Teenagers with Anglophone migrant parents: Pushed into a privileged social landscape

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Abstract

This paper deals with the cosmopolitan, Anglophone institution of a youth theatre among Anglophone migrants in the Czech Republic. While Anglophone migrants are privileged due to the English language and its position in the globalized world, all children and young people with migrant parents struggle with establishing their position among their peers, where it is essential to be included. In the Czech context of a homogeneous society, Anglophone teenagers are often considered different and their position in a peer group may be questioned. When the teenagers enjoy the Anglophone, safe environment of the youth theatre, what makes them 'other' in the outside world makes them 'normal' in the theatre group and strengthens their cosmopolitanism. The homogeneity of Czech society pushes them into more privileged social landscapes.

Key words

Anglophone migration, cosmopolitanism, privileged social landscape, otherness

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The founder of the youth theatre: *"This lady wants to come here to watch you as bilingual children who are going to a youth theatre in English while living in Czech, coming from different countries and who are excellent actors. She is interested in studying you because you are such a 'weird and wonderful' people who are worth looking into."*

David (16, Czech/USA), in a hurt tone of voice: *"But we are not weird,"* – and then to the others in the rehearsal room: "*Are we?*"

This introductory quote from my field diary is not just the beginning to this paper, but also began my entry into the field. Oscar, the drama teacher of the group whom I studied in the youth theatre, introduced me to my field with this quote, and I am using it here as the prologue to this paper, as it indicates what I will be addressing: The role played by the Anglophone-specific space of a youth theatre in the identity management of teenagers from Anglophone migrant families living in the Czech Republic, specifically the role it plays in the social landscape in which they are placed and then actively move themselves within it.

According to the OECD (2021), about 20% of people from OECD countries between the ages of 15 and 34 are or were migrant children or children with migrant parents (either foreign-born or native-born to foreign-born parents), and the number of young people living this way continues to increase. Little is known about children's particular understanding of migrant life, despite the fact that children make up a large proportion of migrants (Knörr 2005: 14). Therefore it is important to investigate the strategies and trajectories of child migrants (or migrant parents' local-born children) for navigating local social landscapes. The experience of these children and young people is different from the experience of adult migrants, as it happens in the context of childhood. Childhood needs to be seen as an independent state where specific social norms and values are applied that determine actions and shape social relationships (Corsaro – Fingerson 2006). Another aspect at stake here is related to the nature of Anglophone migration, which involves some attributes of privilege; Anglophone families have more accessible ways of adapting to life in foreign countries due to the English language, as well as obtaining a certain status if they are citizens of well-developed countries (Benson – O'Reilly 2009). Children with Anglophone migrant parents face specific challenges that I would like to address in the Czech context in this paper.

This case study is about the organisation of a youth theatre, an Anglophone drama club for young people who speak fluent English, which takes place in a city in the Central European country of the Czech Republic. Young people are socialised in different spaces that are not interconnected and do not relate to each other, spaces representing the majority society and

its institutions as well as spaces related to their Anglophone migrant family background. The youth theatre is yet another space that contributes to their socialisation. In my case study of extracurricular activities for children of Anglophone migrants, I focus on demonstrating some of the specific challenges and difficulties faced by Anglophone migrant youth and the role of this specific extracurricular activity in the adolescents' navigation of their local social landscapes.

Privileged migration

In this paper, by 'Anglophone migrants', I mean migrants whose mother tongue is English; that is, they have been exposed to English since early childhood and engaged in natural conversation from that age. The children's parents' country or countries of origin are either English-speaking, or/and their parent(s) have spoken English to the child from early childhood as their common means of communication.

Anglophone migrants have attributes of privilege that are specific to them. One of the reasons is that English (their mother tongue) is a global lingua franca (Seidlhofer et al. 2006). Privilege has been recognised and described by scholars as an unearned advantage that is neither common nor universal, unearned in the sense that it is not received due to individual talent or special effort, but is a right or entitlement related to a preferred status or rank, benefitting the recipient and excluding others, and importantly, the recipient of the privilege is often not aware or not fully aware of their privilege (Black – Stone 2005; McIntosh 1992). As Black and Stone argue, social privilege goes beyond race and gender; they expand the definition of social privilege to five more aspects, including 'ableness' (2005: 244–245). Black and Stone depict ableness in terms of mental and physical ability and disability, and it can be connected to the ability to speak English. They depict speaking English as a primary language as a suggested category of privilege, although it is not listed as one of their five main categories. Other authors (Linkov – Lu 2017; Rahman 2005) also speak of English-language privilege in their own societies.

