. “Thus, once the I emerges as a process affirming ‘that I am,’ it begins the lifelong endeavor of reflecting upon ‘what I am’” (Hart qtd. in McAdams 133).

Kenyon, too, touches upon this idea and refers to this strife for independence as the identity paradox (23). The dependence on others and effects of the environment on the sturdiness of one’s identity collide with the desire of being independent, and Kenyon therefore claims that no individual’s identity can truly be parted from its surroundings and influential figures in their lives (23). In accordance, sociolinguist Kramsch discusses the perspectives on change and development of one’s personal self and its correlation to the language identity which the individual experiences (483-84). The researcher argues for the positive shifts made when the “…poststructuralist approaches in applied linguistics have moved from studying stable permanent ‘identities’ to studying moving, changing, and conflictual ‘subject positions’…”, claiming that factors such as culture and social surroundings affect these changes in the identity development, which follows the line of theory with previously mentioned researchers on identity (Hart qtd. in McAdams 133; Kenyon 23; Maslow 374).

In order to study and discuss the impact of the war on individual cases, it is also of importance to consider the factors resulting in an unsuccessful development. To understand the consequences of being deprived of one’s fundamental human needs, may result in the
nuanced understanding of how certain actions such as oppression, can affect each person differently and thus change the individual outcomes drastically. To investigate the factors which uncover the fulfilled or deprived needs for one’s personal development respectively in the narratives, could further lead to aspects such as enhanced understanding of other’s needs, values and behavior which the Swedish National curriculum emphasizes as an important preparation for future references (Natl. Ag. For Ed. 4).

To follow this aim, the highest and thereby also the hardest needs to fulfill in Maslow’s hierarchy are the “self-actualization” elements which are characterized by acknowledgements of oneself, one’s surrounding and through successfully achieved goals in life (381). Independence, self-respect, strength, a feeling of freedom and a ‘firmly based self-esteem’ are examples of characteristics by self-fulfilled individuals (Maslow 381-82). “By firmly based self-esteem, we mean that which is soundly based upon real capacity, achievement and respect from others” (Maslow 381). Hence, individuals who have fulfilled all their previous needs and developed to have stability, security and feel belonging in their lives are in Maslow’s theories regarded as developed in their personal self and satisfied with all their greater needs in life (“A Theory of Metamotivation” 93). In other words, those individuals who have not found or been able to fulfill their primary needs, suffer from various negative feelings as an effect of the lack of fundamental requirements (Maslow 93).

…this is to say that self-actualizing people do not (for any length of time) feel anxiety-ridden, insecure, unsafe, do not feel alone, … or isolated, do not feel unlovable, rejected, or unwanted, do not feel despised and looked down upon, and do not feel deeply unworthy, nor do they have crippling feelings of inferiority or worthlessness. (Maslow, “A Theory of Metamotivation” 93).

The symptoms mentioned as indicators of lack of fulfilled needs in one’s development can be connected to the origin and some of the indications for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
(PTSD) which, as the name implies, can occur after traumatic circumstances such as war time (Dyregrov and Yule 176). The psychologist and psychiatric researchers Dyregrov and Yule determined, what was previously dismissed, that every individual including young children, can suffer from PTSD. Indications of PTSD are found to be such as showing signs of agitated behavior and aggression after horrifying experiences or immensely stressful situations (Dyregrov and Yule 176). Common symptoms found by Dyregrov and Yule of PTSD in children were signs of repetitive behavior, retreating back to old childlike habits and having frightening dreams with or without the content of the trauma they experienced (176). The researchers describe that in adolescent years they can develop depressive behavior and feelings which affect their personality, or other psychiatric disturbances which fall closely in line with the behavioral effects of the lack of self-fulfillment found by Maslow (93, Dyregrov and Yule 176).

The objectives for the present study do not involve an extensive mapping or an in depth psychological analysis of the identity of Miriam and Liesel. Although one of the individuals, Liesel, studied in the present inquiry is a fictional character rather than an existing individual, it could be argued for the value of studying her personal development since we closely follow Liesel through her childhood and can access her inner thoughts and feelings through the narrative. Liesel’s character appears to aim to depict a young child’s understanding, afflictions and battles while growing up during the circumstances of war, which are those aspects of her thoughts and behavior that are useful for the analysis of her personal development. The theories mentioned in this section are excerpts from research in the field of humanities which provide a theoretical ground for the aim to study two examples of individual impacts of the Holocaust. Maslow’s theory of motivation allows the analysis to illustrate how elementary human needs are deprived during the circumstances of war and the consequences of this for the personal development. This perspective on the human
development is therefore crystallized within the analysis through the examples of changes in the surroundings for Miriam and Liesel during the Holocaust and how these are portrayed to influence them in the narratives. For this study, the identity paradox might shed light on the struggle of developing a self when influenced by a majority of negative input from your surroundings.

3. Understanding the Effects of War in the EFL Classroom

Granting the many differences between the chosen narratives for the present study, the two texts also share numerous aspects disclosing evident effects on Miriam Darvas and Liesel Meminger’s personal development respectively, due to the setting of the Second World War in Europe. Below, the theories attending the wartime circumstances and its influence on the individual and the theories regarding the impact from the surroundings on the personal development will thereafter be intertwined into the analysis of the narratives. Lastly, an educational approach to the reading and usage of the themes will be suggested, presenting the texts in a pedagogical light.

3.1 Literary Analysis

“To tell one story well requires that one not try to tell every story”

(Roskies and Diamant 15).

