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Ab uno disce omnes

On the cover:
Vassili Kandinsky
“Various circles”

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ROALD DAHL: THE GREAT STORYTELLER REVEALING HIS LIFE

Lai Chun Chun, Ivy *

Abstract: *Roald Dahl is a wonderful storyteller. One of the great storytellers revealing his life, Roald Dahl writes stories with a fantastic narrative. This paper discusses some of the real life experiences that inspire Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, James and the Giant Peach, Matilda, the Witches, the Twits and the Big Friendly Giant. The impact of the narrative on the readers has also been discussed.*

Keywords: *Roald Dahl, narrator, fantastic fiction, reader.*

Résumé: *Roald Dahl est un excellent narrateur. L'un des plus grands narrateurs révélant sa propre vie, Roland Dahl écrit des récits employant la narration fantastique. Notre étude s'intéresse à quelques expériences de la vie réelle qui ont été la source d'inspiration pour les ouvrages Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, James and the Giant Peach, Matilda, the Witches, the Twits and the Big Friendly Giant mais aussi à l'impacte de la narration sur ses lecteurs.*

Mots clés: *Roald Dahl, narrateur, narration fantastique, lecteur.*

Roald Dahl: The Great Storyteller Revealing His Life

Roald Dahl, a renowned children stories writer, narrates story in an intriguing way, which has attracted many children readers. *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, James and the Giant Peach, Matilda, the Witches, the Twits* and *the Big Friendly Giant* are his well-known masterpieces that are so popular. It would be worthwhile to find out how Roald Dahl narrates these stories, and how Roald Dahl's life possibly influences the way he narrates the stories. In this paper, the way Roald Dahl narrates in the six masterpieces will be analyzed to illustrate how Roald Dahl's life possibly influences the story-telling.

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The methodology we are going to use is to map Roald Dahl's life events with the way story is told. The way the story is told will be analyzed to find out any possible Roald Dahl's life influences of story-telling.

In *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, the story begins with 'these two very old people', Grandpa Joe and Grandma Josephine. (*Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, p. 1) Then, the narrator shifts the focus from the Buckets family back to Charlie. Progressively, the narrator points to the chocolate and thus the enormous factory. The story unfolds itself. Eventually, founders of the Golden Tickets are found one by one. The first one is a boy called Augustus Gloop. (*Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, p. 36) The second one is a small girl called Veruca Salt who lives with her rich parents in a great city far away. (*Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, p. 39) Later, two more golden tickets are found. The third ticket is found by a Miss Violet Beauregarde. The fourth ticket is found by young Mike Teavee. (*Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, p.49) The last Golden Ticket is found by Charlie (*Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, p. 64) at the shop. Layers of narratives have been built one by one in a systematic way. It is as if Roald Dahl who has experienced a number of great events in his life: the break out of the Second World War, the plane crash, etc. The psychological impact of the narrative on the reader is so profound that readers are pushed to go on reading.

In fact, the reason why Roald Dahl can write such a fascinating narrative on chocolate is that Roald Dahl has thought quite a lot of chocolate. (Schultz, "Finding Fate's Father: Some Life History Influences on Roald Dahl's Charlie and the Chocolate Factory.", p. 463) At age of nine, Roald Dahl attends school near a sweet shop. He spends his adolescence in an English public school, where Cadbury Company is nearby. Dahl and his classmates sometimes get to taste experimental chocolates, rating them and writing out their reactions. *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory's* origin can be traced to Cadbury experience. Roald Dahl remarks, "I have no doubt at all that, thirty-five years later, when I was looking for a plot for my second book for children, I remembered those little cardboard boxes and the newly-invented chocolates inside them, and I began to write a book called *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*" (Boy, p. 149).

Chocolate, from the chocolate factory, has become a key icon of the narrative, with which each kid is interwoven. Mr. Wonka, the man who belongs to the chocolate factory, meets Augustus, Veruca Salt, Violet Beauregarde, Mike Teavee, and finally Charlie Bucket in the factory one by one. In the factory, the waterfall adds visual appeal to the narrative. 'A whole mass of enormous glass pipes were dangling down into the river from somewhere high up in the ceiling!... 'It's all chocolate! Every drop of that river is hot melted chocolate of the finest quality.' (*Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, p. 89) The vivid description of the waterfall in the chocolate factory is possibly influenced by the explosion of bombs Roald Dahl witnesses during the Second World War. 'I

heard lots of bombs not very far away.’ (*Going Solo*, p. 105) The dynamic running chocolate from the waterfall is possibly situated in the context of the thunder of bomb explosion in the Second World War.

