

**An Examination of Neil Gaiman's *Coraline* and *The Graveyard Book* in the Context of
Gothic Elements and Child Psychology**

By

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“An Examination of Neil Gaiman’s Novels (*Coraline* and *The Graveyard Book*) in Context of Gothic Elements and Child Psychology” by Shah Rila Nowal Prima ID 19103055 Spring 2022 has been accepted as satisfactory in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Bachelor of Arts

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- 1) This thesis is written by me and I have acknowledged any sources that I have used while writing this paper.
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Abstract

This is a paper about how British author Neil Gaiman's writing supports children's psychological and emotional needs. Gaiman's two books - *Coraline* and *The Graveyard Book* have been used as the primary texts. This paper shows how Gaiman used gothic elements in his writings. Classical monsters like Dracula, Frankenstein, werewolves, and other horrific creatures were developed to instill fear in people. However, Gaiman's monsters are different. Instead of being frightening and intimidating, they are represented as kind, attractive, and appear to be like any other human being. This paper also examines the main characters, Bod and Coraline, and their responses when they are in danger, as well as how this can affect the young readers' minds.

Keywords: psychological, horror, gothic, children, fear, parents, alienation

Contents

Declaration	2
Approval	3
Ethics Statement	4
Acknowledgement	5
Abstract	6
Chapter1 - Introduction	8
i) Research Questions.....	10
ii) Thesis Statement.....	11
Chapter 2 –Literature Review	12
i) Target Audience for Neil Gaiman’s Book.....	12
ii) Author’s Inspiration for Writing.....	13
iii) Birth of Bildungsroman and Gothicism.....	15
iv) Critics on The Graveyard Book and Coraline.....	16
v) Freud and Repression.....	17
vi) Jacques Lacan’s Mirror Stage.....	18
Chapter3 – Author’s Life & Writing	19
i) Personal Life.....	19
ii) Writing Style.....	19
Chapter 4	23
i) Gaiman’s Stories for Emotional Development.....	23
ii) “Coraline”, a Comforting Character.....	24
iii) Bod between Living and Dead.....	28
iv) Effects of Gaiman’s Writing on Children.....	32
Chapter 5 - Gothic Elements in Gaiman	33
i) Characters.....	33
ii) Setting of the Novels.....	34
Chapter 6 - “Coraline”, Trapped in Capitalist Vortex	37
Chapter 7- Bildungsroman and <i>The Graveyard Book</i>	40
Chapter 8 - Conclusion	43
Works Cited	45

Chapter1 – Introduction

“If you want your children to be intelligent, read them fairy tales. If you want them to be more intelligent, read them more fairy tales.”

-Albert Einstein.

Stories play an important part in our lives. Children often ask their parents to tell fantastical and magical stories. These stories remain fresh in their minds for a long time. Such stories improve focus, memory, empathy, and communication skills. It helps in developing our morals and gives courage throughout our lives. A child's self-esteem develops with the win of the hero. *Coraline* and *The Graveyard Book* by Neil Gaiman are books that appeal to young readers. Neil Gaiman is a British author who writes short stories, novels, comic books, fiction and non-fiction novels for children as well as for adults. He was born in 1960 in England and currently living in Minneapolis, USA. From an early age, Gaiman used to read book of all kinds of writer. C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkein, James Branch Cabell, Edgar Allan Poe, Michael Moorcock, Ursula K. Le Guin, Lod Dunsany and G.K. Chesterton were his favorite most favorite authors (Newbery Award Winning Authors). They inspired him to write new stories. Gaiman worked as journalist to gain knowledge about the literary world. He wrote many articles and interviews for several British newspapers. He worked as a comic writer as well. Neil Gaiman has received many awards for his writing. He received the most prestigious Newbery Medal (2009) for *The Graveyard Book*. In the same year, he was also awarded the Hugo Award for best novel.

The novel *Coraline* was named after its protagonist, Coraline who is a nine years old girl. Coraline is a character with which children can connect easily. She is relatable because she is

facing the common problem of alienation that almost all children face now-a-days. This story is set in England. At the beginning of the story, Coraline's family move to a big old apartment. It is never specified whether it is a city or a town. However, Coraline's father takes a trip to London, which proves that they live somewhere outside London. Coraline's parents are constantly busy with work to spend time with her. They always tell her to "Go away" and let them work. When Coraline asks "Why don't you play with me?" "Busy, Working." her father replies (Gaiman, 18). Like any other child, Coraline wants to be loved and appreciated, but her parent's busy lifestyle prevents her from feeling loved. Nonetheless, this is not the only aspect that draws children and other readers to this novel. The novel is also full of suspense that keeps the reader curious. When Coraline's mother opens the big, carved, brown wooden door at the far corner of the drawing-room with the biggest, blackest, rustiest key it made both Coraline and the reader wonder where it will lead. The next time when Coraline opens the door, it leads to a cold, dark hallway. Throughout the book, we come across many moments that arouse fear as well. Coraline walks into the other house and sees the other mother who exactly looks like her mother, only with pale white skin and button eyes. Coraline is a very descriptive novel. While reading, the readers get a detailed mental picture of the characters. "They were thin, and pale, and quite pretty, and had black button eyes" (Gaiman, 40-41). All these elements make the book very enjoyable to read and give a chance to the young readers a chance to connect with the character.

The Graveyard Book is the story of Nobody (Bod) Owens. The opening line of the book is full of creates a sense of suspense which captures the readers' attention immediately. "There was a hand in the darkness, and it held a knife" (Gaiman, 1). Bod's parents were killed by a man named Jack at the beginning of the story. Bod was a toddler at the time and he crawled up in the mountain in a graveyard and gets got away from the murderer. Bod is raised by the ghosts in the

graveyard. Neil Gaiman gives a very detailed description of the graveyard, which gives the reader a good idea of what a graveyard is like even if they have never visited one. “You could see the funeral chapel, iron doors padlocked, ivy on the sides of the spire, a small tree growing out of the guttering at roof level. You could see stones and tombs and vaults and memorial plaques” (Gaiman 12). *The Graveyard Book* is a novel written for young adults. However, the themes, character depth, and emotional journey of the book are appealing to people of all ages. If one is unable to connect with Bod, they can connect with Bod’s guardian Silas or Bod’s parents Mr. and Mrs. Owens. Each chapter of this novel has its own individual story. Each chapter of the story represents Bod at a different age and stage in his life. This makes the novel a very good example of a bildungsroman. Gaiman skillfully changes Bod’s voice and thought process to portray his age and indicate how he is maturing. Bod is 15 years old by the end of the story, and he is free to return to the real world because the man named Jack and his accomplices, who have been attempting to kill him, is no longer a threat to him. The book is about children growing up, meeting new people, failing, succeeding, and learning about the world around them until they are mature enough to begin their own journeys.

i) [Research Questions](#)

- Primary Reserch Questions:

What effect does Neil Gaiman's novel *Coraline* and *The Graveyard Book* have on children's phycology? What role do gothic aspects play in this novel?