In the context of Anglophone migrants, we can also mention privilege due to nationality, which is also recognised by Black and Stone (2005) – this means migration from the prosperous, well-developed, affluent countries of the Global North to the less-developed countries of the Global South. An Anglophone person's passport usually signifies protection and a right to cross borders unhindered (Croucher 2012) as a symbol of social status. There are many advantages to privileged Anglophone migration into less wealthy, less-developed countries, such as the comparatively low cost of

living, job and business opportunities, cultural and social hospitality, but also feeling no need to make an effort to learn the local language and local culture due to being able to speak such a widely-spoken language as English and their migration ties to the expatriate migration network (Croucher 2012). Migrants privileged by citizenship, class or 'race' have not been studied until recently (Benson – O'Reilly 2009). Privileged migration has been considered unproblematic in receiving countries as well as in their post-migration (back in their native country), which contributes to the non-white, non-western image of migration (Kunz 2016; Bjørnsen 2020). Emerging studies consider privileged migration an important part of migration, along with the fact that it is not so unproblematic (Kunz 2016).

Cosmopolitanism

Thanks to more accessible movement within global spaces, more people are migrating regularly and cosmopolitanism is also becoming more widespread; it is no longer just the domain of elites, although not all migration necessarily leads to cosmopolitanism. The very concept of cosmopolitanism must be understood as ambiguous and blurry. Ulf Hannerz describes cosmopolitanism *"as a willingness to engage with the other; it entails intellectual and aesthetic openness towards divergent cultural experiences, a search for contrast rather than uniformity"* (1996: 103). The author also sees cosmopolitanism as two kinds of competencies; one is being able and willing to listen, watch and appreciate, and the other is to manoeuvre expertly through different cultures (Hannerz 1996). These two competences, however, cannot be strictly understood as distinct types of cosmopolitanisms, but rather as a range of different levels, from being able to appreciate another culture on some level to being able to expertly navigate it in practice. Mari Korpela (2014) defines the cosmopolitan approach as a perspective that is wider than a perspective tied to a specific locality or nation, as well as an ability to adapt to different cultural environments (Korpela 2014). Given these definitions, not all migration is cosmopolitan. This especially need not apply to a certain kind of privileged migration involving its own institutions and social networks, independent of local ones. A discrepancy arises, since these groups are the bearers of global values and global knowledge, but they relate solely to each other and close themselves off in their own social bubbles (ibid). Children's positionality in cosmopolitanism is even more problematic, as their identity management is different from that of adult migrants.

Youth in migration

Young people in migration are an essential topic. In their book on *Contested Childhood*, Seeberg and Goździak (2016) summarise that *"In many European countries, both policy-makers and the general public do not commonly distinguish between immigrant children and children of immigrants; both are referred to as 'children from immigrant background'"* (ibid: 183). The emphasis here is more on the structures in which children and young people live and what they experience. In the present case study, I deal with the situation of children with a migrant parent or parents, although some of the children have also migrated themselves. The lives of young people with migrant parents are tied to their parents' country or countries of origin, while their daily lives take place in the destination country. However, the extent of their involvement in each country varies (Somerville 2008; Levitt 2009; Wolff 1994). This means their identities are managed based on different discursive and material practices and knowledge, different from those of their parents and from those of their peers.

Identity starts to rapidly develop at the beginning of puberty, when people begin to be concerned about their appearance and what their peers think about them (Tatum 1997). Teenagers with migrant parents mainly have to deal with the dimensions of citizenship and ethnicity, among others. Similarly, Svobodová and Jánská (2016), in a study of Vietnamese children in the Czech Republic, point out that growing up in migrancy is an important social category for forming an identity, along with, for example, social class and gender. These scholars aim to understand how teenagers manage identity for themselves while trying to come to terms with the fact that they are growing up 'in migrancy' and 'between two cultures' (Svobodová – Jánská 2016: 122).

Somerville studied Indian teenagers in Canada; she demonstrates how teenagers with a migrant parent or parents construct their ethnic identities in the transnational social field on three levels: *"at the level of emotions: they feel Indian, yet also Canadian; at the level of appearance: they express their transnational belonging through fashion styles and clothing, and at the level of allegiance: they feel a sense of loyalty to India at the same time that they feel a sense of loyalty to Canada"* (Somerville 2008: 23). The identification process is an interaction between relationships of similarity and difference; individual and collective identities are as much an interactional product of 'external' identification by others as of 'internal' self-identification (Jenkins 2014: 200–201).

