

# An Analysis of the Children's Characters in Roald Dahl's Novel "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory"

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**Abstract-** Charlie and the Chocolate Factory by Roald Dahl is one of the most popular children's novels. This novel talks about the adventure of five children who have the opportunity to pay a visit to the most famous chocolate factory in the world, Wonka's. The owner, Willy Wonka, who becomes the tour guide of the day, is a man of unique style and personality. Children's novels explore the challenges the children's characters come across in their everyday lives. Roald Dahl's Children's books have been adapted into films and received good response from the children all over the world. In addition to that, the moral values are always associated with the children's novels. This paper focuses on the morality by analysing the children's characters in Charlie and the Chocolate Factory (1964) by Roald. This study takes up a textual analysis to reveal the children's characters' morality that arises from the texts.

## INTRODUCTION

Lim (2009), in her article *Writing for Asian children: history, fantasy, and identity*, supported this view by claiming that —children's literature is a genre that is quite distinctive from fictions for adults and has very much its own set of conventions (p. 21). Hafez (2002) claimed that the books that children read will help mould and influence their view of life and the way they realise their experiences (p. 158). This will help the children to relate the current events to the real world. It creates an opportunity for the children to dwell on fantasy and develop self esteem among them.

## CHILDREN AND BOOKS

Now a day's, Science and technology play a major role in molding children. Technology can transmit children's literature to a film. For example, the success stories of *Harry Potter* series by J.K Rowling, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884) by Mark Twain and also *Alice in wonderland*, a fantasy

adventure film released by the Walt Disney in 2010, which is adapted from the fantasy novel *Alice's adventures in wonderland* (1865) by Lewis Carroll. Mikkelson (2005) stated that childhood is the age when children respond to fantasy and adventures, and thus, using literature can help children to develop their self-confidence and morality. Apart from that, literature for children is able to promote moral values in dealing with the issues like trauma, self-confidence and interpreting the world (Biskin & Hoskisson, 1972; Dana & Lynch-Brown, 1991; Dowd & Haden, 1994; Sheinman, 1999; Binnendyk & Schonert-Reichl, 2002).

## ROALD DAHL AND HIS WRITING

Roald Dahl is a well-known author who wrote entertaining and humorous fantasy stories that are lovable among children despite his creative, cynical and witty style which critics described as violent and cruel (West, 1988; Cullingford, 1998, Szuber, 1999). In an article published in the Horn Book Magazine by Eleanor Cameron, she commented Charlie and the Chocolate Factory as —one of the most tasteless books ever written for children (West, 1988, p. 71). According to West (1988) and Szuber (1999), Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, although being much loved by the children, came under attack for being racist through the characters of the Oompa Loompas (West, 1988). Thus, his writing of children's books usually met with disapproval and, Although the attack on the depiction of the Oompa Loompas as racist raised public uproar, Dahl pointed out in West (1988) that "Oompa Loompas in Charlie and the Chocolate Factory are charming creatures, whereas the white kids in the book were, with the exception of Charlie, most unpleasant" (p. 72).

## ANALYSIS OF CHILDRENS' CHARACTER AUGUSTUS GLOOP

Augustus is represented as an immature boy. It can be very clearly seen in his actions. For example, when he kneels on the chocolate river bank to drink some chocolate even though such actions are prohibited. In spite of adults giving advice, he “had quietly sneaked down to the edge of the river” (Dahl, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, 1964, p. 96). Gibbs (2005) stated that a person who depicts immature morality feels that “authority should not boss anyone around” (p.148). This can be proven when his mother does not approve of his behavior, so she asked him to stop exclaiming, “Augustus, sweetheart. I don't think you had better do that. Portraying an —egocentric manner which depicts immature morality” (Gibbs, 2005), he ignores his mother and he was kneeling on the riverbank and starts scooping hot melted chocolate into his mouth as fast as he could. These scenes depict Augustus a greedy boy. His insatiable manner is because of the fear that others would have a share for the delicious chocolate. So he soon takes this action. This is not a good moral action because he has not sought the owner's permission.

Augustus also does not take the slightest notice of his mother or Mr. Wonka (Dahl, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, 1964, p. 97) which resembles his ego-centrism. Gibbs (2003) also asserted that physical damage committed by an individual is acknowledged to be wrong while punishment serves as a way to correct the behavior.