After visiting the waterfall, Oompa Loompas comes up in the journey to the chocolate factory. Oompa Loompas are beasts leading the kids to the factory. The appearance of Oompa Loompas is possibly constructed under the influence of the eccentric life Roald Dahl has in Middle East. Foreign people and the poisonous snakes are exotic beings Roald Dahl has encountered when he has the contract with the Shell Company from the age of twenty two to the age of twenty five. (*Going Solo*, p. 3, p. 21) Oompa Loompus adds liveliness to the chocolate factory, turning the chocolate factory to a unique one. With the uncommon beasts Oompa Loompus, the narrative becomes more dynamic, which plunges readers to the thrilling journey.

At last, Mr. Wonda sends each kid away. August Gloop, Veruca Salt, Miss Violet Beauregarde, Mike Teavee and Charlie have been sent by Mr. Wonda one by one in order. The final one is Charlie, the winner who is going to own the chocolate factory. The narrative echoes the beginning of the story, in which the golden tickets of winners are uncovered one by one. The ongoing whirl of narrative allows readers to explore the mystery of the journey to the chocolate factory. The layered narrative is possibly contextualized at Western Desert where Roald Dahl is abandoned in flight crash. The desert signifies emptiness, which is echoed by the “layered” narrative.

In the narrative, at the end, Charlie wins the victory and triumphs. This marks the special moment of his life, the time he owns the factory. The ending of the narrative is possibly influenced by Roald Dahl who has survived after so many accidents in his life.

Unlike Charlie who has a perfect family in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, in *James and the Giant Peach*, James’ parents are eaten up by an enormous rhinoceros that James has become an orphan. Eventually, James lives with Aunt Sponge and Aunt Spiker. Schultz states that accidents, such as being eaten up, recur in Roald Dahl’s fiction. (Schultz, “Finding Fate’s Father: Some Life History Influences on Roald Dahl’s Charlie and the Chocolate Factory”, p. 470) One day, James meets an old man who tells him how to plant the seeds. On the other day, suddenly, a peach is discovered by Aunt Spiker. The peach is growing bigger and bigger. The huge peach plays an important role in the narrative. This is probably due to the fact that Roald Dahl’s father who is an expert gardener and above all a collector of alpine plants. (*The Boy*, p. 18) Why Roald Dahl chooses the peach, instead of other fruits, is that ‘It’s pretty and it’s big and it’s squishy and you can go into it and it’s got a big seed in the middle which you can play with.’ (www.roaldahl.com) Writing about the peach is possibly influenced by the “writing hut” on the tree where Roald Dahl writes in the countryside.

Through the peach, James embarks on his new journey. He realizes the hole of the peach which he is crawling is not a hole but a tunnel. By crawling through the tunnel, he meets various creatures. 'There (is) an old-Green-Grasshopper as large as a large dog sitting directly across the room from James now. And next to the Old-Green-Grasshopper, there (is) an enormous Spider. And next to the Spider, there (is) a giant Ladybird with nine black spots on her scarlet shell. On a sofa near by, reclining comfortably in curled-up positions, there (are) a Centipede and an Earthworm. On the floor over in the far corner, there (is) something thick and white that looked as though it might be a Silkworm. But it (is) sleeping soundly and nobody was paying any attention to it. Every one of these 'creatures' (is) at least as big as James himself, and in the strange greenish light that (shines) down from somewhere in the ceiling, they (are) absolutely tarrying to behold.' (James and the Giant Peach, p. 39-40) The creatures he encounters are bizarre. Roald Dahl depicts the creatures in such a manner, possibly influenced by his desire to go to East Africa, where there are jungles and lions and elephants and tall coconut palms he is fascinated about. (Boy, p. 173) No wonder Roald Dahl can portray those creatures in such a lively manner.

