

Peer Bullying in the Angel of *Nitshill Road* by Anne Fine and *Bad Girls* by Jacqueline Wilson

Anne Fine'nın *Nitshill Caddesi*'ni Meleği (The Angel of Nitshill Road) Adlı Romanı ile Jacqueline Wilson'ın *Kötü Kızlar* (Bad Girls) başlıklı yapıtında Akran Zorbalığı

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Abstract

Children's novels may roughly be classified as fantasies and realistic. In realistic novels for children, usually the problems which the child may come across in his/her everyday life are dealt with. The writers of realistic novels for children may give some messages or imply some strategies for the children who face the problems in real life similar to the ones narrated in these novels so that they may overcome their problems.

Peer bullying is a widespread and serious problem children may encounter at school. The researchers have displayed that peer bullying may cause some psychological problems, and it may even trigger suicidal ideation. Therefore some anti-bullying programmes have been put into practice in Britain as in some other countries. The first and the most important step in these programmes is to encourage children to report bullying. Otherwise, it will be impossible for the authorities to intervene in and remove bullying. Nevertheless, the investigations conducted to see the effects of these programmes display that there are still a great many of children who do not complain their teachers or parents of being bullied and suffer silently.

This paper argues that carefully written novels for children about peer bullying may help the victims of bullying to cope with bullying by suggesting some coping strategies and encouraging them to report bullying.

Anne Fine and Jacqueline Wilson are the two outstanding writers best known for their realistic novels for children. Fine in her novel titled *The Angel of Nitshill Road* and Wilson in her work entitled *Bad Girls* have dealt with peer bullying. Thus, this paper aims at analysing Anne Fine's *The Angel of Nitshill Road* and Jacqueline Wilson's *Bad Girls* to find out what characteristics of the victims, the bystanders, and bullying have been presented; what coping strategies have been recommended to children in these books.

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This study displays that both writers have depicted the victims of bullying and bullying scenes true to life. Furthermore, they have pointed out the role of such environmental factors as the attitudes of the teachers and school administration in the prevention of bullying. Besides, Anne Fine in her novel has suggested that the victims may sometimes take bullying as a joke. Moreover, writing such novels, both writers have exhibited that the realistic novels for children may be important guides showing children how to overcome the problems they may encounter.

Keywords: Anne Fine, Jacqueline Wilson, peer bullying, *Angel of Nitshill Road*, *Bad Girls*

Öz

Çocuk romanları, kabaca gerçekçi ve fantezi olarak sınıflandırılabilir. Gerçekçi çocuk romanlarında, genellikle çocuğun günlük yaşamında karşılaşılabileceği sorunlar ele alınır. Gerçekçi çocuk romanlarının yazarları, gerçek yaşamda bu romanlarda anlatılan sorunların benzerleriyle karşılaşan çocuklara, sorunlarının üstesinden gelebilmeleri için bazı stratejileri anlatabilir ya da bazı iletiler verebilirler.

Akran zorbalığı çocukların okulda karşılaştıkları yaygın ve ciddi bir sorundur. Araştırmacılar akran zorbalığının çeşitli psikolojik sorunlara neden olabileceğini, intihar düşüncesine bile yol açabileceğini göstermişlerdir. Bu nedenle, diğer bazı ülkelerde olduğu gibi, İngiltere’de de zorbalıkla mücadele programları uygulama konulmuştur. Bu programlardaki ilk ve en önemli adım, çocukları zorbalıkları bildirmeye özendirme. Aksi halde yetkililerin zorbalığa müdahale edebilmesi ve ortadan kaldırabilmesi olanaksızdır. Ancak bu programların etkilerini ortaya çıkarmak üzere yürütülen araştırmalar, hâlâ zorbalıkları anne-babalarına ya da öğretmenlerine şikâyet etmeyen ve sessizce acı çeken birçok çocuğun olduğunu göstermiştir.

Bu çalışma, akran zorbalığıyla ilgili özenle yazılmış çocuk romanlarının, çocukları zorbalıkları bildirmeye özendirerek, bazı zorbalıkla başa çıkma stratejileri önererek, zorbalık mağdurlarına zorbalıkla başa çıkabilmeleri konusunda yardımcı olabileceği görüşünü savunur.