- Secondary Research Questions:

What distinguishes Neil Gaiman apart from other authors in terms of writing style? What role do Gaiman's *Coraline* and *The Graveyard Book* play in the emotional development of

children? Can children relate to the protagonists and learn from them? What are the gothic elements in these novels? What makes *The Graveyard Book* a coming-of-age story?

ii) **Thesis Statement**

Many articles have been written on Neil Gaiman's work. However, very few discuss how Neil Gaiman's writing is helpful to children's psychological development. This research looks at the different ways *Coraline* and *The Graveyard Book* examine children's psychological needs and emotional development. It takes me to an examination of gothic elements in Gaiman's work which I argue, is used as a literary and narrative tool by the author. This paper thus looks at Gothicism as significant in how Gaiman narrates his stories about children and the psychologically complex world of the bildungsroman.

Chapter 2 –Literature Review

i) Target Audience for Neil Gaiman’s Book

The article “Neil Gaiman’s Ghost Children” by Dominik Becher discusses how ghosts and ghost stories are essential to the storytelling of Neil Gaiman (Becher 1). Gaiman emphasises on the supernatural horror in his writing. However, when writing horror fiction for children, he always incorporates humor to keep it from being too scary for the children to read. Gaiman's ghost stories have a deep and therefore lasting emotional impact on young readers. Gaiman's novels (such as *The Graveyard Book*) provide a space for children to develop a healthy relationship with death.

In a podcast interview with “Bainpicker” in 2014 Neil Gaiman discusses why he thinks scary stories are appealing to the readers. According to Gaiman, technological advancements did not to reduce the appeal of gothic stories. The practice of listening to ghost stories can be traced all the way back to ancient Egypt. Classical ghost stories from Rome include werewolves, cases of demonic possession and witches (Gaiman 3:50 – 3:59). Regardless of the era, people have always been curious about what happens after this life ends. The gothic elements in books make our skin crawl and our heartbeats get faster, reminding us that we are still alive. It also gives us hope to live a little longer. Gaiman also emphasizes that he does not write exclusively for children. Gaiman says in the podcast interview that he writes for anyone, whatever of age, who enjoys being scared and seeing good triumph over evil.

The Guardian published an interview with Neil Gaiman titled "Why Our Future Depends on Libraries, Reading and Daydreaming" in which he talks about why reading books is important for children. According to Neil Gaiman, the best method to ensure that the next generation children are educated is to let them read any book. It can be fiction or non-fiction. Children must

learn how to read for pleasure. Gaiman believes that children should choose what they want to read. Gaiman says, "There are no bad authors for children, that children like and want to read and seek out, because every child is different. They can find the stories they need to, and they bring themselves to stories " (Gaiman, The Guardian). He also says that reading fiction helps to build empathy. Fiction allows the author to use their imagination to create a universe and readers can see the world through the eyes of the author. Fiction opens door to escape unpleasant thoughts. Gaiman says, "Fiction opens a door, shows the sunlight outside, gives you a place to go where you are in control, are with people you want to be with" (Gaiman, The Guardian).

ii) Author's Inspiration for Writing

Neil Gaiman discusses the inspiration for *The Graveyard Book* in a 2010 interview with Bloomsbury Publication. This book took a very long time to write. Gaiman had the concept for this novel while he was only 25 years old. He and his family used to live in a high-rise with only rooms and stairwells. There was no garden or open space to explore. His two-year-old, on the other hand, enjoyed riding his tricycle along the road and through the grandstands. Gaiman saw that his son seemed really at home and peace there. Then Gaiman had the idea of writing a story about a child who enjoys wandering around graveyards. Gaiman wanted to write a book similar to *The Jungle Book*. He wanted the protagonist to grow up in a graveyard with ghosts. Gaiman says that *The Graveyard Book* is about growing up, learning and moving on in life.

In an interview for the Edward Gorey documentary, with Christopher Seufert, Gaiman discusses how Gorey influenced the book *Coraline*. Gaiman claims that he knew *Coraline* was a Gorey story as soon as he started writing it. Initially, his main concern while writing the story was who would read it, if it was appropriate for them to read and if they will like it or not. Then Gaiman was inspired by Gorey and remembered Gorey's idea of telling the story that he wanted

to tell. So most of the people are not going to be on the same page as him. Gaiman had to accept that people would look at a novel like *Coraline* and think, "That's too strange." Nonetheless, one person will read it and declare it to be the most beautiful thing they have ever read. It was Edward Gorey who taught him to be willing to accept that. Gaiman intended to send the story to Gorey so he could sketch Coraline while he was writing it. Coraline is a tiny small character. Only Coraline's character was never going to fill the drawing book. Consequently, Gaiman wrote in great detail about her surroundings so that there will be no blank spaces when Coraline is illustrated. At the very least, there would be some kind of shadow or spooky atmosphere to fill the book.

Neil Gaiman in his 2012, speech at the University of the Arts, revealed that he never received any formal education in writing novels. He knew he wanted to write a novel, a film, or a short story since he was 15 years old. That was his sole objective in life. He could not tell if he was doing the right or wrong. However, picturing himself in the position he desired (as a fiction novelist who writes good books) gave him the motivation to keep working toward his dream. He continued to write as long as it felt like an adventure. He wrote his first literary piece for money and after that he never wrote another book for money. He took the decision to only write pieces that made him happy and proud of himself. Once Gaiman misspelt the name Caroline and wrote Coraline instead. From there, he came up with the title Coraline for his book. He is not fond of rules in writing as a creative writer. Rather, he enjoys breaking down prejudices through his writing and presenting a different perspective to the world.

iii) Birth of Bildungsroman and Gothicism

The author of the article "Origin and Development of Bildungsroman Novels" Simhachalam Thamarana discusses Bildungsroman and how it is used in literary texts. The term Bildungsroman was coined by Karl Van Morgenstern in 1817. It gained popularity towards the end of the nineteenth century. *Entwicklungsroman* (novel of development), *Erziehungsroman* (novel of education), *Künstlerroman* (development of the artist), and *Zeitroman* (development of the era in which the hero lives) are some of the subgenres. The goal of most Bildungsroman is for the protagonist to mature psychologically and emotionally. This maturation process follows a set pattern. The protagonist is on a journey for the meaning of life or serves as a platform for the author's social and moral views, as expressed through the protagonist. The Bildungsroman sub-genre has some popular themes; such as - Identity and the Self, Coming of Age, Education, Love, and Search for the Meaning of Life etc. Plot, character, point of view, setting, tone, and style are the main elements of literature. Different types of literary works place a strong emphasis on one or more of these elements. The Bildungsroman puts more emphasis on character. The story usually follows a standard structure of introduction, rising action, climax, falling action, and conclusion.