The identity management of teenagers with a migrant parent or parents is, therefore, based on the interaction between two or more social landscapes

and the teenagers' negotiation within them. Somerville (2008: 26) says teenagers with migrant parents are actualised through their transnational relations in two countries. Their identity cannot be specified as based on just one ethnic identity. They have a different experience from their parents, since they did not migrate as adults, as well as a different experience from locals; they have embedded themselves in the networks of two countries. That influences the way these teenagers identify their sense of self vis-a-vis defining their level of belonging (2008: 26). *"The children of migrants are able to stay connected to their parents' birthplace at the same time that they build a strong connection to their own country of citizenship."* (ibid: 30)

Brocket (2020: 135) sees teenagers with migrant parents from Palestine in the USA as in a more problematic situation. She describes Palestinian teenagers experiencing multiple tensions and exclusions in the US due to the interaction of transnationalism, assimilation, diaspora, and racialisation in their lives. As they are reflexive actors, they are crafting their positioned belongings. Teenagers with migrant parents navigate this feeling of exclusion and 'in-betweenness' through discursive and material practices that centre the 'self'. This then reinforces their feelings of otherness (Levitt 2009) and exclusion.

Pollock and Van Reken (2001) have another perspective; they talk about expatriate, mostly Anglophone children being raised and educated in a culture or cultures outside of their parents' culture(s). They follow the idea of Ruth Hill Useem (1976), who first drew attention to the experience of Third Culture Kids (TCK). Pollock and Van Reken show another aspect of this problem, emphasising that these expatriate children feel different, but associate their social reality with cosmopolitanism. The TCK build relationships with all cultures in which they grow up while not having full ownership of any of them; simultaneously, they point out that this experience generates a problem with a sense of belonging. Although elements from each culture are integrated into their life experiences, their sense of belonging is in relationship to others of similar TCK backgrounds (ibid: 19). As children between cultures, they develop their third culture to explain an identity that is different from that of the host country or their parents' home country or countries.

The literature also notices parents' role in the process of identity formation. Mari Korpela (2014) describes parents contributing widely to adolescents' and children's experience of identity. The parents' decisions determine the discursive praxis that the children and teenagers experience. In a case study of lifestyle migrants from the Global North living in India, she demonstrates firstly that their cosmopolitanism is somewhat limited, as they tend not to fully connect to the local culture and rather connect with a community of international migrants. Secondly, such parents have

an un-problematical, idealistic view of their children's cosmopolitanism as it derives from growing up in lifestyle migration. They believe exposing children to the different social realities associated with other social spaces will contribute to their problem-free 'absorption' of various cultural and social stimuli and thus to their 'natural' cosmopolitism. However, the experiences of children and teenagers are not so flexible (Korpela 2014).

As much as all these perspectives maintain interesting points, my study concentrates mainly on the cosmopolitan experience of children with a migrant parent or parents and their identity management, which is influenced by otherness, belonging and privilege.

Methods

The study utilises 12 months' participatory observation of a particular group at youth theatre rehearsals, both in-person and online, including during breaks, and three of their performances, one in person and two online. The observations were conducted in the rehearsal studios, in the theatre itself, and from October 2020 until June 2021 online in a room with one of the actors, as due to the pandemic lockdown all rehearsals and performances were held online. The study also conducted 12 semi-structured interviews with Anglophone teenagers from this particular group who have a migrant parent or parents. The interviews were conducted mainly during the first part of the research, all in person. The teenagers were between 15 and 18 years old. The study also involved an in-person, semi-structured interview with their teacher at the youth theatre.

The names of the people have been anonymised and changed in the study, as well as the institution. However, as much as I tried to conceal these identities, the place is rather specific to the given environment and can be traced by those familiar with it; the families and the teacher acknowledged that and gave informed consent to the research. The issue being researched is not sensitive, and any information of a personal nature cannot be tied to a certain child or teenager, as the alternative names used are not consistent with the persons specifically interviewed, although the descriptions of situations are precise and the quotations have not been edited.

The study started in spring after the 'first wave' of COVID-19, when online school and activities were over. After online rehearsing throughout the winter, they were back to in-person activity and rehearsals. I finally started conducting the in-person observation in the spring term. After the summer holiday break, in-person rehearsals started again. Unfortunately, in the middle of the term they went back online, including the autumn performance. I decided to continue observing online even if the observa-

tion was not as fruitful, as I could only follow one conversation among the youth as a group (a condition that applied to everybody else involved). The conversations were flatter, concerning mainly the play itself, and the experiences of the teenagers themselves were less discussed.

The nature of online observation is less obvious to the participants, but a lot is missing from the interaction, since the observer is alone in a room with a computer screen of people, each of whom is also alone in their own place; the participants are thus separated in physical space, but united virtually. Fortunately, I had already gotten to know the group in person for several months, which helped my orientation in the field when it moved online. As much as it is a currently important issue, this article does not address the specificity of online observation and 'lockdown reality'.

The interviews were conducted in person in the Czech and English languages. I gave the young people a choice as to which language we would speak. Of the young people who spoke Czech, only one chose English. Most turned the question back to me, assuming it would be more pleasant for me to speak Czech. They acted following their bilingual upbringing and strategy of neutrality (Scotton 1976), a bilingual adults' and children's strategy to speak the language that suits their conversation partner.

