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## **Approach to moral development in children through the novel *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* by Roald Dahl**

***Jency Brightlin. S***

II M.A English Literature, Nirmala College for Women, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India

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### **ABSTRACT**

The paper deploys the paramount role morality plays in literature especially in children's literature. Moralistic Approach is used to incorporate ethical teaching in children. The novel *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* by Roald Dahl is a fine example of this kind. Roald Dahl depicts virtues through his works which stimulate the ideas and opinion of the children towards rectitude. It is conveyed by the author Roald Dahl through the fictional character Oompa- Loompas is analyzed with the help of Kohlberg's theory of Moral Development. This theory focuses on the progressive stages in moral development among children. This paper further focuses on the role of virtue in society and literature by helping children learn moral values.

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**Keywords:** Children's Literature, Rectitude, Moralistic Ethics, Progressive Stages, Virtue

Moral development in children are becoming a moral issue in the society nowadays. In this era, it is clear that today's young generations face more temptations than previous generation. Children's literature promotes morals with its fictions and non-fiction works. The prominent work of Roald Dahl is a fine example of this category. His children's novel *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* conveys many moral message to children through the songs of Oompa- Loompas. The paper further discusses the moral values through the application of Kohlberg's theory of Moral Development. This theory focuses on the child's moral development through its six stages.

*Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* was first published in 1964, is a children's novel by Roald Dahl a British author. The story was inspiration by his personal experience. During his schooldays chocolate companies especially 'Cadbury' company often sends test packages to school children to develop their new products by getting their opinions, which created the impact on Dahl. This novel focuses on the adventures of young Charlie Bucket who have poverty stricken family. He won golden ticket by luck; with him there are four children who won the golden tickets to visit the mysterious chocolate factory in Charlie's town. The factory has an eccentric owner, with workers known as Oompa- Loompas. The four children were self-centred, nasty and greedy to follow the rules, so they cause troubles and they suffer from agony and torment. Their personality made them chased out of the factory whenever each child got expulsion from the factory, Oompa-Loompas regularly crack into songs which gives the remarks of the children's behaviour. On the other hand Charlie is brave, generous, modest, kind and respected everyone qualifies to be the owner of the factory. Finally Charlie was rewarded for his good characters.

The main aim of the moralistic approach is to judge the literary works by their ethical teachings and their effects on readers rather than formal principles; it aims to produce the literature to be ethically sound and virtues to be praised. According to moralistic approach, importance of literature is based not in the way of saying but what it says, here 'way' represents the form or structure of the literature and 'what' represents the moral values of the literature. Moralistic approach focuses on the morals and its strains to unite moral earnestness with aesthetic sensitivity.

*Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* by Roald Dahl convey moral messages to its readers and to help them learn good moral attitudes through its ethical teaching. The novel projects children's have high moral responsibilities which can be achieved through good deeds. The five children in the novel are judged according to their behaviour and the songs of Oompa-Loompas explains their failed moral values which sent them out of the factory.

Lawrence Kohlberg's six stages of moral development is an expanding theory of psychological theory originally formed by Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget in his theory of Cognitive development. This theory upholds that moral reasoning or values is the required condition for an ethical behaviour which can be claimed through six stages of moral development, it operates in three phases they are pre-conventional, conventional and post-conventional morality. The paper focuses stage one from the pre-conventional phase which is 'Punishment and Obedience Orientation', it pivots on the direct and immediate consequences of individual according to their own actions. For instance an individual's action which is recognized as morally incorrect will be punished. So it creates an impact on individual to obey the orders or to follow the moral values to avoid punishment.

The great big greedy nincompoo / ... We're positive he'd never give / even the smallest bit of fun / or happiness to anyone / ... So greedy, foul, and infantile, / ... That all the greed and all the gall / is boiled away for once and all / ... This greedy brute, this louse's ear, / is loved by people everywhere! / For who could hate or bear a grudge / against a luscious bit of fudge? (Dahl 104-05).