Anne Fine ve Jacqueline Wilson gerçekçi çocuk romanlarıyla tanınan iki önemli yazardır. Fine, *Nitshill Caddesi’nin Meleği* adlı romanında, Wilson, *Kötü Kızlar* başlıklı yapıtında akran zorbalığı konusunu ele almıştır. Nitekim, bu çalışma mağdurların, tanıkların ve zorbalıkların hangi özelliklerinin sunulduğunu; çocuklara hangi başa çıkma stratejilerinin önerildiğini ortaya koyabilmek için, Anne Fine’in *Nitshill Caddesi’nin Meleği* ile Jacqueline Wilson’ın *Kötü Kızlar* adlı romanlarını incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Bu çalışma, her iki yazarın da zorbalık kurbanlarını ve zorbalık sahnelerini gerçeğe uygun olarak çizdiklerini göstermiştir. Dahası, her iki yazar da zorbalığın önlenmesinde öğretmenlerin ve okul yönetiminin tutumu gibi çevresel faktörlerin rolüne dikkat çekmişlerdir. Bunun yanı sıra, Anne Fine romanında mağdurlara zorbalığı bazen bir şaka olarak görmelerini önermiştir. Her iki yazar da, böyle romanlar yazarak, gerçekçi çocuk romanlarının, çocuklara karşılaştıkları sorunlarla nasıl başa çıkabileceklerini gösteren önemli rehberler olabileceklerini ortaya koymuşlardır.

Anahtar sözcükler: Anne Fine, Jacqueline Wilson, akran zorbalığı, *Angel of Nitshill Road*, *Bad Girls*

Introduction

The contemporary novels for children may roughly be divided into two as fantasies and realistic novels. The writers of contemporary realistic novels for children deal with the problems the child may face in his/her everyday life. Depicting the characters trying to cope with the difficulties which the child-reader may come across in real life, illustrating how these characters are able to overcome the difficulties, the writers of such novels may imply some strategies for children so that their readers may use when they encounter similar problems as well as giving the message that the child facing some difficulties in life is not alone, some other children have similar problems and they are able overcome these problems. Therefore, it is possible to assert that the most important feature distinguishing the realistic novels for children from the ones for adults is the messages and the strategies for children included in these novels.

Some realistic novels for children are about the problems the child may face at school. School life is an important stage in the life of a child. During primary school years (the ages 6 through 12), children learn to make “ongoing and reciprocal” friendships (Morgan, King, Weisz, Schopler, 1989, p.453). In other words, the playmates of nursery school period replace with friends at primary school (Morgan et al., 1989, p.453). Nevertheless, it is difficult to say that children always meet their peers with whom they can develop friendships at school since primary school is a social environment where children meet their peers of different personalities. Therefore, as well as having his/her best friends, a child may meet the ones whom s/he does not like, and may suffer from some interpersonal problems at school. The child beginning a primary school is far from the protection of his/her family. Moreover, different from nursery schools, at primary schools, the teachers do not keep a close watch on students. So, the child beginning a primary school has to cope with the interpersonal problems s/he is going to face on her/his own for the first time in his/her life. So, it can be thought that the novels about the problems at school may help children to overcome the interpersonal problems as will be discussed in detail below.

Peer bullying is a prevalent and serious problem students may face at school. Dan Olweus is the first researcher to study peer bullying at school and to point out its prevalence in Scandinavian countries (Olweus, 1995, p.197). Although peer bullying was first tackled in Scandinavian countries, it is not a problem specific to Scandinavia. The experimental studies conducted by various researchers in different countries including the United Kingdom (Glover, Gough, Johnson and Cartwright, 2000; Smith and Shu, 2000) have exhibited that peer bullying at schools is a widespread problem all over the world.

Besides, as bullying is a form of aggressive behaviour it causes some severe socio-psychological problems both for the bullies and the victims. Concerning the bullies, Olweus has reported that “... as young adults, the former school bullies had a fourfold increase in relatively serious, recidivist criminality” (1995, p. 198). Olweus’s findings exhibit that bullying is not a simple mischievous behaviour which will cease when childhood is over. On the contrary, it may be regarded as the early symptom of the personality prone to violence. As for the victims, the research shows that peer bullying has serious and long

lasting effects on the victims. Bullied children are more anxious, more depressed (Craig, 1998, pp. 128-129; Rigby, 2001, p. 322), find it difficult to answer in class, feel threatened in some way (Glover et al., 2000, p.149), and being bullied triggers suicidal ideation (Rigby, 2001, p.322; Smith and Shu, 2000, p. 194). The experimental studies exemplified above display the disastrous consequences of bullying.

