



Post-Colonial, Decolonial, and Indigenous Perspectives in Roald Dahl's Fiction, *The BFG* and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*.

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines Roald Dahl's *The BFG* and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* through three distinct yet interconnected lenses: post-colonial, decolonial, and Indigenous perspectives. These stories may seem like light-hearted children's fantasies. They also carry traces of the history and power dynamics of Britain's colonial past.

From a post-colonial perspective, both books demonstrate how British culture once sought to define itself as superior. In *The BFG*, the giant's playful, mixed-up language gently mocks the idea that "proper" English is the only correct way to speak. But the ending, where the Queen steps in to "fix" things, still leans on old colonial habits of control. *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* also reflect this history. Willy Wonka's vast chocolate empire depends on ingredients from far-off places, and the Oompa-Loompas are described in ways that echo the racial stereotypes and economic exploitation tied to colonial trade.

A decolonial view pushes the discussion further. It asks how these books might question Western ways of thinking altogether. Sophie and the BFG build a relationship based on trust and shared knowledge, suggesting that wisdom can grow from cooperation rather than hierarchy. Charlie's journey to factory ownership might seem to celebrate capitalist success, but the factory's magical inventions hint at other possibilities beyond profit and industry.

Finally, an Indigenous perspective focuses on land, resources, and the more-than-human world. The BFG's dream-catching can be read as a reminder that non-human beings and the natural world hold their own stories. Meanwhile, the chocolate that fuels Wonka's empire raises questions about farming practices, ecological balance, and respect for the earth—concerns central to many Indigenous traditions.

Together, these points show that Dahl's novels don't simply repeat old colonial ideas, but they also open imaginative doors to community, reciprocity, and new ways of seeing the world.

Key Words: Post-Colonial, Decolonial, Perspective, Indigenous, fantasy, Trust, Ownership, etc.,

Introduction

Roald Dahl's children's books occupy a curious place in the literary imagination. They are wildly popular and frequently adapted for film and stage. The Fictions are beloved for their dark humour and inventive language. Yet beneath the surface of giants who catch dreams or a chocolate factory run by an eccentric genius lie traces of Britain's colonial past and the global structures that shaped the twentieth century. This paper argues that *The BFG* (1982) and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (1964) can be read through post-colonial, decolonial, and Indigenous perspectives to reveal how these seemingly fanciful stories engage with histories of empire, racial hierarchy, and alternative ways of knowing.

Examining children's literature through these critical lenses is important for several reasons. First, stories for young readers often introduce cultural values long before children encounter formal historical or political education. Colonial attitudes can thus seep into the imagination in subtle ways through language, character archetypes, or depictions of faraway places. Second, these texts offer opportunities for resistance. The same imaginative freedom that delights young audiences can be used to challenge dominant narratives, to unsettle ideas of superiority, and to propose new relationships between humans, other beings, and the earth.

The BFG and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* are especially rich for such a study. Both feature protagonists who are marginalized within their own societies: Sophie is an orphan who teams up with a misunderstood giant, while Charlie is a poor boy who inherits a fantastical industrial empire. Both stories also involve encounters with "others," whether the non-human giants or the Oompa-Loompas, figures that resonate with colonial encounters between Europe and the rest of the world. Through playful language, exaggerated settings, and morally charged adventures, Dahl creates spaces where the legacies of empire can be both reproduced and questioned.

To situate this reading, the paper draws on three critical frameworks. Post-colonial theory examines how literature reflects and responds to the history of colonial domination and the ongoing impact of imperial power structures. Decolonial thought goes further, asking how to move beyond the colonial matrix of power and to value multiple ways of knowing the world. Indigenous perspectives foreground relationships with land, non-human life, and community-based knowledge systems. Together, these approaches allow us to see Dahl's works not simply as products of their time, but as dynamic texts that can reinforce or destabilize colonial assumptions.

The following section outlines key historical and theoretical contexts. Understanding Britain's colonial history, the development of children's literature, and the major ideas of post-colonial, decolonial, and Indigenous studies provides the foundation for a close reading of the novels.

