

# “Something Wicked This Way Comes, Chuckles”: Humor and the Uncanny in Shirley Jackson's Charles

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Received: 12.04.2024 • Accepted: 20.06.2024 • Published: 06.10.2024 • Final Version: 28.11.2024

**Abstract:** This research looks at how Shirley Jackson's short story "Charles" blends the uncanny and humor to delve into more complex psychological and sociological concerns. The study aims to analyze the roles that humor and the uncanny play in the story, as well as how they impact tone and mood and how they depict parental perspective and childhood behavior. This study employs qualitative theme analysis to examine how Jackson combines the uncanny and humor to address larger psychological and societal issues. Data analysis entails finding themes and patterns connected to these elements, whereas data collection is closely reading the text and concentrating on any instances of humor and the uncanny. The key findings emphasize the deft application of humor and the uncanny to investigate the intricacies of childhood and parenthood and to question societal standards. The analysis highlights the significance of Jackson's work in analyzing common human experiences and social interactions while also advancing our comprehension of her narrative techniques and thematic themes.

**Keywords:** Shirley Jackson, humor, uncanny, thematic analysis, societal critique

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Overview

Shirley Jackson's "Charles" explores the subject of a kid's conduct and parental perspective. The mother of Laurie, whose son is starting kindergarten, tells the story. The story examines the intricacies of juvenile growth, parental emotions, and societal expectations via Laurie's descriptions of a mischievous and disruptive youngster named Charles. Laurie's transition into kindergarten, accompanied by a shift in his mannerisms, signals the start of the story. He signals a change from his previous, naiver personality by donning a new look and projecting an authoritative demeanor. Initially filled with nostalgia for her son's childhood, the mother starts to worry more and more about Laurie's conduct as he tells her about Charles' disruptive behavior at school. Charles grows to be a major character in Laurie's stories because of his persistent wicked behavior, which includes hitting students, disturbing the classroom, and showing disdain for the tutors. Both the mother and the father express surprise at Charles' actions and worry about his impact on Laurie. Charles' actions worsen throughout the narrative, leading to startling moments like making a girl bleed and using foul language. Despite this, Laurie's parents appear content with Charles's presence, seeing him as a normal part of growing up. In an apparent attempt to get insight or an explanation for Charles' actions,

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the mother even states that she would want to meet Charles' mother. But when the mother finds out that Laurie's kindergarten class does not include a student called Charles during a Parent-Teacher Association meeting, the narrative takes an unexpected turn. This realization compels the mother to reevaluate her views on her son's actions as well as the nature of young children's storytelling and imagination. "Charles" is essentially a story about the difficulties of parenting, the intricacies of childhood, and the fuzziness of the boundaries between truth and fantasy. It draws attention to how kids negotiate social and behavioral standards as well as how parents react to and understand their kids' conduct. Jackson skillfully conveys the spirit of childish innocence and mischief via her nuanced and witty storytelling, leaving readers to wonder about the nature of reality and perception (Jackson, 2010).

In Jackson's short story "Charles," deeper psychological and sociological concerns are explored via the use of comedy and the uncanny. The story's comedy comes from the way the mother first pines for her son's carefree youth while also pointing out Charles's increasing disobedience. Jackson uses comedy to show how ridiculous kids' behaviors and parents' opinions can be. Laurie, for example, gives a darkly humorous touch to the story with her deadpan narration of Charles's antics, such as hitting a youngster in the stomach and making him weep. Conversely, the uncanny surrounding Charles' existence gives rise to the eerie. One disconcerting aspect of the story is the absence of Charles as a pupil in Laurie's kindergarten class. Because of this ambiguity, which blurs the lines between imagination and reality, readers and characters alike feel uneasy. The reader is prompted to consider if Laurie's experiences are authentic and whether the narrator is trustworthy due to Charles' uncanny personality.

