

The Moral Ambiguity in Neil Gaiman's *The Graveyard Book* ความคลุมเครือทางศีลธรรมในนิยายของนีล เกแมน เรื่อง ผจญภัยในสุสาน

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Abstract

This article aims to study Bod, the protagonist in Neil Gaiman's *The Graveyard Book*, in terms of his moral ambiguity, development, and relationships with friends and enemies. His moral ambiguity is analyzed through a case of school bully and an abuse of authority. The study shows Bod's moral ambiguity when he and his guardian are victimized. To understand his emotional development and friendship with Scarlett, David Elkind's child development theories, Deborah Tannen's, and Carol Gilligan's adolescent development theories are used to examine the cause and how their conflicts are resolved. Examining Bod's and Scarlett's emotional development shows that Bod has higher degree of emotional development even though he is younger than Scarlett. Their problems occurring when they are young adolescents are caused by their different gender which eventually results in the end of their friendship. It can be said that the novel's uniqueness is the presentation of the increasing moral ambiguity and the loss of friendship when entering adolescence. Implicitly, the author does not only encourages the young reader to prepare themselves for changes when entering adolescence, but also relieves the young adult reader's tension caused by the same sufferings like the ones Bod experiences.

Keywords: The Graveyard Book, Moral ambiguity, Relationships in childhood, Relationships in adolescence

บทคัดย่อ

บทความชิ้นนี้มุ่งศึกษาประเด็นความคลุมเครือเชิงศีลธรรม พัฒนาการและความสัมพันธ์ของบ็อดกับตัวละครอื่นในวรรณกรรมเยาวชนเรื่อง ผจญภัยในสุสาน โดย นีล เกแมน โดยวิเคราะห์ความคลุมเครือเชิงศีลธรรมของบ็อดผ่านสถานการณ์ที่ตัวละครดังกล่าวเผชิญปัญหาอันธพาลในโรงเรียน และปัญหาการใช้อำนาจในทางที่ผิด โดยพบว่าบ็อดกลายเป็นตัวละครที่มีความคลุมเครือเชิงศีลธรรมเมื่อผู้ปกครองและตนเองตกเป็นเหยื่อ ส่วนพัฒนาการเชิงอารมณ์และความสัมพันธ์แบบมิตรภาพระหว่างเพื่อนของบ็อดกับสการ์เล็ตต์นั้น การศึกษานี้ใช้ทฤษฎีจิตวิทยาเด็กของเดวิด เอลโคห์น และทฤษฎีจิตวิทยาวัยรุ่นของเดบอราห์ แทนเนน และแครอล กิลลิแกน ในการทำความเข้าใจและการคลี่คลายปัญหาความสัมพันธ์ของทั้งคู่ จากการศึกษาพบว่าในสถานการณ์คับขัน บ็อดแสดงพัฒนาการทางอารมณ์สูงกว่าแม้ว่าจะมีอายุน้อยกว่าสการ์เล็ตต์ ส่วนปัญหาความสัมพันธ์ที่เกิดขึ้นเมื่อทั้งคู่เป็นวัยรุ่นตอนต้นนั้นเกิดจากเพศสภาพที่แตกต่างกัน ส่งผลให้ทั้งคู่มีความคาดหวังต่อมิตรภาพที่แตกต่างกันและไม่อาจรักษาความสัมพันธ์ไว้ได้ อาจกล่าวได้ว่าลักษณะเด่นของนิยายเรื่องนี้คือความคลุมเครือทางศีลธรรมที่เพิ่มขึ้นตามช่วงวัย และการสูญเสียความสัมพันธ์อันดีกับเพื่อนเมื่อเติบโตเป็นวัยรุ่น ผู้เขียนไม่เพียงช่วยเตรียมความพร้อมให้ผู้อ่านที่เริ่มเข้าสู่ช่วงวัยรุ่นตอนต้น แต่ยังช่วยลดความตึงเครียดของผู้อ่านที่เผชิญความสูญเสียลักษณะเดียวกับตัวเอกของเรื่อง

คำสำคัญ: ผจญภัยในสุสาน ความคลุมเครือทางศีลธรรม ความสัมพันธ์ช่วงวัยเด็ก ความสัมพันธ์ช่วงวัยรุ่น

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Introduction

Awards presented to *The Graveyard Book* include Newbery Medal, ALA Notable Children's Book, and ALA Best Book for Young Adults. These awards might guarantee the novel's quality content and convince parents to buy it for their children. If the reader seek for the adventurous story, the first chapter might intensify their curiosity. In the Introduction, Silas, one of the ghosts in the graveyard, comments, "It is going to take more than just a couple of good-hearted souls to raise this child. It will take a graveyard" (Gaiman, 2008). But what kind of a child it will be? Neil Gaiman sets up a toddler, his protagonist, in the graveyard surrounded by mostly the dead. Granted the freedom of the graveyard, the toddler Bod grows up and experiences various unforgettable adventures. Obviously this plot of family romance interests and challenges young readers to exercise their imagination. But as the plot develops, the family romance is eclipsed by Bod's moral ambiguity and his relationships with friends and enemies.

