



The Cursory Aesthetics of Existence: Physiognomy, Paedophobia and the Tainted Child

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ABSTRACT:

This essay discusses the problematics of the child protagonist's ontology in the contemporary children's fiction. It discusses the obsessive and recursive patterns observed in the contemporary children's fiction like the ideological collapse of family as an institution, the orphan child, fragile physiognomy of the child protagonist and the phenomenal tasks it is expected to perform, this imbalance between the cerebral and the corporeal as an ideological construct. It also discusses the articulation of paedophobia through the debased, abominable and inferior discourses of physiognomy, pathology, illness and disability thrust on the children; the sanitary and desexualized vocabulary used to address the child protagonist and the necessity to do so. The essay elaborates how these discourses overlap with the ideology of utilitarianism and evince children as the victims of biopolitical anxiety. The essay attempts to understand and define a paedophobiac.

KEYWORDS:

Abject, Children's fiction, cerebral, corporeal, physiognomy, paedophobia, spatiality.

Contemporary children's fiction as a corpus of writing shares the recursive pattern of the discrepancy between the cerebral and the corporeal, that is, the presence of the inverse ratios model whereby, "the physical is usually found in an inverse ratio to the intellectual appetite."¹ The veracity of this imbalance between the physiognomy and the intellectual powers or the menial strength exhibited by the children can be elucidated through the dietary prescriptions and practices for children along with the area of the space they individually inhabit. The respective protagonists glorified in the genre of contemporary children's fiction are lean, emaciated, "wimpy"² with delicate physiognomies. The fragile physiognomy is the symptom of a diseased, malnourished and hungry body, signifiers and symptoms of a child belonging to lower class, an orphan with poor guardians or under the tutelage of cruel institutions. The conditions of the poor physiognomy of the child protagonist are enmeshed with its situation of financial depravity and the claustrophobic spaces they inhabit.

Charlie, the eponymous protagonist of Roald Dahl's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (1964) is the son of Mr. Bucket, a lower-class worker in the toothpaste factory where "he sat all day long at a bench and screwed the little caps on the tops of the tubes of toothpaste ... [And] however hard he worked ... There wasn't enough money to buy proper food for them all." Mr. Bucket's inability to provide for his family has its effects on Charlie's physiognomy who "grew thinner and thinner. His face became frighteningly white and pinched. The skin was drawn so tightly over the cheeks that you could see the shapes of the bones underneath", who survives on the monolithic liquidated diet of cabbage soup. (15, 58) But it is Charlie whose moral virtuousness is appreciated and becomes the owner of Mr.

Willy Wonka's chocolate factory. Dahl's eponymous heroine, Matilda's mind is described as "nimble" because of her brilliant learning ability and she is a marvellous reader of Victorian literature only at the age of four. (4-5, 12) But there is a disproportion in her stature and her acts of bravura. In his illustrations of Dahl's *Matilda* (1988), Quentin Blake in the first picture shows Matilda at the age of three reading the newspaper in such a way that it emphasizes her diminutive physiognomy where the newspaper covers her entire body like a blanket.³ In another sketch on the same text, Matilda is sitting on the library chair reading Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* but the proportions of the chair are exaggerated so much so that it is with great discomfort she is sitting in that chair where she cannot recline as that would give her a sleeping posture and even her feet do not touch the ground. The book seems too heavy for her to read, so she has a bent posture with her face buried in the book. While this strategy of diminution and exaggeration offers a sharp contrast discussing about the imbalance between the cerebral and the corporeal of the child protagonist's physiognomy, it also shows the liminal, claustrophobic spaces these children inhabit or create for themselves as a space for privacy, as a space of demarcation between the child and its obnoxious guardians.

