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in České Budějovice

Jihočeská univerzita v Českých Budějovicích

Pedagogická fakulta

Katedra anglistiky

Diplomová práce

Intertextuality in Contemporary Fantastic

Fiction

Intertextualita v současné fantastické

literatuře

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České Budějovice 2022

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Tímto bych velmi ráda poděkovala vedoucí mé diplomové práce PhDr. Alici Sukdolové, Ph.D. za všestrannou pomoc, množství cenných a inspirativních rad, nápadů, doporučení, připomínek a zároveň za obdivuhodnou a neustálou ochotou při konzultacích poskytnutých ke zpracování této práce. Děkuji.

## ANOTACE

Práce se na teoretické rovině a následně prostřednictvím literární analýzy soustředí na prvky intertextuality v současné anglicky psané literatuře. Úvodní kapitola představí charakteristiku pojmu intertextualita podle vybrané odborné literatury (F. de Saussure, W. Benjamin, F. Jameson, G. Allen). Interpretační část práce bude zkoumat díla současných autorů fantastické literatury, kteří vycházejí z tradice anglického gotického a viktoriánského románu. Teoretická východiska intertextuality se práce v literárněvědné analýze pokusí interpretovat v kratších textech N. Gaimana (*A Study in Emerald*) a v románové trilogii Theodory Goss, která v literárních aluzích využívá děl anglických klasiků (M. Shelley, A. C. Doyle, B. Stoker, H. G. Wells, R. L. Stevenson, O. Wilde) a motivů z děl americké literatury (N. Hawthorne). Práce se v závěru pokusí zhodnotit význam děl klasické literatury v kontextu děl současné anglicky psané prózy.

## ABSTRACT

The diploma thesis focuses on the elements of intertextuality in contemporary English literature at the theoretical level and then through literary analysis. The introductory chapter will present the characteristics of the concept of intertextuality according to selected literature (F. de Saussure, W. Benjamin, F. Jameson, G. Allen). The interpretive part of the thesis will examine the works of contemporary authors of fantastic literature, who based their works on the tradition of English Gothic and Victorian novels. The theoretical foundations of intertextuality in literary analysis will be attempted to interpret in the shorter texts of N. Gaiman (*A Study in Emerald*) and in the novel trilogy of Theodora Goss, which exploits works of English classics in literary allusions (M. Shelley, A. C. Doyle, B. Stoker, H. G. Wells, R. L. Stevenson, O. Wilde) and motifs from works of American literature (N. Hawthorne). The diploma thesis also attempts to evaluate the significance of works of classical literature in the context of works of contemporary English prose.

## Contents

INTRODUCTION .....	1
THE ORIGIN OF INTERTEXTUALITY .....	3
Principles of Intertextuality .....	4
Intertextuality in the relation to Postmodernism and the World Wide Web.....	4
EXAMPLE OF AN INTERTEXTUAL TEXT.....	7
A Study in Scarlet.....	7
A Study in Emerald .....	8
Analysis.....	8
Irony.....	10
LITERARY ANALYSIS OF THEODORA GOSS' NOVEL – THE STRANGE CASE OF THE ALCHEMIST'S DAUGHTER .....	12
Chapter I – The Girl in the Mirror .....	12
Summary.....	12
Analysis .....	14
Chapter II – Consulting Mr. Holmes .....	16
Summary.....	16
Analysis .....	17
Chapter III – The Magdalen Society.....	18
Summary.....	18
Analysis .....	19
Chapter IV – A Murder in Whitechapel .....	19
Summary.....	19
Analysis .....	21
Chapter V – The Letter from Italy.....	23
Summary.....	23
Analysis.....	24

Chapter VI – Diana’s Story .....	26
Summary.....	26
Analysis .....	27
Chapter VII – The Poisonous Girl.....	27
Summary.....	27
Analysis .....	29
Chapter VIII – The Man Who Ate Flies .....	29
Summary.....	29
Analysis .....	31
Chapter IX – A Rescue at Night.....	32
Summary.....	32
Analysis .....	33
Chapter X – Beatrice’s Story .....	34
Summary.....	34
Analysis .....	36
Chapter XI – The Marvelous Circus .....	39
Summary.....	39
Analysis .....	41
Chapter XII – Catherine’s Story .....	42
Summary.....	42
Analysis .....	44
Chapter XIII – Return to the Asylum.....	45
Summary.....	45
Chapter XIV – The Twisted Man .....	46
Summary.....	46
Chapter XV – The Streets of Soho .....	47