As the following analysis categorizes the finding of the two main themes found in the narratives, it is of value to emphasize the uniqueness of the texts and the opportunities to find several other themes and subjects for discussion. However, due to the aim of this present
inquiry, the analysis of the narratives will be conducted based on the categories of the circumstances of the war and the affection of these on the personal development.

3.1.1 Living Conditions and Circumstances of Wartime

Living during the circumstances of war is, evidently, burdensome and fatiguing for the individuals affected. As part of the genre of Holocaust literature, the chosen narratives could be assumed to treat subjects on the matter of death and loss. The Book Thief however, does not only deal with this subject, namely, it is Death itself who introduces the reader to the text and it thereafter narrates the entire novel. Choosing to use Death as a narrator for the life of a young person, whose childhood years are enacted in Germany during the Second World War, is doubtlessly a conscious feature to enhance the feeling of the presence of death and the fear of meeting it due to the surrounding disturbances (Copley 4). Above all, it is undeniably a feature which is only possible in the world of fiction (Copley 10). Hence, the novel rapidly and effectively establishes ground for the upcoming events during the Holocaust. Through the complement of Liesel’s testimony, the readers are able to enter both the inner world of the girl whilst simultaneously being presented an overview through the eyes of Death. Hence, the encounters with Death are enriched with details and display features which allow the reader to sympathize with the effects on Liesel when tragically losing acquaintances, yet again there is a presence of hope and survival, as she battles these emotional barriers.

This is again highlighted in the very beginning of the novel, where one of the passages which welcomes the reader is a statement from Death saying “Here is a small fact/ You are going to die.” (Zusak 3) which then gradually leads us to the event of the sudden death of Liesel’s brother. Introducing Liesel’s life with the combination of Death declaring the inevitable, and simultaneously narrating the death of her brother depicts the tragedy in her life.
and her lack of power and control in her life at this point. The notion of this will soon be enhanced with the revelation of yet another traumatic situation in Liesel’s life.

Equally, Miriam Darvas manages to mediate a similar feeling of the presence of death in her autobiography, where the plot dives straight into the hands of death and the time when the then, seven year-old, Miriam witnessed the murder of her best friend and love, in the middle of the street in Berlin, in the year of 1933. “The sound of crunching bone sliced into my head and lodged there like shards of glass. ‘No, no,’ I screamed, but no sound came.” (Darvas 1). This introduction to Miriam’s memoirs gives the reader the notion that *Farewell to Prague* is greatly imprinted by death, which could stand for Darvas’ overall understanding of her childhood. Researchers in the field describes the narration of one’s experiences and memories as a natural way of understanding what one has experienced through a life story and thus can be imprinted by the feelings from the events (McAdams 132; Roskies and Diamant 12; Waxman 120).

The theme of death and loss is powerfully introduced in these two texts and will thereafter follow Miriam and Liesel’s footsteps closely, affecting them deeply in some aspects, and barely missing them in others. As mentioned by Waxman, surviving through such circumstances like Miriam Darvas managed, might affect the author’s aim and writing process of her autobiography in different ways (2). In the very end of Darvas’ autobiography, she has added a section named “The Author’s Notes” in which she mentions how her childhood, deeply imprinted by the circumstances of the Second World War was rather similar to her mother’s, experiencing the First World War as a 14 year-old. This might be one of the factors which could have affected Darvas in narrating her life story, in order to demonstrate the similar devastating consequences for young individuals living through wartime. Through the crucial aspect of educating others about the Holocaust in order to
prevent a recurrence, it is also important to convey the presence of the predominant feelings, such as fear of death, of deportation, of disposal of one’s lies and falsified identities.

Closely following, the readers are further presented to an additionally life changing event in both Miriam’s and Liesel’s lives which both are traced back to the circumstances of the ongoing war. In the autobiography, Miriam explains how, not long after the death of her best friend Kurt, her family began to feel an intensification of the radical movements, noticing a shift in the behavior of the people and feeling the fear of the unknown slowly drawing near the reality of the Darvas’ family (Darvas 7-8; Roskies and Diamant 28; Waxman 89). The family feels forced to leave Berlin, the country of Germany in fact, the sole place representing home and safety for young Miriam at the time. Darvas describes these memories as depicting an exceptionally difficult time for her, constantly battling the fear of “those” men murdering her friend and the image of his battered body, whilst noticing a feeling inside of her that would remain with her for most of her adult life. Through the memory of a dream, Darvas express her anxiety to the reader:

Distorted images of blood, viscous and wet, dripped inside my head. Black boots danced around my inert body. The darkness converged into a sea of blood in which I was drowning. I woke up screaming. …What was this Nazi that could kill without cause? …Something I did not understand was beginning to take shape somewhere inside me. It coiled itself around my stomach like a disease. (Darvas 9)

In her nightmare, we can sense the horror and fear of death in her dazed dream; the images of wet blood dripping and drowning her representing the fear of the previous unknown notion of death and murder. Mixed with the intrusion of the “black boots”, who are now threatening her whole existence and compelling her family to flee for their lives, caused Miriam immense distress. For any individual, these images and experiences which Miriam, and many others
part of the events of the Holocaust, was unfortunate to observe would result in agony. For a seven year old, such an experience was undoubtedly life changing.

Liesel too, is forced to leave her family rather early in her childhood, due to what is explained to the reader as a consequence of her mother believing that she would live a better life with another family. However, further on in the novel, the readers are present to follow when the realization of the standpoint and consequences of the war eventually does reach Liesel, which moreover leads her to understand the reasoning behind having to leave her biological family. This realization further brings her foster father and Liesel to a moral dilemma. “A small addition/ The word communist + a large bonfire …+ the suffering of her mother + the death of her brother = the Führer. …‘I hate the Führer’, she said. ‘I hate him’.” (Zusak 124). It becomes clear to Liesel how all the traumatic events in her life connect to Hitler, the Führer, and his party’s ideology, oppressing all citizens expressing ideas which threatened the governmental success, which led her to this realization on the night of the book burning in Germany, 1933 (Gregory 55; Kaplan 287; Roskies and Diamant 14).

