

UTILIZATION OF INTERTEXTUALITY IN NEIL GAIMAN'S BOOKS

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ABSTRACT

Almost each of Neil Gaiman's books, we cannot consider without the usage of intertextuality. Thus, is the interconnection between two similar works especially, literary books that impact readers' interpretation of the text. In the following passage, one of the bestsellers of the author (Caroline) is analyzed to survey the utilization of intertextuality. Intertextuality is learned with the juxtaposition of the works "Coraline" and "Alice in the Wonderland".

Keywords: *Intertextuality, Time and Place, Climax, Theme, Female character, Psychology*

The author wrote this novel for his daughters. He was really eager to give his daughters an incredible work with a cool female heroine. The story might not be very long, but it took Gaiman over ten years to finish.

Gaiman considers *Coraline* the "strangest" book he's ever written. He's also very proud of it, and for good reason: *Coraline* appeals to a huge range of people. The author noticed that kids tend to read it as a cool adventure while adults read it as kind of a horror story. So, the novel is considered both horror and adventure.

In the book reader comes across some strange phrases, such as black buttons, magical mirrors and others like that. They are used in the novel on purpose to show their real meaning. In the novel they are used as the simple words but on the other hand, they are considered the symbols of strange meanings. For instance, black button eyes. The black button eyes of the other mother are probably the most iconic or well-known image to come out of "*Coraline*".

They were looking at her with their black button eyes. Or at least she thought they were looking at her. She couldn't be sure. [Busack Richard, 2009]

These eyes are definitely terrifying. The black button eyes let reader know that he or she is in the other world and highlight how disturbing it is. Buttons are a seemingly harmless object, but in the other world, they become sinister and threatening. In fact, turning nice things into threatening things seems to be one of the main functions of the other world and the beldam herself.

Besides that, the key is also considered one of the symbolic words. The key into the other world becomes a hot commodity, or item, in the story. There's only one key to the door between the other world and our world. And the other mother and Coraline both want to control that key.

The appearance of the key can help the reader understand what it represents. Compared to the other keys, it's "*the oldest, biggest, blackest, rustiest key*" [Miller John Jackson, 2005]. It is different from all the other keys, just like the other world is different from the real world. In this way, the key seems to represent the other world: old and ugly.

Usually when reader thinks of keys, they think of unlocking something or opening something up. Coraline certainly does this when she finds the other world. But if keys can unlock, they can also lock you in. That's more what Coraline is about – the fear of being trapped somewhere you don't want to be. So how do we eliminate the fear of being trapped? Well, trap the key itself! And that's exactly what Coraline does.

This book makes a big deal out of mirrors, which they also symbolize, something different.

Coraline goes through a door to get to her other world, but her parents and three ghost children are trapped in a mirror. And when the reader thinks about it, what happens when he or she looks in a mirror?

Everything looks the same... but different. This is exactly how Coraline feels when she walks into the other world – like its familiar, but something’s just not right.

Even the other mother knows that mirrors don’t represent reality:

The other mother smiled. “Mirrors,” she said, “are never to be trusted.” [Whitaker Steve, 1989]

While reading this book, the reader can notice that the notions of dissatisfaction, choices, identity, the home, versions of reality, fear, family and courage as the main themes of the novel. For example, courage: Coraline is up there with the most courageous kids of all time. As she explains, what really makes you brave is doing something even when you’re scared. In *Coraline*, our heroine has a special kind of courage, fighting back against the other mother totally alone. In the end, her courage gives her more confidence, which of course will mean even more courage in the future.

The theme of the family: Coraline’s parents are really busy and tend to ignore her; she’s often left alone to entertain herself and even take care of herself. That doesn’t sound like the best family set-up. But then Coraline discovers an alternate set of parents who pay her tons of attention and cook her delicious food. Sounds like a good trade. Coraline quickly figures out that it’s a rotten deal. Her own parents might have their flaws, but they’re still her parents. And Coraline loves them enough to fight hard to get them back from the cruel other mother. *Coraline* teaches us that, when it comes down to it, family is irreplaceable.

The theme of fear: *Coraline* is definitely a scary book, there’s no question about it. The stuff Coraline goes through to rescue the ghost children and her parents gives the reader nightmares. Coraline herself gets scared – a lot, actually – but she manages to deal with her fear very well and always keeps on keep in on. Usually, she pumps herself up with little pep talks. She reminds herself that she’s brave, that she’s an explorer, and that she can’t give up. And she reminds other characters of that, too. When the ghost children get scared and tell her to run, Coraline tells them to hang on. When the cat freezes up out of fear, she comforts him. The best part about fear is that it’s all relative: once Coraline has lived through the scary adventure of the other world, going to school seems like nothing

The theme of the home: At the beginning of *Coraline*, the heroine is bored at home: her parents are too busy for her, the place she lives is dull, and she has exhausted all the exploring there is to do. It takes being in a crazy and super scary alternate world to make Coraline realize just how much she appreciates her real home. The real world might be dull sometimes, but it’s home for Coraline. This is a common trope, common device in literature. “There’s no place like home...”

The theme of identity: In *Coraline*, the heroine doesn’t have friends or family to rely on, so she learns this lesson pretty quickly. She doesn’t need other people to know her in order to know herself: even if everyone forgets her name, it doesn’t mean she isn’t Coraline. And of course, other people’s identities become an issue for Coraline, too. Who is the other mother? What is the other mother’s identity in relation to Coraline’s real mother’s identity? And the three ghost children? Can they have identities if they don’t even have names? Coraline is struggling with all of these questions, all the while trying to save the day.

The theme of dissatisfaction: Boredom and dissatisfaction are great ways to start off a story. Seriously, dissatisfaction often leads people to look for something to do, and that something often gets them into serious trouble. That’s certainly what happens in “*Coraline*”. Coraline starts off feeling ignored and lonely. So when a weird hallway appears behind a mysterious door, Coraline take the opportunity to cause some trouble. She’s curious and fascinated by the other world, but she also quickly realizes she wants to go home. After surviving a

very scary adventure, Coraline seems cured of her dissatisfaction: it turns out excitement and adventure can be a bit over-rated.

The theme of choices: Choices are really important in "*Coraline*". After all, Coraline makes some pretty big decisions in the story, and a lot of small ones, too like what to have for dinner. Her first and most important decision is one that changes the entire story: she chooses not to stay in the other world after her first visit. If she hadn't made that choice, she would have been in deep trouble and the reader wouldn't have had his story. Throughout the book, though, Coraline always seems to have a choice in the matter: she doesn't have to save her parents or the other children, but she chooses to. Even though Coraline doesn't have total control over the situation, she does decide to be brave and at least give it a shot. And it turns out she made the right choice.

As we mentioned in the previous chapter, it is a common thing for Neil Gaiman to use intertextuality in each his works. As other works, in this novel also intertextuality is observed. The notions of "other world" and "this world" of the novel are also found in the book "*Alice in the Woodlands*" by Comparing these two stories, in "*Coraline*" the main character goes through the weird door to the other world, while in the book "*Alice in the Woodlands*" Alice goes to the new world through the mirrors. In both two stories the reader comes across with the speaking cat, but one thing must be differentiate between them that, one of them in positive character, the second one is in negative one. In "*Coraline*" the cat is appeared in black color and he can be found in both real world and the "other world". He always wants to help to Coraline. But in "*Alice in the Woodlands*" the color of the cat is not black, he has black and grey stripes and he is found only in the new world. He always tries to make Alice lose her way.

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