

The Boy's Morality as Reflected in Laura E. Richards' *The Golden Windows*

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Abstract. This research paper discusses the portrayal of morality of the boy in *The Golden Windows* written by Laura E. Richards. The objective of this research paper is to analyze the portrayal of the boy, the main character of the short story, the factors that influence the boy's morality, and the effects of the boy's morality growth. Using a library research method, the writer collects both primary data from Richards' original short story and secondary data from scholarly sources on moral development and literary analysis. The writer analyzes the data by employing moral approach that foregrounds ethical reasoning in literature by using Lawrence Kohlberg's theory of morality. The results of this research reveal that the boy is characterized through both direct and indirect means as hardworking, curious, generous, innocent, responsible, and ultimately emotionally mature, demonstrating a blend of innate virtues and learned behaviors. His journey through obedience, self-interested exploration, and positive social relationships shows how his rural upbringing, freedom to think independently, and emotional guidance of family and community shape his moral outlook. His transformative development fosters decisive decision-making and solidarity, underscoring literature's role in promoting ethical consciousness.

Keywords: Portrayal of Morality; Factors of Morality; Effects of Morality.

1 Introduction

Morality plays a crucial role in raising children in the United States, as it is viewed as essential for their development into ethical and responsible individuals. By the age of 10, children are encouraged to embrace key values such as honesty, accountability, curiosity, respect, empathy, determination, and open communication, which serve as the foundation for their moral growth [2]. Morality is a framework for evaluating and engaging in attitudes and conduct, encompassing both formal and material aspects. It consists of ethical principles that define right and wrong, guiding individuals through prescriptive and universal judgments. These moral principles help individuals navigate ethical dilemmas and maintain social order, highlighting the essential role of morality in shaping human behavior and societal norms [17]. According to Kohlberg, morality growth occurs through a series of stages, progressing from a basic understanding of obedience and punishment to more complex levels of ethical reasoning [9]. He argues that individuals develop their moral judgments based on their cognitive development and social experiences.

Morality is also reflected in children's literature, which remains a medium for conveying moral lessons through stories that nurture ethical values and guide young readers in distinguishing right from wrong. One of the children's literatures revealing morality is short story entitled "The Golden Windows" written by Laura E. Richards (1903). It is a short story that subtly explores morality through the perspective of a young boy. The story tells a boy who is fascinated by the golden glow of windows in the distance embarks on a journey to find them only to discover that the glow is an illusion caused by the setting sun. When he looks back from the previous windows, he realizes that his own windows appear golden from afar which teaches him a profound lesson about perception, contentment, and gratitude. This story connects to the concept of morality as it highlights the importance of self-awareness, appreciation for one's circumstances, and the idea that what may seem better from a distance is not always as it appears. Through the boy's journey, readers gain insight into the moral values of honesty, contentment, and the dangers of idealizing the unknown.

This research paper has some significant reasons. Firstly, it deepens the understanding of how children's literature can serve as an effective platform for examining moral development and ethical reasoning. By integrating literary and psychological perspectives, this research highlights the role of fiction as a valuable tool for fostering moral education in young readers. Additionally, educators, teachers, and parents can gain valuable insights into the ethical challenges children and adolescents encounter by analyzing the protagonist's experiences in the short story. Then, by understanding how young readers engage with these moral themes through literature enables adults to guide them in developing critical thinking skills and ethical decision-making in real-world situations. Furthermore, this research paper provides a broader perspective on the influence of morality in childhood development, emphasizing its significance in shaping a child's moral framework. By contributing to the study of morality in children's literature, this research will offer insights into the role of literature in shaping readers' ethical perspectives. In relation to this research paper, the writer is interested in analyzing the narrative of the short story. The writer will analyze the portrayal of the boy's morality, the factors that influence the boy's morality, and the effects of the boy's morality on his perception of the world in Laura E. Richards' *The Golden Windows*.