The Scope of the Study

This study qualitatively examines the presentation of the increasing moral ambiguity and the loss of friendship when entering adolescence. On the surface, this novel offers the adventurous story of a toddler whose all family members are murdered. He toddles out of the crime scene to the graveyard where he is raised, protected, and educated by ghosts and supernatural beings. Besides his unique upbringing in the graveyard, Bod or Nobody Owens is a fascinating protagonist if one tries to study him through his relationships with friends and enemies. In this article, with David Elkind's child development theories, Deborah Tannen's, and Carol Gilligan's adolescent development theories, I will examine his relationships with Elizabeth Hempstock, Nick Farthing, Maureen Quilling, and Scarlett Amber Perkins which reveal the ambiguity in drawing the line between evil and good; and how child and adolescent development theories can give insightful reading Gaiman's plot, characters, messages to his young readers.

Review of Literature

Researchers such as Beach et al. (2009) comment on *The Graveyard Book* that the author's mastery lies in the fact that he can creatively adapt elements from "[Rudyard] Kipling's *Jungle Book*, myth and folklore, fairy tales and nursery rhymes, history and secret societies in quasi-Dickensian fashion." They also point out that this young adult novel offers "the adventure and creepiness"; and they underline that the story's chilling moments are "genuinely frightening." Robertson (2011) studies on how Gaiman adapts motifs from Kipling's *Jungle Book* and complicates its presentation of good and evil. Beyond the Kipling's model, Abbruscato (2010) investigates Bod's characteristics along with Joseph Campbell's heroes in *The Heroes with a Thousand*

Faces and observes similar patterns. For example, Bod's voluntary decision to leave the graveyard and return to the world outside can be seen as a transformed hero who embraces a mission to teach and impart knowledge from his adventure to other people. Millet (2015) studies the adolescent's identity of the protagonist. She suggests that in characterizing Bod, Gaiman does not only represents the feelings of the outsiders, but also suggests young adults' capability to grow up to be anything they wish.

This review of literature shows that the focus of studying Gaiman's *The Graveyard Book* shifts from evaluating the work under the possible influence of other classics to examining the protagonist as an individual struggling with alienation and the psychological support adolescent readers may find in reading this novel.

Findings and Discussion

Bod and Liza: An Altruistic Morality

In Acknowledgement, Gaiman states he begins the novel with "The Witch's Headstone" which is how Bod befriends Liza Hempstock and how she helps him out of trouble with Abanazer Bolger. In his website, Gaiman (2008) explains his writing process as follows: "So I wrote Chapter Four first, to get a sense of what was happening in the middle (easier because each chapter is a self-contained story) and what Bod was like when he could talk". Thus, this chapter might be the best springboard to study the boy's characteristics and their implications. His friendship with the dead witch is unique because he is always forbidden to visit where the suicides, the criminals, and other "unsacred" people are buried. The description which Bod tries to grab an apple but unluckily falls to the ground reminds the readers of two famous myths of Adam and Eve and Isaac Newton. By eating the forbidden fruit, knowledge of good and evil was introduced to Adam and Eve; Isaac Newton questioned what force that brought the apple to the ground. Bod is curious of how the witch would look like and later learns it when encountering Liza. His new knowledge of the witch is similar to what Adam and Eve learn in the sense that such knowledge is strictly forbidden. His new knowledge is similar to Newton's because both explain phenomenon: Bod's knowledge explains that witch hunting is caused by jealousy, selfishness, and fear while Newton's knowledge explains that the fall of that apple is caused by gravity. Although he does not step into Potter's Field, his inquisitive mind on that landscape and its inhabitants is explicit. David Elkind, a child psychologist, describes that children at age eight have enormous curiosity in nature, man-made things and people especially those from foreign lands (Elkind, 1978). In Bod's case, a witch is interesting and mysterious foreigner whom he is eager to know more about.