> *I am completely at ease, both with Czech and English, it's up to you.*
> (Lena – 15, Czech/The Netherlands)

Based on the data gathered in this way, I ask the following research question: For young people with a migrant parent or parents, what role does the youth theatre play in their navigation of the social landscapes in which they are placed and then actively move themselves within it, and how does it contribute to their identity management?

Context of an extracurricular activity: Youth theatre as an institution of socialisation in migration

Identities are managed based on discursive and material practices tied to various spaces and their institutions; in the case of children and young people, these are institutions of socialisation. As part of the socialisation of young people with migrant parents, these institutions can refer to various social spaces. I am focusing on an Anglophone, extracurricular activity of a drama class/youth theatre in this paper.

The tradition of youth theatre is connected with Great Britain and dates to the mid-20th century, growing from origins in schools, amateur dramatics, and community drama. The beginnings can be traced to London's

National Theatre (https://www.nyt.org.uk/about-us), where they started teaching children to perform hard, serious dramas, such as Shakespeare's plays. Nowadays, approximately 750 youth theatres are spread across the United Kingdom, catering for an estimated 30,000 young people from various backgrounds. Youth theatres have also been established outside of the United Kingdom. They have spread worldwide and are run by British or Anglophone migrants; there are such youth theatres, for example, in Croatia, Germany, Slovenia and also the Czech Republic.

According to research by Hughes and Wilson (2004), most British youth theatres chiefly value activity by children and young people that is regular and systematic, undertaken in an egalitarian group that is stable and welcomes everybody irrespective of ability or background.

Hughes and Wilson also add that taking part in the youth theatre significantly impacts "the personal and social development of young people". The activities performed in a youth theatre and its environment support positive transitions from youth into adulthood, combining "a transitional art form with a social group in a transitional moment". A youth theatre is a place where young people are protected in developing their social skills while "confronting the uncertainty and risk involved in making transitions to adulthood" *(*Hughes – Wilson 2004: 70). Most youth theatres in Britain are affordable for all, if not free, and their affordability is ensured and supported by the public education system.

Youth theatre in the Czech Republic

There has been a youth theatre in the Czech Republic since 2011, established by a migrant from the United Kingdom; its teachers are from Anglophone countries and it is run only in English. It is mainly attended by teenagers and children with an Anglophone migrant parent or parents. There are also expatriate children with a parent or parents from non-Anglophone countries and a few children with local parents whose parents' strategy is to socialise their children in English as bilinguals. The youth theatre in the Czech Republic has grown over the past 10 years from only a few children at the beginning into six different age groups in an age range from three to 17, with approximately 200 students from 32 countries (according to their website in spring 2021) in the academic year 2020/2021. In the Czech Republic, attendance is just available to the upper-middle class due to its cost, as it is not supported by the local public education system.

The plays were chosen following the tradition of British youth theatre (Hughes – Wilson 2004) – they are challenging, well-known dramas such as *Salt Mountain* and *The Canterbury Tales*; or contemporary dramas refer-

ring to Anglophone cultural knowledge and teenagers' dilemmas; or their attempt at devised theatre that references the Anglophone as well as the Czech context. They are performed twice a year; the audience consists primarily of the actors' parents and families.

The youth theatre advertises on its website and social media, and sometimes an article about it is published in an Anglophone newspaper in the Czech Republic. We can read on the website that the performance is as crucial as the rehearsal; that students are led by professionally-trained lecturers who encourage them to be creative, take risks, grow confident, and work hard; and the theatre also declares itself to be inclusive and to accept people from all backgrounds – anyone can attend a trial session and then decide if they want to join. All of this is according to the rules and beliefs of traditional British youth theatre as recorded by Hughes and Wilson (2004).

Anglophone activities in the Czech Republic are in demand due to the growth in the number of such residents. This means there are enough cosmopolitan families in the city with parents prepared to pay for their children to be socialised in English in their afterschool activity. There are also cosmopolitan or transnational local families who want their children to have a similar experience, or who seek to have their children 'truly' bilingual for their contact with the country of origin of one or both parents, or for their own possible future migration or international careers. The fact that the youth theatre in the Czech Republic has a relatively large number of Anglophone children who are growing up there participating in it raises many questions about the young people's practises.

In this study, I consider Anglophone teenagers with a migrant parent or parents in the context of privileged migration (Black – Stone 2005; Croucher 2012) and cosmopolitanism (Hannerz 1996; Korpela 2014) on the one hand, and of managing identity in the specific social landscape of Anglophone young people with a migrant parent or parents in the Czech Republic on the other hand (Somerville 2008; Levitt 2009; Wolff 1994; Seeberg – Goździak 2016).