In this essay, we will examine the diverse ways in which the discourse of puny, delicate physiognomy of the child refigures and is formulated in contemporary children's fiction; the need for such phantasmagorical representations of the child protagonist's physiognomy; how do we reconcile these two contrary possibilities of fragile physiognomy and the child's bravura. It is also worthwhile to examine the sadistic, masochistic intentions practiced by the adults on the children in contemporary children's fiction which evinces the paedophobic tendencies exhibited by the adults through their cold imagination and manhandling of children's physiognomies evident in the price a child has to pay for becoming the protagonist of contemporary children's fiction. Therefore, the

other key concern of this essay will be to dwell on the necessity of paedophobia as an ideology and how it asserts itself and configures in and through the discourses of abject physiognomies.

Plastic, wooden and flour babies

Contemporary children's fiction begins on a note of pessimism. The protagonists of contemporary children's fiction are either orphans or they have cruel guardians to whom their responsibility is entrusted. Dahl's protagonists, James in *James and the Giant Peach* (1961), Sophie in *The BFG* (1982), the "[extra]ordinary mouse" or the "mouse-person" in *The Witches* (1983), Rowling's eponymous in the Harry Potter series, Lois Lowry's Kira in *Gathering Blue* (2000), all are orphans whose parents have either died in an accident, have been murdered or have died of illness. Dahl's Matilda, James and Philip Pullman's Lyra in *Northern Lights* (2005) have brutally callous guardians responsible for their care. As mentioned earlier, these children belong to the lower class whose parents are unable to provide for their subsistence. Therefore, it is likely that these children reside in austere, barren, small, dilapidated, "ramshackle[d] house[s]"⁴ without any luxuries which might provide children pleasure and privacy (8). But the case cannot be dismissed simply as the poor condition of lower class. It is also a condition of paedophobia articulated by the cruel guardians or the agents of cruel institutions to whom the care of children in contemporary children's fiction is entrusted. These children are made to live in arid, desolate, cold, unpopulated landscapes seeming as bare as a "prison cell" (8). James, the eponymous protagonist of Dahl's *James and the Giant Peach* is taken by his Aunt Sponge and Aunt Spiker to live in a house on the top of a high hill, which is cut-off from all the houses in the city. It is significant to note that the protagonists of contemporary children's fiction are not only orphans but they have no siblings or rather, they are sequestered from any

loving human contact. George, the eponymous hero of Dahl's *George's Marvellous Medicine* (1981) lives with his family on the farm which was "miles away from anywhere, so there were never any children to play with" (1). Similarly, the Camp Green Lake of Louis Sachar's *Holes* (1998) is a "dry, flat wasteland" with smelly and threatening surroundings occupied by lizards, scorpions and rattlesnakes waiting to consume the physiognomy of the child and has scanty resources for survival (3). Sophie in Dahl's *The BFG* is taken by the BFG to the Giant country which is a "desolate wasteland" with no vegetation but only nauseating Snozzcumbers which are unpalatable (13). Such revolting diet is unhealthy for her physiognomy and in the absence of food would further make her weak and diminish gradually.

Harry in Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (1997) sleeps in a cupboard under the stairs sharing his sleeping space with spiders. This sharing of the habitat with insects bespeaks of the fact that Harry's guardians have a poor sense of a child's environment for upbringing. Further, such a narrow and stifling spatial arrangement is unfavourable for mobility but prefers that the child stays rooted in a single posture. It follows that children's dwelling places resemble like prison especially, by transporting them to the remote location, paedophobics present children as outcasts. The following significant points emerge from the textual references discussed in this section: a) Paedophobia is not simply a baseless sentiment of hatred exhibited through vituperative phrases in speech or writing by an adult towards a child but it is a sentiment with a specific locus which is the physiognomy of lower class and orphan children. Abuse fantasies of physiognomy is a sub-discourse through which paedophobia functions and manifests itself. Paedophobia is a physical-spatial-mental phenomenon with a paranoid consciousness exhibited by the paedophobics in dismantling every affective affinity and possibility of pleasure a child is susceptible to acquire. Therefore, it isolates the child spatially to arid settings and physically from its