This exclamation by Liesel however occurred in the middle of the street, not far from the district members of the Nazi party, which led her father to act upon precautionary measures. “At the time, Liesel had no idea that her foster father, Hans Hubermann, was caught in one of the most dangerous dilemmas a German citizen could face. Not only that, he’d been facing it for close to a year.” (Zusak 125). After delivering a hard slap with closed eyes on Liesel’s cheek and screamed at her, loudly enough for the members of the party to hear, how she could never say such a thing again, he lowers his voice. He continued: “‘[y]ou can say that in our house’, he said, looking gravely at Liesel’s cheek. ‘But you never say it on the street, at school …, never!’” (Zusak 125). In this final statement, we are presented with the true values of Hans Hubermann, showing Liesel that neither does he believe in the agenda of the Nazi party nor support these ideas in his household, however he tries to teach Liesel
that their society is ruled by the influence of this party and that it is not accepted to appear as
an opponent to their ruling. According to Kaplan, these values and battling moral dilemmas
were rather usual amongst Germans living through the Holocaust (5). The researcher argues
for vast differences between each German, representing the spectrum from those greatly
engaged with the ideology of the Nazi regime to those similar to Hans Hubermann who
condemned the ideas (Kaplan 5). The Hubermanns even stretched far out to the other end of
the spectrum, while risking their own lives in order to safe a Jewish person’s, Max
Vandenburg’s, life.

Similarly, the intensification of the effects from the Nazi government and the fear of
their influences, were also sensed by Miriam. Darvas experienced a threat against her whole
family from “those” in black boots which results in a fearful flight to Prague containing
captivation, interrogations and a temporary loss of her mother and younger sister. “I did not
understand why we were here, why my father was beaten. Nothing made sense.” Miriam
describes as the Nazi soldiers, with rifles pointing to their heads, had captivated her father and
her at the border between Germany and The Czech Republic (14). “The swastika in its white
circle on a red band on his upper left arm screamed a warning” as the soldiers questioned
them while examining their forged identification papers, compelling continuous lies of names
and origin for Miriam and her father (Darvas 15).

While they were questioned, simultaneously, Miriam explains to the reader how the
family has taken her mother’s maiden name Muller in their new identification papers, since
she is “ethnically German”. Her father additionally has to use a falsified first given name and
place of birth due to his Jewish background. Miriam manages to settle into the habit of using
her forged personal details, however she describes an immense distress for each situation she
is forced to use them, which is often stated by others who experienced similar situations
(Roskies and Diamant 27-29; Waxman 89). When confronted by a soldier to present her
identification papers while alone, on her flight to England, she remembers the lessons learned from the incident of the captivation and uses her mother’s surname. Darvas also comes to the idea of utilizing her position as a child to deceive the soldier and intelligently remembers to use the German language. “… I knew exactly what to do. I began to cry. ‘I lost my mother,’ I wept out in German’. While dismissing the focus on her papers, the soldier appears mostly concerned with making the young girl stop crying and is satisfied with the reassurance from a fellow passenger to assist Miriam in her search for her mother.

The official made a quick, brief bow, marked the window by the door with a chalk cross, and left. …A column of soldiers marched down the platform… and swept more people off. The man in the lead noticed the chalk mark over own window, bowed and went on. People were herded out by rifle butts. (Darvas 74-75)

In several ways, the above excerpt from Miriam’s autobiography depicts the living conditions of the affected by the Holocaust. With German identification, either falsified papers, by being fortunate to belong to the “German blood” or through your great acting skills, one could have Miriam’s view from the train, watching hundreds of people being forced into captivation by soldiers of the government. Through another perspective, one could be unfortunate enough not to acquire neither forged papers nor the advantage of being a child, and could therefore await other alternatives such as a transportation to a concentration camp.

Though not as intrusive, details disclosing the strict conditions of the war and the actions brought from the rule of the Nazi government, can be found in Liesel’s surrounding as well. An example of this is through the characterization of a shop owner on the corner from Liesel’s house, narrated to us by Death. “She developed this evil look to discourage the very idea of stealing from her shop, which she occupied with soldier-like posture, a refrigerated voice and even breath that smelled like Heil Hitler.” (Zusak 51). Notwithstanding, Frau Diller does not have an influential part of Liesel’s life, however it effectively depicts how even the
smallest event such as passing the shop at the end of the street would affect Liesel and confront her with the face of the circumstances of the Second World War.

Stated by previous research, the perspective on the child and the advantages and coping with the settlement of living on falsified papers and the surroundings of the war, were considerably different, which can be found in the two texts as well (Roskies and Diamant 29; Kaplan 287). Whilst Roskies and Diamant argue for the flexibility of the child and its adaptation to the requirements for survival, which could be seen in the example of Miriam’s courage to utilize her position as a child, Kaplan claims that the distress experienced by the children would affect them throughout their lives (29; 287). As Miriam develops and becomes older, survivor Henryk Grynberg’s recollection of living under falsified papers and the urge to never associate oneself as Jewish again might be closer to the reality of what Darvas felt throughout her childhood, even if managing to flee to safety point to her adaptation and using her position as a lonely child, all in all would be rather in accordance with the claims of Kaplan (287; qtd. in Roskies and Diamant 29). In comparison with the childhood of Liesel, she manages to find comfort in her foster family and thereafter does not feel as distress by the circumstances of the war as previously, although her condemnation of the actions of the Nazi’s as well as the fear developing during the air raids later on in her life, grow bigger through her relationship to her Jewish friend Max.