Jackson delves into deeper psychological topics about parental perception and childhood development by incorporating humor and the uncanny. Charles' inflated actions provide a remark on the difficulties of parenting and the intricacies of childhood behavior. Through her recollections about Charles, Laurie's mother's early anxiety over Laurie's behavior is conveyed, reflecting a common parental experience of trying to manage and understand their children's activities. Furthermore, the uncanny aspect of Charles' absence from the kindergarten class calls into doubt the accuracy of memory and perception. This section of the story raises the possibility of a more thorough investigation of how people create and understand reality, especially about stories and memories from childhood. Hence, Jackson's use of humor and the uncanny in "Charles" sheds light on deeper societal and psychological concerns. Jackson asks readers to consider the nature of truth, memory, and the complexity of the human experience via the prisms of childhood behavior and parental perception (Jackson, 2015).

### *1.2 Research Gap*

Even though Jackson's "Charles" blends humor with the uncanny in a fascinating way, there isn't much research on these elements. The story's dark humor and its examination of the uncanny through Charles's character are frequently emphasized in current studies; nonetheless, there is a noticeable research gap about the themes' wider implications. The lack of thorough investigation into how humor and the uncanny combine to communicate deeper psychological and societal issues in "Charles" is one area of research gap. Although these topics are touched upon in certain studies, a more thorough examination is required to completely comprehend the intricate relationship between humor, the uncanny and the story's thematic depth. The comparison of Jackson's "Charles" with other works or with comparable literary works is another area of research gap. Researchers can learn more about how Jackson's

use of humor and the uncanny in "Charles" fits within the genre or adds to her broader collection of work by contrasting it with other works. Ultimately, more investigation is required to fully grasp the subtleties of humor and the uncanny in "Charles," as well as the implications of these findings for comprehending Jackson's narrative strategies and thematic concerns.

### *1.3 Significance of the Study*

Studying humor and the uncanny in Jackson's "Charles" is essential because it may help us comprehend her storytelling strategies, thematic themes, and the overall scope of her work better. Through examining the juxtaposition of humor and the uncanny in "Charles," scholars can acquire a deeper understanding of Jackson's distinct storytelling approach and the nuanced nature of her characters. Comprehending the function of humor and the uncanny in "Charles" might shed light on more general psychological and societal concerns found throughout Jackson's oeuvre. The story's examination of parental perspective and childhood conduct, for instance, speaks to universal experiences and is hence appropriate for a broad audience. Additionally, contrasting "Charles" with other works helps show where Jackson fits into the literary world and sheds light on how her themes and techniques have changed over time. This comparison method can also highlight distinctive features of "Charles" that distinguish it from other comparable literary works. The potential to deepen our comprehension of Jackson as a writer and the lasting relevance of her work in examining intricate human experiences and societal interactions makes the study of humor and the uncanny in "Charles" significant overall.

### *1.4 Research Objectives*

1. To analyze how humor functions in Jackson's "Charles" and how it affects the tone and topic of the story as a whole.
2. To examine how "Charles" employs the uncanny and its impact on creating a sense of ambiguity and uneasiness.
3. To investigate how "Charles" uses humor and the uncanny to communicate deeper societal and psychological concerns.
4. To evaluate "Charles'" distinctive features and genre-defining contribution, contrast it with other Jackson works and other literary masterpieces.
5. To look at how humor and the uncanny in "Charles" could be understood more broadly about Jackson's thematic concerns and narrative techniques.

### *1.5 Research Questions*

1. How does Jackson employ humor in "Charles" to examine topics of parental perception and childhood conduct while establishing a darkly comic tone?
2. How does the uncanny appear in "Charles," and how does it add to the eerie and unclear mood of the narrative?
3. In "Charles," how do humor and the uncanny collide, and what deeper societal and psychological aspects do they portray?
4. In what ways does "Charles" share themes with previous Jackson works and other works of a similar nature? How does it handle humor and the uncanny?
5. In what ways does the study of humor and the uncanny in "Charles" contribute to our comprehension of Jackson's narrative strategies and the lasting significance of her contributions?

## **2. Methodology**

Since the focus of this study is humor and the uncanny, a qualitative research approach was most suited for examining these themes in Jackson's "Charles." Qualitative research offers rich, in-depth insights into the text by enabling a thorough examination of the themes and literary methods utilized in the story.

