

**UTOPIA OF CLASSLESS SOCIETY IN CHOCOLATE FACTORY: MARXIST  
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**Abstract**

This study addresses the problem of how Roald Dahl's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* reflects the dynamics of class struggle and the concept of a classless society through a Marxist perspective. The analysis employs a Marxist literary criticism framework to examine the narrative's portrayal of socioeconomic themes, focusing on the symbolic representation of the chocolate factory as a site of production and class interaction. The findings reveal that while the narrative suggests a meritocratic shift in power and advocates for moral integrity over wealth, it simultaneously exposes the underlying contradictions of a classless society. The presence of the Oompa-Loompas highlights the persistence of labor exploitation, questioning the authenticity of the proposed utopia and indicating that the narrative reinforces rather than fully resolves capitalist ideologies. The study concludes that Dahl's work, while promoting ideals of social mobility and equity, ultimately fails to achieve the Marxist vision of class eradication. Instead, it presents a diluted form of capitalism, masked as a fantasy, which invites critical reflection on the limitations of children's literature in addressing complex social issues.

**Keywords:** *Classless Society, Marxist Criticism, Utopian Ideals*

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Marxism, a critical social and economic theory formulated by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, continues to serve as a potent framework for examining capitalism societies and their inherent class structures. The primary focus of Marxism is the inherent struggle between the bourgeoisie, who possess the means of production, and the proletariat, who are obligated to sell their labor for subsistence. Marxist theory posits that this link leads to exploitation, alienation, and systematic inequality (Fuchs, 2020). Capitalism,

prevalent in numerous global nations, is frequently justified by the principles of meritocracy and the market's "invisible hand," however it, in reality, intensifies income inequality and solidifies class distinctions (Harvey, 2020).

The novel *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* by Roald Dahl (1964) offers a unique opportunity to investigate Marxist ideas in children's fiction. The story follows Charlie Bucket, a boy from a destitute family, who wins a chance to visit the luxurious chocolate factory of capitalist figure Willy Wonka. Through Charlie's journey and the symbolic roles

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played by the other children and factory workers (the oompa-loompas), the narrative critiques capitalist consumerism, the moral failures of the bourgeoisie, and the commodification of labor (hunt, 2020; fisher, 2022). While dahl may not have intended a marxist critique, the novel reflects key marxist concerns such as labor exploitation, class struggle, and utopian aspirations for a more equitable society.

Prior research has examined *charlie and the chocolate factory* through diverse critical frameworks, such as psychoanalytic, postcolonial, and feminist lenses (stephens & mccallum, 2021). Recent scholarship underscores the significance of marxist analysis in interpreting the novel's portrayal of class mobility and consumption (nodelman, 2020). Gubar (2021) contends that the narrative moralizes poverty and condemns luxury, portraying charlie's humility as the quintessential proletarian virtue. Furthermore, research by reynolds (2020) and hintz & tribunella (2021) indicates that the working circumstances of the oompa-loompas symbolically reflect the systemic inequalities inherent in the global capitalist economy, particularly within postcolonial frameworks.

This research's theoretical foundation is based on classical and contemporary marxist theory, encompassing class conflict, labor alienation, and capitalist ideology. According to marx, the proletariat under a capitalist system becomes alienated not just from the products of their labor but also from their inherent human potential (marx & engels, 2020). In dahl's work, this alienation is reflected in the depiction of the oompa-loompas, whose labor supports the factory while their voices and agency are subordinated. The candy factory functions as a metaphorical environment where production, ethics, and social class intertwine intricately.

this study utilizes a theoretical framework that both extends and deviates from prior research by concentrating on the concept of a utopian, classless society suggested by the novel's

conclusion. Charlie's nomination as wonka's successor prompts inquiries regarding the feasibility of genuine class mobility or systemic transformation under a capitalist paradigm. Critical theorists such as eagleton (2020) and jameson (2021) argue that the utopian imagination in literature frequently obscures underlying ideological inconsistencies.