In the text, —For sudden, there was a shriek, and then, a splash, and into the river went Augustus Gloop. This clearly illustrates the penalty of Augustus' own ignorance. He is also sent shooting up the pipe, to be altered a bit and to be boiled for a minute more. It is just to make sure that all the greed and the gall is boiled away for once and all (p. 105). The author describes greedy children as immature and their actions need to be punished.

## VERUCA SALT

Veruca shouts and screams whenever she wants something. Veruca cries in the most pestering way, when her wish is not being granted by her parents. Veruca Salt portrayed as an immature girl when she

scream[s] to her parents, lie[s] for hours and kick[s] and yell[s] (Dahl, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, 1964, p. 40) on the floor in order to insist on her needs and for the community to accommodate her needs and wants. This supports Gibbs' (2005) view that an immature child has trouble in understanding the ideal relationship with others and prone to detect how her parents are being unfair to her.

Veruca employs the idea of being practically demanding. Another example that portrays Veruca's egocentrism due to her impetuous manner is when she asks for an Oompa Loompa from her father. She is similar like Augustus. She is brave and hungry so she demands her father to buy her an Oompa Loompa which depicts her immaturity. Her words, “Daddy! I want an Oompa-Loompa right away!” demonstrates her domination on her father to own an Oompa-Loompa immediately. She goes on by saying “I want to take it home with me! Go on, Daddy! Get me an Oompa Loompa!” (Dahl, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, 1964, p. 96). These are the examples that shows her dominating character not to listen anyone except herself. Besides, she even instructs Mr. Salt to buy her a big boat like Mr. Wonka, and this reveals her egocentric manner. She goes on by exclaiming, “Daddy, said Veruca Salt, I want a boat like this! I want you to buy me a big pink boiled-sweet boat exactly like Mr.Wonka's! And I want a chocolate river and I want... I want...” (Dahl, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, 1964, p. 107). All the examples says that punishment is required to correct children's behavior.

## CHARLIE BUCKET

Charlie is portrayed as a perfect grandchild because of his willingness to share and listen to his grandparents' stories depicts his perseverance, kindness and responsibility as the only child in the Bucket family. He always “went into the room of his four grandparents to listen to their stories, and then afterwards to say good night” (Dahl, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, 1964. p. 19). Charlie creates a warm relationship with his parents and four grandparents, depicts his responsibility toward the elders. In addition, his grandparents reckon that Charlie “was the bright things in their life”(p. 19). Charlie's relationship with his grandparents shows mature morality. He gained respect for the elders through the positive interaction the family members

have at home. Although the Bucket family is poor, healthy relationships in the family contribute to a harmonious environment.

Charlie intends to share a bar of chocolate with his parents and grandparents on his birthday. It portrays his mature morality, depicting his kindness and care toward the rest of family. "Here, Mother, have a bit. We'll share it. I want everybody to taste it" (Dahl, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, 1964, p. 45). Charlie refuses to accept the fact that the chocolate belongs to him and he strongly insists his family members to take it when he pleads with Grandpa Joe, "Please, begged Charlie, turning round and offering it to Grandpa Joe".

When Charlie is rewarded with the chocolate factory at the end, Charlie is doubtful if his parents and grandparents would agree to live at the factory. He "tried to calm the three old people who are still petrified with fear, showing his responsibility to make sure his grandparents who feel frightened feel better". He persuades his grandparents, "It's quite safe to indicate his assurance that they will be visiting the most wonderful place in the world". (Dahl, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, 1964, p. 189). Charlie is trying to ensure the comfort ability of his grandparents at the chocolate factory shows his matured morality. Due to his good manners and his virtue for being a "good sensible loving child, he is eventually rewarded the Wonka chocolate factory" (p.49).

#### CONCLUSION

The worth and value of obedience, responsibility and honesty are also recognized in the novel. Children who are disobedient and aggressive towards the parents are portrayed as immature characters and are given punishment to correct their behavior. Parents also play major roles in educating the children to well-behaved. Moral values should be implemented right from the childhood to shape any children into a moral individual. Despite the criticism on Roald Dahl's works, it proves that moral values presented in these two novels are expressed through the children's mature and immature morality examined in the text. To conclude, Roald Dahl's work has attracted children to become good readers due to the sense of confidence, courage, fun and hope he depicted through the children's characters in the novel.

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