

Abstract

The following thesis addresses the theme of puberty through three Italian novels: *Agostino* by Alberto Moravia, *Ernesto* by Umberto Saba, and *Dietro la porta* by Giorgio Bassani. The introduction outlines the history of the children's and adolescents' protagonism in literature since the beginning. One chapter is dedicated to each author, his biographic data and generic work. The analyzed novels are then formally presented whose contents reveal a prevalence of the puberty theme. The authors' life journeys and unique youthful traumas are clearly projected in each novel. We can find the reflection of complicated family relationships, first sexual experiences, and initial problems of adult life in the stories of the young protagonists. Finally, the difference between the characters and their authors is shown with a brief comparison.