His friendship with Liza, a ghost in the graveyard, is unique because he firmly wants to find her a headstone after few minutes of acquaintance. To accomplish that, Bod must break the



rule: stepping out of the graveyard to the world outside. The readers have multiple options in examining his strong decision. The first option is to look at it as a normal change of middle childhood when boys find girls attractive and eager to be involved with them (Liza's smile is attractive and Bod wants to make her smile). The second one is that Bod is old enough for more challenging tasks. A headstone is difficult to obtain, he has to plan and gather information. Asking about how to use money and its value and finding proper clothes to blend in the world outside suggest his advancement in problem-solving skill. Later, Bod faces the trouble getting locked up in the room by vicious shopkeeper Bolger. Interestingly, eight-year-old Bod does not ask Liza for help the moment she appears in the shop. The readers can see this as his intention to complete this mission on his own like adults do. However, Bod finally lets Liza help him Fade (becoming invisible). Breaking the rule is a threat to his safety; Bod fails to find her the proper headstone, yet he gives a paperweight with his painted words "E.H. we don't forget". At least it shows the boy's strong intention to keep promise—a sign of responsibility that adults practice.

Reading Aristotle can give the readers the third option to interpret Bod's action. In *The Nicomachean Ethics* (1996), various meanings of friends are available. The one most applicable to Bod and Liza is that they have and recognize mutual characteristics. Both Liza and Bod long for reassurance of existence. This explanation might clarify why Bod struggles to find Liza a proper headstone. The headstone itself is important because of the message written upon it. The touching words are a proof of being loved and remembered by the living and also reflect the person's personality traits. Most importantly, they confirm each other's existence: for example, words on Doctor Trefusis's headstone which inform the year of his birth and death are "1870-1936, May He Wake to Glory". After death, one can be finally forgotten. Words on headstone, however, help the living or next generations recognize the person's existence. In striving for Liza to be remembered, Bod's action can be seen as striving to accentuate his own existence. In writing "we don't forget", Bod might wish the living can remember him, that his existence can be recognized not only by the dead but also the living. Their last meeting when Bod decides to leave the graveyard again reflects how both of them want to be remembered. Liza wants to hear that Bod will miss her, and Bod promises so. Her last words "I will miss you too. Always" echo "we don't forget". They recognize and try to fulfill each other's wish; they hope to see each other being happy; they give meaning to each other's existence. So, their friendship can be said to be the best kind of friendship according to Aristotle's definition since both of them "wish the good of their friends for their friends' sake" (Aristotle, 1996). Of course, unforgettable memory is a result of growing the best kind of friendship together.

Bod vs. His Enemies: A Virtuous Beginning

A person can be defined from how he treats his friends, but the more accurate definition might derive from how he treats his foes. Jack would be Bod's only enemy during his childhood and adolescence if Bod was never allowed to attend school. Like most school stories, school bullies and quarrels among students are popular and inevitable for the plot. Nick Farthing and Maureen Quilling force younger students to steal, threaten to blackmail them, and force them to give money. Nick and Mo are stereotypical characters of school bullies: they have privilege of cunning mind and physical strength. Also, they claim themselves as Batman and Robin. Bod, however, corrects them as Doctor Jekyll and Mister Hyde. Elkind (1978) suggests that the ability to understand metaphor occurs for the first time during adolescence. Gaiman again brings child development to show Bod's impressive literacy and wide range of reading. Simultaneously, he underlines the difference between "lifestyle" in Bod's world and the world outside: while Bod's metaphor is referred from the literature books, Nick's and Mo's metaphor is from a comic book or TV. In Nick's and Mo's view, they are proud of their misdeed and team work. Other characters see them as ordinary students, while they have secret lives of manipulating younger ones. In Bod's view, their secret lives are similar to Hyde's case. Jekyll always finds excuses for Hyde's wrongdoings, and misunderstands that he can control his evil self. The novel ends with Jekyll's failure to resist the transformation, and finally devoured by the evil part. Bod tries to say that everyone possesses both good and evil side, but Nick and Mo fail to control their evil ones. Like Jekyll, they have to pay the extremely painful price.