2 Research Method

2.1 Research Approach

According to Grover, research approach is the overall plan and strategy used to conduct a study, encompassing philosophical assumptions, research design, and specific methods for data collection, analysis, and interpretation [6]. Based on the background of the study that reveals moral phenomena, the writer uses moral approach in literature. According to Haski-Leventhal, moral approach is an individual's ethical perspective

shaped by their values, attitudes, and overall worldview, which in turn guides their actions and decisions, involving processes of moral reasoning and judgment that help determine what is right or wrong in a given situation, serving as a framework that influences behavior [7]. The object of this research paper is American short story entitled *The Golden Windows* written by Laura E. Richards that will be analyzed by using Kohlberg's theory of moral development.

2.2 Method of Data Collection

In this research paper, the writer employs library research as a methodology. According to George (2008:22-23), library research is a systematic process of investigating and analyzing existing information sources to develop a deeper understanding of a topic. It involves identifying, locating, evaluating, and effectively using information from various library resources, such as books, journals, databases, and other scholarly materials. Saunders (2012:678–681) classifies data in library research into two categories: primary and secondary. Primary data is specifically collected for the research project at hand, while secondary data is compiled to provide additional insights, perspectives, and conclusions. The primary data of this research paper are derived from Laura E. Richards' children's literature short story entitled *The Golden Windows*. Meanwhile, the secondary data is sourced from credible references related to moral behaviors, including books, articles, theses, and various internet sources.

3 Results and Discussion

3.1 The Portrayal of the Boy's Morality

3.1.1 Obedience to the Parental Authority

The boy, the main character of Laura E. Richards' *The Golden Windows*, is portrayed as a morally upright child who shows deep respect and obedience toward his parents. This obedience is not enforced through punishment or fear, but it emerges from genuine appreciation and internalized values. At the beginning of the story, his father gives him a rare gift: a day off from work. Instead of treating it as a chance to act freely without purpose, the boy responds with thoughtfulness. He accepts the day not as mere leisure, but as an opportunity to fulfill what his father encourages, learning something good. This immediate sense of responsibility reveals how deeply he values his father's guidance.

His behavior is not limited to verbal gratitude. He puts his father's words into action by setting off on a journey with purpose and curiosity. He treats the day with seriousness, seeking meaning rather than entertainment. This decision emphasizes how the boy does not separate freedom from duty. His choices are shaped by the trust his father has placed in him, and his actions reflect a desire to prove that the trust is deserved, as quoted:

“One day the boy’s father called him and said: ‘You have been a good boy, and have earned a holiday. Take this day for your own; but remember that God gave it, and try to learn some good thing.’” (Richards, 1903:1). This quotation is the foundation for the boy’s moral actions throughout the story. The father frames the holiday as both a reward and a responsibility, something to be appreciated, not wasted. The boy’s obedience is reflected not only in his respectful response but also in how he carries this value through the entire day. His quiet determination to find something meaningful shows a child who views obedience not as submission, but as a moral obligation born from respect.

Through this portrayal, the story emphasizes that obedience is a defining trait of the boy’s character. It demonstrates how deeply he honors his parents’ teachings and how that respect influences his every action. His morality is built on the strength of family influence and the desire to do good, even when no one is watching. This external depiction of his relationship with his parents highlights the essential role of obedience in shaping his sense of right and wrong.

3.1.2 Actions Driven by Self-Interest

The boy is portrayed as a curious and hopeful individual whose actions are driven by personal desire rather than obligation to others. After receiving a day of freedom from his father, he does not choose to rest or stay at home. Instead, he embarks on a journey to find the house with the golden windows, a place he has long admired from a distance. His choice is not motivated by duty or a wish to help someone else, but by his own longing to discover something more beautiful and fulfilling beyond the life he already knows.

This pursuit of wonder, while innocent, is clearly driven by self-interest. The boy imagines that the people who live in the house with golden windows must be happier, wealthier, or somehow better off than his own family. The house becomes a symbol of something greater, something he wants to see and experience for himself. His moral decision to walk far from home, without telling his parents, is based on what he thinks he probably gain emotionally: satisfaction, beauty, or perhaps a new understanding of the world, as quoted: “On this far hill stood a house with windows of clear gold and diamonds. They shone and blazed so that it made the boy wink to look at them...” (Richards, 1903:1). This line reveals how captivated the boy is by the image he sees from his own hilltop. The windows appear to promise something magical, and the boy believes that by reaching them, he will find something missing from his current life. The decision to chase that vision is not morally wrong, but it is focused on fulfilling his hopes. It shows that his actions, though respectful and kind in nature, are still shaped by a desire for personal gain. He does not yet understand that a value can come from within rather than from something external and far away.