The Masters

The director/teacher of the group whom I studied is British, and he began attending a youth theatre in Britain at the age of eight. He studied acting and teaching in England, and he has been living in the Czech Republic since the early 2000s. The Masters is the oldest group in the theatre, and in the spring term of 2020 it consisted of 19 young people aged between 15 and 17; in the winter term of 2020 the number was 14, and it remained 14 during the following spring term (fewer participants due to lockdown

and rehearsing online). Most of the children in this group had attended at least one other group in the youth theatre when they were younger, and many have attended the youth theatre since early childhood. They use the English language to communicate and navigate it with ease. The nationalities of the children and their parents were mixed; mostly, one parent came from an Anglophone country (see more in the discussion below), and the other was local (more below).

Findings

The group was, in some aspects, very heterogeneous. Most of the teenagers had one parent who had been raised and educated locally, the same as they are, while the other parent is in the Czech Republic in migrancy. The migrant parents were primarily from Anglophone countries: the USA, the UK and Australia. However, there were teenagers with one parent from a non-Anglophone country, usually economically well-developed western countries such as the Netherlands or Germany, while some children's parents were both from the Netherlands or from Switzerland. Two children had both parents raised and educated in the Russian Federation, and one had both parents from the Czech Republic. Most of the teenagers spoke English and Czech. Four of the group whose parents were both migrants spoke English and another non-local language and they were in the country with their families temporarily. The level of their involvement with the local culture in terms of experience and practise varied (Korpela 2014).

The 'wonderful' Masters are practising their privileges

Upon closer examination, there were many things that all of these teenagers had in common. They were all multilingual, with a strategy to emphasise the English language in connection to their own lives, even when it was not the language of either of their parents. All of the teenagers attended schools with extra English classes; some attended international schools with English as a primary language. They did not learn and practise English just as the language spoken by one of their parents, but also as part of their family's strategy to maintain their cosmopolitanism (Hannerz 1996), to be able to speak not just with their own parents and other family members in migrancy, but also with their cosmopolitan peers from all over the world.

> *Basically, we do a mix, my father generally talks to us in Italian or Spanish… Outside the family, with friends, I speak English because I go to school that is in English.* (Elias – 17, Swiss)

I speak English with most people. Most of my friends speak English. (John – 16, Australian/Czech)

For all of the youth theatre teenagers, English was the language they used among their peers, it was a living 'peer language' for them, and its use in this sense united them.

Their shared language was English; however, when Martha (16, Czech/British) and Amy (16, Czech/USA) met on public transport and talked about their play and who was playing what part in the performance, they spoke Czech. When they met another of their peers from the theatre, Philip (15, Czech/German), they switched to English immediately. The girls knew each other well, and when out in the Czech environment, they spoke Czech. Philip was a new member of the group, and they did not even think to speak to him in Czech, associating him just with an English environment. Their language competencies allow them to navigate the social landscape in English or another language at their discretion, or according to a strategy of neutrality (Scotton 1976).

All the young people had friends who were both Anglophone speakers and local-language speakers. They also had Czech friends outside the youth theatre, from school (whether they attended an international school or a Czech publicly funded school), and also from other after-school activities. John, for example, has been attending a Czech Boy Scout group since he was a small child, and at the time of the interview it was the only peer activity for him conducted in the local language. These young people experienced the local culture in various intensities and at various levels of cosmopolitanism (Korpela 2014).

Most of the young people at the youth theatre had experienced living outside of the Czech Republic, either as Anglophone migrants in a privileged, cosmopolitan environment, or as young people visiting their Anglophone parent's or parents' country of origin. If they had not had such a long-term experience in an Anglophone environment outside their current country of residence, it was at least common practice for all of them to travel to different countries relatively often. They did not talk about any obstacles that would prevent their movement, and they took their placement within the global world for granted. This is shown, for example, in their ideas about their future lives, which were geographically open – they considered their futures and their adult employment as happening in a cosmopolitan world.

I haven't decided where I want to go to university, maybe I will stay here, go to Australia, UK, I do not know yet. (John – 16, Australian/Czech)

> *The UK, London… Yes, that is where I am going to uni.* (Elias – 17, Swiss)

Other teenagers in the group also think about their future more globally, mostly in Anglophone countries, especially when we talk about their studies. Those teenagers whose parents are both from non-Anglophone countries stated that they do not wish to live in the country of their parents in the future.

The role of the youth theatre in these teenagers' cosmopolitanism is also prominent. They talk to each other there about the countries from which their migrant parent or parents come, their experiences there, and various points of interest. For example, when Lara (16, Czech/USA) was going to the USA, she talked about the COVID-19 restrictions and the fact that her grandparents did not want to wear face masks. Others in the group then also spoke about their own problems with travelling to their migrant parents' countries of origin and how people there followed their pandemic rules. The teenagers in the youth theatre share stories and experiences about their lives outside the Czech Republic; the information contributes to their socio-geographical knowledge, which draws these places closer to them and renders them more approachable.

