

## ROALD DAHL' S NONSENSE POETRY: A METHOD IN MADNESS

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### ABSTRACT

Following on the footsteps of writers like Louis Carroll, Edward Lear, and Dr. Seuss, Roald Dahl's nonsensical verses create a realm of semiotic confusion which negates formal diction and meaning. This temporary reshuffling of reality actually affirms that which it negates. In other words, as long as it is transitory the 'nonsense' serves to establish more firmly the authority of the 'sense.' My paper attempts to locate Roald Dahl's verse in the field of literary nonsense in as much as it avows that which it appears to parody. Set at the brink of modernism these poems are a playful inditement of Victorian conventionality. The three collections of verses Rhyme Stew, Dirty Beasts, and Revolving Rhyme subvert social paradigms through their treatment of censorship and female sexuality. Meant primarily for children, these verses raise a series of uncomfortable questions by alienating the readers with what was once familiar territory.

**KEYWORDS:** Roald Dahl's Poetry, Subversion, Alienation, Meaning, Nonsense