Comparison Of Alice’s Adventures In Wonderland And Coraline

Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland (AAiW) is a novel written by Lewis Carroll. It tells a story of a young girl named Alice who falls down a rabbit hole, soon discovering a fantasy world populated by peculiar, anthropomorphic creatures. On the other hand, Coraline is a film directed by Henry Selick, based upon an adventurous girl named Coraline who uncovers her ideal universe, unaware of its dark and sinister secret. Whilst Carroll reveals Alice’s growth of maturity through the transition from youth, Selick demonstrates gratefulness in overcoming self-deception through Coraline. Carroll characterises his protagonist to possess the trait of curiosity that promotes childhood innocence, yet Selick exposes a self-centred protagonist to be overly unappreciative of her settings. Both AAiW and Coraline utilise a range of language and stylistic techniques to show Alice and Coraline’s own development of self-perception and sincerity as they travel into foreign worlds.

Although the two texts are from contrasting genres, Carroll and Selick both explore the concept of self-discovery of their protagonists. Carroll was a well-known children’s classics author producing works such as the ‘Alice in Wonderland’ fantasy fiction series, in 1865. He spoke with only basic vocabulary, similar level to a child due to his bad stammer. As a result, it was easier for Carroll to talk to children, which undoubtedly inspired his best-known writings. Selick, however, is a director, producer, and writer who is best known for directing stop-motion animation films. Based on Neil Gaiman’s 2002 novel, Selick recreated dark fantasy film, Coraline, in 2009. The two texts have a target audience of young children, although; AAiW takes place in a magical fantasy world. Yet, Coraline appears with a horror-like atmosphere where the film elicits tingles of unease and tremors of spookiness. Throughout AAiW, Alice experiences ‘growing up’, physically, but also coming to understand the world of adulthood and how it differs from a child's expectation. Alternatively, Coraline must ‘be careful for what she wishes for’, as requesting for something may not necessarily imply her true desires and needs. In the social context of an unknown world, it is evident that Carroll and Selick used a similar plot of fantasy creations but instead appealed to their diverse audiences.

Both Carroll and Selick used characterisation to show Alice and Coraline’s first exposure to their unknown worlds. Alice is characterised as being an inquisitive seven-year-old girl. When she spots a rabbit wearing a waistcoat and exclaiming “Oh dear, oh dear! I shall be late”, Alice proceeds to sprint after it and chase the rabbit down his rabbit hole. This begins her journey into Wonderland. ‘A rabbit hole’ can be seen as a metaphor for something that transports someone into a wonderfully (or troublingly) situation. In this section of the novel, the curiosity and juvenile behaviour of Alice is shown to the audience. These traits are exemplified when Alice chases the rabbit without consideration of the consequences, leading her to embark on her adventure into Wonderland. Similarly, Coraline is an 11-year-old girl who is characterised to feel the need to ‘belong’. Selick portrays her parents to neglect her, which results in Coraline feeling lonely. This drives Coraline in becoming reckless and bored, leaving her to explore on her own. Later that night, Coraline is awaken by a squeaking mouse who guides her to discover an unusual, small door. In this scene, Coraline appears to be desperate to explore something exciting, which elicits her to open the door and impulsively continues along the path to the Other World. Characterisation of Coraline establishes to the audience that she emotionally overwhelmed by

the lack of interest she is receiving in the real world. Therefore, affecting her ability to think and act rationally. Distinctly, both protagonists carry traits of curiosity that results in their exposure to the alternative worlds. Revealing Alice and Coraline's youth-like behaviour through their discovery of the unknown worlds, relates to the awakening of a new reality for the two protagonists.

Together, both authors use foreshadowing to indicate to the audience that the beginning of Alice and Coraline's journey into the unknown world is near. In the beginning, Alice's fall down the rabbit hole foreshadows her curiosity and personality, as her dialogue is mainly juvenile and random. For example, Alice remarks to be falling through the Earth and landing in "Australia or New Zealand". This follows the concept of 'growing up'; as Alice's exaggerated dialogue is a reminder to the audience of her childish-like behaviour. With the use of foreshadowing, Alice's youth is emphasised to the audience through her dialogue, which prepares for the development of her maturation. Moreover, the very first scene of Coraline shows a pair of eerie metallic hands transforming an old doll into a doll with an identical appearance to Coraline. These menacing hands belong to the Other Mother, which foreshadows her attempts to manipulate Coraline's self-conscious and expectations of a perfect life. Accordingly, Coraline then later despises the real world and envies the Other World. The small preview of the Other Mother in the opening scene foreshadows to the audience that Coraline's behaviour is about to be influenced by the Other World. Therefore, foreshadowing is incorporated within the plots of two texts, accentuating Alice and Coraline's encounter of the unfamiliar domains. As a result, the audience can compare similarities and differences that arise from two worlds of the protagonists.