Their privileges allow these 'wonderful actors' to easily navigate different geopolitical and social landscapes, at least in their imagined futures. The privilege not just of a high-status passport and 'native language' or economic capital (Black – Stone 2005; Croucher 2012), but also of their relationships in the youth theatre allows them to easily imagine their futures in global terms.

The childhood that has been guaranteed to them by their parents is extraordinary, as are the exceptional ambitions they take for granted. Being part of the youth theatre is one of the privileges resulting from their socialisation, based on their language competence and economic status. The activity's cost, like that of most activities held in English in the Czech Republic, is not affordable for more economically challenged families, as well as not accessible to peers who have not had the opportunity to speak English fluently at the level of a native speaker. Thus, participation in the youth theatre in the Czech Republic brings together children and young people with similar opportunities and experiences that are not available to most local children.

The children who attended the youth theatre are not aware of the specificity of their privilege. I witnessed a conversation among the teenagers after they had rehearsed a play about migrants from underdeveloped countries and the trouble such migrants have, both on their way to the UK and

then in the UK. The youth theatre participants were saying how they have now realised how privileged they are, as they have a roof over their head, their parents have steady jobs, and they are able to go to school. In their speech they were oblivious to the fact that they are also more privileged than other children around them, that they can easily navigate different social landscapes thanks to their family's economic status, their language competence, and the education they have been provided. This group of 'wonderful Masters' is homogeneous in several ways: in speaking more than one language, in their life strategy to use English as their native language, and they are (all but one) homogeneous in migrancy, in the sense that at least one of their parents was a migrant being brought up in a country different from the country they live in now. This allowed these young people to be part of multiple social spaces, to sail through an open social landscape, within a certain hyperbola.

'Weird' Masters?

Privileges of the adult world do not always correspond to children's experiences. Bjørnsen found in her study about the lives of Norwegian Foreign Services' (NFS) personnel's children that *"the cultural narrative of 'the privileged NFS childhood' takes the form of an adult-centric perspective of the 'global elite', projected onto childhood. Socio-economic status; unique, exotic experiences, opportunities and potential; … are dimensions of this narrative carrying expectations on emotion that the informants could not match."* (Bjørnsen 2020: 129) Bjørnsen describes the problem of the expectation of a happy, privileged childhood that her informants felt was a burden because it meant they could not show their anxiety, worries and sadness, as well as living with the expectancy of high performance. This imagined privilege meant they were expected to act in specific ways, to be happy and not feel distressed. As Bjørnsen puts it, there were "cultural expectations on how they were supposed to feel about their own life" (2020: 131). Nevertheless, these children struggled to fit into the environment of their schools and of their new peers.

Although Bjørnsen was studying the childhoods of elite families in the upper class who moved regularly and never stayed in any one place for more than a few years (and even though she interviewed adults reflecting on such childhoods), similar expectations and insecurities were also reflected upon by the teenagers in my research. Although the youth theatre teenagers were from families of migrants who were more ordinary than those in the Norwegian study, in some aspects they experienced the same high expectations from adults and the same feeling of otherness from their

peers, all of which contested their identity and sense of belonging. While not all Anglophone children in the Czech Republic feel the same way as is described in this paper, the children from my research sample who were attending the youth theatre did feel this way.

The Masters' experience of being 'weird' among their Czech peers

According to the *Inkluzivní škola* (Jiroutová 2021) NGO, 4.65% of foreign nationals studied at Czech schools in the academic year 2019/2020. If we estimate what that means for an elementary school with three class cohorts per grade level, that means the average elementary school would have about 29 foreign national pupils. At the national level, the feeling that the Czech Republic is an ethnically and racially homogeneous society is strong. Jarkovská et al. state that children also adopt the ethnic lens of the adults. In peer groups, they register ethnicity and draw attention to 'otherness' (2015). At puberty, the opinion of their peers becomes essential for young people (Tatum 1997). Ethnicity, citizenship and growing up in migration (Svobodová – Jánská 2016) are categories that these young people have to deal with.

Most of the young people from the youth theatre reflected on their position among their Czech peers as having been problematic from the very beginning. They claimed that they did not fit in at school; they emphasised the feeling of their own inadequacy. When emphasising the handicap of language, they said they felt their Czech was a barrier to their social acceptance.

> *I went straight away to fourth grade… we didn't know Czech very well, and we didn't get along with people* [at the school]. (Ellen – 15/USA)

> *You know, although I was born in Czech, my Czech is not as good. I hate the fascination with Czech proverbs at Czech schools.* (Martha – 16, Czech/British)

Some of the children expressed experiencing discomfort among their Czech peers, and said that when they are at school they feel the pressure of expectations in their communication with peers and teachers. They wished to be "normal", to fit in, but their abilities (their native language and transnational experience) made them extraordinary, and they did not care for the kind of attention they receive.