Jerrold E. Hogle discusses how gothic fiction became a part of western society in the chapter "Introduction: The Gothic in Western Culture" of the book *Gothic fiction is a style that emerged in the post-medieval and post-Renaissance periods. The first Gothic story, *The Castle of Otranto*, was published in England under a pseudonym in 1764. This was a very unstable genre in the beginning and was eventually dispersed into different genres. Around 1900 the Gothic elements ultimately found its way into films, novels, television shows and series, romantic and satirical musical plays, and computerized games and music videos. Mostly the*

reader of this genre were middle-class and Anglo. More kinds of audiences have been drawn in over the years. Gothic literature reveals our cultural and psychological selves as well as conditions that other forms cannot.

iv) Critics on *The Graveyard Book* and *Coraline*

The article "A Critical Analysis of Uncanny Characters in Neil Gaiman's *Coraline* and *The Graveyard Book*" by Kamalini Govender examines Neil Gaiman's uncanny characters and how it helped growing the protagonist. *Coraline* and *The Graveyard Book*, by Neil Gaiman, both have unusual characters who ignore society's stereotypical gender, race and religious domination. Due to the presence of unusual characters such as the other mother and Liza, the ghost-witch, the protagonists Bod and Coraline experienced numerous challenges, leading them to become bolder, creative thinkers who are more willing to confront their fears and accept diversity. The characters developed self-awareness and were able to assimilate what was previously dismissed as foreign, and learned to cope up in multiple society. Gaiman broke the prejudices by adapting a Gothic mode that uses transgressive characters who were initially viewed as monsters. Gaiman breaks the prejudices by adapting a Gothic mode that uses transgressive characters who were always viewed as monsters. These uncanny characters also underline the positive effects of postmodern re-readings of psychoanalytical themes can have on literary interpretation.

Jennifer McStotts in this chapter "The Jungle, the Graveyard, and the Feral Child: Imitating and Transforming Kipling Beyond Pastiche" discusses the similarities between these two stories (*The Jungle Book* and *The Graveyard Book*). All good writers, according to McStotts, are also good readers. So, sometimes their writings are also influenced by the book or author that they like. *Jungle Book* stories and Gaiman's *The Graveyard Book* have a connection

which Neil Gaiman never denies. Rather he talks about it while discussing his inspiration or writing process for the book. Many critics believe Gaiman's adaptation of Mowgli is the strongest evocation of the feral child archetype, which is one of the reasons the book became so popular. According to McStotts, imitating *The Jungle Book* and disclosing that it was inspired by Kipling's writing is a deliberate choice by the author. However, Gaiman's novel is neither a mere copy of *The Jungle Book* nor a tribute to its author. Rather, it borrows Kipling's world and changes the story by using exaggeration, contemplation, and reversal. Although the writing style is imitative and evocative but the use of feral child tropes, themes, and morals is unique. Bod is less ferocious and more hopeful than Mowgli. *The Graveyard Book*, unlike *The Jungle Book*, does not have any sociopolitical discourse which highlights the underlying distinction between the two works.

v) Freud and Repression

The book *Freud's Concept of Repression and Defense, Its Theoretical and Observational Language* was published in 1961. Sigmund Freud was born in 1815 in Austria-Hungary. He was a neurologist and the founder of psychoanalysis. Freud's works talk about the unconscious part of the human psyche. Freud once was treating a young patient and the patient dropped a word while quoting a poem. Freud concluded that dropping the word was the work of the unconscious mind because the word reminded the young man of blood. Freud believed that was linked to his pregnancy scare. So, the man blocked out the word so that he does not need to remember his negative experience with pregnancy. This is known as "Freudian Slip". Freud then talks about "Repression" as a defence mechanism of the human mind. Repression is unconscious blocking unpleasant emotions and memories to reduce the feeling of guilt and anxiety. It plays a distorting

role in one's behaviour. Freud's theory has been used to examine the characters of the novel. It has also been used to show how Gaiman's writing can affect the child readers' psychology.

vi) Jacques Lacan's Mirror Stage

Jacques Marie Émile Lacan was a French psychoanalyst and psychiatrist. In his paper "Mirror Stage" (1949) he talks about the "mirror stage" which happens between 6 to 18 months of child development. In this stage, the child learns the idea of self and other through watching itself in the mirror (symbolic or real). The baby identifies with an external image of the body in the mirror or through the caregiver. Thus she/he has sense of self. Lacan said that the image represents the "Ideal I." During the mirror stage, the baby realizes for the first time that his or her body has a complete form by looking in the mirror. It is the image that gives him/her a sense of wholeness. This theory has been used to prove how fictional characters affect our psychology as well as help us to build our personalities.

Chapter3 – Author's Life & Writing

i) Personal Life

Neil Richard Gaiman is an author who writes science fiction, fantasy story, short story novels, comic audio theatre and film. He was born in 10th November 1960 in Southern England town called Portchester. He belongs from a Polish-Jewish family origin. Neil Gaiman's father David Bernard Gaiman worked in their family grocery store and his mother Sheila Gaiman was a pharmacist. Neil Gaiman's family moved to West Sussex after he was born. Gaiman received his education at a number of Church of England schools. He started reading at the age of four and became an addicted reader. He got married to his first wife Mary McGrath in 1985. He had three children, Michael, Holly and Madeleine from this marriage. He moved to the United States in 1993. In 2009 in an AIDS fund raising event he met his second wife, Amanda Palmer. They got married in the year 2011.

ii) Writing Style

Neil Gaiman writes in a variety of styles for a wide range of age groups. He has written everything from children's picture books to children's novels, young adult novels, adult novels, fantasy novels, and non-fiction literature. Therefore, categorizing his writing style by genre or theme is quite difficult. However, if we must categorize him as a writer, he is a fantasy author. His writings are all beautifully written, without becoming too dense or difficult to read. Neil Gaiman is a fantasy author who is known for his creativity. He builds up an atmosphere and setting so well that his books feel immersive and magical. He has a way of weaving stories together that makes his writing seem like fairy-tale. Regardless the reader from any age group will feel as if they are being transported into a wonderful realm while reading Gaiman. Another strength of Gaiman's writing is his ability to turn traditional narrative and tropes the way he

wants. Whether the book is a non-fiction, a fairy-tale retelling or whether this is his own fantasy world, there are lots of trope subversion with exploration.