Bod interrupts their misdeeds by encouraging Paul Singh, a victim of bullying, to disobey Nick's and Mo's threat to blackmail. And when Paul succeeds to uphold himself, other students do. Bod instantly becomes the school bullies' enemy. Wiseman and Duck (qtd. in Schneider, 2000) coins a term enemyship and give a definition as "a relationship with a specific person, often one who has interfered with the attainment of one's goals. It is a fairly enduring relationship that often involves the conscious use of power against the enemy". Is there only Bod who has enemyship with Nick and Mo? Hayes, Gershman and Halteman (qtd. in Schneider, 2000) find in their research that children of various ages indicate that aggressive and aberrant behavior causes enemyship. So, the oppressed students can claim Nick and Mo as their enemies, but only Bod that can initiate the rebel. Though Bod's freeing the oppressed students is admirable, he again intimidates his own safety. This is similar to the scene in J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. Harry Potter, an anti-bullying protagonist, tries to help Neville Longbottom get back the Remembrall from Malfoy, the bullying student from their rival house (Rowling, 1997). Without any hesitation, Harry flies on the broom for the first time to protect his friend's important object. Bod and Harry find others' welfare more important than their own safety. Bod at this stage is a heroic boy who



intimidates the evil oppressor's power and liberates the oppressed. The readers can feel that Bod's fading and frightening Nick and Mo at the graveyard is the rightful self-protection. However, the fight continues and involves more physical and emotional violence. Nick hurts Bod's hand the next morning and Mo gives strong challenging expression. In order to see Bod's moral ambiguity, methods which he uses to fight back should be explored respectively in details.

Bod vs. Nick: A Primary Transformation of a Victim to a Bully

The way which Bod gives a lesson to Nick is haunting and dark. When Nick tries to hurt Bod, the big boy uses an opportunity of Bod's sleepiness and low awareness of his surroundings. Bod adapts the same strategy, he attacks Nick in his sleep by manipulating dream. Nick suffers in great deal as seen from his scream the moment he wakes up. What factors do force Bod to choose and attack Nick at that particular time? Four probable factors are as follows: Nick reminds Bod of the murderer Jack, Bod needs an immediate way to relieve anger, Bod tries to practice theory he learns, and he underestimates the effects of his chosen method. First, Nick, similar to Jack, tries to attack Bod's body. Bod is informed that Jack still wants to kill him. The boy seems to prepare himself for possible attacks. So when Nick hurts him, in order to reassure his safety, Bod will do everything he can even it is extremely violent. Second, Bod is upset by Sila's absolute order to leave the school, he can no longer learn in classroom like other ordinary students. Of course Nick should be responsible for this and Bod must revenge right away to relieve resentment. Third, like when he practices Fading, Bod also eagers to practice other lessons. Recently he asks Mr. Pennyworth specific questions such as Haunting (arousing others' discomfort and, with more intensifying degrees, terror) which suggests that Bod foresees the chance to use. Though different in degree of violence, this resembles how students eager to practice what they learn from school. Finally, Bod underestimates the effects of Dreamwalking (controlling people's dreams). He claims, "Of course it's a dream. I would have to be some kind of monster to do this in real life", which means those who hurt another in real life is wicked than those who do it in dreamlike atmosphere. However, Nick completely changes after Bod's attack. Mo reports that he does not talk to her, remains silent in class, and does homework after school. Superficially, his life pattern seems to be typical for diligent or reserved students, but compare to what he used to be, it suggests a degree of social withdrawal. Bod's Dreamwalking is harmfully effective because it destroys Nick's sense of leadership, superiority, power, and boldness. Although Nick seems to be "reformed", this haunting dream probably lingers in his head for a long time. Consider Nick's and Bod's methods of hurting each other, the readers might feel awkward to define Bod as a heroic protagonist when the victim becomes the bully himself. Bod's monstrous characteristic will be explored further.

Bod vs. Mo: A Complete Transformation of a Victim to a Bully

Mo's vicious strategy to revenge Bod is complicated than Nick's. Suspect why Bod hanging around Nick's house at night, Mo manages to call the police and report false information intentionally that the boy breaks her properties. Her decision reminds the readers of how she was once the brain part of the perfect team. In a way Mo adapts Bod's strategy when the boy encourages Paul, one of those students continuously threatened by Nick and Mo, to report the police if Nick and Mo do not stop blackmailing him and other young students. While the spirits in the graveyard taking side with Bod (Amabella Persson believes he does Fading and Fear to bad children and that is admirable), the living in the world outside the graveyard side with Mo. A motif of parents or authoritative adults agree or support what not so admirable about their children continuously occurs in children stories. Simultaneously being a police and Mo's uncle, Tam is in risk of being trapped in his own bias. Instead of following general investigation procedures by asking Bod formal and unbiased questions, Tam's language causes worry and sounds like a threat. Psychologically, Tam's harsh words and unreasonable attempting arrest can be explained as defense mechanism caused by Bod's likeliness to harm his niece. Tam's bias and his colleague Simon's ignoring of the matter, if not interrupted by Silas's rescue, probably lead Bod to "prison for kids". Bod's firm decision, "I won't go back. Not to that school. Not like that," implies his defeat and epiphany that the world outside the graveyard is truly dangerous and unfair because of uncontrollable bias.