Historical and Theoretical Background

British Colonial Context and Children's Literature

By the mid-twentieth century, when Roald Dahl was writing, the British Empire was undergoing a dramatic transformation. Former colonies in Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean were achieving independence, yet the cultural mindset of the empire persisted. British readers were negotiating a new sense of national identity: no longer rulers of a vast empire, but still influenced by centuries of global trade, resource extraction, and racial hierarchy. Children's literature played a subtle but significant role in this process. Classic works like *Peter Pan* or *The Jungle Book* openly celebrated imperial adventure, presenting far-off lands as playgrounds for European characters. Even later, supposedly neutral fantasies often carried echoes of colonial thinking—depicting non-European characters as exotic, primitive, or in need of Western guidance.

Dahl himself was born in 1916 in Wales to Norwegian parents and spent part of his early career as a fighter pilot and diplomat, experiences that exposed him to the waning days of the British imperial project. While he did not write overt colonial adventures, his stories reflect the era's tensions: fascination with the foreign and the fantastic, ambivalence toward authority, and a keen awareness of power imbalances between adults and children, rich and poor, insiders and outsiders.

Post-Colonial Theory

Post-colonial theory emerged in the late twentieth century as scholars and writers sought to understand how the legacies of colonialism continued to shape literature, politics, and culture. Key thinkers such as Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, and Gayatri Spivak examined how Western texts often portray the "Orient" or the colonized as the exotic "Other," a construction that justified imperial domination. Post-colonial criticism asks how literature resists or reproduces these patterns. In children's books, questions arise about how non-Western characters are depicted, how power dynamics are represented, and how language itself can serve as a tool of control or liberation.

Reading *The BFG* and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* through this lens highlights how they participate in, but also question, colonial narratives. The BFG's playful misuse of English undermines linguistic authority, while the Oompa-Loompas' portrayal (especially in early editions where they were described as African pygmies) draws attention to the racial stereotypes embedded in global commodity chains like the chocolate trade.

Decolonial Thought

While post-colonial theory critiques the after-effects of colonialism, decolonial thought—associated with scholars like Walter Dignolo and Anibal Quijano—emphasizes the need to move beyond the colonial matrix of power altogether. Decoloniality calls for recognizing and valuing diverse epistemologies, especially those suppressed by Western modernity. It is not just about analyzing colonial histories but about creating space for alternative worldviews and practices.

In Dahl's novels, decolonial analysis might focus on how characters develop knowledge outside formal institutions. Sophie and the BFG rely on mutual trust and shared dreams rather than state-sanctioned expertise. Charlie's factory, with its wild inventions and bending of physical laws, suggests a break from industrial capitalism's rigid logic, hinting at more relational or community-oriented economies.

Indigenous Perspectives

Indigenous scholarship brings another vital dimension, centering relationships with land, non-human beings, and collective stewardship. Thinkers like Linda Tuhiwai Smith and Robin Wall Kimmerer stress that knowledge is embedded in place, story, and reciprocity rather than in purely extractive systems. Applying Indigenous perspectives to Dahl's work encourages readers to notice how the stories imagine interspecies communication and the moral weight of resource use.

The BFG's practice of catching and sharing dreams resonates with Indigenous understandings of the more-than-human world as alive with meaning. Conversely, the industrial extraction behind Willy Wonka's chocolate empire raises questions about ecological balance and ethical sourcing—issues that remain urgent in real-world cacao production.

Intersection of the Frameworks

These three frameworks overlap and complement one another. Post-colonial theory reveals how power operates in representation; decolonial thought invites the creation of alternative knowledge systems; and Indigenous perspectives insist on the inseparability of culture, land, and community. Together, they provide a rich toolkit for examining how children's literature can both echo and challenge imperial ideologies.

Post-Colonial Readings

Post-colonial criticism asks how literature reflects and responds to the histories and legacies of colonialism. In Roald Dahl's *The BFG* (1982) and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (1964), this approach reveals the subtle yet persistent echoes of Britain's imperial past. Both novels are saturated with ideas of otherness, cultural hierarchy, and economic exploitation—hallmarks of colonial discourse—while simultaneously containing playful disruptions of those very ideas.