Due to the studies exhibiting the prevalence and the disastrous consequences of bullying, some intervention programmes have been developed and put into practice in various countries including Britain. The studies undertaken to see the effects of the intervention programmes in Britain have shown that though there is a decrease in the prevalence of bullying and an increase in the number of the victims reporting bullying, these programmes could not remove bullying (Glover et al., 2000; Smith and Shu, 2000). Moreover, though the studies indicate an increase in the number of the victims reporting bullying after anti-bullying programmes, there are still a number of children who did not talk with anybody about being bullied (Smith and Shu, 2000, p. 204; Glover et al., 2000, p.150). These children suffer silently and try to cope with bullying by themselves. Therefore, it may be concluded that bullying remains to be a serious problem for a great number of children.

So far we have tried to exhibit to what extent bullying a prevalent and serious problem is. The writers of the realistic novels for children have, of course, dealt with this widespread problem with serious consequences. Thus, this paper argues that the novels for children aged 8-12 about peer bullying may provide a rich resource for the children trying to cope with bullying by themselves and for the bystanders.

Literary works have already been used in the treatment of some problems children have. This treatment called bibliotherapy “is a family of techniques for structuring interaction between a facilitator and participant based on mutual sharing of literature” (Pardeck and Pardeck, 1998, p. 25). Bibliotherapy is based on the idea that the child will identify himself/herself with the characters in the book (Gregory and Vessey, 2004, p.128; Moulton, Heath, Prater and Dyches, 2011, p. 122). Taking the underlying logic for bibliotherapy into consideration, we may assume that the novels for children about bullying may be beneficial for the victims of bullying suffering silently without seeking any help from the authorities since these books will illustrate that s/he is not alone, somewhere some other children face the same problem. Besides, the silent sufferer may identify himself/herself with the character and learn some coping strategies.

Jacqueline Wilson and Anne Fine are the two British writers best known for their realistic novels for children. Anne Fine was the Children’s Laureate from 2001 to 2003, and was awarded an OBE in 2003. Similarly, from 2005 to 2007, Jacqueline Wilson served as the Children’s Laureate. Wilson was given an OBE in 2002, and made Dame in 2008. According to the results of the surveys investigating the reading habits of children in England, Wilson and Fine are among the favourite authors of children (Dungworth, Grimshaw, Mcknight, Morris, 2004, p.177; Maynard, Mackay and Smyth, 2008). It is clear that the novels by these writers appeal to a great many of children. Therefore, it can

be deduced that the implications in their books will get through to a number of children. Both Fine and Wilson deal with the problems children may encounter in real life in their novels. These writers have not disregarded peer bullying, and Wilson in *Bad Girls* and Fine in *The Angel of Nitshill Road* have dealt with this problem. Thus, this paper aims at an in-depth analysis of Jacqueline Wilson's *Bad Girls* and Anne Fine's *The Angel of Nitshill Road* to find out whether the bullying scenes depicted are realistic, what characteristics of the bullies, the victims and the bystanders have been presented, what strategies have been suggested to cope with bullying, what messages have been given to the readers. In other words, the aim of this paper is to discuss whether these books may be the guides for children as well as giving pleasure.

Bullying in Jacqueline Wilson's *Bad Girls* and Anne Fine's *The Angel of Nitshill Road*

In *Bad Girls* by Jacqueline Wilson, the story of Mandy with eye glasses and having elderly parents is presented. Although Mandy is ten years old, her mother infantilizes her, and buys her pink clothes with rabbit or cherry pictures. Kim, Sarah and Melanie constantly tease Mandy about her clothes, her elderly parents in general, her fat and overprotective mother in particular. In *The Angel of Nitshill Road* by Anne Fine, Barry Hunter perpetually abuses Penny, Marigold and Mark. Barry harasses fat Penny calling her by such nasty words as "mountain" or "moving mountain" (Fine, 2010, p. 2), introverted Marigold by telling her such rude sentences as "where do you live Marigold? Is it that really smelly street we see you walking down after school?" (Fine, 2010, p.6). Mark is small for his age, and wears eye-glasses with very thick lenses. Barry irritates Mark, calling him by "Mark the Martian" (Fine, 2010, p.3), stealing and hiding his belongings. As the examples here may display, Mandy in *Bad Girls*, Penny, Marigold and Mark in *The Angel of Nitshill Road* are steadily harassed by their peers. Olweus, in his definition of peer bullying, emphasizes the importance of the steadiness of the harassment in bullying as follows:

... a student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students. Negative actions can include physical contact, words, making faces or dirty gesture, and intentional exclusion from a group. An additional criterion of bullying is an imbalance in strength (an asymmetric power relationship): The student who is exposed to the negative actions has difficulty defending himself or herself (Olweus, 1995, p. 197).