These lines were sang by Oompa-Loompas when the golden ticket winner Augustus Gloop fell into the chocolate river and sucked by the pipe because of his greediness for chocolate. He was greedy to eat the chocolate in the river that he fell into it and was sucked by the pipe. At the end of the song the Oompa-Loompas teach repentance from his greediness which will make him loved by everyone.

Than some repulsive little bum / who's always chewing chewing-gum / ... That chewing gum will never pay / this sticky habit's bound to send / the chewer to a sticky end / ... disgusting sanatorium / and that is why we try so hard / to save Miss Violet Beauregarde / from suffering an equal fate. / She's still quite young. / It's not too late, / provided she survives the cure (Dahl 127-29).

Violet another golden ticket winner had a habit of chewing gums which in turn made her try an untested gum that was produced in the factory's lab. The above lines are the song sung by the Oompa-Loompas to Miss Violet by telling her a story about Miss Bigelow who always keeps chewing while bathing, dancing and also at church. Finally she bit her tongue to two. Similarly they did not want Violet to bite her tongue so they wish her to be cured from this obsession of chewing gums.

Veruca Salt, the little brute, / has just gone down the rubbish chute / ... and this is the price she has to pay / for going so very far astray / ... for though she's spoiled, and dreadfully so, / a girl can't spoil herself, you know. / Who spoiled her, then? Ah, who indeed? / Who pandered to her every need? / Who turned her into such a brat? / Who are the culprits? Who did that? / Alas! You needn't look so far / to find out who these sinners are. / They are / her loving parents, MUM and DAD (Dahl 147-148).

Veruca Salt, another winner of the golden ticket was adamant and selfish that she wanted to take the squirrels that worked at the factory but ended up falling into a drain hole. Oompa-Loompas through this song tells that the child can't spoil herself it was because of her parents who made her arrogant by pandering to her every need, here Oompa-Loompas accusing her parents to be culprits of their child's bad behaviour.

They loll and slop and lounge about, / and stare until their eyes pop out. / ... they sit and stare and stare and sit / until they're hypnotized by it, / IT ROTS THE SENSES IN THE HEAD! / IT KILLS IMAGINATION DEAD! / IT CLOGS AND CLUTTERS UP THE MIND! / IT MAKES A CHILD SO DULL AND BLIND / HE CAN NO LONGER UNDERSTAND / A FANTASY, A FAIRYLAND! / HIS BRAIN BECOMES AS SOFT AS CHEESE! / HIS POWERS OF THINKING RUST AND FREEZE! / HE CANNOT THINK - HE ONLY SEES! / ... before this monster was invented? / THEY ... USED ... TO ... READ! They'd / READ and READ, / ... the nursery shelves held books galore! / ... so please, oh please, we beg, we pray, / go throw your TV set away (Dahl 171-173).

Another golden ticket winner Mike was obsessed with television. Oompa-Loompas compares the past where television doesn't exist and children used to read books which promotes creativity with more imagination about dragons, gypsies, queens, whales, pirates, and treasure isles but at present children are obsessed with television which over stimulates their brain, makes the individual antisocial, waste time, kills imagination, thinking become rust and it clogs up the mind. So the Oompa-Loompas explains this situation and recommends the parents to throw away their television.

In this novel four children who are troublesome, nasty, greedy, self-centred, rude, mean, impetuousness, spoiled, aggressive, prideful,

bad-tempered and slothful are punished whereas Charlie who is generous, kind-hearted, selfless, honest, fortitude and integrity was rewarded. The reward he received was the chocolate factory.

Thus through the theory, children are rewarded for their good deeds and punished for their bad deeds. Dahl through his fictional character Oompa-Loompas he points out the moral acts done by the children in the novel. Also through their songs he conveys moral message to his readers. Therefore his children's book *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* helps children to understand that good actions are considered as good moral values while bad actions are considered as bad moral values. As a result the children in the novel are rewarded and punished accordingly. Dahl uses literature as a means to convey ethical messages to his young readers.

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