With these creatures, James has an exciting journey on the peach. In the narrative, the most dramatic moment is the time the peach is leaking. 'It's full of holes and the juice is dripping out everywhere!' (*James and the Giant Peach*, p. 116) The burst of the peach is remarkable. It is like a bomb explosion in the Second World War, similar to the thunder of waterfall at the chocolate factory in *Charles and the Chocolate Factory* (as discussed above). The burst of the peach is possibly influenced by the context of the Second World War. What is so special about the burst of the peach is that the rainbow is dangling high in the sky just above the leaking peach, and it is heading directly towards the rainbow. (*James and the Giant Peach*, p. 118) The sudden crash of the leaking peach into the rainbow high in the sky makes the narrative more appealing.

The peach, in the narrative, has dawn the readers' attention. 'There (is) the giant peach, caught and spiked the very pinnacle of the Empire State Building'. (*James and the Giant Peach*, p. 138) 'Police cars and fire engines (come) screaming in from all over the city and pulled up outside the Empire State Building. Two hundred firemen and six hundred policemen (swarm) into the building and (go) up in the elevators as high as they could go.' The giant peach stationed at the top of Empire State Building has caused the chaos of the city. This is possibly influenced by the chaos at the Western Desert where Roald Dahl has the injuries. Finally, hundreds and hundreds of children come to the City to see the marvelous peach stone in the Park. (*James and the Giant Peach*, p. 155) The peach stone becomes a landmark for children. Like Charlie who triumphs at the end of *Charlie and the chocolate factory*, James who has been the saddest and loneliest boy, now has all the friends and playmates in the world

at the end. James is no longer lonely, possibly influenced by Roald Dahl who has so many friends, such as close friend Arthur Norris who helps to organize an exhibition of his photographs. (*The Boy*, p. 163)

In *Matilda*, the story is about the extra-ordinary Matilda who is often ignored by her parents. This is possibly influenced by Roald Dahl's sister Astri, whose attention has been all given by Roald Dahl's father. Astri dies from appendicitis, followed by her father's death caused by pneumonia. (*The Boy*, p. 20) The extraordinary Matilda is talented at language. At the age of one and a half, she can speak very well, and knows many words as most grow ups. At the age of three, she teaches herself to read by studying newspapers and magazines. At the age of four, she could read fast and well. (*Matilda*, p. 5) The narrative is progressive. One afternoon, when Matilda's father refuses to buy her a book, Matilda sets out all by herself to walk to the public library. She meets Mrs. Phelps, who allows her to borrow so many great books to read. The talented Matilda is so absorbed in books. She is utterly literate since her childhood. This is possibly influenced by Roald Dahl, who is sent by her mother to schools at an early age. (*The Boy*, p. 27) In fact, Roald Dahl's father wishes all his children to be educated in English schools. (*The Boy*, p. 21) Dahl is well-educated in the British public school system, as a border at St. Peter's school, Weston Super Mare and then at Repton in Derbyshire. (<http://www.litencyc.com/php/speople.php?rec=true&UID=1118>)

Even though Matilda is often ignored by her parents, Matilda, despite her intelligence, loves to play tricks on others. She once squeezes a line of glue all round the inside rim of Mr. Wormwood's hat so that when Mr. Wormwood puts his hat on, he cannot leave the 'permanent hat'. (*Matilda*, p. 30) Another trick she plays is that she puts Fred's parrot at her home to make fun of ghosts' noises. (*Matilda*, p. 42) One funny trick she plays on her father is that she fills dad's bottle of oil with violets with her mother's platinum blonde hair-dye extra-strong. As a result, her father's hair is dyed and probably all the father's hair has been taken off due to peroxide. All these tricks she plays not only reveal what a genius Matilda is but also suggest the justice she attempts to fight for. All these are possibly influenced by Roald Dahl who loves to play tricks when he is young. Roald Dahl once raises a suggestion to his four friends, which is to slip the mouse into one of Mrs. Prachett's jar of sweets. (*The Boy*, p. 36) As planned, Roald Dahl lifts the lid of the Gobstopper jar and drops the mouse in. (*The Boy*, p. 37) He successfully slips the mouse into one of Mrs. Prachette's jar of sweets. Among his friends, Roald Dahl feels like a hero himself. Roald Dahl is a naughty boy who loves to play tricks on others to make fun.