In other words, the harassment can be called bullying if it is continuous. As we have mentioned above, the assaults by Kim and her gang in *Bad Girls*, by Barry in *The Angel of Nitshill Road* are continuous. Besides the continuity of the assaults, Mandy, Penny, Marigold and Mark cannot defend themselves as will be discussed in detail below. So, it

can be said that Wilson and Fine have depicted the realistic pictures of peer bullying in their novels studied in this paper.

In *Bad Girls*, the story is narrated by Mandy. The use of first person narrator enables the reader to see the innermost thoughts and feelings of Mandy, the victim, clearly. The inner monologues display that Mandy is displeased with her clothes, her plaits, and admires such girls as Kim while deprecating herself as the following quotation exhibits: “Girls like Kim never wear glasses or braces on their teeth. They never get fat. They never have a silly haircut. They never wear stupid baby clothes...But you can’t tease girls like Kim. There is nothing to tease her about” (Wilson, 1998, p.201). This quotation illustrates that Mandy displeased with her own physical appearance regards herself worth teasing.

Moreover, Mandy does not have any friends at school. Her best friend, Melanie, has left her for Sarah. Later, Kim has wanted Melanie and Sarah to join in her gang. Now, Mandy is all alone while Melanie is Kim’s best friend. That Kim has taken her best friend provokes Mandy’s self-deprecating thoughts. Therefore she believes that Kim takes whatever or whoever she wants as the following quotation displays: “If Kim wants you as a friend then that’s it. You don’t argue with her. She can be so scary” (Wilson, 1998, p. 202). This quotation is another example illuminating how she overestimates Kim.

Mandy, lonely and dissatisfied with her physical appearance, plays pretend game, imagining herself to be Miranda Rainbow. Miranda character that Mandy has created wears a lot of make-up, has stylish hair, sexy clothes; in other words, Miranda is just the opposite of Mandy. While describing herself as Miranda, Mandy points out that “I had heaps of friends and they all begged me to be their *best* friend” (Wilson, 1998, p.229). This description is noteworthy since it reflects how lonely Mandy is. Moreover, she thinks that her loneliness stems from her babyish appearance. Therefore, it may be thought that Mandy’s pretend game is the consequence of her self-deprecating thoughts.

Besides, Mandy is anxious about being bullied. The novel opens with a scene relating Mandy’s deep anxiety about meeting Kim and her gang and being bullied by them. After school, on the way home, Mandy sees Melanie, Sarah and Kim waiting near the bus stop. The writer has put Mandy’s thought and feelings into words as follows:

I didn’t know what to do. I took a step forward, my sandal sticking to the pavement.

They were nudging each other. They’d spotted me...

I stood still. I looked over my shoulder. Perhaps I could run back to school? I’d hung around for ages already. Maybe they’d locked the playground gates? But perhaps one of the teachers would still be there? I could pretend I had a stomach ache or something and then maybe I’d get a lift in their car?

...

If I ran back they’d only run after me. So I went on walking, even though my legs were wobbly...

I was getting nearer and nearer. My sandals were still sticking. I was sticking, too. My dress stuck to my back. My forehead was wet under my fringe (Wilson, 1998, pp. 200-201).

The quotation above reflects Mandy's deep anxiety about being bullied. However, she does not do anything to defend herself. Mandy's thoughts and feeling discussed so far in this paragraph reveals her such traits as anxiety and low self- esteem. Olweus describes the characteristics of the typical victims as follows:

The typical victims are more anxious and insecure than the other students in general... Also, victims suffer from low self-esteem, they have a negative view of themselves and their situation. They often look upon themselves as failures and feel stupid, ashamed and unattractive... The victims are lonely and abandoned at school. As a rule, they do not have a single good friend in their class (Olweus, 1997, p. 175).

The above-given quotation indicates that Mandy has all the characteristics of a typical victim of bullying.

In *The Angel of the Nitshill Road*, Anne Fine presents three victims of bullying to her readers. Different from Wilson, Fine has given little information about the personality traits of the victims. Instead, she prefers demonstrating how they suffer from being bullied. The reader does not know what introverted Marigold feels or thinks at the very beginning of the novel since she seems to be indifferent to everybody and everything including being bullied by Barry. However, when the major character of the novel, Celeste, begins to defend the victims and to stand up against bullying, as will be discussed below in detail, she participates in games. Hence, it can be deduced that Barry's bullying has caused Marigold to lose her self-confidence; accordingly she has preferred being alone.