Being a disappointment to her parents, rejected by Nick and overturned by uncle Tam already suffocate Mo. But such painful payback of putting Bod in a great fear and eliminating his study opportunity at school seems inadequate. Similar to Nick's case, Bod chooses to torture the mind rather than the body. It is the time to practice Mr. Pennyworth's explanation of how to increase Fear to Terror. Bod appears in her worst hour at science lab where transparent bottles full of unpleasant dead objects surround her. Such haunting atmosphere is in itself a great weapon and also intensifies terror. The readers might question whether this revenge is a reasonable choice or Bod eventually becomes monstrous. Gaiman seems to provide ambiguous answers. Mo's unflagging wish to revenge can linger in her mind for a very long time if she never sees Bod again. To end the matter, Bod comes back, reveals himself, and exercises Haunting. Her vengeful intention is gone when terror strikes her. In a way, Bod frees her from lasting emotional confinement caused by undying wish to revenge. If so, Bod is not very wicked. On the other hand, Bod's Haunting only reemphasizes and increases Mo's predicament. It is highly probable that Mo would end up so much worse than Nick. Considering this, Bod's revenge seems not to be necessary. So, the readers can see him as doing it for pure pleasure. Unlike many young protagonists, Bod is not a completely good-hearted boy. His horrifying punishment blurs the boundary between good and evil and question notion of heroism.



Bod and Scarlett: A Blurred Boundary of Good and Evil

A blurred boundary of good and evil is most obvious when viewing Bod's relationship with Scarlett. From the outset to the end, Bod and Liza remain friends while Bod and Nick and Mo remain enemies. Unlike those straightforward relationships, the author imitates human being who can be very admirable and frightening to the same person. Their first encounter (when Scarlett is five and Bod is four years old) goes very smoothly: their totally different backgrounds are not problematic. Bod has a good time learning English alphabets and discussing the history with her. Their only critical incident is when Bod brings Scarlett to explore the tomb in the middle of the hill. Both of them in this scene are very realistic according to child development theories. Elkind observes that children at age four have "unreasonable fears. These maybe fears of the dark, of dogs, of birds, and so on ... A more effective strategy is to accept the child's fear as a reality to him and assure him that someone will be there to help him should he needed help" (1978: 63), while children at age five likely to cope with stress in a calm and matter of fact way (1978: 65). Though Bod is younger, he is having an adventure in his homeland, while Scarlett is not very familiar with the place. So, they seem to rotate the role in this situation: Bod is a five-year-old child reassuring the safety of Scarlett who feels scared of dark place like the four-year-old. Also, despite the stressful situation, Bod is calm and explains logically to startled Scarlett that Indigo Man is only a human and not a ghost because she can see him (54). Although Bod is raised by the dead and the vampire, his level of social development and intelligence is not less than other children at all. Gaiman adds Scarlett to Bod's unconventional life to challenge the notion of normality. Children have no problem in socializing with those different from them; it seems to be adults who invent such notion.

It takes ten years for them to meet again. Obviously it delights them both: Scarlett is happy that Bod is not just an illusion she makes up, and Bod can resume friendship with the living. Adolescent Scarlett underlines the parallel between Bod and Jack. Mr. Frost—Jack in disguise—and Bod first appear to be benevolent figures. Mr. Frost helps Mrs. Perkins and Scarlett get through depression after divorce more easily. Losing school friends due to relocation can hugely impact the adolescents' emotions. Bod accompanies her and makes she feels less lonely in the town she once lived. However, this promising reunion is interrupted. Jack, Bod's most-wanted enemy, exploits Scarlett to get to Bod while Bod sets her as a bait to lure Jack to the place where Bod can easily eliminate him. Why does Gaiman allow Bod to handle other members of Jack of All Trades elsewhere in the graveyard but have to assassinate Jack in front of Scarlett? Multiple explanations are available. First, Robertson (2011) explains that Gaiman's purpose is to underline moral ambiguity. Scarlett must be there to witness how the murderer Jack, in his extreme horrid moment, appears again to be like Mr. Frost who drives her home. Bod has known all his life that

Jack murders his whole family, so the only picture he has in mind is an absolute evil Jack. Unlike Scarlett, she only knows Jack as Mr. Frost who is so benevolent that it is impossible for her to imagine how such a good man can be heartlessly wicked. Bod, Jack, and Scarlett must be together in Jack's final moment to arouse the perfect sense of moral ambiguity.