> *When we moved to Czech, and I was going to a normal Czech school, the children were all the time asking me to say something in English. I felt like an exotic animal.* (Amy – 15, Czech/USA)

> *I always had to translate when we had English-speaking teachers in the primary school. It was good, but I am shy.* (Martha – 16, Czech/British)

At the same time, the Anglophone teenagers in the youth theatre anticipate their classmates' expectations. They are, therefore, trying to confirm their competencies and become a walking dictionary for their peers. They tutor other pupils because they are perceived as native speakers. They are motivated to watch international news and English-language television series to maintain their transnational knowledge, which the adults in their lives and their peers expect from them. They are exposed to specific 'tests' that they do not want to fail, they struggle with a lack of specific competencies with which to perform in these situations, and they feel the need to make a special effort to meet the expectations imposed on them to be 'the others'.

Therefore, the expectations of their Czech peers deepen these teenagers' 'otherness'. All of this causes the Anglophone young people with a migrant parent or parents from the youth theatre to feel alienated and rejected; they work hard to avoid feeling inappropriate. They make an effort to adapt to the expectations of their surroundings and thus succeed with an appropriate form of Anglophone 'otherness'.

When Martha (16, Czech/British) talked about her Czech friends asking her to translate words into English, she completely dismissed the possibility of looking them up in a dictionary; she considered it unthinkable. This shows how much effort she expended to adapt to the expectations of her peers about what it means to be an Anglophone bilingual with migrant experience. She was not accepted as Czech and therefore made an effort to confirm the expectations made of her by her peers, i.e., how not to be strange, but 'the' other, the recognisable other, the Anglophone migrant. In summary, the expectations that these young people admitted to having accepted have pushed them into situations where they affirm their privileges even as they themselves perceive them as the handicap of their 'otherness'.

'Weird and wonderful' Masters in the youth theatre club

For these Anglophone teenagers, the youth theatre was another social space they can enter. Several reasons to attend the youth theatre were re-

peated in the interviews. Anglophone teenagers with migrant parents were practising their favourite hobby there; they valued the drama class activity in and of itself. They loved theatre and believed they were talented; they imagined themselves as actors or directors in the future. Although not all of them expected to act as a job, they all wished to be connected to acting of some kind.

> *I want to continue acting, but I do not think I will be a professional actress. It is a too difficult and uncertain job.* (Martha – 16, Czech/British)

> *Since I was really little, I was always taking part in school plays and stuff. I was really enjoying it, and people said I was great, so I guess that made me feel I should definitely be an actor.* (John – 16, Australian/Czech)

Not only was the theatre their favourite activity, but they were also happy there. They appreciate that they can be themselves in the youth theatre, they are not worried about inappropriate behaviour. They feel safe here because they know they will always be socially accepted and respected. Their acting performances are never condemned, and their directing ideas are considered.

> *… it is not really that Oscar directs the entire thing; he lets all of us contribute to everything.* (John – 16, Australian/Czech)

Along with the popularity of the theatrical work (rehearsals, directing, and acting itself), the teenagers' statements very often emphasised the accepting atmosphere, tolerance, and openness of all the participants in the Masters group at the youth theatre.

> *They are definitely more open, friendlier here.* (Anna – 15, Czech/USA)

> *They [meaning others in the group] are very accepting, like all the differences, they also support LGBT. There are people there from that group, and they know they can show it, and no one will judge them.* (Martha – 15, Czech/USA)

> *I find them more open than my friends in the Czech school, and they are usually more pleasant, nicer, and I understand them more.* (Ellen – 15, Czech/USA)

Here, in the environment of the Anglophone youth theatre, Anglophone young people with a migrant parent or parents not only feel accepted, but above all, they feel adequate. They reflect on the fact that in the youth theatre environment they can share their 'common experience', that of growing up in migration.

> *And the names were nice too. No one was surprised.* (Amy – 15, Czech/USA)

> *Then we also have people there who are Czechs …, or Czech-English, or Czech-Americans, who are the same as me, go to a Czech school, and we have the same problems ….* (Martha – 16, Czech/British)

> *When I first came, it was cool to see so many children who spoke as good English as I did, and no one asked where you come from at first glance.* (Amy – 15, Czech/USA)

This does not mean they considered themselves 'the same'. They named their diversity and spoke about the tolerance they provide each other. Awareness of tolerance is another key competence that navigates them in the social landscape.