Darvas’ memory also discloses the fixed boundaries of the Nazi ideology, herding some individuals with rifles pushed against them as if they were animals, while marking a cross above those who were accepted and free, simply because of their origins. Notwithstanding, researchers in the field of Holocaust literature and testimonies have found that living the lives which the Darvas family did; continuously fleeing and with the fear of being exposed of their false identities, affected individuals greatly (Roskies and Diamant 29; Waxman 89). The family was forced to isolate themselves, even from close friends to Miriam
The lastly mentioned requirement was thus the one that appears to have affected Miriam the most. “I had been told that I must not recognize anyone… When I saw Chris I forgot the admonition… my heart splintering into a thousand shards.” she describes when passing one of her closes friends she had found (Darvas 51). This experience shows the loneliness of living under these circumstances, the great loss of friends and communities when living as a refugee, as well as the courage it took for the families to venture the risk of being discovered in order to survive (Roskie and Diamant 29; Waxman 89).

Though stripped of their human rights, needs to interact with whomever they wish and live their lives in the manners in which they wish, there are examples of empowerment of those silenced as well. Surely, one of the liberating aspects for Miriam could be the possibility to form a witness excerpt which can educate millions across the world of the consequences of the Holocaust for her, letting her suffering fulfill a purpose after the war as well (Roskies and Diamant 12; Waxman 120). In the case of Liesel, this aspect might not be as clear, both regarding the fictional aspect of the text as well as the aspect of Liesel, eventually, growing up without the oppression on her or her family.

However, it might be argued that through the sympathies for Max, Liesel and the Hubermanns empower those families who risked their lives in order to help their fellowmen (Kaplan 5; Waxman 120). It too, can be argued that Max Vandenburg was able to provide his own contribution for those Jewish people victimized by the Nazi regime. After a period of time living with the Hubermann family, Max wrote a short story for Liesel where he describes the ideology of the Nazis, in the shape of a fairytale symbolizing the progression of the ideas, spreading to all citizens of the world. The fairytale depicts Hitler planting a tree for each of his ideas to grow into a forest amongst the people. One little girl however managed to plant her own tree which grew larger than all the trees in the forest, providing her shelter from all
the ideas which the Führer planted to the other inhabitants. Despite the efforts by Hitler and his soldiers to cut it down, the tree protects Liesel and Max from all evil.

This short fairytale could be interpreted as a feasible way of teaching Liesel the power which she holds by her actions to befriend and care for Max, criticizing the surrounding ideas and actions affecting the society to deny fundamental rights to all citizens of the society (Waxman 120). Additionally, this short text which enriches Liesel’s understanding of the consequences of the Nazis, could also be seen as empowering both the victim, Max, as well as empowering Liesel to continue her rightful actions in the future. Texts like these could further use their simple construction in order to enhance the effect of the message conveyed, creating content which is not only simple enough for the reader to identify with, they could also provide an additional effect to the tragic events described (Copley 4).

Other features which are argued to enhance the empowerment and possibility to controversially discuss and criticize social constructions or ideological actions in this case, is argued to be done through adding a humoristic feature to the text (Copley 4). Although this evidently distressing aspect of a constantly reminder of the oppression and tragic events present throughout the texts, The Book Thief manages to add this humoristic touch to the matter. Zusak effectively describes the societal pressure; the uncertainty of the future and the division between the leader of the people and their own personal beliefs through small, ordinary details in Liesel’s life. The author manages to create a delicate balance between humor and the fearful fact of the enclosing detail, creating a feasible text that the reader can relate to, yet also leaves the premise for deeper analysis, which Copley claims to be an empowering and effective feature to criticize the content (4).

An example of the humoristic touch to the description to an inevitably tragic historical time, is through the perspective of our narrator Death while describing the sight of the book burn. Death ponders:
…another onslaught of Heil Hitlering. You know, it actually makes me wonder if anyone ever lost an eye or injured a hand or wrist with all of that. You’d only need to be facing the wrong way at the wrong time... Perhaps people did get injured. Personally, I can only tell you that no-one died from it, or at least, not physically. There was, of course, the matter of forty million people I picked up by the time the whole thing was finished, but that’s getting all metaphoric. (Zusak 121).

In this passage, Zusak lets the reader reflect on the submissiveness, by others, and devotion, by many, to the Nazi party and its obscure actions such as burning millions of books by cause of the author's religion or affiliations (Copley 4, 10). Our narrator further leads us to the massacre of another millions of human beings which unfortunately, retells the course of the events of the Holocaust and the Second World War (Roskies and Diamant, 12). Witty statements like the mentioned, aid the educational aspect of this Holocaust literature, providing both accuracy in details as well as shedding light on the preposterous situation in Europe where the fellowmen were slaughtered whilst the rest of the world watched as it happened (Roskies and Diamant, 24).

Due to the feature of being a narrative in form of an autobiography, some might argue that Miriam Darvas’ text holds higher value and effect for the readers due to the aspects of depicting actual life experiences. By researcher in truth-telling in post-war circumstances, David Mendeloff argues for the essence of the psychological and personal beliefs of those writing their ‘truth-tellings’ as well as the understanding of those reading them (363-64). Consequently, this claim could argue for the educational value of the narratives, referring to the previous knowledge of the readers which thereafter affects their understanding of the ‘truth-telling’ in the texts. Through this argument, it could be claimed that fiction, as this example has shown to assimilate with an autobiography from the Holocaust, could also provide a foundation for exposing truthful events and personal experiences. It could therefore
be argued that the selected narratives in this study can be utilized as educating literature in the EFL classroom.