Carroll and Selick both emphasise the result of Alice and Coraline's growth when travelling within their different domains by using symbolism. The extremely beautiful garden of Wonderland serves as a symbol to convey Alice's desires to hold onto her feelings of childlike innocence that she must vacate as she matures. During her adventures in Wonderland, Alice is constantly asked to prove what she knows and often remarks the lessons she has learnt to others she meets along the way. This displays Alice's progressive knowledge, where new experiences becomes a learning lesson for her, suggesting a growth of development. Alternatively, the Other Mother become a very predominate character within Coraline, essentially, indicating that Coraline is present in the Other World. Additionally, when Coraline is asked by the Other Mother to have her "eyes sewed", she abruptly becomes frightened. As Coraline constantly refuses her offer, the Other Mother angers in frustration and transforms into this spider-like figure; attempting to eat Coraline. This assists Coraline into realising that the Other World is not so perfect, where she is desperate to have everything to back normal, such as reverting to the real world. Furthermore, her wishes for the 'perfect' life is not what she truly desires and changes her mindset to appreciating her real world. Conclusively, both Alice and Coraline are faced with symbolic images and characters along their journey, which results in their transforming identities. Throughout the course of the unknown worlds, the two protagonists experience unusual incidents that express a development of growth and a change in state of mind.

The two authors use juxtaposition to highlight the change of Alice's infantile behaviour and display a contrast in Coraline's setting. Alice mentions she becomes "curiouser and curiouser" while exploring Wonderland, as she experiences many changes in size, whether it be as small as a mouse or as big as a giant. Alice's maturation is juxtaposed in these events, which represents the evolution of her childlike persona. The transition from being a child into

adulthood tends to act imprudently on curious impulses, as children are eager to seek out new opportunities in life. This shows as to why Alice continues to explore Wonderland even if she is frighten upon entry. Juxtaposition was utilised through Alice's dialogue and behaviour to ensure that the audience focuses on the comparison of her youth to adulthood. Additionally, Selick created Coraline's real world to juxtapose to the world that the Other Mother creates. The real world is filled with a boring atmosphere, whereas the Other World aspires from Coraline's desires, such as a bright and wondrous realm to explore. Coraline follows the concept of 'be careful for what you wish for', as she soon realises that the Other World is one vast deceit. Therefore, displaying to the audience how Coraline eagerly prefers the Other World; recklessly taking her real world for granted. Through juxtaposition, Carroll emphasises Alice's youth through her behaviour in Wonderland, whereas Selick presents Coraline's ungratefulness through the setting of the Other World. Journeying and overcoming events within alternative universes, this is where the two protagonists progressively evolve their personality and mindset of their real worlds.

AAiW and Coraline incorporate allegories to present the two protagonists and their transformation in life. The allegory of Wonderland is disjointed and nonsensical, just like how a dream can be perceived. However, it is said that dreams can foretell the future, implying that what Alice experiences in Wonderland, resembles her development of maturity. For instance, the Queen of Hearts, ruler of Wonderland, is a character with a foul-temper who is highly narcissistic. She is quick to give death sentences at any slightest personal offense even if she is culpable. During a trial where the Queen is wrongly excusing an individual of stealing, Alice protests against the Queen. Despite the Queen's imitating facade, Alice shows a sense of responsibility; taking action to what is right even if a death sequence was following. The allegory of this event indicates to the audience that Alice has lost her child innocence and finally matured. Additionally, the allegory of colour in Coraline is shown when the dull environment of the real world displays colour after Coraline conquers the Other World along with the Other Mother. This suggests that Coraline's real world incorporates elements of the Other World; gesturing that her real world can possess things on both positive and negative sides. By this, the audience can distinguish that Coraline's perspective on life has changed and thus, finally accepts her reality. Overall, Carroll and Selick used allegories to demonstrate the change of Alice and Coraline's perspectives on their realities. Through the exploration amongst unknown worlds, both protagonists are exposed to multiple episodes of events, in which transforms their mindset on reality and conclude their new identities.

In conclusion, Carroll and Selick both present their two young female protagonists to discover their identities along a journey through strange worlds. Characterisation of Alice and Coraline acquire traits of curiosity, which eventually leads them to discovering their unknown worlds of Wonderland and the Other World. In addition, foreshadowing is used to enhance the first exposure upon Alice and Coraline's entry into their different domains. Within the symbolism of Wonderland and the Other World, the two protagonists proceed to experience unusual circumstances that directs them to understand their identities further. Moreover, juxtaposition was applied to focus on the ultimate change in both Alice's maturity levels and Coraline's gratefulness towards life. Finally, allegory of Wonderland represents a corresponding transformation of Alice's overall surge towards adulthood. Whereas allegory of colour displays Coraline's transition of thoughts from being ungrateful, to being appreciative.