cutting-edge research underscores an increasing interest in examining children's literature as a domain for ideological reproduction and opposition (kidd, 2020). Dahl's work provides a comprehensive case study within this framework. This study seeks to examine the symbolic conclusion of class conflict in *charlie and the chocolate factory* and evaluate if the narrative genuinely depicts a marxist utopia or subtly reinforces capitalist values.

the research purpose is to examine roald dahl's *charlie and the chocolate factory* from a marxist perspective to reveal the novel's critique of capitalist institutions and its envisioning of a utopian alternative. The primary study hypothesis posits that *charlie and the chocolate factory* serves as a veiled marxist critique of capitalist exploitation and class stratification, however ultimately does not advocate for a fundamental reconfiguration of capitalist power.

The use of marxist criticism in literary studies has provided a foundational framework for analyzing how literature reflects, reinforces, or critiques class structures and economic ideologies. Karl marx and friedrich engels (1970) in (mylonas, 2012) argue that cultural products, including literature, are not independent from material conditions but are shaped by the economic base and superstructure. Their theory has influenced generations of literary theorists who see literature as a tool to understand social and class dynamics. In marxist analysis, characters, settings, and narratives are often examined in relation to class struggle, labor exploitation, and ownership of the means of production.

Althofer (2025), a leading figure in marxist literary criticism, emphasizes that literature can serve both to reinforce dominant ideologies and to challenge them. According to eagleton, texts should be read not only for what they say but for what they conceal—how class, ideology, and power are woven into the structure of the narrative. (tacik, 2018) extends this idea by examining how literature participates in the construction of “structures of feeling” that reflect historical changes in social consciousness, including aspirations for classless societies or critiques of capitalist institutions.

When it comes to children’s literature, scholars like (de bruin-molé, 2021) have argued that fairy tales and fantasy often carry hidden ideological messages. Zipes suggests that many children’s stories, while presented as entertainment, transmit cultural norms and values, including those related to authority, obedience, and class. Roald dahl’s works, including *charlie and the chocolate factory*, have been the subject of both praise and critique for their moral messaging and portrayal of social inequality. Scholars such as (øversveen & kelly, 2023) have noted that the seeming simplicity of children’s narratives often masks complex social commentaries.

Recent studies have commenced an examination of *charlie and the chocolate factory* within a marxist perspective, notably regarding its portrayal of poverty, wealth, and labor. The depiction of the bucket family’s financial struggles and charlie’s subsequent ownership of the chocolate factory is sometimes interpreted as a symbolic redistribution of wealth. Critiques have arisen over the portrayal of the oompa-loompas as a submissive, exotic labor force, prompting worries about racial and class exploitation. Researchers such as althofer (2025) and tacik (2018) contend that dahl’s factory, albeit presenting a utopian reprieve from poverty, concurrently perpetuates capitalist inequalities obscured by fantasy components.

The literature on marxist criticism, especially in regard to children’s fiction, presents a

substantial domain for analyzing class relations and social ideologies. *Charlie and the chocolate factory* exemplifies the conflict between capitalism principles and the idealistic vision of a classless society. The current research offers essential insights that facilitate the examination of how narratives directed at young audiences can both mirror and influence socio-economic awareness.

## METHODS

This study utilizes a qualitative research design, employing marxist literary criticism as the principal analytical framework. The study examines a textual analysis of roald dahl’s *charlie and the chocolate factory*, highlighting aspects that illustrate class conflict, labor relations, and ideological dominance. The method entails meticulous analysis to reveal how story structure, character evolution, and theme elements reflect or critique socio-economic hierarchies. This research analyzes, from a marxist perspective, how the novel shapes its fictional universe in connection with capitalist beliefs and utopian ambitions, especially in its depiction of production, ownership, and the transfer of power from wonka to charlie.