Matilda's intelligence is discovered by Miss Honey, who learns to know that Matilda should not be in the bottom form. However, the principal Miss Trunchbull objects the idea of putting Matilda into the top form. In the narrative, Roald Dahl tries to make a contrast between the compassionate Miss Honey and

the violent Miss Trunchbull to get hold of readers' attention. Miss Honey visits Matilda's home, trying to convince Mrs. Wormwood that Matilda could be brought up to university standard after the proper coaching. Miss Trunchbull is a formidable figure. She insists on saying that Matilda has put a stink-bomb under her desk (*Matilda*, p. 80) She even treats other children violently in school. For example, she grabs hold of Amanda's pigtails and let the pigtails go so that Amanda is sailing like a rocket in the sky. (*Matilda*, p. 109) The writing of formidable principal figure is possibly influenced by Roald Dahl's Matron at St. Peter. Roald Dahl's Matron is a large fair-haired woman with a bosom, which scares Roald Dahl most of all (*The Boy*, p. 90). Like Miss Trunchbull who dislikes small kids, the Matron dislikes small boys very much. (*Boy*, p. 86) The Matron upholds strict disciplines and always punishes the children. She once sends Wragg to the Headmaster as Wragg sprinkles sugar all over the corridor. (*The Boy*, p. 87) At another time, the Matron drops little soap-flakes into Tweedie's open mouth when he is snoring in order to punish him. The way Roald Dahl portrays Miss Trunchbull is possibly influenced by the Matron he comes across in St. Peter.

Matilda's brain power to topple over things has been uncovered by Miss Honey. Curious to explore Matilda's will power, Miss Honey has invited Matilda to visit her home, during which she discloses her life secrets to her. It is found that Miss Trunchbull is Miss Honey's aunt who has taken Miss Honey's house which her father leaves her after his death. In order to punish Miss Trunchbull, Matilda asks Miss Honey some details and uses her brain power to make the chalk write to intimidate the big liar Miss Trunchbull who has possessed things of Miss Honey her father leaves her. Miss Trunchbull has then fallen down after seeing the words that could possibly be written by Miss Honey's father. (*Matilda*, p. 217) The concept of "a liar" is possibly influenced by Captain Hardcastle who makes the claim that Roald Dahl is trying to cheat by asking for help with his essay. Roald Dahl does not cheat, in fact, so he calls Captain Hardcastle a liar. (*The Boy*, p. 198) Roald Dahl's hatred over the liar Captain Hardcastle who claims that Roald Dahl has cheated at St. Peter's possibly influences his writing about the liar Miss Trunchbull who by all means tries to lie to Miss Honey to gain all the possessions. In the story, finally, Matilda stays with Miss Honey, her best companion.

In *the Witches*, witches in fairy tales are set at the beginning. 'In fairy-tales, witches always wear silly black hats and black cloaks, and they ride on broomsticks. But this is not a fairy-tale. This is about real witches.' (*The Witches*, p. 1) At the start, the narrator's grandma tries to tell the narrator how to recognize a witch. There have been some puzzlements of the narrator about why all the witches are women. (*The Witches*, p. 3) The narrator's grandmother, a Norwegian who knows all about witches, tries to tell the distinctive features of a witch to the narrator. (*The Witches*, p. 18) For example, a real witch wears

glove. A real witch wears a wig to hide her baldness. (*The Witches*, p. 19) A woman holding her nose could also be a witch. (*The Witches*, p. 22) A Witch never has toes. (*The Witches*, p. 24) The grandmother emphasizes that in Norway, people are used to the fact that there are witches everywhere. (*The Witches*, p. 17) The narrative resorts to the familiar friendly tone of Norwegian grandmother to talk about the distinctive feature of Norway, which is the fact that there are witches everywhere. This is possibly influenced by Roald Dahl's Norwegian parents who have shared with Roald Dahl so much about Norway. Roald Dahl has been to Norway during the summer holidays. He prepares fish, and finds out that the Norwegians always eat the skin of the boiled fish. (*The Boy*, p. 57) In *the Witches*, the narrator talks to his grandmother 'we used to row out and wave to the shrimp-boats on (the) way home'. (*The Witches*, p. 42) He knows so much about the Norway, and writes *the Witches* that best describes Norway.