As for Penny, she is anxious about being bullied like Mandy in *Bad Girls* as may be observed in the following quotation: "But as the hands of the clock rolled round toward playtime she'd get a horrible feeling, as if her stomach was being gripped by a hard, invisible hand" (Fine, 2010, p. 1). This quotation illustrates Penny's high level of anxiety about being bullied. Besides, she feels upset when she is called "mountain" by Barry (Fine, 2010, p. 14). Therefore, we may conclude that she feels herself unattractive like Mandy in *Bad Girls*.

It is noteworthy that Penny and Marigold do nothing to defend themselves against the assaults of Barry, and they suffer silently. Of the three, Mark is the only one to react against the bullying of Barry as is described in the quotation below:

Mark went haywire, right out of control. With tears of rage spurting behind his glasses, he'd scream and howl and rush at Barry Hunter, trying to tear out chunks of his hair. Everyone turned to stare at him clawing and kicking and yelling. Some couldn't help grinning quietly to

themselves, but Barry Hunter laughed out loud. He was so big, he could hold Mark at arm's length and watch him flailing about like a windmill in a high gale.

Then he'd tease him some more. 'Now, now, now! Temper, temper!' (Fine, 2010, pp.3-4).

The quotation above displays to what extent Martin is infuriated by the bullying of Barry, as well as showing up the physical imbalance between Martin and Barry. The researchers emphasize the importance of physical imbalance in peer bullying. According to Whitney and Smith "...it is not bullying when two children or young people of the same strength have the odd fight or quarrel (cited in Fox and Boulton, 2005, p. 320). Similarly, Olweus points out that bullied boys are physically weaker than the other boys (Olweus, 1997, p. 175). The existence of physical imbalance in peer bullying is important so much so that it will be impossible to call a conflict between two children, between two boys in particular, as bullying if there is no physical imbalance between them. Depicting such a scene in the quotation above, Fine has been able to both display Martin's rage and emphasize what is going on between Martin and Barry is not a simple quarrel between two boys but peer bullying.

The bullying scenes and the traits of the victims depicted by both Fine and Wilson in their novels are consistent with the ones found out by the researchers. Hereby we may assume that the children suffering from being bullied may identify themselves with the characters depicted true to life in *Bad Girls* and *The Angel of the Nitshill Road*.

Besides depicting the characters true to life, Fine calls attention to the environmental factors such as the attitudes of the teachers causing the development of bullying in Nitshill Road School. Olweus points out that environmental factors such as the teachers' attitudes determines to what extent bullying will manifest itself in a classroom or school (Olweus, 1997, p.175). He maintains that the teachers should "intervene in possible bullying situations and give an absolutely clear message to the students: Bullying is not accepted in our school" (Olweus, 1997, p. 185). In *The Angel of the Nitshill Road*, there is no scene exhibiting the intervention of the teachers throughout the novel. Furthermore, Mr Fairway, the class teacher, connives at the bullying of Barry as the following quotation displays:

All afternoon Barry Hunter made life difficult for poor old Mark. He tripped him up when he was called to Mr Fairway's desk. While Mark was up there, Barry took Mark's pencil-box and hid it behind the books in the corner. He dropped Mark's woolly on the floor and trod a huge footprint on it (Fine, 2010, pp.45-6).

This quotation exhibits that although Barry bullies Mark while Mr Fairway is in the class, Mr Fair does not intervene in and warn Barry. So, Barry goes on harassing Mark as if there were no teacher in the class. Nevertheless, in the same scene, Mr Fairway

leaves the class for a while; taking this chance, Mark begins to look for his pencil-box. Meanwhile, Mr Fairway returns and reprimands Mark for disturbing everybody without listening to him. Furthermore, he gets angry with Celeste trying to explain the reason behind Mark's walking around (Fine, 2010, p.46). Instead of Mark the victim, if Mr Fairway had reprimanded Barry, while he was bullying Mark, he could have given the message that he would not allow bullying in his class; thereby, he could have prevented bullying. However, Mr Fairway prefers reprimanding Mark instead of Barry. By doing so, Mr Fairway gives the impression that he does not have the slightest intention of preventing bullying in his class. Creating such a scene, Fine indicates the wrong attitudes of the teachers in the steadiness of bullying at school.