Summary.....	47
Analysis.....	48
Chapter XVI – Into the Warehouse.....	49
Summary.....	49
Chapter XVII – A Boat on the Thames .....	51
Summary.....	51
Chapter XVIII – Back to Park Terrace.....	52
Summary.....	52
Analysis.....	52
Chapter XIX – Justine’s Story .....	53
Summary.....	53
Analysis.....	54
Chapter XX – The Athena Club .....	56
Summary.....	56
Analysis.....	57
Chapter XXI – The Letter from Austria .....	58
Summary.....	58
Final Analysis and Interpretation .....	58
Intertextuality.....	58
Theme.....	59
Focus on Clothing .....	60
Situational Humour and Irony in Dialogues .....	61
Process of Transformation .....	62
CONCLUSION .....	64
RESUMÉ .....	66
SOURCES.....	68



Primary sources .....	68
Secondary sources.....	68
Electronic sources.....	69

## INTRODUCTION

The aim of my diploma thesis is to focus on the elements of intertextuality in contemporary English literature at the theoretical level and then through literary analysis. The introductory chapter will present the characteristics of the concept of intertextuality according to selected literature such as Ferdinand de Saussure or Graham Allen. The interpretative part of the thesis will concentrate on examining the works of contemporary authors of fantastic literature, whose postulates are based on the tradition of English Gothic and Victorian prose. The theoretical foundations of intertextuality in literary analysis will be attempted to interpret in the shorter texts of Neil Gaiman and in the novel trilogy of Theodora Goss, which uses and combines both works of English classics in literary allusions and motifs from works of American literature. In the final part of the literary analysis there will be an attempt to evaluate the importance of works of classical literature in the context of works of contemporary English prose.

The theoretical approach concerning both the origin and the principles of intertextuality along with an example of intertextual text in the work of Neil Gaiman (*A Study in Emerald*) will be included in the structure of the theoretical part. Subsequently, this text will be compared with the original story written by Arthur Conan Doyle. Additionally, the motif of irony, which plays an essential role in the text, will be mentioned as well.

The thesis will be based on the definition of intertextuality as a “text within another text”, or intertextual literature, in which we are dealing with multiple stories, characters, and references to other books, events, etc., in just one single story. That is what becomes the main theoretical approach to the topic of my thesis. Therefore, at least a moderate knowledge of world literature, its characters and stories, is essential while reading such literature. Besides, the ability to look for various connections and hints in those stories, or to ask yourself questions to solve possible mysteries related and also being able to answer them at least partially is very important as well. On one hand, it might sound very difficult and challenging. On the other hand, just because it may sound difficult and challenging, it does not mean that it is not worth reading.

I am convinced that reading such literature must be fulfilling rather than exhausting. Therefore, this is the reason why I have chosen the topic of intertextuality in literature as the topic of my diploma thesis. Moreover, my personal fondness both for mysteries and for classic world literature in the Romantic period and American Gothic literature, confirmed to me that this topic will be worthwhile and undoubtedly very engaging.

## THE ORIGIN OF INTERTEXTUALITY

The origin of intertextuality and the whole literary theory of that go back to the time of Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913). In his very famous work called *Course in General Linguistics*, published after his death in 1915, he deals with the question relating to a linguistic sign. Saussure divides this sign into two units – a signified (concept) and a signifier (sound-image). Based on that, he wants to point out that meaning of a text is non-referential and so a sign does not refer to an object in the world but the combination between a signified and a signifier. Those signs are not determined, but rather differential. Thanks to that characteristics of theirs, the signs have meaning because of their purpose within a linguistic system. Moreover, meaning which they produce is given through a similarity with each other. Therefore, all of the connections and relations between them are actually based not only on differences, but also on similarities with other signs as well. <sup>1</sup>

Saussure comments on this topic through those words: *“In language there are only differences. Even more important: a difference generally implies positive terms between which the difference is set up; but in language there are only differences without positive terms. Whether we take the signified or the signifier, language has neither ideas nor sounds that existed before the linguistic system, but only conceptual and phonic differences that have issued from the system.”* <sup>2</sup>

Based on Saussure’s theory of signs, their connections and relations to other signs, the whole sign-system model and linguistic structure related, the origin of the theory of intertextuality, either in literature or anywhere else, has come to light. <sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> ALLEN, Graham. *Intertextuality*. Routledge. London, 2000, 10.