Another quality of writing that makes him stand out is humor. Gaiman is able to perfectly balance humor and sincerity in his writing. The way he writes brings life to the story. He chooses his words very carefully depending on which tone he wants to write. Even though each scene has its own mood and setting, the overall tone and mood of the book remain consistent. In short, Gaiman is a chameleon, adapting his writing style to the story he is telling.

Most of Gaiman's characters are driven for something and the plot and the story revolves around on what the characters say and do. His writing concerns young girls and boys who are wanting to grow up or adults who are looking for fulfillment in life. Gaiman's villains are horrific. They serve as a reminder that goodness can triumph over evil no matter how strong it is. The hero is able to confront the villains and grows stronger (physically and mentally) in the process.

Gaiman's first work, *Neverwhere*, introduced a lot of people to his writing style. It is dark and ominous. It is an urban fantasy that explores themes of loneliness, friendship, and love, all of which blend together. It includes mundane elements of real life that we all experience with magnificent imaginative worlds that are described in fine detail. He uses very simple descriptions and witty funny plays on words to capture people's attention and give them a real sense of the world that he is trying to create. Neil Gaiman's work is capable of balancing humor with serious topics or situations, as well as significant character development. Also to do so in a playful manner that makes his reader smile at the absurdity of our existence. *American God* and *Anansi Boys* are good examples for that.

Neil Gaiman also writes some wonderful children's books. His children provided the majority of his writing inspiration for his children's books. Gaiman writes for adults as if they were children, and he writes for children as if they were adults. That is a distillation of what makes his writing so magical. He writes for children from the perspective of an adult, and he does not speak down to them. He treats children the same way he treats adults. According to him, children need to be told things in a more concise and straightforward manner. *The Graveyard Book* is a middle grade novel that is appropriate for all ages. The story is both touching and amusing. It is a beautiful story about a boy growing up in a cemetery that exemplifies Neil Gaiman's creative imagination and fantastic way of seeing the world, which resonates with youngsters without being patronizing. The story flows as if Gaiman remembers what it was like to be a child. He writes in such a way that people have forgotten what it was like to be a child. A good example of this is *The Ocean at the End of the Lane*. It is an adult fiction. However, the majority of the book takes place is centered around the perspective of a child which bring a portion of reader's childhood. It puts us, the adults, in the mind of a child in a way that we have forgotten, but as soon as we start reading we remember every detail. It is an unnerving, horrific, supernatural story that grabs readers' attention right away. His characters are so well-crafted that readers do not even realize they are in love with them until they are halfway through the novel and the character is in danger. As his stories do not follow any particular structure, it is easier for young readers to follow the storylines.

Neil Gaiman's writing style is constantly changing. With every new book, he creates a new atmosphere and fits his writing style into it. Every character he writes is unforgettable. Every description of the story's setting is profoundly meaningful and it ties his words together with his existential thought. Through his story, he always communicates a moral, a message, a teaching

or a criticism. Every single character evokes an emotional response from the reader. His work is a perfect blend of relatable concepts, scenarios, and experiences, as well as the farthest, most distant thoughts, feelings, memories, and philosophy.

Chapter 4

i) Gaiman's Stories for Emotional Development

Stories play a very important role in children's life. The books they read help them to develop their personalities as the stories expose them to a variety of different characters and experiences. They become friends with the characters in the story. Children are transported to another world through stories. It allows them to relax and find newer ways to connect creatively. By reading and connecting with the characters, they get a taste of adventure, fear, and happiness. Stories help to develop and improve their imagination by adding more layers and dimensions. It makes them confident about achieving anything they want. The beauty of storytelling is that it can be both immensely realistic and mystical. It helps children to comprehend and accept their own emotions.

Neil Gaiman's *Coraline* and *The Graveyard Book* are the perfect combinations of horror and humor. Unlike many traditional folklores that scare children into behaving better, his stories do not create unnecessary fear in children. In fact, they give empower children by making them confident to fight in any situation and not give up under any circumstances. In the journal article titled "Neil Gaiman's Ghost Children", Dominik Becher said that "Bettelheim's *The Uses of Enchantment* (1976) has argued that especially the dark symbolism of fairy tales and this includes ghosts – has psychologically positive and necessary functions for the mental development of children " (Becher, 92). Gaiman's writing gives children a sense of safety and comfort. It also allows them to form a bond with the character and adopt many of their positive qualities. It helps them to see how to make the best decision possible, even if the odds are stacked against them.

ii) “Coraline”, a Comforting Character

Both the characters Coraline and Bod were designed based on Gaiman’s two children Holly and Michel. Gaiman started writing these two stories so that his children can read and take comfort from the stories. Coraline is the only child of her parents. Despite the fact that both of her parents worked from home, they never had time for Coraline. She was always on her own, exploring the area around her house. She returned home only to eat her lunch and dinner. There was nothing to do in the house for her. The days when she could not go outside, her parents were unconcerned about her and only focused on their own work.

Most children feel lonely these days because both of their parents’ work and are unable to provide them with the attention they require from their parents. Because of this, some children begin to distance themselves from their parents and isolate themselves. Despite her loneliness, Coraline knows that her parents are busy and working. Considering their inability to give her time, she recognizes that her parents love her. Many children will benefit from this understanding as they will learn that their parents still love and care for them even if they are unable to provide them with proper attention. This gives hope to children who suffer silently inside for their parents’ love and attention.

Coraline and her neighbours had a great relationship. Coraline was adored by the old ladies, Miss Spink and Forcible, as well as the strange old man Mr. Bobo. They had warned her about the risk ahead of time. Coraline was given the stone with the hole by Miss Spink and Forcible, which served as a protection charm for her. Miss Spink passed Coraline the stone and said “It might help, they’re good for bad things sometimes” (Gaiman, 06). Coraline always followed their advice, which ultimately helped her in escaping the world of the other mother. Coraline was never forced to accept Miss Forcible's or Miss Spink's beliefs. They always give her advice

without forcing it on her. Their attitude towards Coraline is always compassionate, caring, and kind. As a result, Coraline respects and listens to them. Most of the children do not want to listen to their elders. This can be another lesson for the children, that listening and respecting their elders is important and can help them solve many problems because they are more knowledgeable about the world because of their experiences. Parents can also learn how to approach children without forcing their beliefs on them.

Coraline uses the key to open the door to the other mother's world because she was bored. However, while doing so she realized, she was doing something wrong. "She knew she was doing something wrong" (Gaiman, 10). When Coraline first time goes to the other mother's world, she stays very calm and observes the situation. She comes to know that the cats can talk, rats are friends of the other mother and chocolates are good for dogs. She watches Miss Spink's and Forcible shows and wins a box of chocolate which she shares with the dogs in the theatre. She realizes her other parents are more attentive and supportive of her. They say goodbye standing at the front gate when she goes out to explore. When she comes home her other parents are waiting outside to welcome her. They ask her about her expedition and cook for her. They offer her to stay there forever. Rather than getting greedy, Coraline chooses to come back to her real world. It happens because of what Freud called the "Id". "Id" contains all the urges and impulses. "Id" is not affected by reality or logic. "Id" is also responsible for survival instinct. Therefore, although the other mother and the other world were very impressive to Coraline, she chose to come back.