The data gathering involves pinpointing pertinent situations, dialogues, and descriptions in the novel that indicate class relations, labor exploitation, and the concept of meritocratic social mobility. These textual aspects are further analyzed within the framework of marxist concepts, including base and superstructure, alienation, and ideology. Secondary materials, such as scholarly papers and critical essays on marxist theory and roald dahl’s oeuvre, are employed to substantiate the interpretation. The analysis seeks to uncover the discrepancies between the narrative’s superficial fantasy and the deeper socio-political messages it may communicate. This strategy facilitates a profound comprehension of how children’s literature functions as a conduit for the dissemination of class ideology.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Representation of Class-Based Society in the Story

The narrative distinctly illustrates a society profoundly segregated by socioeconomic distinctions. The Bucket family's destitution starkly contrasted with the affluence surrounding the chocolate factory, reflecting the conflict between working-class adversity and capitalist extravagance. The background of each youngster illustrates various social strata, emphasizing societal diversity and disparities. Characters such as Veruca Salt and Augustus Gloop exemplify the extravagance and entitlement sometimes associated with the upper classes. This juxtaposition establishes a foundation for a critique of societal stratification and class privilege.

Willy Wonka's position as the proprietor of the plant underscores the concentration of economic power characteristic of capitalist systems. He governs the factory's means of production, highlighting the inequality between laborers and proprietors. The Oompa-Loompas, serving as the factory's worker force, epitomize an oppressed labor class, excluded and objectified. Their romanticized portrayal conceals the oppressive circumstances of their labor. This dynamic exposes the ingrained power disparities present in class-based cultures.

*"So please, oh please, we beg, we pray, go throw your TV set away, and in its place you can install, a lovely bookshelf on the wall."*

— Roald Dahl, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, Oompa-Loompa Song (about Mike Teavee), p. 127.

The children's behavior reflects their social conditioning and class values. Those from affluent backgrounds demonstrate greed, selfishness, and entitlement, while Charlie's humble nature and generosity represent working-class virtues. The narrative suggests that moral worth is not tied to wealth but to character. The factory tour becomes a symbolic journey through various class traits and consequences. These

characterizations reinforce the story's underlying social critique.

*"However small the chance might be of striking lucky, the chance was there."*

— Roald Dahl, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, narrator about the Golden Ticket, p. 35.

Economic disparities are further illustrated through the depiction of the children's homes and lifestyles. While some live in opulent environments with every luxury, Charlie's household is cramped and impoverished. This physical setting reinforces social divisions and emphasizes the hardships faced by the lower class. The stark contrast also highlights the barriers to social mobility in capitalist societies. It situates the story's tension within real-world economic realities.

The portrayal of family dynamics also reflects class influences. Wealthier families are shown as indulgent but often dysfunctional, while Charlie's family, despite poverty, maintains strong bonds and moral values. This contrast challenges stereotypes about poverty and virtue. It also critiques the moral bankruptcy sometimes present in affluent classes. Through this, the story questions the legitimacy of social status based solely on wealth.

Overall, the class-based society in the story is represented as unequal, exploitative, and morally complex. The narrative critiques capitalist structures by exposing the negative traits associated with wealth and the dignity found in poverty (Øversveen & Kelly, 2023). The factory functions as a microcosm of broader social inequalities. Through characterization and setting, the story reveals how class shapes behavior, opportunity, and social relations. This sets a foundation for exploring utopian alternatives within the narrative.

### Construction of the Utopia of a Classless Society

The narrative establishes a utopia of a classless society chiefly through the symbolic transfer of ownership from Wonka to Charlie. This legislation advocates for the redistribution of

wealth and authority predicated on merit rather than lineage or financial resources. Charlie's modest origins and commendable character render him an exemplary leader for a new, just society. The narrative suggests that genuine value surpasses class distinctions, envisioning a society where ethical principles dictate social standing. This constitutes the essence of the utopian ideal.

The factory is portrayed as an environment where conventional class distinctions can be redefined or transcended. In contrast to traditional factories, it is depicted as enchanting and transforming, implying potentialities that transcend capitalist exploitation. The labor of the Oompa-Loompas, albeit contentious, is presented within a framework of collaboration and reciprocal advantage, at least superficially. The factory's internal mechanisms represent the potential for peace between labor and ownership. This establishes an optimal framework for envisioning a classless society (Khanlarzadeh, 2020).