The BFG: Language, Authority, and the “Other”

At first glance, *The BFG* appears to be a whimsical fairy tale about a lonely orphan, Sophie, who befriends a benevolent giant. Yet the narrative is deeply concerned with the politics of language and authority, two key elements of colonial power. The Big Friendly Giant's peculiar “gobblefunk” English is often played for humour, malapropisms such as “scrumdiddlyumptious” or “catasterous disastrophe” delight child readers. From a post-colonial standpoint, however, this linguistic play undermines the idea that “proper” English is the sole marker of intelligence or civilization. Empire historically imposed the colonizer's language on colonized peoples; the BFG's gleeful misuse of English turns that hierarchy upside down, suggesting that meaning can thrive outside grammatical correctness.

Yet the story does not wholly escape colonial logic. Although the BFG resists the violent cannibalism of his fellow giants, he ultimately appeals to the British monarchy for help. The climactic scene in which Sophie and the BFG persuade the Queen to deploy her army to capture the other giants reinforces a familiar imperial narrative: the benevolent but powerful ruler intervening to “civilize” or restrain savage others. The fact that the solution is military—netting and imprisoning the giants mirrors colonial practices of containment and control. Even as Dahl satirizes authority through the BFG's comic speech, he positions the British Crown as the ultimate source of justice, reflecting the lingering prestige of imperial institutions in the British imagination of the early 1980s.

The representation of the giants themselves also invites a post-colonial reading. They are described as enormous, grotesque, and child-eating—figures of monstrous difference. Colonial literature frequently portrayed non-European peoples as frightening or subhuman to justify domination. While Dahl's giants are literal monsters rather than human ethnic groups, their role as a collective “Other” that must be subdued resonates with these older tropes. The BFG is the exception that proves the rule: he is “good” because he aligns with human (and specifically British) norms of morality, vegetarianism, and cooperation with the state.

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory: Empire, Commodity, and Labour

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory engages colonial legacies even more explicitly. Willy Wonka's global chocolate empire depends on cacao—a crop historically tied to European colonial exploitation in Africa, the Caribbean, and South America. Chocolate's economic history is steeped in the forced labour of enslaved and colonized peoples, and Dahl's narrative, whether intentionally or not, reflects this backdrop.

The most striking example is the depiction of the Oompa-Loompas. In the novel's first edition (1964), they are described as “black pygmies” imported from the “deepest and darkest African jungle,” paid only in cacao beans, and housed permanently inside the factory. This characterization reproduces the imagery of colonial slavery and racial otherness: dark-skinned, small-statured workers who serve a white industrialist in exchange for a subsistence wage. Critics quickly pointed out the racist implications, leading Dahl and his publishers to revise the Oompa-Loompas' appearance in later editions to make them whimsical white-skinned beings with green hair and orange faces. Yet even in the revised versions, they remain a closed labour force whose freedom and agency are questionable. They never leave the factory, have no visible family structures, and express their thoughts only in collective song. The revision disguises but does not erase the economic hierarchy: an all-powerful owner controls an exoticized workforce that has little say in its own destiny.

The factory itself is an industrial wonderland that turns global resources into spectacle. Rivers of chocolate, endless candies, and fantastical machines evoke both the abundance promised by imperial trade and the alienation of modern industrial capitalism. Charlie's eventual inheritance of the factory might read as a triumph of virtue over greed, but it also reinforces the idea that power and wealth naturally pass to those who are morally "deserving," a narrative historically used to justify imperial expansion and economic inequality.

Children, Class, and the Imperial Imagination

Both novels link colonial themes to issues of class and childhood. Charlie is the impoverished child of an undernourished family, living on the edge of starvation in a crumbling house. His reward—a sudden leap to unimaginable wealth and authority—parallels the colonial fantasy of upward mobility through conquest or discovery. The factory tour eliminates rival children who embody various vices (greed, gluttony, pride), leaving only the humble, obedient Charlie. The moral seems clear: those who accept discipline and show gratitude may inherit the empire.