Although her parents never show interest in her life, she still remembers the little details about them. She remembers how her father got thirty-nine bee strings to save her. Therefore, she could not abandon her parents. It shows children to consider different factors before coming to a

conclusion about anything. Even though she is scared, she faces her fear and goes back to the other mother's world to rescue her parents. She says, "When you're scared but you still do it anyway, that's brave". After going back to the other mother's world again, she confronts the other mother directly by saying "You don't frighten me. I want my parents back." When the other mother lies about Coraline's parents abandoning her. She does not believe the other mother and believes in herself. She knows challenging other mother to a game is risky. She may lose her life and other mother will never play fair. Yet, she believes in her ability even in this diverse difficult situation.

Coraline knows the rats are the spies of the other mother. Nonetheless, when the cat tortures the rat she asks to stop. Even if they were her enemy she shows mercy. It shows her immense capability of empathy. Freud's concept of "ego" works here. Ego mediates between id and super ego. It is part of the conscious personality. Ego helps decide how to behave keeping in mind social rules and manners. So, Coraline's conscious personality shows mercy to an animal even though it is her enemy.

The other mother locks her behind the mirror where she encounters previous children's souls which the other mother had taken. They all tell her how scary the other mother is and Coraline does not have a chance to win against her. They say, "Flee, while you still have air in your lungs and blood in your veins and warmth in your heart." They tell Coraline to leave her parents behind and only worry about herself. However, Coraline is a very strong headed-determined girl and she refuses to leave her parents behind. Super ego also works here and incorporates the values and morals of society. Coraline's super ego does not allow her to abandon her parents even though they never really cared about her. Her morality does not let her leave her parents in danger. So, she says, "I'm not running away. She has my parents and I have to get them back."

She tricks her other mother and convinces her to play games with her. She uses her ability to explore and suggests they should play a “finding-things game”. Coraline was already having trouble finding her parents, but she could not say no when the voices trapped in the mirror asked her to help them recover their souls as well. She remembers the information she received from the dark voices in the mirror and begins searching for their souls accordingly.

Throughout the quest, Coraline is very scared but she does not give up. “Coraline had never been so scared, but still she walked forward.” Her ego tells her not to get scared. Ego provides the power of rational problem solving. Therefore, she collects all the souls that were taken by the other mother. Her other mother tries to manipulate her one last time by saying, “You will go home. You’ll be bored. You’ll be ignored.” She added, “If you stay here, you can have whatever you want.” Coraline refuses to have everything this way. She says that she does not want everything she wanted. It means nothing to her if she receives everything she wants without having to work for it. She would rather work for it and earn it. She wants the feeling of achievement. It takes “learning something, doing something she had not known how to do before.” She thinks calmly and figures out where her other mother trapped her parents. She provokes her other mother and let her believe that Coraline has no clue about where her parents are. Coraline successfully achieves the key of the passageway of her world and is able to get back to her world.

After going back to her real world she realizes her parent’s value even more. However, the other mother keeps following her as shadow. She cleverly plotted a plan and finally got rid of the other mother forever. This part will make children realize it is possible for them to win against the strong if they think rationally.

iii) Bod between Living and Dead

Nobody Owens is the main character of *The Graveyard Book*. One night when he was merely a year old, a man named Jack killed his whole family. The baby crawled his way to a graveyard close to his house. To protect him from the man Jack, the inhabitants of graveyards take him under their protection. Mr. and Mrs. Owens become his parents, and Silas, who can travel between the living and the dead, becomes his guardian. The residents of the graveyard grant Bod "Freedom of The Graveyard". The boy starts to grow up there and with time Bod becomes curious about the world outside. He wants to live with people who are "Breathing". Nevertheless, with every interaction with the outside world, he realized that the graveyard is his home. He learns many things in 15 years. After that, he starts losing his ability to see the dead. He leaves the graveyard to see the whole world and only to return to the graveyard permanently after he lived a full life.

This is a coming of age story. It follows Bod's life from his childhood to his adulthood and shows how he becomes a mature person. From his early childhood, Bod is very smart. The first time he meets a real human being, Scarlett, he realizes they both belong to two different worlds. He accepts this fact without being upset. He takes Scarlett inside a tomb and there they see a very scary ghost, Indigo man. Bod very cleverly handles the situation by saying that Indigo man is imaginary so that Indigo man does not hurt them. When Ghouls take Bod he remembers his lessons taught by Miss Lupescu and asks for help from the Night-gaunts "Bod took a deep breath, and shouted, just as Miss Lupescu had taught him" (Gaiman, 38). Even in the fear he does not lose his cool and comes out of dangerous situations. This attitude of Bod gives a message that we may experience challenges in life, but maintaining our calmness and sense of reasoning will help us solve many of them. Even in the graveyard, Bod gets adequate education

from the inhabitants of the graveyard. He always completes his lessons and is very eager to learn new things. Bod is a child with a lot of empathy. Rather than believing what everyone told him, he judges everyone based on his actual interactions with them. For example, everyone warned him to stay away from Liza, the witch. Nonetheless, he meets her and, after learning her story, he does everything he can to make Liza happy which no one ever did for her. It will help a child reader to keep in mind that individuality is not a bad thing. They can listen to others opinions about something and still keep their opinion about a matter. Liza says, "It is the first nice thing anyone's done for me in five hundred years" (Gaiman, 59). This kind of empathy can create peace among people. Bod is not scared of death. He knows if he goes out of the graveyard, he can get killed by Jack. Yet he wants to study in school and learn new things. It is because of id. "Id" encourages people to do things that are forbidden to fulfil their own desire. So, even though being in school is a very dangerous as well as an adverse situation for him. He still gets out of his comfort zone to know about the way of the world.

In school he watches Nick and Mo bullying other kids and asking for money from them. He was instructed by his guardian, Silas to keep a very low profile and not to draw attention to himself. However, after seeing Nick and Mo bullying and exploiting students, he could not stay quiet. First, he approaches Paul and asks him to say no to Nick and Mo's demands. He advises Paul to let the police and school authorities know if needed. Paul follows Bod's advice and soon the rest of the class also says no to Nick and Mo's bullying. When Nick and Mo try to get back to Bod, he very cleverly brings them to a near cemetery and scares them away. Bod says, "I brought you here to give you a choice." Nick says. "You didn't bring us here." "I wanted you here. I came here. You followed me. Same thing" says Bod (Gaiman, 83). Mo tries to hurt him with her words by saying, "You're weird, you don't even have any friends" (Gaiman, 85). But to

Bod it is okay to not have friends. To him, school is a place to learn and even if one has no friends that do not make them weird. "I didn't come here for friends; I came here to learn." Bod said truthfully (Gaiman, 85). He faced many problems protesting against those bullies but he made sure that they never bullied anyone ever again.