Charlie's selection as the successor symbolizes meritocratic social mobility. The narrative implies that society responsibilities need to be dictated by merit and diligence rather than by inherited affluence. This meritocratic ideal contests current class systems by advocating for a more equitable allocation of opportunity. It reflects Marxist aspirations for a future in which social class no longer determines one's fate. This narrative option presents an optimistic perspective on social equality.

Moreover, the children who do not succeed in the factory's assessments exemplify the deficiencies of capitalist principles, including avarice, egotism, and excess. Their exclusion from the story indicates a repudiation of these undesirable characteristics. This purification process suggests that an ideal society necessitates ethical transformation with economic alteration. It underscores the imperative of ethical conduct in maintaining a classless society. The narrative consequently connects morality with social justice.

The narrative's hopeful tone underscores the utopian goal. Notwithstanding the adversities encountered by Charlie and his family, the finale assures a more promising future rooted in equity

and compassion. This optimistic conclusion corresponds with the conventions of utopian literature, wherein transformation and renewal are essential themes (Crossley, 2023). The narrative encourages readers to envision a realm in which societal divisions no longer constrain human potential. It presents a perspective that starkly contrasts with the initial depiction of socioeconomic disparity.

Nonetheless, the depicted utopia is fraught with inconsistencies. The persistent presence of the Oompa-Loompas as a laboring class undermines the notion of genuine equality. Their depiction prompts inquiries on the authenticity of a classless society or its mere reorganization. These difficulties indicate that the utopian goal is aspirational rather than completely actualized. The story thus facilitates critical examination of the boundaries of social revolution. This intricate depiction enhances the narrative's ideological depth.

### **Implications of the Classless Society Utopia**

The envisioned ideal of a classless society in the narrative signifies a profound critique of capitalist principles and frameworks. It questions the validity of inherited wealth and promotes a society founded on equity and ethical merit. The narrative advocates for social justice and equality by envisioning a society free from the constraints of social class on opportunity. This has significant ramifications for the manner in which readers, particularly children, comprehend class and morality. It promotes analytical reasoning on economic and social processes.

The narrative posits that ethical character ought to underpin leadership and societal standing. This redefining of value challenges capitalist concepts that emphasize the acquisition of money. It suggests that social mobility ought to be universally attainable, unimpeded by lineage or privilege (Misesani & Mustofa, 2022). This concept fosters inclusion and the democratization of authority. This assertion aligns with the overarching Marxist advocacy for the dismantling of class hierarchies.

Moreover, the utopia advocates for a more harmonious relationship between work and ownership. The narrative suggests potential for non-exploitative work situations by seeing the factory as a cooperative space. This confronts actual capitalist labor relations characterized by alienation and inequality. The assertion is that productive effort can be both gratifying and justly compensated in a fair society. This cultivates optimism for alternative economic structures.

The depiction of the Oompa-Loompas contradicts this idealistic message. Their position as a subordinate labor force indicates persistent exploitation notwithstanding the principle of equality. This prompts apprehensions over the susceptibility of utopian goals to co-optation or compromise. It serves as a warning that social justice necessitates continual vigilance against emerging forms of domination. The inference is that utopia constitutes a continuous endeavor rather than a completed condition.

The story suggests that ethical change is crucial for attaining a classless society. The removal of faulty characters signifies a cleansing of capitalist vices like as avarice and egotism (Ansar, 2024). This ethical aspect indicates that economic transformation is inadequate without a corresponding alteration in values. It highlights the link between ethics and social structure. The narrative thus advocates for a comprehensive perspective on societal change.