Similarly, Sophie begins *The BFG* as a powerless orphan. By aligning herself with the benevolent giant and ultimately with the Queen, she becomes a mediator between worlds and a heroine who helps secure the British nation. In both stories, children are positioned as the ideal colonial subjects—pure, morally upright, and destined to inherit the structures of power if they prove worthy.

Humour, Satire, and Ambivalence

It would be a mistake, however, to read these novels as simple celebrations of empire. Dahl's characteristic dark humour and grotesque exaggeration complicate any straightforward moral. The BFG's mangled English not only undermines linguistic authority but also makes the Queen's court look stuffy and ridiculous. Willy Wonka himself is an unsettling figure: mercurial, secretive, and arguably untrustworthy. His factory operates outside government oversight, suggesting a critique of industrial capitalism as much as a celebration of it. The Oompa-Loompas' pointed songs, often scolding the vices of modern consumer culture, give the supposedly subservient workers a voice that critiques both the visiting children and the society that produced them.

This ambivalence aligns with the post-colonial concept of "hybridity" articulated by Homi Bhabha. Colonial texts often contain contradictory impulses: they reinforce imperial ideologies while simultaneously undermining them. *The BFG* and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* exemplify this hybridity. They draw on colonial stereotypes and power structures but also invite readers to laugh at authority, question industrial greed, and imagine alliances across radical difference—between human and giant, child and eccentric inventor.

Decolonial Perspectives

Where post-colonial theory critiques the lingering effects of empire, decolonial thought seeks something more radical: breaking away from the entire colonial matrix of power and centering ways of knowing that European modernity has historically silenced. Thinkers such as Walter Dignolo, Anibal Quijano, and María Lugones argue that colonialism was not only about territorial conquest or economic control; it also imposed a hierarchy of knowledge that privileged Western science, language, and economics over Indigenous and local epistemologies. A decolonial reading of *The BFG* and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, therefore, asks not only how these texts reflect colonial legacies, but also how they might imagine realities outside of those legacies—spaces where other logics, relationships, and values take precedence.

Moving Beyond Colonial Categories of Knowledge

In both novels, the most striking decolonial element is the creation of alternative knowledge systems. Sophie and the BFG do not rely on formal education, government science, or military intelligence to confront the menace of the man-eating giants. Instead, they combine the BFG's dream-catching abilities with Sophie's courage and quick thinking to develop a solution. Their partnership represents a form of relational epistemology: knowledge emerges from dialogue, trust, and lived experience rather than from top-down authority. Although the Queen eventually becomes involved, the critical insight—the plan to generate a nightmare that warns of the giants—comes from Sophie and the BFG themselves. This emphasis on collaborative, experiential wisdom aligns with decolonial calls to value knowledge produced outside Western institutions.

In *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, Willy Wonka's factory operates by principles that defy industrial rationality. Its rivers of chocolate, edible grass, and teleporting chocolate bars make a mockery of linear production models and conventional physics. The factory suggests a pluriverse, Dignolo's term for a world where many worlds fit rather than a single, universal modernity. While the narrative ultimately rewards Charlie with ownership of the factory, the technology inside it resists the logic of mere profit. Machines create everlasting gobstoppers that never diminish, a direct challenge to consumer capitalism's dependence on endless consumption. By presenting a system where abundance does not require exploitation or waste, the factory hints at economies organized around sharing and creativity rather than extraction.

Challenging Capitalist Time and Space

Decolonial theorists also critique the temporal and spatial frameworks inherited from colonialism: the idea that history moves in a linear progression toward Western “modernity,” and that space is divided into centers and peripheries ruled from afar. Dahl’s books play with and destabilize these notions.

The BFG’s dream world operates on its own rhythms. Time bends as the giant and Sophie travel enormous distances in moments, and the act of mixing dreams blurs boundaries between sleeping and waking realities. The dreams themselves contain infinite possibilities, challenging the assumption that reality is singular and fixed. Similarly, Wonka’s factory is a labyrinth where rooms expand or shrink beyond the dimensions of the building, where rivers flow upward, and where entire worlds exist behind a single door. These spaces defy colonial mapping practices that sought to measure, categorize, and control. They create what decolonial scholars might call counter-spaces, places where imagination and multiplicity replace the grid of imperial geography.