In the narrative, the Grand High Witch plays such an important role. At one time, Roald Dahl asks his grandmother why she is so sure the Grand High Witch exists, if nobody has even seen her. (*The Witches*, p. 35) Suddenly, a woman wearing black gloves catches sight of Roald Dahl. (*The Witches*, p. 36) She gives him a present. Petrified, Roald Dahl asks the grandmother if she has gone. The grandmother says she has gone. When the grandmother is sick, Dahl visits her at the hotel where the manager Mr. Stringer is met. In the ballroom of the hotel, he sees a great flock of ladies coming. Having taught by his grandmother who tells him how to recognize a witch, Roald Dahl finds all ladies wearing gloves and wigs who look like witches in surprise. (*The Witches*, p. 57) Yet, he notices a tiny young woman on the platform. She is the Grand High Witch. The Grand High Witch wears her masks indeed to make her beautiful. Once she has taken off the mask, she looks so frightful and frightening. (*The Witches*, p. 60) Everyone would have run away screaming. (*The Witches*, p. 61) Annie Marie Bird claims that the Grand High Witch is asexual. On one hand, she looks feminine and pretty; on the other hand, she looks extremely horrifying without the mask. (Annie Marie Bird, "Women Behaving Badly: Dahl's Witches Meet the Women of the Eighties.", p. 120) The portrayal of the Grand High Witch with the mask implies how distant the relationship between Roald Dahl and his mother is when Roald Dahl is away from home. Why does Roald Dahl portray the Grand High Witch in such a mysterious manner? Why is the woman figure portrayed so secretive? It is possibly because Roald Dahl's mother has departed from Roald Dahl for so many years that the basic understanding of what a female looks like is unknown to him. 'From that very first Sunday at St. Peter's until the day my mother died thirty-two years later, I (write) to her once a week, sometimes more often, whenever I (am) away from home. ((write) to her every week from St Peter's (I have to), and every week from my next school, Repton, and every week from Dar es Salaam in East Africa, where I (go

on my first job after leaving school, and then every week during the war from Kenya and Iraq and Egypt when I (am) flying with the RAF' (*The Boy*, p. 81) The portrayal of the Grand High Witch with the mask is possibly influenced by Dahl's distant relationship with the mother since he leaves home. The Grand High Witch's appearance is never known, yet she plays such an important role in the narrative.

The Grand High Witch has prepared a magic formula called Formula 86 Delayed Action Mouse-maker. (*The Witches*, p. 76) Mouse-traps are coming out. (*The Witches*, p. 78) The Grand High Witch is dancing up and down the platform. She has a great plan of wiping out all the children of England. (*The Witches*, p. 82) The Grand High Witch meets Bruno, and the mouse-maker is going to work on him. Suddenly, Bruno has turned to a mouse. Bruno is enchanted. Then, the Grand High Witch grabs the narrator, and enchants the narrator. At that moment, the narrator realizes he is not a little boy but a mouse. The enchanted mice including Bruno and the narrator have become key characters. The reason why Roald Dahl chooses mice to work on is that when he is young, he has been thinking about 'the great and daring mouse plot' (*The Boy*, p. 35). In his philosophy about writing about oneself, one must strive to be truthful. The Mouse plot could reflect the truth in real life, to him. Slipping a dead mouse into Mrs. Prachett's jar of sweets has become his moments of brilliance and glory with his four friends. This is the possibility why Roald Dahl chooses mice to focus on to talk about the transformation of beings into mice.

The grandmother in *the Witches* is the truth-teller. Knowing about Norway which is famous for witches so well, the grandmother tells Mr. and Mrs. Jenkins their son Bruno has been enchanted. Even the grandmother has intimate interactions with his grandson, the narrator, who has turned into a mouse. The narrator asks how long he could live as a mouse. The grandmother replies he can live for 3 times as long as an ordinary mouse. (*The Witches*, p. 188) But, the narrator says he never wants to live longer than her. The intimacy between the grandmother and the narrator reflects they have a close relationship, even though the narrator has turned into a mouse. They love each other so much. In Roald Dahl's autobiographies, *the Boy* and *Going Solo*, not much has been mentioned about the grandmother. However, Roald Dahls' mother has often been mentioned. In particular, Roald Dahl often writes letters to his mother to talk about incidents in school, and wars. Even when Roald Dahl is traveling around or flying in the sky, Roald Dahl still writes so many letters to his mother to keep him informed. The writing of the narrator's relationship with the grandmother could possibly be based on Roald Dahl's close relationship with his own mother. Roald Dahl's mother is the only person to whom Roald Dahl tells the truth about his life.