### *2.1 Design*

For this study, a qualitative strategy—more precisely, a thematic analysis—was applicable. Finding, evaluating, and summarizing recurring themes (patterns) in the text of "Charles" was the goal of this thematic analysis. The "gold standard" for qualitative research is still generally accepted to be directly or conventional approaches (Johnson et al., 2019; Sy et al., 2020). However, recent studies have shown the potential benefits and growing significance of digital approaches for qualitative research (Keen et al., 2022; Varma et al., 2021; Tungohan & Catungal, 2022; Just et., 2024; Pocock et al., 2021).

### *2.2 Data Collection*

The text "Charles" itself served as the main source of information. To find instances of humor and the uncanny, as well as how they impacted the plot, the researcher carefully read and examined the text.

### *2.3 Data Analysis*

Using a focus on humor, the uncanny, parental view, childhood behavior, societal standards, and psychological elements, the researcher examined the text to find themes. Parts of the text were coded in this analysis to find patterns that connect to the research questions.

### *2.4 Validity and Reliability*

To validate the accuracy and consistency of the results, the author requested an expert researcher who has ample experience in the relevant subject, to examine the methods, verify the findings for accuracy, and evaluate the data to ensure consistency. Numerous standards and techniques are offered by methodological literature on qualitative study design to assist qualitative researchers in validating their findings (Sabnis & Wolgemuth, 2024). Furthermore, trustworthiness, authenticity, and universality should always be the objectives of qualitative investigation, and it ought to always result in hypotheses that are found on principles (Wieland et al., 2024).

## **3. Theoretical Framework**

### *3.1 Definitions of Humor and Uncanny*

For more than two millennia, people have found satisfaction in humor (Wild et al., 2003). As a complicated way of life that permeates workplace relationships and has logical connections to pleasure, Robert (2023) claims that humor is a phenomenon that trained psychologists along with other sociologists would find interesting to study. Humor, according to Romero and Cruthirds (2006), is humorous communication that makes a person, group, or

organization feel good and think positively. The most widely accepted hypotheses in humor studies are superiority, incongruity, and excitement alleviation, according to Scheel and Gockel (2017).

According to Windsor (2019), the definition of uncanny is more exactly as follows:

Whether and just if: (1) I see x to be a tangible thing as well as occurrence; (2) I acquire an encounter with x that is inconsistent with what I think is feasible; (3) this leaves me feeling doubtful concerning x; and (4) I aim my worry toward x, then I perceive x as uncanny. He continues by saying that this term aims to express what it means to have an emotionally uncontrollable emotional event. That being said, this does not mean that anything cannot be truly described as uncanny if one has not had such an occurrence. Uncanny is frequently employed in a dispositional meaning, similar to other emotional expressions, to designate anything as the type of item that is likely to be regarded as such. This allows for the inclusion of pieces of art that investigate uncanny topics but aren't necessarily uncanny for the viewer. Furthermore, rather than being evocations of uncanniness, certain artistic creations could be better regarded as indications of it (Windsor, 2019),

### *3.2 Jackson's Works- Humor, Uncanny, and Psychological Themes*

Themes of humor, the uncanny, and psychological depth in Jackson's stories have been thoroughly examined in the context of existing studies on her works. Jackson's skill at fusing humor with serious subjects to create a distinctive storytelling style that appeals to readers has been commended by critics. According to Angeloch (2022), Jackson stands out among "weird fiction" writers for her attention to the uncanny. In contrast to Lovecraft's (2004, 2012) focus on fear, Jackson's interpretation of the "weird" fosters a feeling of "strangeness" and isolation. A prominent topic in her work, this "uncanny threshold state" is attained using narrative techniques that conflate reality, dream, and sanity. Although humor could be an additional weapon in Jackson's toolbox, according to Angeloch, the cumulative consequence is an unnerving detachment from oneself and the outside world. A study conducted in 2019 by Akçil examines Jackson's books from the perspective of the "Female Gothic." Jackson's female stars deal with loneliness and social constraints while navigating uncanny Gothic environments. The characters' psychological anguish and disjointed identities are a result of these constraints, which also include the expectation of domesticity and conventional gender roles. Gothic features, such as haunted homes and uncanny imagery, may represent both imprisonment and an odd haven where female characters might defy social norms. The focus of the dissertation is on the unpleasant and uncanny elements that contribute to the characters' psychological issues, even though comedy isn't mentioned overtly.