loved ones which also aims to silence the voice of the child. It physically secludes the child by effacing its body and giving it a repulsive diet which leads to revulsion at food and thereby, anorexia, leading to dizziness; puts the child protagonist amidst putrid surroundings where it has to learn to paralyse and numb its senses. Indeed, the qualities of seclusion, silence, inability to feel and indulge in emotional affiliations, numbed senses, stagnation, immobility, survival with little or no food, disposability and the ability to remain unaffected in any spatial settings demanded by the paedophobics of a child bespeaks of the latter's status as a non-entity, its toughness which resonates with the materiality of wood. Paedophobics emphasize on the essence of woodenness in a child. The *OED* (2006) defines wooden as: a) made of wood b) like wood c) stiff, clumsy, or stilted; without animation or expressionless. This is the kind of strength, composure, gravitas children are expected to exhibit and it is not surprisingly they are addressed as "pack of bones" which is symptomatic not only of their delicate physiognomy but its hardness or woodenness.

Ms. Trunchbull in Dahl's *Matilda* is a paedophobic. Her paranoia of childhood is palpable when she hysterically denies her childhood to a little boy who thinks she must have been a baby once. She says:

'I was *never* a small person,' she snapped. 'I have been large all my life' ...
'Me a baby!' shouted the Trunchbull. 'How dare you suggest such a thing!
What cheek! What infernal insolence!' (145).

A paedophobic denies the claims to both its own as well as the others' childhood. Moreover, paedophobics refuse to recognize the natural body of the child, they show strong antipathy towards it and strive to change the materiality of the child's physiognomy. In Dahl's *The Witches*, children in their soft, creamy natural physiognomy smell like "dogs droppings" to the witches who are inventing potions to wipe children from the face of the earth. But a child can

survive from the murder at the hands of these witches if they remain unclean and are stinky because such children smell like “violets and primroses” to them (22, 71). In fact, the witches come up with Formula 86 Delayed Action Mouse Maker, a drop which is injected in the sweets of children and on its consumption the child transforms into a mouse. Quentin Blake’s illustration of Dahl’s *The Witches* shows children converted into mouse which are being swiped off with a broomstick by a sweeper. Paedophobics threaten the natural physiognomy of children which is replaced by an inferior, diseased, dirty and decayed physiognomy. The new physiognomy imposed on the child is representative of its easy disposability with no ethical dilemma. Similarly, Ms. Trunchbull in *Matilda* throws two kids, Julius Rottwinkle and Amanda Thripp just like a hammer. In this exchange of signifiers, she transforms them into her objects of Olympics practice. A paedophobic blurs the distinction between an entity and a non-entity and evacuates the child’s body of humane sentiments and sensations. The child’s body is passive and a sheer mass on which the adults enact their “self-fulfilling prophecies”⁴. This ability of the child’s physiognomy to metamorphose according to paedophobic’s intentions is analogous to the materiality of plastic. Roland Barthes in the section on plastic in his book *Mythologies* (1972) remarks:

So more than a substance, plastic is the very idea of its infinite transformation ... [But] in the hierarchy of the major poetic substances, it figures as a disgraced material, lost between the effusiveness of rubber and the flat hardness of metal ... It is a ‘shaped’ substance ... (117)

Just like those wooden and plastic toys with rough texture, mechanical and jerky movements, which only cater to our specific needs and are non-reciprocating, paedophobics in exchanging the child’s natural physiognomy with plasticity conferred the child protagonist with an artificial, inferior texture, a mechanicalness where certain senses in the child are trained and certain are numbed. The

sequestered surroundings devoid of human contact whereby, the paedophobics not only dismiss but refuse to cultivate affective and reciprocal behavior, a sense of unwholesomeness and incompleteness leads to a deformed subject, making it easily discarded.