Children are allowed to make mistakes but acknowledging their mistakes is what makes them a better person. Bod always admits his mistakes and apologizes which helps him in his character development. "I was wrong, wasn't I? I was selfish" says Bod (Gaiman, 93). Another quality of Bod is, he always trusts his parents and guardian. He understands that they only want the best for him. He often asks questions to Silas about the man Jack, who murdered his family. Silas never tells Bod anything about Jack, but instead of becoming upset or angry, he remains patient and trusts that everything Silas does is for his own good. When Bod is in any dilemma, he asks for advice from his parents or any elderly person of the graveyard. "Master Trot? Might I ask for your advice?" says Bod (Gaiman, 102). In his heart, he always knows nobody can do anything to him as long as he is in the graveyard. The people of the graveyard are his family and they will do anything to protect him. "This is my home; I can do things in here." (Gaiman, 115).

In the final chapter, Bod very cleverly gets rid of his enemies (the man Jack and his companion). He has strong moralities. Therefore, he does not kill any of them. Instead, he traps them in different places using his brain. He leaves the graveyard and goes on a quest to see the world and experience everything he can, even if it means leaving his home.

The other mother or Jack was no match for determined and brave children like Coraline and Bod. These characters portray how to solve problems in any given situation. They teach to differentiate between right and wrong. Reading these characters' children can learn morality and the ability to focus, concentration, social skills and communication skills. When they will see

children their same age is facing adversity, it will make them psychologically strong. They will relate to these characters.

The founder of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud says that human minds are like iceberg. The top of the iceberg is the conscious part of the human brain. The part that lies underneath represents the subconscious part of the human brain. Mostly we are not aware of these subconscious thoughts but it affects our behaviour. It can also play an important part in shaping our personality. Freud introduced a term called “repression” which works as a defence mechanism for humans. Through repression human brain blocks all the unpleasant memories and thoughts from the conscious mind. People tend to forget these memories. Still, these memories can have effect on one’s personality. Similarly, good memories and lessons stay with people for a long time. It helps to shape their personalities. So, when children will read these books like *Coraline* and *The Graveyard Book*, it will stay as a good memory with many lessons. It will help them to make the right choice in future.

French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan talks about the crucial stages of growing up. He talks about the mirror stage where children identify themselves by looking at the mirror (symbolic or real). Jacques Lacan theorizes that before a child can even walk or talk, they develop self-awareness by glancing at themselves in the mirror. At this moment, the child experiences the notion of an ideal ego, the reflection of which they can receive from others, in this case, the other is the mirror. The movies we watch or the book we read, look on to propose formative moment of recognition in the mirror image. The children who will read the books will see themselves in the character of Coraline or Bod. These books will give them a chance to adapt qualities from the characters which will help them in real life. It will also help children in connecting with people

and empathizing with others' situations like Coraline empathizes with the rats and Bod empathizes for Liza. They will have a better understanding of the world.

iv) Effects of Gaiman's Writing on Children

Alison Halsall in his article "Visualizing the Gothic in Neil Gaiman's "The Graveyard Book" and Its Illustrated Adaptations" said that Gaiman's story is much more concerned with the fundamental ideals of kindness, humanity, and love than with the gothic's lurid and taboo. Despite the fact that Gaiman deals with tragic themes (death, abandonment, betrayal), requiring the reader to confront the hard realities of life. The Gothic setting and atmosphere comfort rather than shatter a young reader. Gaiman's own take on the Gothic, disturbing the once-terrifying world of ghosts and goblins and making it into a safe haven for the child protagonist and the reader (Halsall, 126). The Gothic children's literature serves distinctly psychological functions, according to critic Michael Howarth. Howarth thinks that the Gothic genre allows young readers to process conflicting feelings about themselves and the world around them (Howarth, 2). Gaiman reinvents the Gothic, using the thrills and horrors that popular Gothic evokes in readers because of his interest in a child's developmental and psychological progress. Coraline's facing her predatory other-mother is a perfect example of the Gothic, a terrifyingly pleasant prison in which Coraline cleverly outmaneuvers her own anxieties and insecurities. Consequently, in Gaiman's novels, the protagonists' struggles to develop agency over their own psyches. Gaiman utilizes the Gothic, emphasizing on the child's complex psychology while appealing to a young reader's predisposition for hauntings and nightmares (Halsall, 124).

Chapter 5 - Gothic Elements in Gaiman

i) Characters

Both *Coraline* and *The Graveyard Book* are categorized as "Children's Gothic," a relatively new genre in children's literature for addressing identity conflicts, aspects of horror, and allegorical interpretations of contemporary cultural debates (Kamalini, 04). Gaiman broke the stereotype by writing uncanny characters like "The cat" and graveyard inhabitants. Horror fiction tries to evoke feelings of terror, horror, and unease in the reader. Fear is engendered not only by the plot and scene, but also by the character. Characters in the form of monsters would be used to create a fearful atmosphere. Classical monsters like Dracula, Frankenstein, werewolves, Dr. Jekyll, and other horrific creatures were developed to instill fear in people. Those monsters mentioned were designed to shock the reader, with their appearances and with their roles. These characters were rejected by society. They were never written as the mainstream part of society. In the early 1800's, gothic literature became the most popular in England. Vampires, werewolves, and Dracula were the monsters written during the romantic era. Not only in their appearances, but also in their roles, they were portrayed as dangerous, powerful, enticing, and malevolent. The concept of Ghoul originated in Arabic literature. It carries the Gothic era's theme of horror and fear. The physical characteristics of these monsters were dangerous as well. As we know, stereotypes are broken in postmodern writing. Modern monsters are shown in a variety of ways. Instead of being frightening and intimidating, they are represented as kind, attractive, and appears to be just like any other human being (Anisa, 1-2).