Jackson's pieces in popular periodicals are examined by Mangrum (2021), with an emphasis on the function of comedy. According to Mangrum, Jackson's comedy isn't only "domestic humor," but also a strategy for overcoming the restrictions imposed on women's voices in print culture after World War II. Mangrum claims that Jackson's writings emphasize the conflict that exists between female's need for public expression and the constraints that society and the market impose on them.

Master of the strange Shirley Jackson masterfully combines psychological uneasiness, dark humor, and the uncanny in her writings. Her characters struggle with social constraints, loneliness, and the fuzziness of truth and perception. Jackson's humor is frequently sardonic, caustic, and slightly ludicrous. As the villagers get ready for the yearly event in "The Lottery,"

a feeling of normalcy is created, which heightens the horror of the conclusion. This dark comedy takes the reader by surprise, heightening the impact of the unpleasant elements. Jackson is masterful at evoking a sense of the uncanny, the familiar becomes weird. Her descriptions are frequently unremarkable yet unnerving, suggesting a reality that lies just beyond the surface. The ostensibly routine occurrences at the house take on a menacing edge in "The Haunting of Hill House," leaving the reader uncertain of what is real and what is just a product of the characters' (or the reader's) imagination.

Jackson's protagonists are frequently alone as they battle their inner demons and societal expectations. "We Have Always Lived in the Castle"'s anonymous narrator struggles with how the villagers see her and her sister, painting a terrifying picture of social isolation and anxiety. The boundaries between sanity and insanity are blurred when the fears and internal problems of her characters become externalized dangers. Together, these components produce a distinctive and frightening reading experience. The reader is disarmed by the humor, leaving them more open to the nagging fear. The psychological themes connect with our fears, and the uncanny atmosphere leaves us feeling uneasy all the time. In "The Lottery," the apathy towards an uncivilized custom emphasizes the shadowy side that can exist in seemingly ordinary lives. Though frequently labeled as horror or gothic, Jackson's art is not limited by genre. Her examination of the fears associated with conformity and the human mind is ageless. The psychological, uncanny, and humorous aspects all work together to create a deeply explored examination of what it means to be human in a strangely similar environment. In conclusion, Shirley Jackson crafts a terrifying and thought-provoking experience with her deft mix of humor, the uncanny, and psychological concerns. Her art makes us reevaluate the fundamental foundation of our existence and challenges our understanding of reality.

### *3.3 Analyzing Literature Through Humor and the Uncanny: A Focus on Jackson's "Charles"*

In literary analysis, humor and the uncanny can be useful instruments for revealing a text's underlying themes and meanings. These concepts are central to Jackson's "Charles," as they help to shape the story and explore difficult concepts related to parenthood, children, and social conventions. The humor in "Charles" accomplishes several goals. On the surface, it offers a humorous respite, bringing the story's tone down. Jackson's humor, nevertheless, frequently has a darker undertone that draws attention to how ridiculous society and human conduct can be. For instance, Laurie's imaginative stories about Charles' misbehavior are amusing in their absurdity, but they also highlight more profound realities about young children's imaginations and their need for attention. The uncanny aspects of "Charles" elicit uneasiness and discomfort. Laurie's description of Charles' actions blurs the boundaries between the known and unknown, making the reader's understanding of reality difficult to follow. The story gains depth from this uncanny atmosphere, which prompts readers to consider the nature of childhood innocence and the veracity of recollection. In "Charles," Jackson tackles psychiatric concerns with a sense of comedy and the otherworldly. The narrative explores the difficulties of parenting, peer pressure, and the intricacies of child development. Through the use of these literary methods, Jackson offers readers a thoughtful depiction of human psychology and behavior that makes them consider their own experiences and presumptions.