3.1.2 Identity and Personal Development

Through the analysis of the circumstances of war, a portrait of the severe influences on Miriam and Liesel’s lives emerged thus indicating and confirming previous testimonies of the changing living conditions for all citizens affected. Depictions of differences and similarities in the personal experiences of the war were found which, again, emphasize the uniqueness of each experience (Roskies and Diamant 30; Waxman 88-89). According to scholars in the field, the impact of these living conditions were shown through identity confusion, battling personal values, ethics, as well as through great influence on the youngest in society, the children, in their personal development (Kaplan 5; Roskies and Diamant 28-29). It is therefore of value to investigate the second theme found in the narratives, disclosing the personal affection on Miriam and Liesel’s development respectively.

For Miriam, having to flee with her family from Berlin, at only seven years of age, caused her world to crumble and she was forced to leave the only place where she felt safe and had a home, which is one of the strongest needs we have to fulfill (Maslow 376). To lose the basic elements of having a home and feeling safe affects the human development greatly, and causes a child immense distress which can leave permanent scars on the development process of the individual (Maslow 378). To experience the treachery of the fellowmen by being forced to leave your country, question the actions of human beings and lose hope, affects the individual extensively. The experiences in which Miriam begins her new life in Prague, manifested a change in her identity development, partly through the aspect of having
to live on falsified identity, and thus hindered her development of her personal self since she could not fulfill the higher needs with the lack of the psychological needs (Maslow 373). However, during this distressing part of her life, she still keeps the comfort of her parent’s presence and guidance through the experience, which according to Maslow’s theory could have helped Miriam to undergo this process, even though she lost all her sense of belongingness and connections to her childhood friends (Maslow 377). After the experience of being captivated together with her father, Miriam begins to express a greater understanding of the connection between the men in the black boots who killed Kurt, the soldiers with swastikas on their uniforms and her own survival and now intensively begins to question the Nazi’s and their actions.

Contrasting, Liesel, approximately at the same age as Miriam, was deprived not only her need for security through the loss of her brother Walter and the parting of her mother, she was also confronted with the experience of having to find stability in new surroundings. Liesel describes to the reader how she knows that her biological mother loves her and how her new family would be able to provide Liesel with a portion of a wealthier life than if she were to stay with her mother. However, “[n]othing changed the fact that she was a lost, skinny child in a foreign place, with more foreign people. Alone” (Zusak 32). Again, the reader is introduced to a part of Liesel’s life where she is confronted with a traumatic change of circumstances and is left powerless over her situation. The protagonist is now depicted not only as in deep grief over the loss of her brother, yet also in the situation of having to part with her mother and leave her home for an unknown city and a new family. She is not only deprived of her physiological needs, Liesel also loses her psychological connection to everyone she has ever known (Maslow 376).

Likewise, the readers of *Farewell to Prague* come across corresponding reactions of those expressed by Liesel when Miriam comes to understand that she will have to flee again.
When overhearing a conversation between her mother and a friend some years after moving to Prague, her reaction was considerably stronger. “I felt as though the veins inside my body were collapsing and my bones crumbling into a pile of ashes.” (Darvas 55). When the day of the lonesome flight to England came, Miriam says to herself: “I did not want to live anywhere else. I wanted to be here, with my family, my friends, the things I knew and understood” (Darvas 58). Subsequently, both Miriam and Liesel share the immense feeling of loneliness, loss, desolation and hopelessness when forced to leave their families and suddenly enter the world of unknown (Maslow 377-378). Due to this life changing situation facing the young girls as consequences of the war, naturally, fear might influence a change in the identity development (Maslow 374; Kramsch 483).

Considering Liesel’s young age at the time, this traumatic period of her life affects her development greatly and reminds itself through constant nightmares throughout her life as well as a few incidents of wetting herself in her sleep. Research conducted by the psychologist and psychiatric Dyregrov and Yule show how warlike circumstances, unsafety and traumatic experiences can lead children and adolescence to regress in their developmental process, for example wetting her bed in Liesel’s case which many younger children might do however should no longer happen to children in her age (176). Horrifying and continuous nightmares were also found in the study, which led to the conclusion of the previously mentioned categorizing as symptoms for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, PTSD (Dyregrov and Yule 176-178).

In due time, Liesel too, later discovers the understanding of the actions made by the Nazi’s and how this affected her surroundings, more than ever these ideas come to surface when her foster family takes in the Jewish refugee Max Vandenburg, and hide him in their basement. In one passage, Liesel finds Max struggling with his appalling dreams, and Death mentions how the dreamers shared their vicious nightmares to each other and says: “It would
be nice to say that after this small breakthrough, neither Liesel nor Max dreamed their bad visions again. It would be nice but untrue.” (Zusak 239). As Liesel and Max continuously dreamed and re-experienced their traumatic memories from their past, it could be argued that they both showed symptoms of PTSD (Dyregrov and Yule 176). However, the present inquiry does not have the objectives to conduct a thorough psychological mapping of either Liesel or Miriam, and therefore no conclusions to this matter will be drawn. Nonetheless, the comparison between the symptoms of PTSD and Liesel’s behavior might highlight the severity of the traumatic changes which she had to process and its effect on her development.

As mentioned by Maslow, these experiences are undoubtedly traumatic for an adult: for children, small acts such as losing their parents for short instances can be distressing, let alone never being able to see your mother and father again (Maslow 377-378). This unfortunately covers both our young girls.