The school environment described in *The Angel of the Nitshill Road* is quite different from the one presented in *Bad Girls*. In *Bad Girls*, Mandy's mother, Mrs White, visits Mrs Edwards, the headmistress, to talk with her about Mandy's being bullied by Kim and her gang. Just after Mrs White's taking her leave, Mrs Edwards sends one of her monitors to call Kim, Melanie and Sarah without waiting for the break. This may indicate that the headmistress attaches utmost importance to preventing bullying at her school. She first speaks with Kim, Melanie and Sarah. Then she calls Mandy, and speaks with her privately. Even though Mandy does not confirm being bullied, Mrs Edwards calls Kim and her gang again, and speaks with them as follows:

..., Mandy here is being incredibly loyal to you girls, refusing to say anything against you,...

But it's obvious to me that you three girls have been very unkind to Mandy and this has got to stop, do you hear? I detest bullying. I won't have it in my school. Now, Kim, Melanie, Sarah, I want you three to say sorry to Mandy, and promise that you won't call her any nasty names or chase her ever again (Wilson, 2010, p. 267).

The quotation above clearly suggests that Mrs Edwards is determined to prevent bullying at her school. After this event, some precautions are taken to prevent bullying. For instance, there is a teacher on duty in the playground keeping an eye on Mandy, Kim, Melanie, and Sarah. Another incident indicating the determination of the school administration to solve the problems of the students in general, bullying in particular is class meetings called Circle Time scheduled in Year Six. During Circle Time, students sit in a circle and discuss various issues. At the first meeting, when the teacher says that they are going to discuss the issue of bullying, Mandy feels herself uneasy; however Miss Moseley, the teacher, soothes Mandy smiling at her and the others. Then she reads some news about bullying. Miss Moseley directs them by posing questions so that the students can discuss bullying thoroughly. Finally, she gives the following message:

If someone is being bullied you should always tell ... Tell your mum and dad. Tell your teacher. Tell another teacher if things still don't get

sorted out. The person who is getting bullied needs help. And the person doing the bullying needs help too, because they're sad, sick, silly people. We should feel sorry for them, even though they hurt and do a lot of harm (Wilson, 2010, p. 375).

Here Miss Moseley is the mouthpiece for the writer. Via Miss Moseley, Jacqueline Wilson has been able to emphasize the overall message of the novel: report bullying. Thus, Kim gives up bullying Mandy after this meeting. Mandy's problem has been solved since her mother and teachers have intervened in the bullying.

So far we have tried to exhibit that both Wilson and Fine have emphasized the importance of the environmental factors in the prevention of bullying. Hence, it can be deduced that the novels for children should be read not only by children, but also by adults so that adults can understand the problems of children and their own roles in the prevention of such problems as bullying.

In the quotation above, there is a message for bullies as well: do not bully because bullies are "sad, sick and silly". This overt message is supported by the events in the novel; Melanie and Sarah do not want to make friends with Kim anymore. Kim is left all alone, while Melanie and Mandy become friends again. Taking the quotation above into account, we may think that choosing the title of the novel as *Bad Girls*, Wilson has indicated that bullies are not approved by society.

The same quotation includes a message for the bystanders as well. Wilson has given a message for the bystanders probably because bullying is not considered to be a problem between the bully and the victim but a phenomenon involving the other children called bystanders who are neither bully nor victim (Fekkes, Pijpers, Verloove-Vanhorick, 2005, p.82). Regarding the role of the bystanders in bullying, Cowie mentions that "The silent and collusive behaviours of bystanders can give stronger support to the bullies and directly enhance a culture of violence" (cited in Menesini, Codecasa, Benelli, Cowie, 2003, p. 11). Giving such a message as in the quotation above, Wilson asks the bystander-readers to take part actively in the prevention of bullying, reporting it to such authorities as teachers, headmasters or parents.

A similar message for the bystanders is given by Fine in *The Angel of the Nitshill Road*. The major character of the novel, Celeste, is a bystander who manages to put an end to the bullying at Nitshill Road School. Due to her efforts to prevent bullying, she is believed to be a real angel by her schoolmates. The writer deliberately names her Celeste. Moreover, Celeste tells Penny and Lisa that her father wanted to name her Angelica (Fine, 2010, p.12). This detail may indicate that the writer must have thought these two names fit for the bystander struggling against bullying in her novel. Besides, Fine creates the following scene to bring these two names to the attention of her readers:

The little group who chummed down Nitshill Road had a chat at the corner.