In Anne Fine's *Flour Babies* (1992) children are supposed to be guardians of little sacks of flour and when parenting the latter becomes difficult, children rely on their parents who tell them parenting is difficult and they would have exchanged parenting a child with a flour baby. Once again we notice that the natural physiognomy of the child is exchanged by the amorphous, powdery materiality of flour. These flour babies are small sacks given the shape of babies. In fact, this clayey nature of flour which can be moulded anyhow, its ability to soak and retain with its irresponsiveness, absence of any behaviour patterns which do not ask for any psychological investment, the nurturing potential of flour without any consumption it requires for itself is similar to the docility, passivity and little nourishment a paedophobic stipulates for a child. Flour is also a commodity of consumption. And so are children. In Dahl's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, when Augustus enters Mr. Wonka's chocolate making apparatus, the latter only expresses the anxiety to stop and save Augustus not because of any humanitarian or ethical dilemma but because Augustus' flesh will make distasteful the taste of his chocolates. The episode subtly hints that if children's flesh tasted pleasant, they would have been consumed orally. Children's panic in Fine's *Flour Babies* is justified when they come to know that certain cultures cook and eat children and they taste like pork (98). Nevertheless, they are consumed in terms of their labour.

Wood, plastic and flour are all inert materials, they offer a plain surface which is to be etched and shaped into various products. When paedophobics are engaged in an effort to replace the child's physiognomy with this cold, smooth

plainness, James R Kincaid argues in her book *Child Love* (1992) that they are essentially arguing for the case of a defenseless and a vacant child, “drained of any capacity to feel” on whom they can project their meanings, fantasies, needs and fears. (74)

Dirty, sick, pathological and mutilated physiognomies:

Consider the following derogatory epithets with which children in contemporary children’s fiction are addressed. They are “filthy”, emit “stink-waves” smelling of “dogs-droppings”, “a load of garbage”, smeared with “soot”, they are “potty”, “ploopy” and “witless weed”. They are the very incarnation of sickness, a “scab”, a “clot”, a “poisonous pustule”, a “gumboil”, “nauseating little warts”. This is another offensive fictive discourse of paedophobia on child protagonist’s physiognomy. Dirtiness signifies a line of separation from cleanliness, as does sickliness from healthiness. Within this scheme of demarcation, a paedophobic assumes itself to be clean and healthy and bodily superior to a child. This restores the agency to paedophobics to sanitize with “informed consent”⁵ children’s contagious physiognomies which are a threat to a healthy society. To sanitize might become a disciplinarian and punitive procedure to train the child’s body at a paedophobic’s pleasure or to efface and dispose it as a waste body. Mary Douglas in her book *Purity and Danger* (1966) says that “dirt essentially is disorder ... Dirt offends against order. Eliminating it is not a negative movement, but a positive effort to organize the environment.” (2) Therefore, dirt also makes a child an outsider and a paedophobic’s defence against dirt, aligns him with the status quo. But dirt and sickliness also signify carelessness and unawareness not only of the child but also of its loving parents. Therefore, the idea is to underline the incompetency and dispense away with the erstwhile authority responsible for the child’s care and replace it with the regime of paedophobic’s rigor. This also

makes palpable the textual manoeuvre in contemporary children's fiction which begins on the sadist note of the child protagonist's parent's death. Sickness entails not only a delicate physiognomy but a condition of helplessness and being at the mercy of others. This can be seen in the physically mutilated body of Kira with a twisted leg in Lowry's *Gathering Blue*. Kira is thought to be unproductive, a waste to the society with her physiognomy. Vandara, a woman along with the other villagers pleads for her eviction from the society. She remarks:

But she has not contributed ... She drags that dead leg around like a useless burden. She is slow, and she eats a lot. (30)