## 4. Discussion

### 4.1 Analysis of Humor in Charles

In "Charles," humor is utilized to depict the mischievous behavior of the character Charles and the reactions of Laurie's parents. Here are some instances of humor in the story:

At the start of the story, Laurie undergoes a variation between a "sweet-voiced nursery-school tot" and a "long trousered, swaggering character," signaling the end of an era for his mother. This sudden change in Laurie's demeanor is humorous in its depiction of a child trying to appear more grown-up than he is. The mother's amusing and satirical remark, "all this toughness, and bad grammar, and this Charles boy sounds like such a bad influence," demonstrates this. On the whole, "Charles" uses comedy to highlight the ridiculousness of childhood behavior and the responses of parents, giving the story's examination of more serious subjects a lighter tone. Laurie's exaggerated and dramatic reports about Charles' behavior at school provide a humorous contrast to the seriousness of the situation. For example, Laurie casually mentions that Charles hit the teacher and made a girl bleed, showing a lack of understanding of the gravity of these actions. For instance, Laurie seems to be unaware of the seriousness of Charles' conduct when he teasingly brings up the fact that he hit the instructor and caused a girl to bleed.

It's also funny to see how the parents respond to Laurie's anecdotes about Charles. Their outlandish and humorous responses betray their amazement and anxiety at Charles' conduct. The story takes on a funny tone when the father makes sarcastic remarks about Charles scheming to become a school aide, and when the mother expresses a wish to meet Charles' mother. The notion that Charles' actions are affecting Laurie is conveyed lightheartedly, as though Charles were a bad influence tainting Laurie's actions. The mother's amusing and satirical remark, "all this toughness, and bad grammar, and this Charles boy sounds like such a bad influence," demonstrates this. On the whole, "Charles" uses humor to highlight the ridiculousness of childhood behavior and the responses of parents, giving the story's examination of more serious subjects a lighter tone.

### 4.2 The Impact of Humor on the Reader and its Role in Conveying Deeper Themes

Jackson uses humor in "Charles" to impact readers and communicate deeper themes. Humor has a profound impact on readers because it engages them both intellectually and emotionally. Jackson's use of humor captivates the reader with a sense of sarcasm and delight, especially via Laurie's exaggerated accounts of Charles' misconduct. Readers can relate to the narrative more deeply since they may remember comparable situations from their upbringing or childhood. Moreover, humor is essential to expressing the story's deeper ideas. Jackson uses humor to examine the intricacies of societal standards, parental expectations, and childhood deportment. The gap between adult and child viewpoints is highlighted by the contrast between the gravity of the parents' worries and the relatively insignificant nature of Laurie's stories about Charles. The topic of the loss of innocence and the challenges of growing up is highlighted by this separation. Furthermore, "Charles" uses humor as a vehicle for societal criticism. Jackson parodies mainstream perceptions about child behavior and discipline by depicting Charles as an unruly and disobedient child. The absurdity of Charles' acts—hitting the instructor and making a girl bleed—highlights how arbitrary laws are and how frequently ineffective attempts are made to enforce them.

### *4.3 Analysis of the Uncanny in Charles*

In "Charles," several factors, most notably Charles's enigmatic personality and his impact on Laurie, the main character, and his family, add to the uncanny atmosphere. There is uneasiness because of Charles' persistently disruptive and abnormal conduct. His acts, which go beyond the norm for kindergarten conduct, are surprising and include hitting classmates, disrupting the classroom, and using inappropriate language. Charles acts disruptively, but it doesn't appear like he has many repercussions. His acts, such as hitting the instructor or making a girl bleed, are frequently depicted as getting away with it, which heightens the character's uncanny and enigmatic quality. Laurie has been greatly influenced by Charles, as seen by the way Laurie has adopted Charles' mannerisms at home. This adds to the strange dynamics at work by implying a deeper, maybe manipulative link between the two individuals. A major disparity in reality is introduced after the story when it is revealed that Laurie's kindergarten class is missing Charles. This plot twist heightens the uncanny quality of the story by casting doubt on the reader's comprehension of the characters and events.