Miriam Darvas was not only forced to flee the second country in which she eventually had settled within, additionally she was forced to complete a two month long journey to England alone and thus leave her family. During the length of the journey, as well as the first period spent in England, Miriam was repeatedly forced to move, and could never find a safe home to live in or a sort of continuous life in which she could rely on. As her life continues and Miriam decides to enter university in London, the war entered its most intense period, and once again deprived her from her primary need of security (Maslow 376).

So we moved, and we moved, and we moved – from place to place. …Since I knew little about the comforts of home, nothing much of family togetherness and permanence, this constant wandering from one room to another did not bother me, nor would it in the future. (Darvas 112)

Like Miriam expresses, the effects of the circumstances of war had tremendous impact on her life, creating a sense of lacking the belonging and comfort to someone or something. This
eventually developed into a habit which followed her throughout her life. This statement is an important example of how her development was influenced by the experiences she lived through and due to this lack of fulfillment in her needs, she never manages to replace these feelings and thus lives with the consequences of not achieving these elements in her development (Maslow 373). Maslow argues for consequential behavior and feeling in line of those expressed by Miriam, giving examples of feeling rootless, isolated, unloved and insecure, and through this, Darvas’ development can be interpreted as lacking of fulfillment in both physiological and psychological needs (374; “A Theory of Metamotivation” 93).

Nevertheless, one way in which Miriam does fulfill her higher needs, especially whilst becoming older, is through her determination to study and finish her university studies which she started in London. Throughout her academic career, Darvas appears to find stability in her life and a routine of which she was in control, and thus is able to create an inner strength, show her capability and find self-confidence in herself and her knowledge (Maslow 381). Through her education she therefore manages to fulfill her self-achieving needs and consequently develop her personal self into a successful and positive identity (Kenyon 23; Maslow 381-82; McAdams 133). This stability in Miriam’s personal self and her values, both inner value towards herself as well as outer value towards others, could also be interpreted to have resulted in her autobiography expressing these thoughts and experiences (Maslow 382; Waxman 2). Through sharing her understanding of the events of the Holocaust, her own suffering in these circumstances in her autobiography, she creates the possibility to educate others about the atrocities and empowering her own experiences (Copley 4; Waxman 96; Williams 232).

Liesel however, shows her empowerment of herself in quite different manners. When first entering school, shortly after her arrival to her foster family the Hubermanns, Liesel soon discovers how she, in contrast to her classmates, lacks the ability to read and write. However,
throughout her childhood we follow as she struggles to learn how to read and on several occasions also steals books to collect for her reading practices, which explains the title of the novel. With the help of her father and Max, Liesel learns how to read and even master it as well as to the level of self-confidence where she decides to read to all her neighbors hiding in the bomb shelters during the wartime air raids. She eventually composes her own life story as well. It could therefore be argued that both Miriam and Liesel manage to find their needs for self-fulfillment and develop in their personal selves through the help of literature and education (Maslow 381-82). These aspects provide them with the important aspects of self-courage, knowledge, achievement, the respect for others and the strength to believe in their values in order for them to develop and finding their identity as well as restrain from the impact of the ideologies in their surroundings (Copley 4, 10; Maslow 382; Roskies and Diamant 27-29).

3.2 Pedagogical Implications of the Narratives

This section of the analysis aims to highlight the pedagogical value of the findings in the literary analysis on the circumstances of war and how these further affect Miriam and Liesel in their personal development. As the analysis showed, the circumstances of war were found rather similar for both Miriam and Liesel, in the effects on the family situations, their questioning of the action by the Nazis and their treatment of other human beings in their surroundings, as well as their impact on their possibility to develop within oneself and find a fulfillment in all of their needs. The analysis also suggested that both Miriam and Liesel however, eventually find security and stability in their lives and thus were able to continue developing towards a firm selfhood, which was highly affected by education and literature.
(Maslow 378). These aspects helped the young individuals to empower themselves through severe times in their lives and can therefore show the profound importance of literature for an individual (McAdams 132).

Narration and biographical material used in research have also increased remarkably during the past decades and the interest for life experiences and individual life stories has expanded in the field of social science research (Erben 1; Ruth and Kenyon 2; McAdams 132). McAdams claims that the importance of narration to understand the human mind and to create sense from individual’s personal experiences has grown in research during the past decades, which has been referred to as the narrative turn (132). As the autobiography of Miriam Darvas holds this valuable feature of depicting memories from reality, some might argue that Miriam Darvas’ text holds higher value and effect for the readers. As a researcher on truth-telling in post-war circumstances, David Mendeloff argues for the perspective of the truth-teller as well as the reader’s responsibility for deciding what might be understood as enhanced in its truthfulness. Mendeloff describes the perspective as holding its essence in the psychological and personal beliefs, arguing for the impact and knowledge on the reader as well as the teller (363-64). Consequently, this claim could argue for the educational value of the narratives, referring to the previous knowledge of the readers which thereafter affects their understanding of the ‘truth-telling’ in the texts. Therefore, it may be claimed that fiction, as this example has shown to assimilate with an autobiography from the Holocaust, could also provide a foundation for exposing truthful events and personal experiences, especially if the readers have a profound knowledge about the subject beforehand.

However, the autobiography might also be preferable because of its enhanced identification for the reader, due to the reader’s knowledge of the ‘real’ memories portrayed in the text. The fictional feature of using a narrator which cannot come close to a comparison to the world of memories or realism, in The Book Thief enhances once again its categorizing as a
fictional depiction. Despite this, since the novel appeared to show similar themes as the autobiography, *The Book Thief* might be used in the classroom as a rather different text and stand as an alternative to those learners who prefer fictional literature. It is therefore argued that the EFL education can find great value in the differences of these narratives and create enhanced learning possibilities.