Coraline's other mother looks like Coraline's mother. There is no monstrous feature. Rather she looks like a human. Except for the button eyes, she doesn't have a scary appearance. Coraline's other mother is a monster, but her other father is not quite so bad. He attempts to

alert Coraline of the other mother's scheme. In the end, he is punished for telling Coraline too much, and he is transformed into a pallid and swollen grub-like creature. Even then, he tells Coraline to flee and resists attacking her. The other father said, "Run, child. Leave this place. She wants me to hurt you, to keep you here forever...She is pushing me so hard to hurt you." When the other mother traps Coraline in the mirror, the souls of the other three children try to help her by providing whatever information they have. Lastly, when Coraline was running away from the other mother through the dark hall she had no strength. Then the ghosts helped her. "Ghost-hands lent her strength that she no longer possessed" (Gaiman, Coraline). None of the dead people in *The Graveyard Book* appears to be frightening. They are extremely kind. They take an infant child into their care and keep him safe till the danger has passed. They look after him as if he is their own child. They provided him with a good education and food. He is never scared by them. Even the witch who wreaks havoc on everyone comes to Bod's rescue. The graveyard ghost has no desire to confine Bod to the graveyard. Rather, they let him experience the world as soon as he is capable of taking care of himself. The main "monster" of the novel was Jack, who was a human and the ghost are the one trying to protect Bod. The monsters that used to have a bad and evil stereotype changed their roles to be good, angelic, loving with a comedic portrayal in Neil Gaiman's novel.

ii) [Setting of the Novels](#)

As the monsters of the novels are not portrayed as gruesome, the settings of the novels were quite scary. The story takes place in an apartment. Previously, gothic stories used to take place in big mansions. In modern day the setting changed into apartment. Coraline's own room is always dark and slight light came from the hall which gave her room a gothic vibe. The hallway between the two worlds is dark and cold with a musty smell where strange voices whispers and distant

winds howl which gave readers the creep. The sky in the other world is always luminous grey. The Surroundings of the house were full of mist as if she was walking into nothing. “For a moment she wondered if she might have gone blind, but no, she could see herself, plain as day. There was no ground beneath her feet just a misty, milky whiteness.” The mirror Coraline was confined was cold and full of spider webs. These spider webs symbolized her other mother’s way of trapping Coraline in her world just like a spider sets webs and waits for its prey to become ensnared. When Coraline challenges her other mother to a game, the world starts to crumble. Everything the other mother made turns into grey. All the people turns turned into greyish-white creature and they were tapped into the wall. The environment becomes dusty and damp. Even the house “continuing to change, becoming less distinct, and flatter out, even as she raced down the stairs.” Finally, Coraline puts the other mother’s right hand into the damp and darkness of the well. Old house, secret passage way, mysterious disappearance, parallel world and dark universe that serves the gothic purpose of this story.

The Graveyard Book begins with a murder scene in the middle of the night, with the stench of blood all throughout the house and moonlight shining through the darkness, giving the setting a creepy atmosphere. The half-shone moon on the graveyard with ghosts who have been dead for hundreds of years, at least three hundred ghosts were present when the baby climbed up into the graveyard, setting a gothic mood from the start of the story. Bod grew up surrounded by gravestones, coffins, and skeletons. The graveyard's residents move around in the decaying attire they were buried in and use things left in their tombs. It is the classic Gothic scene of a spooky, haunted graveyard. As the graveyard becomes Bod’s home it becomes a less scary place. When Bod first left the graveyard and went to the market, he was captured by Abanazer Bolger who was planning to hand over Bod to Jack. When Bod was locked in the room it created a suspense

in readers' mind about what will happen next. There are some graves that are dangerous in the graveyard. The grave where the Sleer protects the treasure has a very gothic setting. It is full of darkness, where Indigo man and Sleers are ready to kill anyone that comes inside. Another scary grave was the ghoul grave. Inside the ghoul gate the sky was red like an infecting wound. It was cold and wall inside the ghoul gate was desiccating. Ghouls had strong teeth to crush any bones and sharp tongue to lick bone marrow. When The scene where Bod goes back to his old house to meet Mr. Frost/ Jack is gives a suspense to creates a sense of suspense in the reader. The reader is kept guessing throughout the book about the presence of the mysterious Jack and his purpose to assassinate Bod which makes the story more mysterious.

Chapter 6 - "Coraline", Trapped in Capitalist Vortex

Capitalism is dominating the modern world. Karl Marx is the most famous critic of capitalism. He pointed out many problems of a capitalist society which can be seen in Neil Gaiman's novel *Coraline*. Coraline lives in a capitalist society. Her parents are always busy and are unable to give her proper time. They live in a big old house and Coraline goes to very good school. To effort all these both of her parents need to work all the time. According to Karl Marx work should be the source of someone's greatest joy. However, it is very rare in this modern world. Coraline's parents does not work for joy. Instead, they sit in a room with computer all day to earn money. None of them seem to enjoy their work. Her father cannot even look away from the computer screen when he is working. When Coraline goes to her father's room and says "hello", her father says, "Hello, Coraline", without turn his head around. When Coraline tells him that she is bored, her father says, "Look, here's a piece of paper and pen. Count all the doors and windows...and leave me alone to work." Coraline, her father and her mother are alienated in their own house because they have to work so much. Karl Marx also pointed out this problem that in modern world people suffer from alienation. It is a very common problem in our society which Gaiman pointed out in his writing. Most people have a gap between what they want to accomplish and what they are doing in order to earn money. Although Coraline's parents work from home, they are always busy working in their individual study room. They never even get the time to talk to each other or spend family time together. They are not concerned about what they are contributing to the society. Rather, earning money to lead a good life is their goal. However, in this process of earning money they are not realizing what they are losing.

In a capitalist society workers get paid little and the capitalists get rich. As the workers gets paid little, they need to keep working for them to effort good food, house and education.

Marx believed capitalist system forces everyone to put economic interest in the center of their life and because of that people no longer have deep, honest relationship. It makes people value materialistic things over people and feelings. In *Coraline* they also do not value their family relationship. Coraline does not have any siblings or friends her age. She has to spend her time with miss Spink and Forcible. Therefore, she roams around alone exploring the surroundings of her house. Her parents do not really care where she goes as long as Coraline comes back for dinner. It is very clear that making money is more important for them, than spending time with their children. If Coraline stays in home she always gets bored as she has no one to talk to. Therefore, she always asks her parents “What should I do?” Her mother suggests her to “Read a book. Watch video. Play with your toys. I do not mind what you do as long as you don’t make a mess” (Coraline, Gaiman). Capitalism teaches people to be anxious, competitive and obedient. The days when Coraline cannot go outside, her parents remain unconcerned about her and only focused on their own work. Her parents are unable to understand that children remain very curious to spend time with their parents. They want their parents’ attention more than any luxurious house, expensive food or dress. Gaiman through this writing provides readers’ a view of children’s psychological condition.

Coraline never has any friends. She is always spending time on her own or spends time with elderly ladies, miss Spink and Forcible. In a capitalist society in this era people are too busy running after money or fixing their career from a very early age. People do not go to their neighbors’ house to spend time. The social connect like before does not really exist in modern society. In the process of making money people often forget to spend time doing what they really like, to make friends or socialize. People are being alienated. Through *Coraline*, Gaiman successfully shows this is alienation of modern capitalist society. Although Coraline’s parents

are always busy, she never gets upset about not spending time with her parents. An eleven years old has to accept that her parents work is more important. So, she should not bother them while they are working, even if it means she will be alone and wandering aimlessly. This is how much she is absorbed by the idealism of capitalist society. Coraline, her father and her mother are trapped in the loop of this capitalist society.