Re-centering Marginal Voices

Decolonial analysis also asks who gets to speak and whose experiences define the story. In *The BFG*, Sophie’s perspective dominates, but the BFG himself introduces a linguistic and cultural difference that refuses assimilation. His “gobblefunk” is not merely broken English; it is a creative system with its own internal logic. By letting the BFG’s voice shape large portions of the narrative, Dahl implicitly validates a non-standard, non-imperial language. The Queen and her advisors must adjust to him, not the other way around. This subtle inversion—where the seat of imperial authority bends to accommodate the outsider’s speech—offers a decolonial moment of recognition.

In *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, the Oompa-Loompas pose a more complicated case. Their songs, while often moralizing, provide the only sustained commentary on human behaviour. They are the chorus that critiques gluttony, greed, and arrogance. If we read past the racialized framing of early editions, their collective voice functions as a counter-narrative, calling out the flaws of the supposedly civilized visitors. They are not simply passive labourers but they interpret events, teach lessons, and mock the consumer culture of the industrial North. This ironic agency, though constrained by the text’s colonial baggage, points toward the decolonial possibility of marginalized groups speaking back to power.

Imagination as Decolonial Practice

Decolonial thinkers often highlight imagination as a political act. To envision worlds outside colonial logic requires creativity and play. Children’s literature, with its license for fantasy, becomes an ideal arena for such experimentation. Dahl’s wild inventions—the BFG’s dream jars, Wonka’s everlasting gobstoppers, flying elevators, and edible landscapes—invite readers to imagine economies not based on scarcity, relationships not governed by domination, and communication that transcends national or linguistic borders. These flights of fancy are not trivial; they cultivate what decolonial scholar Rolando Vázquez calls *epistemic disobedience*, a refusal to accept that the Western scientific worldview is the only valid way to understand reality.

Moreover, the child protagonists embody a decolonial stance of curiosity and openness. Sophie listens without judgment to the BFG’s strange words; Charlie moves through the factory in awe rather than entitlement. They succeed not by mastering others but by embracing wonder and humility, qualities that decolonial educators see as essential for learning from diverse traditions.

Tensions and Limitations

Still, the novels’ decolonial possibilities coexist with contradictions. Sophie ultimately relies on the Queen’s military to imprison the other giants, reasserting the very state power that decolonial thought seeks to transcend. Charlie inherits a privately owned factory, becoming the sole proprietor of its extraordinary resources rather than sharing them communally. These endings risk folding radical imagination back into familiar hierarchies of nation and property.

Yet these tensions can themselves be instructive. Decolonial theory recognizes that breaking from colonial modernity is an ongoing process, not a simple narrative resolution. The coexistence of critique and complicity in Dahl’s texts mirrors the broader struggle to imagine futures beyond empire while still living in its long shadow.

Toward a Pluriversal Reading

Seen through a decolonial lens, *The BFG* and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* ultimately invite what Mignolo calls a pluriversal reading, a recognition that many worlds and ways of knowing can exist at once. The giants’ dreamscape, the Oompa-Loompas’ songs, the factory’s impossible technologies, and the children’s openness all suggest that reality need not be organized around a single imperial logic. Even when the narratives circle back to monarchy or private ownership, they leave readers with glimpses of other possibilities: economies of abundance without exploitation, relationships of respect across species, and languages that celebrate difference rather than erase it.

Indigenous Frameworks

While post-colonial and decolonial approaches focus on the political and epistemic afterlives of empire, Indigenous frameworks foreground relationships with land, non-human beings, and intergenerational knowledge. Scholars such as Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Robin Wall Kimmerer, and Leanne Betasamosake Simpson

remind us that Indigenous worldviews emphasize reciprocity, relationality, and the living agency of the natural world. Applying these ideas to *The BFG* and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* opens another dimension of reading: one that centers respect for the earth, the vitality of more-than-human life, and the ethics of resource use.