‘So what did Celeste’s father want to call her, anyway?’

‘Angelica, she told us.’

‘Angelica!’

Another clue!

Tracey raced back just as the bell was ringing for afternoon school. As they pushed and shoved their way back into the classroom, she whispered to everyone round her:

‘Guess what Celeste means! I looked it up in our *Name Your Baby* book. Celeste means “from heaven” (Fine, 2010, p.20).

Depicting such a scene, Fine is able to both explain the meaning of the name ‘Celeste’ to her child-reader and call attention to the names of the bystander. Besides, for the students of Nitshill Road School, the names ‘Angelica’ and ‘Celeste’ are the “clues” indicating that she is a real angel. The angel in the title of the book refers to the above-mentioned supposition of the students. Choosing such names for the bystander and referring to her in the title of the novel, Fine dignifies Celeste probably to encourage the bystanders to intervene in bullying.

Both writers in their novels under discussion in this paper give messages highlighting the significance of the intervention of the bystanders. The writers’ attitudes towards the bystanders are of utmost importance since “Motivating children to intervene and stand up for the victim could isolate bullies from their audience and social support, and help to stop bullying behavior” (Fekkes et al., 2005, p.88). The novels exhibit that the writers are aware of the importance of the support of the bystanders, and they have made a point of motivating them.

Celeste is a newcomer to Nitshill Road School. Witnessing the bullying of Barry on her very first day at school, she begins to stand up for the victims. Although Barry picks on her, she manages to evade Barry’s harassments. Nevertheless, she realizes that she cannot prevent Barry’s bullying by herself, and that Mr Fairway, class teacher, ignores the bullying of Barry. Celeste thinks that if all the students complain about the bullying, Mr Fairway cannot turn a blind eye to it anymore. So, she finds a way to involve other bystanders in her efforts to prevent the bullying. Therefore, one day bringing a black notebook to school, Celeste begins to record the bullying of Barry by dating, and asks the children who have witnessed the bullying recorded to sign below the recording. Though the children hesitate first, later they volunteer to sign the book which they call “the Book of Deeds” (Fine, 2010, p.60). By doing so, Celeste enables the other children to intervene in the bullying. Depicting such a scene, and displaying the consequence of the intervention of the other students in the bullying, which will be discussed in the paragraph below, Fine emphasizes the importance of the solidarity against bullying.

Celeste has to leave the school. The day she is going to leave, she gives the book to Mr Fairway. After reading two or three pages of the book, though he is shocked by

the horrible incidents written in it, trying to despise the book, he asks Celeste “Is this really what you’re leaving me? ... A book of tale-telling” (Fine, 2010, p.80). Despite the despising attitude of her teacher she does not change her mind. The following quotation exhibits Celeste’s determined attitude and Mr Fairway’s reaction:

‘Granny says the rule not to tell tales was invented by bullies –’ Her sky blue eyes met his across the desk. ‘And the people who don’t really want to stand up to them.’

He couldn’t meet her gaze any longer. He looked down (Fine, 2010, p.80).

Celeste’s answer concerning tale-telling in the quotation above is of great importance since a great number of children cannot complain their teachers of bullying as they think that teachers would tell them “stop telling tales” (Glover et al., 2000, p.151). The above-given quotation encourages both the victims and the bystanders to report bullying, emphasizing that complaining of bullying is not tale-telling. The writer emphasizes this message through a detail in the quotation above. The teacher calling Celeste’s act as tale-telling cannot meet Celeste’s eyes anymore after her answer. This detail may demonstrate the reader that the teacher has understood his fault, and he is embarrassed about calling the book “tale-telling”. As well as making a point of adding such a detail, Fine ends this conversation with a scene in which Mr Fairway embraces Celeste, and promises her to prevent the bullying. By doing so, Fine highlights her message for the bystanders: do not refrain from intervening in bullying. Besides, the bystanders may use Celeste’s answer, if any of their teachers calls their complaint as tale-telling.

Moreover, creating such a scene in her novel, Fine suggests a strategy for those bystanders who want to stand up for the victims. If their teachers disregard bullying, the ones who want to take a stand against bullying may collaborate and give written reports. Therefore, it may be thought that Fine has created Celeste to present a model for the bystanders.