### *4.4 Uncanny Influence - The Mysterious Atmosphere*

The tone of the story is largely shaped by Charles's concealing personality. The fact that Laurie is the only one to report his disruptive conduct and that the protagonist's parents never see him contributes to the air of mystery around him. The reader is left wondering about Charles' real identity and motivations as a result of this mystery, which heightens the sense of unease. A big part of what makes Laurie feel uneasy is Charles's impact on him. The fact that Laurie has adopted Charles's actions from his home life, including his impoliteness and profanity, points to a malevolent force at work. This impact blurs the lines between fantasy and reality, which adds to the uncanny mood of the story. The uncanny tone of the story is intensified when it is revealed that Laurie's kindergarten class does not contain Charles. The reader's understanding of the events and people is called into question by this disparity in reality, which leaves them feeling confused and uneasy. In addition, it calls into doubt Laurie's storytelling style and the veracity of his account, which heightens the atmosphere of mystery and ambiguity. There is an unsolved tension that permeates the entire plot because of the mystery surrounding Charles and his impact on Laurie. The reader is left feeling uneasy and uncomfortable by the story's general uncanny atmosphere, which is exacerbated by the absence of a clear ending or explanation for Charles' actions.

### *4.5 Psychological and Societal Themes*

Jackson explores deeper psychological and societal themes, notably those connected to child growth and parental anxiety, in her short story "Charles," by utilizing humor and the uncanny. Jackson emphasizes the intricacies of juvenile development and the difficulties parents have in comprehending and controlling their children's conduct through the exaggerated and bizarre behavior of the fictitious character Charles. Laurie's metamorphosis between a "sweet-voiced nursery-school tot" and a "long-trousered, swaggering character" represents the passage from a naive stage of life to a more responsible and occasionally difficult one. As a rebellious and disruptive character, Charles stands for both the disruptive aspects of growing up and the impact of outside influences on children's conduct, including classmates. The mother's early longing for Laurie's early years and her worries about his altered conduct are typical anxieties expressed by parents who fear that their kids are growing up too quickly and coming into contact with detrimental people. Laurie's inflated stories about

Charles can also reflect parents' anxieties about the future and their inability to comprehend and regulate their kids' behavior. Charles defies societal conventions and expectations of appropriate childhood conduct with his actions, which include hitting classmates, disrupting the school, and using foul language. This emphasizes the conflict that exists between personal expression and societal norms, especially in light of early childhood development. The realization that Laurie's class does not contain a single child called Charles blurs the boundaries between fact and fiction and contributes to the uncanny atmosphere. This casts doubt on the reader's understanding of the story's events and emphasizes how enigmatic and unpredictable childhood is.

In a nutshell "Charles" delves into deeper psychological and sociological topics about parental anxiety and childhood development through the use of humor and the uncanny. Jackson asks readers to consider the challenges of parenting in a changing world and the intricacies of growing up by presenting these themes in a humorous and sometimes bizarre manner.

***Research Question 1: Humor in "Charles" and its Examination of Parental Perception and Childhood Conduct***

Jackson uses comedy in "Charles" to parody societal norms about how kids should behave, emphasizing the gap between what adults think kids should be like and what kids truly think.

***Research Question 2: The Appearance of the Uncanny in "Charles" and its Contribution to the Eerie Mood***

The uncanny elements of "Charles," including Charles' enigmatic actions and impact on Laurie, generate uncertainty and uneasiness, heightening the uncanny atmosphere of the story.

***Research Question 3: The Collision of Humor and the Uncanny in "Charles" and their Portrayal of Deeper Societal and Psychological Aspects***

Jackson's "Charles" deftly blends humor and the uncanny to delve into more profound sociological and psychological concerns, such as the challenges of raising a kid and the worries of parenthood.

***Research Question 4: "Charles" in Relation to other Jackson Works and Similar Literary Works***

By contrasting "Charles" with other works, scholars can learn more about Jackson's narrative strategies and thematic concerns, emphasizing "Charles'" distinctive contribution to Jackson's collection of works.

***Research Question 5: The Contribution of Studying Humor and the Uncanny in "Charles" to Understanding Jackson's Narrative Strategies***

Examining the uncanny and humor in "Charles" offers important insights into Jackson's storytelling techniques, including how she skillfully employs the uncanny to create an eerie atmosphere and uses humor through the uncanny.