Dirtiness, sickliness and physically mutilated physiognomies represent parasitic existence of the child at the behest of others. This discourse shows them to be surplus commodity which is meant to be discarded. But the paedophobics look for value and claim such children. Kira is taken by the church authorities because she surpasses in the skill of weaving and is supposed to weave the costume of the singer unfolding the history of the village on the cloth. Such imperfect physiognomies are claimed by paedophobics because this discourse introduces the condition of innate depravity and the trauma of ontological anxiety in the child. It places the child in a vulnerable, injurious and obligatory position where to be productive is the only solution to remain anchored in the society. It shows the love of paedophobics towards violence which explains their urge to amplify situations of abasement in child. It also articulates the desire of emptiness and incompleteness within which paedophobics like to keep children to exploit their vulnerable situations which in turn, emphasizes on paedophobics' love for perverse bodies. Freud in his *Three Essays on the theory of Sexuality* (1920) defines perversion as "lingering at a particular body organ". This becomes tangible as paedophobia entwines itself with the condition of utilitarianism and productivity (as discussed above in Kira's case); these two conditions are notorious for

fragmentation of body with specific focus on the body part valuable for production and ignoring the others. The case of perversion and fragmentation becomes palpable through the synecdochic vocabulary deployed to address children. Perversion makes paedophobics' offering of optimum rations more conspicuous as the diet is meant to nourish not the entire body but is regulated according to the number of organs engaged in valuable productivity.

Diminutive bodies:

Contemporary children's fiction uses for children the vocabulary used to address vermin. A child is a "nasty little worm", "a little viper", a "grub", a "slug", "empty headed hamster", "filthy little maggot", "disgusted little cockroach", "clotted carbuncle". It is significant to note that only the vocabulary from insect family is used in these linguistic articulations to address children. Various meanings the word insect brings to our mind that they are irksome, intolerable and pernicious, just as children seem to the paedophobics. Insects can be found in any habitat and in any space just as children are supposed to adapt themselves in any conditions according to the paedophobics. In fact, in Dahl's *George's Marvellous Medicine* insects and children are recommended to share the same parasitic diet of cabbage with caterpillars and slugs in it, worms and beetles, earwigs. (6-8) Insects can easily be found in any environment which suggests they are surplus, easily available for exploitation, similar to the surplus quantity of children exploited by the paedophobics. Insect has a stunted body with improper or poorly developed sense organs. This stunted body is similar to the imperfect, unwholesome body of the child with specific loci sensitive to sensory perceptions and insensitive to the others which the paedophobic looks for to execute his utilitarian fantasies. The improper body of an insect also suggests its poor ability to feel pain and hence, it is taken to laboratories for experiments and its body is

mutilated, torn open for scientific knowledge. This idea resonates with the paedophobic's intentions to regulate and control the child, submit it to adult scrutiny and sanction violence on its body without any ethical dilemma.

Naughty child:

Though, naughtiness can be classified as a kind of behaviour a child sometimes exhibits, nevertheless, it has implications on the body. Discourses of criminality are rampant in contemporary children's fiction. Children are suspected of being "gangsters", "greedy little thieves". The idea of criminality associated with children makes them prone to punitive and disciplinary measures, violence on their body in the form of spanking or the agony of pain on not receiving food which leads to weak physiognomy. A child might or might not be naughty but the fictive construct of naughtiness is exploited to constraint and regulate the child. Naughtiness also suggests the resentment of the adult towards a child's rebelliousness and its curiosity, its secret knowledge and refusal to submit to the intentions of the adult. Knowledge and rebellion are the two things which a paedophobic strives to suppress in a child to make it docile because these two qualities threaten a paedophobic's authority. Harry, Frodo and Lyra are curious children and each of them has some secret knowledge which makes them vulnerable. Harry is curious to know about his parents' life and he is thought to have the secret knowledge to defy dark power. Frodo too has the secret knowledge of mysterious ring, its power and the way it functions. Lyra has the phenomenal secret knowledge to read alethiometer, an instrument which tells of true prophecies. They are curious children who want to save other people and invite danger on their body from the agents of cold power. For power is essentially paedophobic, it does not differentiate between a child's or an adult's body and strikes ruthlessly. Power is blind to its own children. For instance, Mrs.