The notion of a classless utopia, fundamental to Marxist theory, imagines a world free from economic hierarchy and capitalist oppression. This concept is symbolically illustrated in the narrative context of the chocolate factory, where labor, ownership, and wealth distribution provoke inquiries on class dynamics. Marxism condemns capitalism for generating significant inequities, positing that the emancipation of the proletariat necessitates the eradication of class distinctions (Harvey, 2021). Within the framework of the chocolate factory, this utopia is undermined by the inherent capitalist ownership, because authority and profit are concentrated in the hands of a one individual.

In Marxist terminology, the chocolate factory exemplifies a microcosm of capitalist production, wherein the labor of individuals—such as the Oompa Loompas—is indispensable for maintaining the riches and creativity of the factory proprietor. The utopian vision is maintained by obscuring labor exploitation and emphasizing fantasy rather than realism. Fuchs (2021) asserts that capitalism regimes frequently obscure exploitation through consumer culture and spectacle, so supporting the prevailing worldview and marginalizing labor. The chocolate factory, despite its superficial egalitarianism, actually maintains a strict hierarchy focused on ownership and control.

The prospect of upward mobility within the factory narrative—particularly exemplified by Charlie's inheritance of the factory—reinforces a meritocratic illusion that Marxism fundamentally criticizes. Instead of destroying class structures, these transitions perpetuate class hierarchy in a different form. Eagleton (2021) posits that capitalism frequently commodifies hope and personal success narratives to sustain its dominance, reframing systemic problems as individual accomplishments. Consequently, Charlie's ascent does not demolish class structures but rather reaffirms the capitalist principle of reward predicated on moral and personal merit.

The depiction of the Oompa Loompas is particularly significant in Marxist interpretation, since they symbolize an idealized labor force—joyful, uncomplaining, and wholly reliant on the factory owner. Their absence of agency and speech exemplifies the alienation of labor articulated by Marx, wherein workers are reduced to mere devices serving capital. Žižek (2021) contends that capitalist utopias frequently depend on the obscurity of labor, with exploitation concealed beneath a veneer of harmony and order. The chocolate factory's paradise is consequently maintained by an illusory representation of labor unity.

Furthermore, the factory's functioning beyond regulatory frameworks and public scrutiny exemplifies another Marxist critique: the privatization of production and the lack of

democratic governance over the means of production. The utopian vision is exclusive, not collective. According to Dean (2021), a genuine Marxist paradise would entail collective ownership and worker self-management, which sharply contrasts with the authoritarian framework of the workplace. The alleged paradise is hence founded on an individualistic rather than a collectivist style of society structure.

The chocolate factory symbolizes a warped utopia where class appears to be eliminated, yet is fundamentally ingrained in the moral economy of the tale. The "worthy poor" receive rewards, whilst the "undeserving" face penalties, illustrating a capitalist morality as opposed to a Marxist ideal of equality. Hobsbawm (2021) posits that utopias in capitalist literature frequently promote conformity and obedience as commendable traits, while obscuring systemic disparities. The narrative of the chocolate factory, consequently, maintains an ideological framework that opposes the authentic Marxist ideal of classlessness and social equality.

Ultimately, the utopian ideal prompts readers to envision possibilities that transcend current social limitations. It instills optimism that systemic transformation is achievable, if challenging. The narrative's popularity ensures that these concepts attain broad exposure, shaping cultural notions of class and justice. This cultural influence highlights the capacity of literature to shape societal awareness. The narrative so enhances ongoing discussions around equity and human dignity.

## CONCLUSION

In summary, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* offers a poignant indictment of class-based society while concurrently envisioning a utopian concept of a classless world. The plot and its characters reveal socioeconomic disparities and capitalist exploitation, emphasizing the values of humility and moral integrity over affluence and privilege. The symbolic conveyance of ownership from Wonka to Charlie represents the aspiration for meritocratic societal advancement and a more

equitable division of authority. The depiction of the Oompa-Loompas and certain unresolved contradictions indicate that attaining genuine equality is intricate and continuous. Ultimately, the narrative prompts readers to critically examine social systems and fosters an aspirational vision of justice, collaboration, and human dignity transcending class barriers.

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