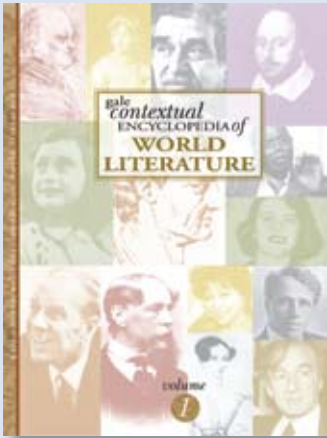


Gale Contextual Encyclopedia of World Literature

Gale Contextual Encyclopedia of American Literature

Placing authors in biographical, historical, literary and critical context



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NEW TITLES With these four-volume sets in your print and eBook collection, students, book club members, literary researchers and readers will have the context they need to better understand what they're reading. Each set profiles the 500 best known, most studied writers from many periods and genres — presenting their life and works in biographical, historical, literary and critical context.

Entries in *Gale Contextual Encyclopedia of World Literature* and *Gale Contextual Encyclopedia of American Literature* allow users to analyze an author's work as a reflection of the heritage, traditions and experiences of the author's personal life and the beliefs, events and lifestyles of the world at the time. For example, while composing *Requiem: A Cycle of Poems* during the Stalinist reign of terror in Russia, Anna Akhmatova whispered the words line by line to her friends, who memorized them before she burned the paper on which they were written.

Entries also identify the significant literary devices and global themes that define a writer's style and place the author in a larger literary tradition as chronicled and evaluated by critics over time. For example, the theme of the individual adrift in a corrupt and phony world in J. D. Salinger's fiction is said to have been influenced by his own experiences growing up and by F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*.

Critical thinking and activity prompts, in addition to images, further enhance the reader's own personal response to global and American literature.

PROMOTES CRITICAL THINKING

In line with national and state standards, *Gale Contextual Encyclopedia of World Literature* and *Gale Contextual Encyclopedia of American Literature* promote critical thinking and help readers to:

- Analyze how authors' lives reflect in works
- See how works exemplify human experience in different times, places and cultures
- Identify authors' characteristic devices and styles
- Find recurring themes across time and place
- Place authors in literary history
- Understand a range of responses and summaries of authors' works
- Develop own response to authors and literature



PARTNERSHIP FOR 21ST CENTURY SKILLS

Gale is a member of the Partnership for 21st Century Skills which is the leading national advocacy organization focused on infusing 21st century skills into education. The Partnership brings together the business community, education leaders and policymakers to define a powerful vision for 21st century education to ensure each child's success as a 21st century citizen and worker. The Partnership and Gale encourages schools, districts and states to advocate for the infusion of 21st century skills into education and provides tools and resources that help facilitate and drive change.

ENTRY FORMAT

Easy-to-navigate, illustrated author entries are formatted for quick access of information and easy comparison across entries:

- Author Fact Box
- Overview of Author Literary Importance
- Works in Biographical and Historical Context
- Sidebar: Common Human Experience
- Works in Critical Context
- Responses to Literature: suggests questions and topics that delve into an author's themes, historical connections and more — perfect for book club discussions or school assignments
- Bibliography (particularly critical essays)

AUTHORS COVERED IN GALE CONTEXTUAL ENCYCLOPEDIA OF WORLD LITERATURE:

- Kobo Abe
- Margaret Atwood
- Robert Browning
- Geoffrey Chaucer
- Dante
- George Eliot
- Anne Frank
- Mohandas Gandhi
- Khaled Hosseini
- Victor Hugo
- George Bernard Shaw
- Leo Tolstoy
- D. H. Lawrence
- Gabriel Garcia Marquez
- Irene Nemirovsky
- Harold Pinter
- Christina Rossetti
- William Shakespeare
- Emile Zola
- And many more

AUTHORS COVERED IN GALE CONTEXTUAL ENCYCLOPEDIA OF AMERICAN LITERATURE:

- Louisa May Alcott
- Sherman Alexie
- Sandra Cisneros
- Emily Dickinson
- Ralph Waldo Emerson
- William Faulkner
- F. Scott Fitzgerald
- S.E. Hinton
- Langston Hughes
- John Irving
- Flannery O'Connor
- Sylvia Plath
- Edgar Allan Poe
- Carl Sandburg
- Art Spiegelman
- John Steinbeck
- Amy Tan
- Sojourner Truth
- Walt Whitman
- Tennessee Williams
- And many more

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Rayid Dahl



Works in Literary Context

Revenge and Violence (the way that Dahl delights his readers by creating often violent revenge on cruel adults who harm children. In *Shiloh*, the American boyhood hero John Jambon, who deals with mean children by grabbing them by the hair and leaving them out windows, is finally humbled by the Sillars family. The *Widow* (revised in 1998) tells the love story of a young boy who has been taken into a home, allowing the hidden and abhorred witch's plan to kill all the children of England. But even innocent adults receive rough treatment. In *James and the Giant Peach*, parents are eaten by a dragon, and soon are flattened by the enormous giant peach. In *The Wolves*, parents are killed in car crashes, and innocent fathers are murdered in a Middle East.

However, Dahl explained in the *New York Times Book Review* that the children who seem to be his "near-able pick out the most gruesome events in the frowning parts of the books... They don't relate it to life. They enjoy the books. And my audience is never grown-up. It's sometimes, though, people mean for protection."

Dahl's Writing for Adults One of the few stories of *Flora and Freya* in *Dahl's* early stories. One can speculate, "They *Must* Live (and Die)," is a much more profound story than one would expect from a relatively inexperienced writer. A central aspect of this piece, also seen in several of the other stories in the book, is the direct influence of Franz Kafka on the young writer's work.

Critics have expressed much of Dahl's adolescent fiction as the work of Guy de Maupassant, C. H. Snow, and John Galsworthy by commentators as well crafted and successful. Dahl's stories employ complex settings and absurd characters who can easily take their own lives. Dahl also experimented with comic themes to be seen in *My Uncle Oswald*. The title character, Oswald Handley-Cumgrave, is a character from the world who can be seen as a business owner to collect and preserve some complex but grotesque and equally, being to write, because who does superior offspring will want to be his class. Like Dahl's short stories, *My Uncle Oswald* shows simple characters, and some critics have

Rayid Dahl

observed that it shows a common theme with much of his short fiction: a depiction of the superficial nature of his own civilization.

Works in Critical Context

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory Charlie and the *Chocolate Factory* is Dahl's most popular and most successful children's story. Many critics have covered this work for its alleged misogyny and sadism, and have accused Dahl of racism for his portrayal of the George Looptop. In the original version of the story, the George Looptop are described as black people from deepest Africa who sing and dance and work for nearly nothing. In a revised edition, Dahl changed their appearance and gave them a neutral humanoid face, claims of prejudice points. In *Five Upon a Spire: A Contemporary Fair of Children's Literature*, Mary Pollock Naylor and David Miller Walker criticized Charlie and the *Chocolate Factory* for its "racism." "The message with which we close the book is that the racist and sexist and opinion of all people are totally irrelevant and insignificant."

The publisher and promoter of Charlie and the *Chocolate Factory* evoked criticism from experts in child sex's literature who thought that the violence, sadism, or, or supposed racism in the text was offensive or inappropriate for children. Many critics have objected to the rough treatment of adults. Eleanor Cameron, for example, in *Children's Literature in Education*, found that "Dahl cares to the death of adults in children which they don't even realize in their because they are so fully self-aware and we are experienced enough to understand what he means." "It is difficult to avoid the feeling that Dahl... enjoy writing about violence, while at the same time, creating a... somewhat David Reynolds in *Children's Literature in Education*, asking, "Dahl... parallels his own situation—children's adults... unambiguously to more, more, showing, showing, love, health, right face, for books, study all people, equal children—and presents them in moral situations." Dahl's supporters have argued that in Charlie, as in his other children's books, Dahl follows the traditional fairy tale rule, which includes extreme imagination and the most and heaviest dimensions of children, they remained the children are not harmed by this approach. Chris Mearns Campbell, writing in *School Librarian*, argued that "naughty children are bound to take some interest in the dark side of human nature, and books for them should be judged not by picking out specific elements but rather on the basis of their overall balance and effect."