Coulter, mother of Lyra in Pullman's *Northern Lights* wants to involve her daughter in her secret project of stealing children and killing them. She also wants to kill Lyra to aggrandize her power by acquiring alethiometer from her.

The overarching, singular concept of child's physiognomy:

We have discussed above a few sub-discourses of physiognomy through which paedophobia becomes palpable. But there is an overarching, monolithic body of the child which becomes tangible in and through the above mentioned sub-discourses of physiognomy. All the accounts of child's physiognomy signify unsentimental vision of these discourse fabricators, which in turn signifies their paedophobia. The child's body is repelling in itself. Its physiognomy is to be replaced by an inferior, sub-human and a decayed physiognomy. As mentioned in an earlier section of the paper, wood, plastic and flour are preferred materials for child's physiognomy because of their simplicity, their plainness which ideally resonates with the empty child a paedophobic wishes to create. So is an insect's body favourable to child's physiognomy because the former is without any complex sense organs or complex feelings and promiscuous sexual organs. This is the reason why children in contemporary children's fiction have desexualized bodies or gender neuter discourses are used to address them. In Dahl's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, Mr. Willy Wonka creates a hair toffee which would make the young children grow up early with moustache and beard and turn them into adults. But one of the kids argues that girls and women do not have beards and moustaches and Willy Wonka dismisses his observation. (116-17) Similarly, Greg Heffley in the *Wimpy Kid* series by Jeff Kinney has feminine description, who is "wimpy" with delicate physiognomy, who indulges in wearing his mother's bathrobes and is found wearing lingerie underneath his party clothes. This haziness in terms of gender address not only bespeaks of

insensitivity of the paedophobics towards children's body to whom they all are one and same, a single mass whose physiognomies need to be changed. The ambiguousness in terms of gender also suggests the quality of rawness of the surface of child's body which needs to be cultivated and given a shape. The disavowal of child's body and its genitalia signifies the refusal to acknowledge its complexities, behaviour patterns, its dignity. It is, as Jaqueline Rose remarks in her book *The Case of Peter Pan* (1984) "above all holding off any possible challenge to our own." (4)

The idea of paedophobic is to create a series of evasions, suspensions in the body and the concept of child; it is to erase the child and its physiognomy and pack it with the body and meaning the adults want to. The idea of evasions and suspensions to avoid any complexity in comprehending child's body is underlined by the idea to make the child's body simple, less defined and featured, its degeneration to the idea of a more uniform, underdeveloped with common features shared by it with the other bodies. For how else otherwise is it possible to build an equation with non-entities like wood, plastic and flour, insects and corporeal child's physiognomy? This can be seen in the case of Oompa Loompas in Dahl's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* who are lovers of cacao beans and Mr. Willy Wonka hires them (men, women and children) in his factory and offers to pay them in cacao beans. He addresses each one of them as "a little man". The idea of blurring the distinction between a child and an adult and ignorance of their different genders shows the monolithic existence to which the body and its needs are reduced in the case of Oompa Loompas. A paedophobic is averse to differentiations or categorizations of children's physiognomy. A question arises: How then should we define the adult[erated] child in the absence of any salient features such as sexuality, gender, body as paedophobics tend to efface these signs? Freud has strongly argued for the presence of signs of sexuality in children and therefore, has punctured the myth of their innocence. In the

paedophobic's mode of conceptualization, sexuality no longer serves the substratum to define and draw a distinction between the adult and the child. He makes a case of new orientations to define the child. The adult[erated] child is not simply a child who mimics adult actions but a selfless, self-abnegating child, a blank surface who completely surrenders itself to the adults who want to manipulate it. It comes from the lower class and is the product of the imagination, discourses and actions of paedophobics.