Story, Land, and Living Worlds

Indigenous traditions often view stories as living entities that shape and are shaped by the land. In *The BFG*, dreams are not merely private mental events; they are tangible beings that the giant can catch, mix, and release. Each dream glows with its own color, sound, and movement, suggesting a world where thoughts and landscapes interweave. This vision resonates with Indigenous concepts of animacy, where natural and spiritual elements—rivers, winds, dreams—possess agency and the power to communicate. The BFG's careful collection of dreams and his reluctance to waste them echo an ethic of stewardship: he treats these intangible creatures as gifts to be respected, not commodities to exploit.

Similarly, the novel's treatment of space undermines a purely extractive relationship to land. The BFG's giant homeland is not a blank wilderness waiting to be conquered; it is a place with its own histories, dangers, and rhythms. Sophie must learn to move quietly and attentively within it, a lesson akin to Indigenous teachings that emphasize listening to the more-than-human world before acting. Although the story eventually involves British soldiers capturing the violent giants, the narrative's emotional core remains the intimate, respectful bond between Sophie, the BFG, and the living dreamscape they share.

Chocolate, Commodities, and Earth Ethics

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory present a more direct confrontation with issues of land and resource extraction. Chocolate is produced from cacao, a crop historically entangled with colonial plantation economies, deforestation, and the exploitation of Indigenous farmers in South America and West Africa. An Indigenous reading highlights how the novel skirts—but cannot entirely erase—these realities. Willy Wonka's miraculous candies seem to spring from nowhere, but every chocolate river implies soil, water, and plant life that must be nurtured and harvested. The invisibility of these ecological relationships mirrors how industrial food systems often hide the labor and landscapes that sustain them.

The Oompa-Loompas' migration to the factory can also be examined through an Indigenous lens. In early editions, they are said to have come from "Loompaland," a forested home threatened by predatory animals. Their relocation to Wonka's closed factory might be read as a displacement narrative, one that recalls how Indigenous communities were often removed from ancestral territories under the guise of protection or progress. Even in the revised, more fantastical depictions, the Oompa-Loompas never return to their homeland; their songs become the only trace of cultural continuity. This mirrors the struggle of many Indigenous peoples to maintain identity and tradition after forced removal.

Relationality and Non-Human Kinship

Indigenous frameworks stress that humans are not separate from nature but part of a larger web of kinship. Both novels create relationships that cross species boundaries. Sophie befriends a giant, and their mutual care allows them to avert catastrophe. The BFG drinks "froboscottle" and lives largely on snozzcumpers, foods that symbolize a symbiotic rather than domineering relationship with his environment. He takes only what he needs, contrasting sharply with his fellow giants' violent consumption of human beings. This ethic aligns with Indigenous principles of taking only what is necessary and giving thanks for what the land provides.

In *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, Charlie's humble gratitude and wonder echo similar values. He does not rush to consume everything he sees; he marvels at the beauty of the chocolate river and the ingenuity of the inventions. His quiet respect contrasts with the other children's gluttony and entitlement, which lead to their downfalls. The narrative thus rewards a posture of humility and stewardship—qualities that resonate with Indigenous teachings about living in balance with the natural world.

Community, Reciprocity, and Teaching

Indigenous storytelling is often a collective process that teaches moral and ecological lessons across generations. The BFG's dream-sharing and the Oompa-Loompas' songs function in this way. Dreams carry messages meant to guide or warn humans, while the Oompa-Loompas' choral performances offer cautionary tales about greed, vanity, and waste. These communal expressions embody an ethic of reciprocal teaching: wisdom flows from non-human or marginalized voices to the human community. The fact that children Sophie and Charlie are the primary learners underscores the idea that each generation must listen to more-than-human teachers to live well.

Re-imagining Economy and Abundance

Another key Indigenous concept is that of gift economies, where value arises from giving and mutual care rather than accumulation. Both novels hint at such economies. The BFG collects dreams not to sell but to share freely, giving children across the world moments of joy or guidance. Willy Wonka's inventions, especially those like the Everlasting Gobstopper that never diminish, flirt with the idea of abundance without depletion.

Although the factory remains privately owned, its most magical creations resist commodification: an everlasting sweet undermines the logic of endless production and purchase.