As the story progresses, this self-driven journey becomes a foundation for growth. Although he does not find what he is looking for, he gains something more valuable: perspective. The story subtly suggests that actions which are initially guided by self-interest can still lead to moral learning. The boy's disappointment and the eventual realization that the golden windows are an illusion help him recognize the worth of his own home and life. Therefore, the story uses his self-motivated actions not to show selfishness, but to portray a realistic path of moral development grounded in personal experience.

3.1.3 Good Social Relationships

The boy is portrayed as someone who places a high value on positive and respectful social interactions. From the beginning of the story, his strong bond with his parents is evident in both his behavior and speech. When his father grants him a day off as a reward for his hard work, the boy does not respond with selfish excitement, but with gratitude and affection. He thanks his father and kisses his mother before leaving, a small but meaningful gesture that shows his appreciation and love. These moments reflect a boy who seeks to maintain harmony within his family and who understands the emotional importance of showing kindness and respect to those who care for him.

This sense of social awareness continues in his interactions with strangers. When the boy reaches the farmhouse on the far hill, he meets a woman and her daughter. Despite being tired and disappointed that the house does not match the golden image he has imagined, the boy does not show frustration or rudeness. Instead, he treats the woman with quiet politeness and listens to her words when she gently explains that there are no golden windows. His respectful acceptance of this truth, without complaint or disrespect, highlights his maturity and consideration for others' feelings, even those he has just met.

The development of his friendship with the girl is another example of how the boy prioritizes kindness and connection in his social relationships. After eating an apple together, a gesture of shared trust, they quickly form a bond. The boy does not treat the girl with suspicion or arrogance; rather, he is open to her guidance and is genuinely interested in what she has to say. This openness reflects his willingness to engage with others in a friendly and humble way, even when he is far from home. Their interaction is not transactional, but it is built on mutual respect and sincerity, as quoted: "Then he told the little girl that he must go; and he gave her his best pebble, the white one with the red band, that he had carried for a year in his pocket..." (Richards, 1903:2). This act of giving away his treasured pebble reinforces the boy's kind-hearted nature. The pebble, which he has kept for a long time, holds sentimental value. By choosing to give it to the girl, he demonstrates thoughtfulness and generosity, traits that are central to positive social behavior. He does not give the gift expecting anything in return; rather, it is a genuine act of affection and gratitude for the short, but it is meaningful connection

they shared. This moment shows that he understands the emotional value of giving and sees kindness as a reward in itself.

The story also mentions his little sister, whom he plans to tell about his journey, demonstrating a familial sense of sharing and inclusion. Though she does not appear in the story directly, the boy's thoughtfulness toward her shows that his social awareness extends beyond those physically present. He values relationships not only through his actions, but also through his intentions. Overall, the boy's consistent effort to be kind, respectful, and emotionally generous paints a clear picture of a character who views goodness through the lens of positive relationships. His morality is reflected in his desire to be seen as a good person in the eyes of others and in his genuine care for maintaining warmth and connection in every interaction he has.

3.1.4 Upholding Duty and Responsibility

The boy is portrayed as a responsible and dependable child, whose actions reflect a strong moral foundation rooted in daily responsibility. Early in the story, he is shown performing essential tasks for his family. Despite his young age, he works in the field, barn, and shed, performing physically demanding tasks and usually reserved for adults. He does not resist or question the work, but he accepts it as part of his role within the household. His dedication to helping his family highlights a deep sense of personal duty and a commitment to maintaining the stability of his home.

Even when offered a day of rest, the boy continues to act with a sense of responsibility. His father grants him the day as a reward, encouraging him to use it meaningfully. Rather than wasting this rare opportunity, the boy chooses to pursue something that he believes holds value, the house with golden windows. He treats that this journey is not as a simple escape, but it is as a meaningful use of time, fulfilling his father's hope that he would learn some good thing, as quoted: "This behavior shows that the boy sees duty not as a burden, but as a guiding principle, even when no one is supervising him, as quoted: "All day long the little boy worked hard, in field and barn and shed..." (Richards, 1903:1).