In *the Twits*, the main characters are the funny couple, Mr. Twit and Mrs. Twit. The opening of the story is, 'What a lot of hairy-faced men there are

around nowadays.’ (*The Twits*, p. 1) The hairy Mr. Twit shows how odd he looks like. This is possibly influenced by Roald Dahl’s father, whose left arm has been broken. (*The Boy*, p. 11) Although Roald Dahl’s father has broken his left arm, he could manage to do things he wants by the four fingers and thumb of his right hand. Influenced by Roald Dahl’s father, Roald Dahl possibly intends to deliberately portray the odd look of Mr. Twit so as to add the humor to the story. A partner of Mr. Twit, Mrs. Twit is an ugly woman who carries a stick when walking. (*The Twits*, p. 8) Roald Dahl creates such a perfect humorous match not just to build-up hilarious plots, but also to emphasize the importance of “couple”. The idea of “couple” is so significant to readers. This is possibly influenced by Roald Dahl’s father who finds the life after the first wife’s death so boring that a second wife has to be found. (*The Boy*, p.15) The tragic death of his first wife prompts him to find the second wife to achieve completeness. This is possibly the idea that inspires Roald Dahl to make use of the couple to write the story.

Mr. and Mrs. Twit love to play tricks on each other. Mrs. Twit takes out her glass eye and drops it into Mr. Twit’s mug of beer. (*The Twits*, p. 9) Mr. Twit puts a frog in Mrs. Twit’s bed. (*The Twits*, p. 10) To pay Mr. Twit back for the frog, Mrs. Twit mixes the worms she dug up in the garden with the spaghetti. To pay Mrs. Twit back for the worms in his spaghetti, Mr. Twit adds an extra tiny thickness of wood to the end of the walking-stick every night so that Mrs. Twit will gradually shrink. (*The Twits*, p. 21) Because Mrs. Twit is shrunk, Mrs. Twit has got to be stretched. Mr. Twit ties Mrs. Twit’s ankles to the iron ring, and fills the balloons with gas. Mr. Twit then ties the ends of the strings to the top half of Mrs. Twit’s body. Fifty colored balloons are floating in the air above Mrs. Twit’s head. (*The Twits*, p.26) Mrs. Twit goes up like a rocket. To go downwards, Mrs. Twit bites the strings. Eventually she floats down. (*The Twits*, p. 32) Mr. Twit gets a horrid shock. The narrative of taking turns to play tricks on each other makes the story intriguing. All the tricks are possibly influenced by the tricks Roald Dahl uses to play in childhood.

At home, Mr. and Mrs. Twit have some crazy acts. Mr. Twit catches the birds and Mrs. Twit cooks them. To catch the birds, they have the branches all smeared with horrible HUGTIGHT. (*The Twits*, p. 40) Then, they grab the birds for the Bird Pie for supper. The next morning, when Mr. Twit collects birds, he finds four little boys in the tree and wants to grab them. Luckily, they tumble out of the trees and run for home with their naked bottoms. (*The Twits*, p. 43) For the four monkeys in the garden, Mr. and Mrs. Twits train them to do tricks, and to do silly things. The monkeys have to turn up-side-down to make the first great circus in the world. (*The Twits*, p. 45) When the Royal Poly bird, who can speak the same language as the birds does, is flying by, the monkey asks them to tell the birds not to perch on the tree or they will be made into Bird Pie. (*The Twits*, p. 48) As a result, the birds as well as the Roly-Poly Bird sit on the top of

the monkey cage. (*The Twits*, p. 50) They are all then perched happily on the roof of Mr. Twit's house. Mr and Mrs. Twits have decided to buy big shotguns to get them. At that time, Mr. Twit has asked the monkeys to turn upside down and jump to the top of the other. When Mr. and Mrs. Twit are away, the monkeys call out to the Roly Poly bird to get the key to the door of the cage for them. (*The Twits*, p. 57) In order to punish Mr. and Mrs. Twits, the monkeys and the birds make the room all a mess. They turn every piece of furniture upside down and stick the glue everywhere. When Mr. and Mrs. Twits come back, they are so appalled. Everything in the room, including themselves, is turned upside down. They yell for help. How madly the Twits are, after plotting to get the birds and monkeys caught. The device of turning the self upside down is possibly influenced by Roald Dahl who drags himself out of the plane during the flight crash. (*Going Solo*, p. 101)