**3.2.1 Circumstances of the Holocaust**

From the findings of the thematic analysis, the immense effects of the war were undoubtedly present throughout the narratives, which could be argued as an obvious finding due to the definitions of the genre. However, since the narratives depict personal experiences and understandings of the Holocaust, each individual and its premises thus affect the remembrance and outcome of the text and therefore should be treated in its individuality (Roskies and Diamant 12; Waxman 2). Hence, the chosen narratives were found to depict an affection on the living conditions for the two individuals during the war.

As several researchers have established, the pedagogical methods for teaching subjects such as the Holocaust have changed drastically over the years (Endacott 9; Nygren and Vikström 52; Rantala, Manninen and van den Berg 323). Although agreeing on the importance of educating our future generations on the events of the Holocaust and its consequences, several researcher appear to argue for rather different approaches to the essential aims and methods to do so (Endacott 9; Davies 1; Gregory 50; Nygren and Vikström 52; Rantala, Manninen and van den Berg 323; Shapiro 193). Shapiro and Gregory strongly argue for the affectional and moral centrality in the study of Holocaust and Gregory states that “[t]o teach the Holocaust simply as history - another historical event like the French Revolution - is inadequate.” (50; Shapiro 194). He emphasizes the great importance of
honoring the victims of the Second World War and teaching our students the consequences of such action in order to prevent another similar tragedy (Gregory 50). With determination, Gregory summarizes:

The act of teaching about the Holocaust should be commemorative of the suffering of all of those (Jews and non-Jews) butchered by the Nazi system of extermination. …It is our way of investing their deaths with a certain meaning. To remain in awe of the event… is both wilfully to turn our backs on their suffering and degradation and by yet another kind of indifference to do nothing to avert the possibility of a repetition. [sic] (Gregory 50).

This approach to teach the events of the Holocaust aims towards the emotional engagement between the learners and the subject and accentuates the importance of commemorating the victims with ethical correctness, which Copley too, strongly emphasizes (3; Gregory 50; Shapiro 194).

Correspondingly, some researchers have also focused on this aim of the study of historical events and argue for the empathic essentiality in teaching such subjects. The method of teaching historical empathy to learners claims the necessity to return back to primary sources and through these, teach students to understand the behavior, actions, limitations and perspectives of those involved in the studied period (Endacott 9; Nygren and Vikström 52; Rantala, Manninen and van den Berg 323). Through these claims of teaching the Holocaust, it could be argued that the themes found in the present inquiry could fulfill this purpose. The theme of the circumstances of war not only depicts a societal and personal affection of the historical period, and the ongoing ideological influence, it further gives the reader clear examples of how it felt and what consequences the individuals had to live with during this period of time. It can thus allow the learners to decipher the historical actions made by those in power and thereafter trace its affect into the everyday life of the citizens, which crystalizes
different perspectives of the same event. An example of this could be the excerpt from the book burning 1933, were we meet Liesel in her battle of understanding how her whole country could support a leader which evidently forced her mother and father to leave to another family. Teaching learners to adopt different perspectives could further lead to discussions about the actions made by Hitler, including the aspects of regarding the Nazi ideology as in the nature of saving the future of Germany, which is claimed by several former followers.

Ian Davies however, rather appears to be searching for a balance between the historical content and the moral value of teaching and learning about the Holocaust. “Teachers rightly do not want to see the Holocaust only in intellectual or academic terms, and yet emotion is in itself not enough. There has to be clear rational thought as well as an emotional response” (Davies 5). Therefore, Davies emphasizes the need for the accuracy in details, in all aspects of teaching about the Holocaust and claims that the most common subjects to integrate the teaching of these events are through English, religious studies and, naturally, history education (6). “By emphasizing accurate knowledge, the skills of critical analysis, the development of awareness of the manipulation of language, and the portrayal of religious and moral issues in a sensitive and living manner, these subjects have much to offer” (Davies 6). The author presents a broad spectrum of dimensions in which the teaching of the Holocaust can be conducted, and several of the skills mentioned by Davies could be connected to the method of teaching historical empathy, as well as requirements which are mentioned in the Swedish syllabus for English. In the syllabus for English at a high school level, it is stated that parts of the core content of the subject, aspects such as attitudes, social and cultural aspects as well as learning about different living conditions should be taught through the subject of English (Natl. Ag. For Ed. 3, 7, 11).
Thus, the circumstances of war appear to be argued for as an important part of understanding the Holocaust and its influence on the victims. Moreover, the specific situation of the two individuals studied in the present inquiry, and their possibility to develop in their personal selves was also found to be of great importance in the chosen Holocaust narratives. Therefore, it is of importance to discuss the implications of the mentioned theme in educational settings, which will be conducted in the following section.

3.2.2 Personal Development

To approach the subject of the Holocaust through the lens of an identity perspective and personal development, it is fair to say that the findings will not be predominantly positive. As found through the analysis of the chosen narratives, both Miriam and Liesel disclosed signs of great impact on their development of self, due to the circumstances and living conditions in which they lived (Maslow 376). Through Maslow’s theories of the physiological and psychological elements needed in order to develop and motivate oneself to ‘self-actualize, and fulfill one’s highest needs, the findings suggested that Miriam and Liesel respectively, suffered considerably from their traumatic experiences caused by the circumstances of war, such as having to adapt and, for moments, set aside one’s search for the self in order to survive and fulfill primary needs (376). Accordingly, Roskies and Diamant claim that several testimonies depict such confusion and battle with one’s self and many recollect how the confusion of the identity and the self, lingered within them for decades after the end of the Holocaust (29).