This quotation emphasizes the boy's consistent commitment to contributing to his family's livelihood. He does his job based on an awareness of the importance of his role, not out of fear or strict orders. The absence of complaint or resistance shows how naturally he embraces responsibility. It also reflects how deeply ingrained these values are in his character. He understands that work is necessary for the well-being of the people he loves and for the order of their household.

The boy's moral outlook becomes even clearer at the end of the story when he comes to understand the deeper meaning of his journey. Instead of being disappointed by not finding real golden windows, he learns to appreciate the value of his own home, work,

and life. This realization is not just personal—it signifies that he is ready to accept the responsibilities of his role within his family and community with a new perspective. He returns, not only with knowledge, but also with gratitude, emotional maturity, and a strengthened sense of duty, which ultimately defines his moral growth. His consistent behavior throughout the story shows that he upholds values, not for recognition, because he sees them as part of himself and his world.

3.2 The Factors that Influence the Boy's Morality

3.2.1 The Knowledge of Environment

One of the factors that influences the boy's morality is his knowledge and awareness of the environment around him. Growing up in a rural setting where his family works as poor farmers, the boy is exposed to a lifestyle that requires discipline, cooperation, and sacrifice. Since young age, he participates in daily labor to support the household, and this direct involvement helps him understand the value of hard work and family responsibility. His environment does not offer luxury or ease, but it instills a practical understanding of what is necessary for survival and emotional connection.

The natural and social surroundings also shape how the boy views the world beyond his home. His habit of climbing the hill near his house to look across at the distant windows of another home reflects both his curiosity and his reflective nature. The landscape becomes a place of quiet observation where he begins to form his moral imagination. He compares what he has with what he sees from afar and wonders whether something more beautiful exists. This longing is not selfish, but a natural part of growing up and questioning one's place in the world. It sets the foundation for the boy's journey—not just to a physical location, but to deeper self-awareness, as quoted: "Then the boy would go up to the top of a hill and look across at another hill that rose some miles away. On this far hill stood a house with windows of clear gold and diamonds." (Richards, 1903:1).

This vision of golden windows reflects the boy's early understanding of value, shaped by his environment. What he sees is beautiful, but it is distant and idealized. His environment has taught him to recognize beauty, but he still does not fully understand its true nature. Through the journey, he begins to develop that understanding. When he reaches the far house and finds only plain glass windows, he realizes that his own home looks golden from a distance and experiences a shift in moral perception. The journey into a new environment allows him to reevaluate his own.

In the end, it is the combination of physical experience, emotional growth, and reflective thought, born from his environment that leads the boy to moral insight. He learns that the things he already had are often more valuable than things that seem better or further away. The environment around him, both as a teacher and as a mirror,

becomes central to his moral development. It allows him to form values based on observation, gratitude, and the quiet wisdom gained through personal experience.

3.2.2 The Freedom of Thought

One of the factors that influences the boy's morality is his freedom of thought. Unlike a character who is constantly guided or corrected by adults, the boy is given space to reflect, choose, and act on his own. This freedom begins when his father rewards him with a day off and encourages him to use the time wisely. Rather than prescribing how the day should be spent, his father simply tells him to "learn some good thing." The open-ended nature of this advice allows the boy to decide for himself what kind of experience or knowledge is valuable, marking the start of a moral journey shaped by internal thought rather than external control.

This freedom grants the boy the ability to explore beyond physical boundaries and the assumptions he has grown up with. He is not restricted by rules or fear, but it is by curiosity and the natural questions of a young mind. His decision to go seek the house with the golden windows is an individual choice, not influenced by reward, punishment, or obligation. Instead, it stems from an honest desire to understand something that has captivated his attention from afar. His journey reflects not only a physical quest, but also a mental and emotional exploration of what lies beyond his current understanding of the world. as quoted: "The boy thanked his father and kissed his mother; then he put a piece of bread in his pocket, and started off to find the house with the golden windows." (Richards, 1903:1).