#### *4.6 Limitations*

Subjectivity can arise in thematic analysis, particularly when dealing with intricate topics like humor and the uncanny. The same text may be interpreted differently by various scholars, which might introduce biases into the analysis. Jackson's short story "Charles" serves as the basis for the study. The conclusions may not apply to other texts or circumstances, even though this story offers a wealth of information for analysis. The cultural, social, and historical setting in which "Charles" was written may have an impact on how humor and the uncanny are analyzed. These factors should be considered when interpreting the findings.

#### *4.7 Implications and Future Research*

Examining Jackson's use of humor and the uncanny in "Charles" might shed light on her storytelling techniques and the ways she employs these aspects to captivate readers. Scholars can get an understanding of the distinctive contributions made by "Charles" to the canon of literature by contrasting it with other works, both from Jackson's output and from literature in general. Examining "Charles" can assist educators in comprehending the intricacies of children's literature as well as how writers captivate young readers with humor and the uncanny. This kind of literary study can also aid in the development of critical thinking abilities in kids by pushing them to examine texts from many angles and ponder the underlying meanings of words. "Charles" provides insights into how children develop, especially regarding how they view the world and how outside influences might impact their behavior. The story also sheds light on the anxieties and views of parents, emphasizing the challenges that parents encounter in comprehending and directing their kids' conduct.

Shirley Jackson's "Charles" is a fantastic chance to impart analytical and critical reading abilities via the distinct prism of humor and the uncanny. "Charles" depends on Laurie's mother's untrustworthy narrator. Pupils can use the book to their advantage by looking for hints that point to the truth, such as Laurie's abrupt behavioral changes, Charles's absence, and the parents' excitement to see the instructor. This practice improves the ability to identify contradictions and challenge the viewpoint of the narrative. The reader is first taken aback by the dark humor in the novel. Determining how jokes about Charles' inappropriate behavior conceal Laurie's deeds helps one get a deeper comprehension of irony and subtext. Students might investigate how humor can detract from the real nature of a character.

The disturbing sense that something is "off" is what drives the plot along. Through the examination of particular instances, such as Laurie's tardiness and the teacher's failure to recognize Charles, students may learn how to distinguish between unsettling features and suspenseful elements. Students can dive into early fears about entering school, fitting in, and family expectations by investigating Laurie's reasons for inventing Charles. Students can gain empathy for Laurie and comprehend the psychological aspects at work by dissecting his behaviors and the results. "Charles" can be utilized in a variety of literary contexts. It goes into psychological issues in coming-of-age stories, examines humor in gloomy fiction, and enhances studies of unreliable narrators in Gothic literature.

## **6. Conclusion**

Jackson's influence on modern writing suggests that wisdom is passed down through generations, both inside and outside of the gender literary community (Jesussek, 2023).

Jackson's "Charles" investigation of humor and the uncanny offers significant new perspectives on the author's narrative style and thematic themes. Jackson skillfully uses comedy to parody parental anxieties and societal conventions, underlining the discrepancy between what adults expect of children and what they truly do. Readers are prompted to reevaluate their perceptions of reality and childhood purity by the uncanny elements of "Charles," especially Charles' mysterious behavior and impact on Laurie. Gaining an understanding of the uncanny and humor's function in "Charles" offers significant information about Jackson's collection of creative work as a whole. It demonstrates her narrative style's signature of fusing comedy with macabre themes and the uncanny. Studying "Charles" in conjunction with Jackson's other works helps academics better comprehend the author's use of storytelling strategies and thematic concerns. In general, the examination of humor and the uncanny in "Charles" enhances our understanding of Jackson's collection of literary works by emphasizing both her unique contribution to literature and her exploration of intricate individual experiences and societal dynamics.

### **Acknowledgments**

I want to sincerely thank the research specialist for so kindly lending his knowledge and time to assess and appraise the state-of-the-art research techniques and results. His wealth of knowledge in the field has been quite helpful in ensuring the data's accuracy and consistency. I sincerely appreciate his careful review and perceptive criticism, which have substantially raised the standards of my present work. I appreciate all that he has done to help with the project.

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