Charlie's eventual inheritance complicates this vision. On one hand, he gains control over a massive enterprise; on the other, his moral purity and evident concern for family suggest that he may govern with restraint and generosity. Readers can imagine a future where the factory's wonders are shared as gifts rather than exploited for profit—a hopeful opening for an Indigenous-informed ethic of plenty without exploitation.

Limitations and Possibilities

It is important to acknowledge that these texts were not written from an explicitly Indigenous worldview and inevitably carry colonial assumptions. The ultimate reliance on the British military in *The BFG* and the privatized ownership of the chocolate factory in *Charlie* reaffirm Western notions of sovereignty and property. Still, Indigenous frameworks encourage readers to look for moments of relational possibility within and around these endings. The tender alliance between Sophie and the BFG, the magical vitality of dreams, the Oompa-Loompas' communal songs, and Charlie's humble stewardship all invite interpretations that value reciprocity, respect, and ecological consciousness.

Indigenous Insights across Both Texts

Indigenous frameworks illuminate a different layer of connection. Both novels, for all their differences, invite readers to imagine a living, animate world where non-human beings communicate and teach. Dreams in *The BFG* behave like spirits with their own desires; rivers of chocolate and fields of fantastical candy in Charlie's pulse with exuberant life. When characters act with respect and restraint—Sophie listening to the BFG, Charlie approaching the chocolate river with awe—they thrive. When they treat the world as an object of gluttony or domination, they falter.

This pattern echoes Indigenous teachings about reciprocity and balance. It also reframes the role of children: they become students of a wider, more-than-human community, learning that abundance flows from relationship, not exploitation.

A holistic reading suggests that Dahl's books are not straightforwardly imperial or anti-imperial, but liminal spaces where competing worldviews meet. The post-colonial frame reminds us of the histories of domination lurking behind candy and dreamscapes. The decolonial frame urges us to seek new epistemologies and listen to voices, giant or child, that colonial modernity ignores. The Indigenous frame invites reverence for the more-than-human world and points toward sustainable abundance.

Together, these approaches reveal that the real magic in *The BFG* and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* is not just fantastical invention, but the possibility of imagining worlds where generosity, respect, and plural ways of knowing coexist. Even when the texts fall short, they open imaginative space for readers. Especially the young ones, to question inherited structures and to envision more reciprocal futures.

Conclusion

Approaching *The BFG* and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* through post-colonial, decolonial, and Indigenous lenses reveals that Roald Dahl's celebrated fantasies are far more than light-hearted children's stories. They are complex cultural texts that both reflect and question the lingering power of empire. A post-colonial perspective uncovers how each novel is steeped in Britain's imperial afterlife: the BFG's alliance with the Queen and the military reprises the trope of a civilized center taming the threatening "other," while Wonka's chocolate empire stands on the invisible labour and landscapes of a global commodity chain shaped by colonial extraction.

Yet these novels also contain seeds of decolonial possibility. The BFG's respect for dreams, his inventive language, and his gentle refusal of violence model an alternative epistemology that values relational knowledge over domination. Charlie's humility and Wonka's magical inventions hint—if only partially—at economies of abundance not bound to capitalist scarcity. These moments encourage readers to imagine futures in which creativity and moral responsibility outweigh the coloniality of power.

An Indigenous framework deepens this analysis by foregrounding kinship with the more-than-human world. Both texts depict lively environments where rivers of chocolate or jars of dreams pulse with agency, teaching that abundance comes from reciprocity, not exploitation. Sophie's alliance with the BFG and Charlie's reverent wonder before the chocolate factory embody an ethic of listening and respect that resonates with Indigenous teachings on ecological balance.

Taken together, these perspectives show that Dahl's work occupies a liminal cultural space. It reproduces colonial hierarchies even as it invites readers to question them. The tension between imperial confidence and the yearning for relational futures becomes the site of the books' enduring power. For contemporary audiences—especially young readers—these stories offer a chance to practice critical imagination: to recognize the colonial past, to hear alternative ways of knowing, and to envision more reciprocal relationships with each other and with the living world.

In this way, *The BFG* and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* remain more than beloved classics. They are imaginative terrains where the echoes of empire meet the possibilities of decolonial and Indigenous futures and inviting readers to dream and to act beyond the limits of the colonial imagination.

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