Thus, the theme of identity confusion and battling development to fulfill oneself appears to imprint many experiences from the Holocaust, and consequently has to be
emphasized in the teaching of the events. The National Curriculum for high schools in Sweden requires that, at this level of schooling, students should learn to understand and respect other people, show understanding of individual differences and learn this through the democratic values of the society (Natl. Ag. For Ed. 4). Davies also continues on this line of thought by arguing that the Holocaust is “perhaps ultimately a failure of the normal moral framework which is used to deal with our everyday lives” and argues that we should perceive the tremendous importance of its understanding and teaching (3). Hence, the importance of integrating the moral, ethic, democratic and critical perspective on the effects of the war for the victims is vastly emphasized.

Through the analysis of the psychological needs deprived from Miriam and Liesel due to their living conditions during the Holocaust, another aspect appeared. Through the negative impact from the surroundings, both Miriam and Liesel found ways in which they could empower themselves and fulfill some of the self-actualizing needs found in the highest rank of Maslow’s theory (381). Education and literature becomes their voices and medium to find their inner strength, courage, self-confidence and capability to achieve something and have control of it, which they have lacked throughout their lives (Maslow 381-82). This further emphasizes the strength of the mind and psychological needs of the human being, as well as indicates how education and knowledge can thus help an individual to actualize oneself (Maslow 381-382). Therefore, the findings from this thematic analysis can further be argued to present an example of the importance of the goals of educators and the role of the schools in order to teach and provide a foundation for finding these inner capacities and potential of the individual (Gregory 50; Natl. Ag. For Ed. 4; Maslow 381-382). Additionally, the themes found in this study suggest a variety of possibilities to include a collaboration between several other subjects taught in high schools, such as including psychology, sociology and classes in religion.
Unfortunately, many researchers occupied with the educational purpose of the Holocaust claim that several schools across Europe show little commitment and time to conduct the advantageous outcomes and possibilities of the teaching of the historical period.

The work that is done in schools in England takes place in the relatively low status departments of religious education (RE) and history. There is at times little collaboration between those teachers. Some history teachers, for example, aim to teach the Holocaust in only two or three 50 minute lessons to Year 9 pupils (aged 13-14) and many school text books give only a very brief account of the Holocaust.

(Davies 4)

Although this focuses on younger students studying in England, the UK has established a mandatory inclusion of Holocaust studies in their National Curriculum, which Sweden does not have, and yet the results of such efforts are disappointing (Rantala, Manninen and van den Berg 324). This could further be an indication of the lack of focus on this subject, or a decreasing integration of the subject in the Swedish schools, resembling the dangerously low understanding of the Holocaust in 1990’s (Ammert 58).

4 Conclusion

The aim of this study was to identify factors in the circumstances of war which were found to affect the development of the self in the chosen narratives, in accordance with Maslow’s theory of motivation. Moreover, a pedagogical analysis of the possibilities of using the narratives for educational purposes in the EFL classroom would be conducted.

The results of the study presented a close connection to the previous research found on the severe circumstances of war at its immense affection on the living conditions for the
victims. The narratives provided individuality in many aspects, however common experiences could be found. Through the thematic analysis, similar factors affecting the developmental of the personal self of Miriam and Liesel were namely the loss of their families, the fear of the government and the unknown, the realization and questioning of those in ruling, as well as the self-fulfillment act of educating oneself and empowering through learning. This was further found to add great value to the education and understanding of the Holocaust, presenting important aspects for the usage of critically discuss the historical events as well as enhance the learner’s historical empathy for this period of time.

Through the use of primary sources and literature within the genre of Holocaust, learners can be provided with personalized, engaging disclosure of the immense richness in details from the narratives. Although representing different writings, Miriam Darvas autobiography and the novel about the life of Liesel Meminger were found to disclose similar themes and impact from the living conditions during wartime in accordance with previous research. It could therefore be argued that autobiographies as well as fiction are able to depict essential details and mediate the feelings present for an individual experiencing an event such as the Holocaust.

However, the present inquiry had limitations which evidently affected the results of the investigation. Due to the limited time and length of this study, the thematic analysis was limited to very brief sections of the narratives in which to shed light on the aim of the investigation. Providing merely a fraction of the content which could have presented great value and other depiction of the lives of Miriam and Liesel, the findings nonetheless, managed to claim the pedagogical advantages of utilizing the chosen narratives. This further implies the importance of continuous research within the area of educational teaching within the genre of Holocaust literature, and especially with the aim of utilizing the narratives in the EFL classroom.
For future research projects in this area, it would be of great interest to follow the ideas, discussions and learning outcomes of those learners reading the narratives for the purpose of enhancing their understanding of the circumstances of war and its impact on two individuals. It would additionally add valuable knowledge to teachers and practitioners in the area if a future study could investigate the effectiveness of an intertwined project between different subjects, to compare if the learners are able to enhance their knowledge and understanding of the Holocaust through these different perspectives, in accordance with the method of teaching historical empathy. If possible, an international study comparing the outcomes of learners reading Holocaust literature, such as the suggested in this study, and the effects on their understanding for others and the circumstances of war, would provide a common foundation for all practitioners in the field of education and literature. This could further create closer connections between the international research on methods and materials to use in order to enhance the understanding of the atrocity of the Holocaust and unitedly fight for the equal fundamental rights for each individual. To conclude the present inquiry, there are many aspects which are yet to be touched upon within this field of study. However, through education and research, we are able to come together and fight for a future founded in the firm basis of equal human rights and in the prospect of a peaceful world.
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