The quotation highlights how his journey is self-initiated, supported by affection and gratitude, but it is not directly overseen by his parents. This moment shows that while he is respectful of their guidance, the path he chooses is entirely his own. As he walks alone, he is free to think, reflect, and interpret everything he sees through his lens. This solitude fosters critical thinking. He begins to question the difference between perception and reality, as the house he reaches is not what he imagines. However, instead of expressing disappointment outwardly, he internalizes the lesson and continues to think through it calmly and respectfully.

The freedom to make mistakes, reflect, and change perspective is what ultimately leads to the boy's moral growth. No one tells him directly that the golden windows are an illusion or that his home is valuable, he learns these truths through experience and introspection. The story shows that moral growth happens not only when a person follows rules, but also when the person questions their own beliefs and finds deeper truths by thinking for themselves. The boy is not punished for wandering or dreaming; instead, he is allowed to grow from it.

This freedom helps shape his moral identity. He returns not only more informed, but also more self-aware and appreciative. The transformation he undergoes is a direct result of being given the space to think, choose, and learn on his own terms. His morality becomes something personal and meaningful, not simply something taught. The story emphasizes that true moral character is formed when individuals are given the freedom to explore their thoughts and make responsible decisions based on reflection and self-discovery.

3.2.3 The Emotion in Maturity

One of the factors that influences the boy's morality is his emotional maturity, which plays a key role in how he handles both his journey and the unexpected truths he encounters along the way. Although he begins the story with a strong sense of hope and imagination, he never lets his emotions spiral into impatience or frustration. Instead, he demonstrates self-control and an openness to learn, even when reality does not meet his expectations. His emotional restraint and calmness allow him to process disappointment in a constructive way, rather than reacting impulsively or with anger.

Throughout his journey, the boy shows a gentle and thoughtful temperament, especially in how he interacts with others. When he arrives at the farmhouse and discovers that the windows are made of ordinary glass rather than gold, he feels the weight of disillusionment. However, he does not express bitterness or lash out at the woman or her daughter. Instead, he listens quietly and accepts what he is told. His ability to remain composed in that moment signals a level of emotional depth and empathy. He understands that the woman is telling the truth and respects her honesty, as quoted: "The woman shook her head and laughed. 'We are poor farming people,' she said, 'and are not likely to have gold about our windows; but glass is better to see through.'" (Richards, 1903:2)

This gentle exchange reflects not only the boy's emotional resilience, but also his capacity for learning through feeling. Rather than dwelling on the loss of his imagined goal, he uses the moment to reevaluate his perceptions. His feelings of disappointment are quickly followed by reflection and acceptance. It is through this emotional maturity that he is able to see beyond the illusion and gain a more meaningful insight about the value of his own home. His emotions do not control him; they guide him toward understanding.

Moreover, the boy's kindness toward the girl, sharing an apple and later giving her his treasured pebble, further illustrates his emotional development. These gestures are rooted in empathy, not obligation. He connects with others because he feels a genuine desire to be generous and kind without coercion. His emotions do not just react to what happens, but they also guide him to act with kindness and do what is right. His ability to build connections and act with tenderness adds depth to his moral growth.

Therefore, the boy's emotional journey shapes his moral character. His capacity to process disappointment, show empathy, and respond with kindness demonstrates a level of emotional maturity that enhances his moral decision-making. Rather than reacting to the world with immediate judgments, he listens, reflects, and grows. The story shows that moral development is not just about choices and reason, but also about deep feelings and a true heart.

3.3 The Effects of the Boy's Morality Growth

3.3.1 The Boy Overrides Competence

One of the effects of the boy's morality growth is his ability to prioritize doing what is right over pursuing personal gain or recognition. Although he begins the story driven by curiosity and the hope of discovering something better than what he has, his journey ultimately teaches him that moral insight and emotional understanding are more valuable than proving himself through achievements or success. As he is mature, his actions are no longer guided by the desire to gain something for himself, but guided by a deeper understanding of goodness, empathy, and gratitude.

The boy is not concerned with showing how clever or skilled he is throughout the story. He does not attempt to solve a problem or demonstrate his ability to others. Instead, he quietly embarks on a personal quest that is more emotional than practical. He climbs a distant hill, not to achieve recognition, but to satisfy a longing for something beautiful and meaningful. His willingness to walk far on his own, even without any clear reward, reveals a growing moral purpose that overrides any concern for praise or competence.