The phobia of affective component is symptomatic of the fear of power and hierarchy implicit in emotional equations. The imbalance of power in emotional relationships bespeaks of the fallibility of the adults, parents or guardians towards their child who has the power to disrupt and puncture their authority. Therefore, there is a conscious and continuous effort to demean and debilitate the child by framing around it fictions of abjectness or putting it in dangerous situations. The ideology of violence is always transparent within the discourse of paedophobia since it serves as the strategy of coercion and regulation of children's lives. The act of violence and enervation as already discussed induces sense of ontological insecurity. Therefore, it is a scheme whereby, a child "whose sense of absolute dependence (however induced), united with a sense of moral allegiance, would render independent (or any) action on its part difficult. The absolutism here amounts to a demand that the child have no reservations...."⁶. It is interesting to note that though, paedophobia signifies hatred of children, there is no neat separation between the child and the paedophobic. In fact, the paedophobic is continuously in proximity with child because the discourses it designs around the child, all are meant to manipulate child's body and life and bring it under the adult paedophobic's regime. Therefore, paedophobia is itself a discourse under the ethos of utilitarian economy to make children productive. One of the ways to see how these adult[erated] child can be productive is to notice who in the end claims this child. Charlie is owned by Mr.

Willy Wonka to be in the future owner of his factory, Danny to be the future runner of his father's garage, George's medicine is used to increase his father's poultry farm business, Matilda's magic is used to secure financial safety of Ms. Honey, Kira is claimed by church to narrate its history and its power by weaving.

Therefore, paedophobic discourse is the dominant hegemonic discourse and the adult[erated] children are its product. The hegemonic attribute of paedophobic discourse also highlights its pervasiveness in our society which is equal to it being the dominant practice of our culture which goes unquestioned. It is also interesting to note owning the adult[erated] child who has been fabricated under the paedophobic discourse of utilitarianism evinces the fact that paedophobic discourse aims not to abolish but to create proximity between the child and the adult; these are the discourses of separation created only for the inclusion and incorporation of the child to execute adult's self-fulfilling intentions. For instance, Danny's father in Dahl's *Danny the Champion of the World* addresses him and himself as "engineers" (4). Once again this signifies the bleakness of adult towards a child's physiognomy and its ability. Rather addressing them on the equal platform, the paedophobic adult makes use of intimate strategies of molesting the child into its confidence.

The progressiveness underlined by the phrase adult[erated] child is misleading. It is not a phenomenon of empowerment but a subject formulated under the discursive categories of paedophobia and utilitarianism. And both these discourses are underlined by a series of cessations and censors of certain senses, organs and behaviour. The adult[erated] child is a case of malformation and unequal development. It is deficient in its cerebral and corporeal features. For it is self-evident that displacing the most precise sensory and reflex apparatus of human body with that of the non-sensory materiality of wood, plastic and flour, the

stunted sense organs with poorly formed or absence of any brain in insects in the discourses of framing the adult[erated] child, the latter's cerebral power is underestimated.

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1. See Kincaid's *Child Love* (1992), p.119
2. Borrowed from Jeff Kinney's children's fiction series title *Wimpy Kid*.
3. See Roald Dahl's *Matilda* with illustrations by Quentin Blake, puffin edn. (2013), p.14
4. A phrase from Perry Nodelman quoted by Marah Gubar in her article, "Risky Business: Talking About Children in Children's Literature Criticism", *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*, Vol. 38.4 (2013), 450-457 (web). p. 451.
5. See Coleman, E. Gabriel: "The Politics of Rationality: Psychiatric Survivors' Challenge to Psychiatry". *Tactical Biopolitics: Art, Activism, and Technoscience*. (ed.) Beatriz da Costa and Kavita Philip. 2010. Print. p. 345.
6. Quoted from Kincaid's *Child Love* (1992). p.81.

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