Chapter 7- Bildungsroman and *The Graveyard Book*

The Bildungsroman is a literary genre that centers around the protagonist's psychological and moral development from childhood to adulthood, with a strong focus on character development. *The Graveyard Book* is a journey of Bod's growing up from childhood to adulthood. In the beginning of the novel Bod is only a year old. He gets adopted by Mr. Owens and Mrs. Owen. In the first chapter Gaiman shows how Bod as a baby behaves. He starts crying when he gets hungry or tired. "The infant looked up at him and then, hungry or tired or simply missing his home, his family, his world, he screws up his tiny face and began to cry" (Gaiman, 13). When Bod eat things, he spills food all over him. This shows Bod's naivety and innocence as a child. In the next chapter, Bod becomes a little bit older. He is a five years old, who is obedient to his parents and guardian. He starts asking question why he is not allowed to go outside and adults tries their best to answer his questions. Bod gets education about what he can or cannot do. Silas even brought books for him and teaches Bod the alphabets. He meets Scarlett, a human from outside graveyard for the first time and gets to know more about the outside world. "She would tell him stories that she had been read or learned, and sometimes she would tell him about world outside, about cars and buses, television and aeroplanes" (Gaiman, 22). Through her Bod is gaining knowledge about the outside world little by little.

In chapter three Bod is six years old and gets his education from Miss Lupescu. He has rebelling tendency. He protests about why Silas was leaving him. He does not want to study with miss Lupescu. He learns about different types of people in the world. From a naïve child, he is becoming someone with lots of experience and learning. When Bod is eight years old, he meets the witch Liza Hempstock. For the first time, Bod leaves the graveyard and enters the real world to make a headstone for Liza's grave. He tries to sell a brooch but is captured by the buyer. Bod

ends up getting locked up in a room by Abanazer Bolger. However, Liza helps Bod to get out from there. This helps Bod from having a false view of the world to having a more realistic view of the world. At the age of ten Bod learns about his family's murder and gets warned by Silas that if he goes outside graveyard, he will also get murdered. Still, Bod does not listen to Silas and wants go to school. He faces bullies in school and confronts them. Nonetheless, he had to leave school because everyone starts focusing on him and where he comes from. This breaks Bod's idealistic vision of life outside graveyard. With this incident Bod has a transition from idealism to reality. At the age of fourteen he is taller than his mother. He meets Scarlett again. Yet he is not tempted to go outside graveyard. "He misses the world beyond the graveyard gates, but he knew it was not safe out there. Not yet. The graveyard was his domain" (Gaiman, 101). It proves Bod became mature, not only physically but also mentally. He understands his parents wants the best for him. He also understands that it is really dangerous for him to go outside graveyard for his own good.

Bod meets the murderer Jack and he brings them to the graveyard. He feels empower in the graveyard. He knows this is his home and nobody knows better about this place than him. He traps Jack into a grave and leaves others inside the ghoull gate. Bod does not kill anyone to take his revenge. When Scarlett asks him that if he killed them, Bod says, "Of course not. This is my home. Why would I want them hanging around here for the rest of time?" (Gaiman, 126). It shows Bod's transitioning from immaturity to making more adult actions and decisions. At the age of fifteen, Silas decides that Bod is ready to live in the outside world. This is point of Bod's life where he has to take a life-changing decision. Bod agrees with Silas and says that he wants to see the world. By now he is a full grown adult who can takes his own decision. He overcame all of his problems with many struggles and lessons. He has grown as a person because of these

problem he faced. At the age of fifteen he has his own morals, values and worldview. All the incidents in each chapter makes him ready to face the outside world alone when he is a grown up. Gaiman layered each chapter beautifully which shows Bod's growth. Each chapter has its own story, at the same time adds elements to Bod's personality. Gaiman mainly focuses on Bod's personal growth and self-realization. He shows how Bod learns to balance his life in graveyard as a living human. Bod's journey begins in childhood and ends with adulthood maturity.

Chapter 8 - Conclusion

Our favorite stories and characters teach us things that we remember for the rest of our lives. It encourages us to confront the challenges of life. It is reassuring to know that we are not alone in our struggles. There are those who are going through the same difficulties as us, which gives us hope. Gothic stories began to gain popularity in children's literature, relying on children's natural anxieties and aspirations. Coraline and Bod's story is a stunning blend of terror, humor, and bravery. These stories teach us the importance of family. Neil Gaiman contributes to this new genre of children's gothic stories which is taking gothic stories to a new level. Using *Coraline* and *The Graveyard Book* with Lacan's and Freud's theory, this study looked into how Gaiman's writing helps children grow psychologically and have a better perspective of the world.

Gaiman violates the romantic era's gothic style of writing. These stories are made even more fascinating by the postmodern writing style, which includes black humor, wordplay, and sarcasm. Previously, characters such as vampires, Dracula, and ghosts were never regarded as members of society. They were always shown as an adversary who would cause harm to humans. These characters are now allowed to be a part of society and an ally of the protagonist in postmodern fiction. Such works indicate that not all ghosts are nasty or evil. If there is evil, there must also be good.

By the end of the story, Coraline and Bod have matured. Coraline matures psychologically, and Bod becomes ready to face the world alone. Both of them had to make big decisions, which helped them mature. In these texts, Gaiman's years of expertise writing comics are evident. *The Wolves in the Walls*, another Gaiman work, likewise deals with similar concerns. The battle between belief and knowledge is explored in this novel, as well as how we learn to accept certain 'truths' as fact which is another good book for children to read.

To conclude, Neil Gaiman with his interview with *TheGuardian* once said,

There are no bad authors for children, that children like and want to read and seek out, because every child is different. They can find the stories they need to, and they bring themselves to stories... What fiction does is to build empathy. When you watch TV or see a film, you are looking at things happening to other people...using your imagination, create a world and people it and look out through other eyes. You get to feel things, visit places and worlds you would never otherwise know. You learn that everyone else out there is a me, as well. You're being someone else, and when you return to your own world, you're going to be slightly changed (The Gaurdian).

Neil Gaiman's writing, though moored in reality, provides an escape from reality. It motivates readers to pursue their dreams and gives them hope that they will come true. Gaiman's work has a tremendous psychological influence on both children and adults, allowing them to see themselves but also better through the characters. His stories open a door to transport readers to a world where they feel they are in charge and can accomplish anything. They feel empowered and that is perhaps the real magic of Gaiman's magical worlds.

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