This becomes especially clear in his interaction with the girl on the far hill. After realizing that the windows he has admired are just plain glass, he does not try to defend his belief or prove he is right. He humbly accepts the truth and even expresses kindness to the girl by giving her his treasured pebble. This moment reveals a boy who no longer acts to look impressive or to gain something for himself, but a boy who instead values connection, honesty, and generosity, as quoted: "Then he told the little girl that he must go; and he gave her his best pebble, the white one with the red band, that he had carried for a year in his pocket..." (Richards, 1903:2).

This action reflects the shift in the boy's priorities. The pebble, once a prized possession, is given away not to gain favor, but as a genuine act of friendship. The boy's choice is not based on personal benefit or the logic of keeping something valuable, but on what he feels is morally right. In this act, he puts kindness above possession, empathy above pride. His morality has matured to the point where doing good outweighs being smart or strong.

By the end of the story, the boy's greatest lesson is not about what he found, but about how he has changed. He sees that true value lies in what he already had, and he returns

home not with a trophy, but with understanding. He does not need to prove his worth through accomplishments because his decisions now reflect a higher moral awareness. His growth allows him to let go of illusions and embrace truth, humility, and goodness, proving that the greatest strength does not come from ability, but from character.

3.3.2 The Boy Develops a Quick and Decisive Decision-Making

One of the effects of the boy's morality growth is his ability to make thoughtful and quick decisions based on a clear sense of right and wrong. As he matures during the story, he becomes more confident in making choices that align with the lessons he has learned. Early, his decision to set out on a journey is driven by wonder and imagination. However, by the end of the story, his decisions are made with more certainty and purpose, showing the influence of his moral reflection and emotional growth.

This development becomes evident when he sees his own house from the knoll and realizes that it is the house with the golden windows. This moment is not followed by hesitation or confusion. Instead, the boy immediately understands the meaning of what he sees and confidently draws a conclusion that reveals how much he has grown. He does not question the truth or seek further explanation, he knows he has learned what he is meant to, as quoted: "And when they looked again, the boy saw that it was his own home." (Richards, 1903:2).

This realization is quiet, but it is powerful. The boy does not need to speak more or delay; he has seen enough to change how he understands the world. His ability to quickly accept the truth and act upon it, by deciding to return home, is a sign of clear moral thinking. He now values the truth over illusion and simplicity over fantasy, and these values guide his decisions with speed and confidence.

This growing decisiveness shows that the boy has gained emotional strength, as he now faces reality calmly instead of feeling confused or chasing dreams. His moral growth has given him the courage to face facts as they are, rather than as he wishes them to be. This emotional maturity allows him to stand firm in his convictions without needing external validation, marking a profound shift from earlier indecision.

Moreover, the boy's quick decision-making demonstrates his understanding of the consequences that come with choice. He recognizes that hesitation can lead to confusion or missed opportunities, whereas swift, thoughtful decisions can bring clarity and progress. This awareness shows that his growth is not only internal, but practical—he is learning how to navigate the world effectively by applying his values promptly.

By the end of the story, the boy's choices are no longer based on trial and error, but on a growing sense of clarity. He has learned not only what is important, but also how to respond to it with certainty, which marks a transformation in his character from a dreamer unsure of what he is seeking to a person who sees clearly and makes confident

choices. His moral development empowers him to act without doubt, but with quiet assurance and emotional strength.

3.3.3 The Boy Learns Solidarity

Another effect of the boy's morality growth is the development of his sense of solidarity with others, especially his family and community. At the beginning of the story, the boy appears drawn toward something distant and unfamiliar—he longs to reach the house with golden windows, believing that life must be better than his own. This desire reflects a natural curiosity and the feeling of separation from his surroundings. However, as he travels and experiences life beyond his home, he begins to form a deeper connection with the people and values he left behind.