Furthermore, in *The Angel of Nitshill Road*, a little girl, Celeste, has been able to put an end to the bullying at school. Celeste has been depicted as a pretty girl with “the shining cloud of hair” (Fine, 2000, p. 10). The pictures in the novel illustrate what an elegant girl Celeste is. Presenting such a girl as the bystander struggling against bullying, Fine may want to imply that contemporary girls do not wait for a hero to rescue them from a dangerous situation. Instead, they intervene in the problems of their friends, and get them out of unpleasant situations.

Besides motivating the bystanders to intervene in bullying, Fine presents a coping strategy to the victims. As has been mentioned above, when Barry has bullied Mark, Mark has lost his temper, cried and attacked him. Celeste’s determined stand against bullying encourages the victims to develop a strategy to cope with bullying as well. One of the days following Celeste’s recording bullying, when Mark comes to school, Barry kicks at a

box and the box lands on Mark's head. While everybody thinks that Mark will get furious, Mark, instead of getting furious, walks like a robot out of control in the playground. Penny and Marigold run and offer him a guiding hand (Fine, 2000, pp. 72-74). By doing so, Mark, Penny and Marigold mean that they do not care for the bullying of Barry, and they take it as a joke. Depicting such a scene, the writer recommends the victims to ignore bullying, to take it as a joke. To emphasize the coping strategy she suggests, Fine calls the chapter in which the victims' stance on Barry's bullying after Celeste's intervention is narrated "Only a joke. Only a game" (Fine, 2000, p.72). Moreover, the message given in this chapter concerning the coping strategy is supported by an illustration. The illustration shows that along with some other children, Mark, Penny and Marigold enjoy the robot game, while Barry is alone and frustrated. Smith and Shu point out that ignoring is the most common coping strategy used by older children. If it is used consistently, it can be useful for some types of bullying such as nasty teasing (Smith and Shu, 2000, p.208). This coping strategy used by older children may be used by younger children as well. So, it can be said that writing such a chapter, Fine has managed to suggest a coping strategy approved by the researchers.

Thus far, we have tried to discuss what strategies have been recommended to bullied children and the bystanders by Fine and Wilson. Nevertheless, for the writers writing the novels including messages for children must be difficult since such novels may easily be boring if the writers attempt at teaching what children should do or should not do directly. If the novel is boring the child may put the book aside, may not want to read it anymore. As we have mentioned in the 'introduction' part of this paper, the novels by Wilson and Fine are widely read by children. Besides, while reading *The Angel of the Nitshill Road* and *Bad Girls*, one never feels that s/he is reading a book full of messages urging him/her to take a stand against bullying. Therefore at this point we want to discuss how these authors relate their messages to their readers, avoiding writing boring books. Fine, as has been exemplified in the paragraph above, presents her coping strategy to her readers by means of a funny game, the robot game. Besides, the narrator of the novel seems to narrate the reasons behind the children's supposition that Celeste is a real angel, instead of telling directly her readers that they should take a stand against bullying. Adopting such a technique, Fine tries to persuade her readers to stand up against bullies implicitly. As for Wilson, she saves her messages about bullying for the last chapter. Until the last chapter, Mandy narrates what she feels when she is bullied, her relation with her family and her friendship with Tanya, the foster child of one of their neighbours, and how she has been driven to an adventure by Tanya. In other words, there is no message concerning bullying until the last chapter. However, throughout the last chapter of the novel, Wilson gives her messages one after the other explicitly, as has been discussed above. Therefore, we may assume that the readers will understand what a bullied child feels till the last chapter, and they will learn what they should do to prevent bullying in last chapter of the book. Thereby, it is possible to deduce that using different techniques, both Wilson and Fine have been able to accomplish writing the novels with the messages about bullying to be enjoyed by their readers.

Conclusion:

To conclude, it can be said that Jacqueline Wilson in *Bad Girls*, Anne Fine in *The Angel of Nitshill Road* have managed to depict lifelike characters being bullied or witnessing the bullying. Presenting the coping strategies used by these characters and the consequences of these strategies, the writers try to motivate their readers to adopt the same or similar strategies to stand up against bullying. Of these strategies, reporting bullying is of utmost importance; otherwise it will be impossible to intervene in and prevent bullying. Therefore, it is noteworthy that both Wilson and Fine have strived for encouraging their readers to report bullying. All in all, it can be said that writing the novels discussed in this paper, Jacqueline Wilson and Anne Fine have provided rich resources for the victims who try to cope with bullying as well as showing the bystanders the importance of their intervention. Besides, these novels can be used in bibliotherapy. Writing such novels, both writers have displayed that realistic novels for children are not the books to be read only for pleasure, but also the important guides illustrating children how to overcome their problems.

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