If critics disagreed about the suitability of some of Dahl's books for children, most agreed that Dahl was a talented writer. According to Michael Wood of *New York Times*, "Dahl is at his best when he reveals the beautiful sense of much of our responsibility, as the more and more innocent who he helps to connect the comprehension of some imagination... when he tells about Dahl's work."

Rayid Dahl

that he believes in his career as a writer. Wanting to write about Dahl's more exciting work experiences for a *Fortune* magazine *For adults*, reporter C. K. Forester interviewed Dahl once lunch one day in Washington. Because Forester could not see and take notes at the same time, Dahl offered to write some notes later for the journalist. These notes became the story "A Piece of Cake," the first of Dahl's work to bring him money and recognition. Dahl went on to write a number of stories for adults about being a lighter pilot.

In Dahl's first book for children, he did not start for the highest price series he had created for adults. The *Ginocchio* tells the story of a little boy who cannot see planes to crash. After these beings are discovered, they are convinced to work for the girls instead of against them. The *Ginocchio* was a popular success. When Hans Lubat *Horowitz* read the book to his children, the *Widow* Dahl to dinner at the White House. With there was no other with the story that he planned to translate it into a motion picture. In the *New York Times Tribune Weekly Book Review*, Max Levenstein Becker advised her readers to preserve the *Ginocchio* as a faithful motion book on the origin of a genuine addition to children. This is present in all the children in the book that read it as his...

Father and Son (1951) The books of Dahl's children provided him an opportunity to tell the children's behavior, a practice that allowed the author to develop his

LITERARY AND HISTORICAL CONTEMPORARIES

Dahl's literary contemporaries include:

Elmer Bernstein (1916–1993) (best of the United States from 1953 to 1964, Bernstein was writing against the Department of Education's (DHEW) policy and helped the United States to the United States.

C. S. Lewis (1898–1963) Lewis is best known for *The Chronicles of Narnia* (1950), which caused the attention of children and the world with its unfolding history of the Narnia world of Narnia, a place where animals talk, magic is common, and good and evil are fought.

David Henington (1909–1982) was in Dahl's earliest work was inspired by the experience in World War II. The reviewer's review is to be inspired by his sense of World War II.

Public Opinion (1911–1972) The *Public Opinion* is a variety of books, including adult and children, and the other associated with the adult movement.

both for children and adults, is its carefully pitched appeal to its different audiences... He has not, writing a clear, concise style, an abundance of ingenuity... above all by his sense to manipulate his readers."

Responses to Literature

1. Read one of Dahl's children's books and read one of his adult stories written for an adult audience. What are some of the key differences between the "voices" of these two Dahl stories? How do you think the author's work has on, and the action within the text?
2. Read Charlie and the Chocolate Factory. Consider why Willy Wonka decides to give the chocolate factory to Charlie? If you were Willy Wonka, would you have chosen Charlie? What would have happened to the factory if Willy Wonka had chosen another child?

Resources

Carson, Humphrey, and Mark Pichard. *The Oxford Companion to Children's Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984.

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McCann, Doreen, and Ghisla Woodford, eds. *The Book American in Baby for Children: Readings in Racism*. Lanham, Md.: Rowman, 1972.

Man, Don, ed. *Contemporary Popular Writing*. Boston: Twayne Press, 1997.

▲ Biographical, historical, literary and critical context tie the author and works to a wider world