> *I guess we are all different as it is, so we take it naturally that we all are totally different, as in other aspects.* (Anne – 15, USA/Czech)

These young people do not associate with each other through ethnicity (on the contrary, they register the ethnic heterogeneity of the group), but above all through their relationship to the Czech geographical area, and to cosmopolitanism. They have certain feelings of 'otherness' in the outside world, but at the youth theatre, they are people 'with experience of Anglophone migration to the Czech Republic', which is the norm of this theatre group. They enjoy the environment of young people with a similar background to their own that is provided by the youth theatre.

Along with their acting skills and acceptance, the youth theatre attendees also develop their ability to navigate the social landscape. When they enact characters' feelings, they learn how to deal with such feelings in their own life roles. For example, in one contemporary drama there are three girl characters, taken from Anglophone fairy tales, who intersect with three very contemporary problems: pregnancy at a young age and how this situation changes friendships, a relationship with a partner who is dull and usurping, and an unsupportive home environment and drug abuse. In the theatre

club, these young people practice their social skills in a safe environment (Hughes – Wilson 2004).

> *It is hard when you try to act for the first time, but after all it would be wrong to not make a fool of yourself, because that would mean you probably didn't even try.* (Lara – 15, Czech/USA)

This is also supported by a quote from one of the students on the youth theatre website: identified as "Natasha" (age and nationality unknown to researcher), she is quoted as saying *"the youth theatre really developed my confidence and acting skills"*. Here self-confidence is a tool to sustain not just individuality, but also one's 'otherness' in the context of growing up in migration.

The choice of the plays written for Anglophone youth theatres, whether for Anglophone theatres in Berlin, England or Ireland, also maintained the attendees' cosmopolitan knowledge. When they rehearsed and performed a play about a particular scandal in Britain history with a connection to contemporary Britain, they learnt about word inequalities as well as Anglophone history. Oscar (their teacher) often explained words that they didn't know or corrected their pronunciation. There was also a Dutch word (a name), in the play and a girl with Dutch parents explained the meaning of the word and its pronunciation. The discursive and material practises in the youth theatre were cosmopolitan. The teenagers with connections to various Anglophone countries (and a few others) from the globalised world produced and reproduced their cosmopolitanism in the youth theatre through such practises.

In conclusion

Anglophone migration creates specific institutions that suit these migrants' specific lifestyles. The youth theatre responds to the demand of Anglophone families who want to raise their children in migration, emphasising the English language and Anglophone world. It is not a choice for all Anglophone parent(s) of teenagers. The Anglophone young people attending the youth theatre in the Czech Republic have grown up in privileged families (Bjørnsen 2020) due to their privileged passport, mother tongue, and parent or parents from the Global North, with easier access to social and economic capital (Benson – O'Reilly 2009; Black – Stone 2005). Although the youth theatre entails different consequences for its members in the context of their growing up in migration, it is a privileged place. The Anglophone teenagers from the youth theatre have experienced otherness

among their Czech peers. They were 'other' to their peers in Czech schools; they differed from the Czech, homogeneous understanding of what a nation is (Jarkovská et al. 2015). They reflected on being identified as 'others' and strived to be identified as 'the others', the Anglophone others, managing their identity as expected by their Czech peers. They worked on their mother tongue, which is not spoken by the majority in the Czech Republic, on their Anglophone knowledge, and on references to their migrant parent or parents' country or countries of origin. Privilege in the adult world is not important for young people, who form their identity by interacting with differences and similarities within their peer groups (Jenkins 2014). In the context of establishing one's similarity in a peer group of teenagers, adult world privilege is a disadvantage.

Because these young people are all navigating a social landscape with two social spaces, they reflect on themselves as 'other' in the Czech environment of homogeneity. In this situation, the institution of the youth theatre offers them a space where the norm is 'otherness', where no ethnic, national or 'racial' group predominates. They feel adequate and content as well as understood and appreciated in the company of young people with a similar experience to their own. They reflect on themselves as being Anglophone, open-minded teenagers. In addition, the youth theatre helps young people manage their identity and transform into adulthood. They act out their feelings and situations of strong emotions, thanks to which they easily recognise their own emotions in the safe environment of the Anglophone youth theatre institution in the Czech Republic (Hughes – Wilson 2004).

For these young people, the youth theatre is a place where their 'otherness' becomes a normality. They experience this normality even as their 'otherness' is strengthened through its practises. Egalitarian, local mainstream schools exoticize these children and create a feeling of their exclusion, of an 'otherness' that motivates them to join a more privileged environment to feel accepted and 'normal'. Although it is located in the Czech Republic, the youth theatre connects its actors with the Anglophone world, teaching them to "manoeuvre expectedly through Anglophone cultures" (Hannerz 1996). At the same time, they tend to close themselves within their own social bubble (Korpela 2014). Their cosmopolitanism and its discursive and material practises are produced and reproduced within the youth theatre, thereby also reproducing their privilege and 'otherness' among their Czech peers.

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