Second, Scarlett is in the killing scene to illustrate 21st-century teenagers' moral development. William Damon (qtd. in Sigelman and Shaffer, 1995) observes adolescents as follows:

“[They have] an increased tendency to view morality as something that contributes a positive identity or self-definition. Because adolescents are more sensitive than children are to the expectations of those around them, they are more motivated to establish reputations as moral and caring individuals and to feel good about their moral values.

Scarlett, as a teenager from the world outside, is under social influence and expectation. One of the 21st-century widespread campaigns is human rights, for example, many countries abrogate death penalty while mercy killing becomes legal. Although Bod is not familiar with killing, death, for the one growing up in the graveyard, is only another kind of life. Also, as 18th-century poet Nehemiah Trott instructs, “revenge best served cold”, Bod is ready to kill Jack after the boy has waited for years. The world outside and the world in the graveyard implant and expect totally different morality from Bod and Scarlett. Obviously, according to Damon, Scarlett cannot include exploiting friends and killing human in her definition of morality. And of course, this experience cannot help or even might obstruct her in building positive identity. And this can explain why she wishes to forget her unpleasant experience with Bod.

Third, Scarlett is there to portray how male and female adolescents are different in their friendship and expectation. Two researchers give insight on these differences. First, Deborah Tannen (qtd. Turner and Helms, 1977) believes that female adolescents, more than males, expect to share thoughts and feelings with their friends. Female adolescents' communication concentrates on affiliation and reassurance while males' communication focuses on dominance and competition. Similar to their adventure ten years ago, Scarlett expects that Bod's purpose of asking her to hide in the tomb is to reassure her safety. She, however, looks at Bod differently when she learns how Bod expects in advance that the Sleer would assassinate Jack (2008a: 286). Of course she perceives herself as a bait because best friends would never treat another that way. Researcher Carol Gilligan (qtd. Turner and Helms, 1977) explains that female adolescents often dwell in the emotional plane while males live in the realm of ideas and facts rather than feelings. Although Scarlett is safe at the end, she cannot see Bod as her best friend anymore since



he painfully hurts her feelings. Bod, as a male adolescent, does not quite understand what happened to his best female friend. He believes that the fact he can drive all the villains away and that he and she are finally safe should be enough to delight her.

When Bod and Scarlett are little children, they completely accept each other. Unfortunately, in order to maintain a healthy relationship when becoming adolescents and adults, some degrees of similar perspectives and backgrounds are required. Viewing their choices and behaviors through theories of child development, the readers understand more of Bod and Scarlett. Although their friendship sadly ends, Gaiman leaves a positive hint in the last chapter: Bod is ready to explore the world outside and one of his intentions is to find "old friends to rediscover". If the author will write a sequel, it will be interesting to see whether Bod can find Scarlett and whether they can form a more healthy friendship when Bod will spend his life in the same world with her.

Conclusion

Nicholas Tucker (1990) suggests that literature for children of age 11-14 offers complexities of characters' personalities because the readers are now ready to question conventional morality. Through child development theories, the reader can understand better of Gaiman's message that no human is absolute good or complete evil. Bod is not a heroic flat character, but a trigger to help the readers question themselves. Reading *The Graveyard Book* should help the juveniles and adults see the moral ambiguity more clearly so that they will re-examine their presuppositions and judgements on others. It can be said that the novel's uniqueness is the presentation of the increasing moral ambiguity and the loss of friendship when entering adolescence.

Plus, the author does not only encourages the young reader to prepare themselves for changes when entering adolescence, but also relieves the young adult reader's tension caused by the same sufferings like the ones Bod experiences. Viewing his suffering such as being rid of opportunity to continue the formal education and the novel's promising ending can encourage those teenagers dropping out of school due to personal problems to move on and be a self-educated and a life-long learner instead. Bod's positive attitude that he may rediscover his old friends can ease the adolescents' heartbroken feelings caused by the loss of friendship and help them think positively that there is always a chance to reunite with friends.



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