The turning point in his moral journey occurs when he meets the girl on the far hill and realizes that her life is very similar to his. Her family, like his own, raises animals and lives modestly. Through this encounter, the boy starts seeing that the challenges and joys of life are shared across different homes and people. He recognizes that his situation is not unique, and this recognition builds empathy and understanding. Rather than continuing to see his life as a weakness, he begins to value what he has and sees himself as part of a larger community of people who live with dignity and purpose, despite their simplicity, as quoted: "She led the boy about the farm, and showed him her black calf with the white star on its forehead, and he told her about his own at home, which was red like a chestnut, with four white feet." (Richards, 1903:2).

This exchange is simple, but it is deeply symbolic of the boy's growing awareness of shared experiences. He no longer views the other families as a distant or superior, but they are equal. His willingness to share about his home, animals, and life shows a change from being distant to being connected. The boy begins to realize he is not alone in his struggles or values. His decision to return home with a new sense of gratitude further demonstrates that he now sees himself as a part of a collective identity like his family, his lifestyle, and the values they live with.

The boy's developing sense of solidarity also brings with it a deeper understanding of responsibility toward others. He realizes that being part of a community means more than simply sharing similarities; it means caring for and supporting those around him. This insight motivates him to act with greater kindness and consideration, recognizing that his choices do not affect on himself, but also the people he loves. Solidarity, then, becomes a guiding principle for his behavior and decisions.

Furthermore, this newfound connection to others enriches the boy's sense of belonging and identity. Instead of feeling isolated or yearning for a distant ideal, he begins to find comfort and pride in his roots. He learns to see his family's way of life not as something

to escape but as something to cherish and uphold. This shift reveals a maturation in his worldview, moving from self-centered longing to communal appreciation.

The boy's moral growth in solidarity also reflects a larger theme of the story: the recognition that true fulfillment comes from embracing one's place within a community rather than seeking to separate from it. He travels far, but he returns home and understands the value of a shared life and mutual support. This cyclical movement illustrates how personal growth and social connection are deeply intertwined.

Therefore, the boy's moral development leads him to understand things for himself and feel solidarity with those around him. He no longer idealizes faraway places, but, instead, he finds beauty and worth in his own home and the people within it. This transformation strengthens his bond with his community, showing that true belonging does not come from chasing something different, but comes from valuing and contributing to the group he has been already a part of. Through empathy, reflection, and moral maturity, the boy learns that solidarity is not only about being with others, but also about standing with them in shared understanding and respect.

4. Conclusion

This research paper discusses the portrayal of morality of the boy as reflected in the short story *The Golden Windows* written by Laura E. Richards. The story follows a young boy from a poor farming family who, after being granted a day off by his father, sets out to find a distant house with golden windows he has admired from afar. Along his journey, he meets new people, explores unfamiliar surroundings, and ultimately discovers that the golden glow he admired is an illusion created by the sunset. When he looks back from the hill, he sees his own home shining with the same golden light, leading to a profound realization about contentment, perception, and the value of what he already has.

Using the theory of morality, this research paper explores the portrayal of the boy's morality, the factors influencing the boy's morality, and the effects of the boy's moral growth. The portrayal of the boy's morality examines how his obedience to parental authority, pursuit of self-understanding, ability to form good social relationships, and commitment to duty contribute to the foundation of his moral character. The factors influencing the boy's morality are further shaped by significant influences, such as his knowledge of environment, the freedom to think and act independently, and the emotional growth in processing experiences and forming connections with others. The effects of the boy's moral growth are reflected in his ability to override competence by valuing moral choices over personal advantage, develop a quick and decisive decision-making guided by clarity and ethical understanding, and learn solidarity by strengthening his sense of connection and shared values with others. These outcomes

highlight the depth of his moral transformation, emphasizing integrity, emotional maturity, and social awareness.

This research paper can provide insights into how morality in children can be understood through literature. By analyzing the protagonist's experiences, choices, and personal growth, readers, especially educators, parents, and scholars, can gain a better understanding of how children process moral values through storytelling. The findings show that children's literature is not only a source of entertainment but also a powerful medium for teaching ethical principles and guiding emotional and social development. Through stories like *The Golden Windows*, readers can reflect on the importance of gratitude, empathy, and perspective, making literature a meaningful tool in shaping moral awareness from an early age.

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