In *the BFG (Big Friendly Giant)*, the story is set at Sophie's bedroom where Sophie 'couldn't sleep'. (*The BFG*, p. 9) In fact, the BFG is dedicated to Roald Dahl's daughter Olivia who is died of measles encephalitis at the age of seven. Sophie, during the witching hour - a special moment in the middle of the night, leans out of the window to see what the world looks like. She catches a glimpse of an enormous long pale white face with the most enormous ears. (*The BFG*, p. 15) The giant is running so fast like the wings of a bird. (*The BFG*, p. 17-8) What is so special is that the enormous giant picks up the tiny Sophie with one hand, carries her across the cave and puts her on the table. Like the violent Mrs. Trunchbull versus the compassionate Miss Honey in *Matilda*, the enormous BFG is carrying the tiny Sophie by his hand. The interaction between the friendly BFG and Sophie is like the father talking to his daughter. This is possibly influenced by Roald Dahl who wishes to talk to his daughter.

Talking in giant's language, which is the language full of grammatical mistakes, like the witch's weird language in the *Witches*, the BFG tells Sophie frankly other giants are going to different countries, eating human beans, that means human beings. The BFG says human beings do not really believe in giants. Sophie, sitting on the BFG's hand, peeps out of the cave. (*The BFG*, p. 33) She is led by the BFG to the Giant Country. The adventure starts. This is possibly influenced by Roald Dahl's journey to East Africa where he encounters some unusual animals. Friendly and honest, the BFG replies to Sophie's question roused by curiosity about whether all giants eat human beings by saying that all giants eat human beings except him, the BFG himself. (*The BFG*, p. 35) To ally with the BFG by friendliness and honesty, Sophie discloses her identity of being an orphan. The narrative is constructed in a friendly and harmonious conversation each other has made, to let readers engage in their intimate, genuine interactions. The BGF, showing his extra-usual ears, tells Sophie he catches dream for children. (*The BFG*, p. 41) The strange ugly extra ears of the BFG makes the friendly BFG look very odd. This is possibly

influenced by Roald Dahl's father whose left arm has been broken. To Roald Dahl, the only way to make the character interesting is to 'exaggerate' all their good or bad qualities to make fun of it to pose an impact on readers. (www.roalddahl.com)

The BFG takes Sophie to a dream journey whereby she meets the giants and the queen. A snozzcumber lover, the BFG hides Sophie while visiting other giants. The BFG shows Sophie the good dreams he has caught in the glass jar. In response to this, Sophie asks if BFG can make a dream about anything she wants. The BFG starts to mix the dream upon request. The journey to London has been set off. Like the exploratory journey in *James and the Giant Peach*, Sophie visits the Palace where she meets the queen. The adventure with the queen and the BFG begins. The BFG travels with other nine giants in England for the Queen. 'The BFG (has) made thousands of journeys to and from Giant Country over the years, but he (has) never in his life made one quite like this, with nine huge helicopters roaring along just over his head... Now he (is) doing it for the Queen of England herself and he (is) frightened of nobody.' (*The BFG*, p. 182-183) The huge Fleshlumpeater's ankles and hands are tied by the BFG with a tight knot. The nine giants carrying helicopters are then captured one by one. At the end, every country in the world sends congratulations and thanks to the BFG and Sophie. The Queen gives order to build a special house for BFG to live, next to which is a cottage for Sophie to live. The BFG is awarded the title of 'The Royal Dream-Blower. The exciting journey is possibly influenced by Roald Dahl who joins the Royal Air Force in 1939. Since then, he flies to different places in the Middle East, such as Iraq, to continue his adventurous journey. The most remarkable moment is the time he experiences Second World War. The depiction of giants carrying helicopters is possibly influenced by his flying journey on the Royal Air Force. Like Charlie who triumphs in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* at the end, Sophie and the BFG are awarded. The triumphant Sophie and BFG mark a happy ending in the story.

Roald Dahl is a great storyteller. Good at mastering the narrative, Roald Dahl writes these children stories delicately to let readers engage in plots deeply. The way Roald Dahl narrates the marvelous stories is possibly influenced by his life. From childhood to adulthood, Roald Dahl's life has influenced the way he narrates the stories much. It is significant to find out how Roald Dahl narrates the stories, as the way he narrates the story plays an important role in language art. In language art, it would be useful to find out how this great storyteller Roald Dahl narrates the stories to know more about Roald Dahl's art of storytelling, which could in some ways help us to understand more about how Roald Dahl's life exerts an influence over writing the stories.

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