<sup>2</sup> SAUSSURE, Ferdinand de. *Course in General Linguistics*. Wade Baslin (trans.), Jonathan Culler (intro.), Charles Bally, Albert Sechehaye, in collaboration with Albert Reidlinger (eds). Fontana, London, 1994, 120.

<sup>3</sup> ALLEN, Graham. *Intertextuality*. Routledge. London, 2000, 10.

## Principles of Intertextuality

While reading any kind of text, literary or non-literary, we tend to find a meaning in-between its lines. This process of searching for that meaning is simply called interpretation or reading itself. Even though new texts are being written every day, great amount of them are based on ideas, thoughts, traditions or simply principles of previous literary works which actually carry the very vital meaning of the work. Nowadays, not surprisingly, texts are being considered by many literary theoreticians as lacking in an original meaning. Some of those texts are then being called intertextual ones; in other words, texts which lead us into a “literary network” of textual connections and relations. Those relations, furthermore, are important for interpreting any kind of a text, and discovering and explaining its meaning. Intertextuality may then be simply described as moving between several texts; and the key meaning lies in the middle of one text and any other literary work or works to which the first one is referred to. Based on that, the text becomes an intertextual text, an intertextual literary work.<sup>4</sup>

## Intertextuality in the relation to Postmodernism and the World Wide Web

Nowadays, the term *intertextuality* within any field of art leads us right to another issue related – Postmodernism. The era, at this exact time, might be also called a Postmodern age (a movement of the late twentieth century).

Postmodern works are characteristic with their connections to the present social, cultural and even historical epoch. The whole concept of postmodernism is therefore, and obviously, very widespread. Nevertheless, the idea of it and its name itself contain both positive and negative connotations. It is right those positive and negative connotations for which postmodernism has been dealt with for several last decades.<sup>5</sup>

*“The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction.”<sup>6</sup>*

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<sup>4</sup> ALLEN, Graham. *Intertextuality*. Routledge. London, 2000, 1.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 181.

<sup>6</sup> BENJAMIN, Walter. *“The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction”* in *Illuminations: essays and reflections*, Hannah Arendt (ed.), Schocken Books, New York, 1968, 217-251.

Walter Benjamin, a philosopher, essayist and critic of German Jewish origin, was of that opinion that reproduction of postmodernism has shattered its thoughts and ideas relating to aesthetic values of previous works of art. In other words, postmodernism basically farther disseminates the aura of that previous and especially original works. Based on that, a great amount of “new” works has been originated and created, and some of them might have been even more preferred or required than the original ones. For example, an original painting by Van Gogh might have been suddenly considered priceless or minor. <sup>7</sup>

Not surprisingly, the twentieth century’ artistic media, involving television and films, are all developed from existing works originated thanks to the technological methods of reproduction. Therefore, the whole reality of that time might be actually based on those media. This kind of representation of the reality concerns a question relating to what is true and real, and what is simply fiction. <sup>8</sup>

Nevertheless, not only films and videos are in a centre of interest, but also books, thoughts or pictures are involved. Therefore, that all might be considered a kind of repetition or pastiche as well. Postmodern works, sometimes, can be even meant as parodies.

Fredric Jameson, a literary critic and Marxist political theorist living in America, describes his perception to this issue of Postmodernism in these words: *“In this situation, parody finds itself without a vocation; it has lived and that strange new thing pastiche slowly comes to take its place. Pastiche is, like parody, the imitation of a peculiar mask, speech in a dead language: but it is a neutral practice of such mimicry, without any of parody’s ulterior motives, amputated of the satiric impulse, devoid of laughter and of any conviction that, alongside the abnormal tongue you have momentarily borrowed, some healthy linguistic normality still exists. Pastiche is thus blank parody, a statue with blind eyes ... the producers of culture have nowhere to turn but to the past: the imitation of dead styles, speech through all the masks and voices stored up in the imaginary museum of a now global culture.”* <sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> ALLEN, Graham. *Intertextuality*. Routledge. London, 2000, 181.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 182.

<sup>9</sup> JAMESON, Fredric. *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Verso. London and New York, 1991, 17-18.

Jameson assumes that intertextual practice may lead to a collapse of an effort to bring past voices and style back. Hence, the whole idea of Postmodernism and intertextuality becomes impossible, just on the account of mixing what is fact and what is fiction; what is original and what is a copy; or on the account of a simple playing with any art work without an attachment to any of well-known cultural norms.<sup>10</sup>

As it was already said before, postmodern way of creation relates not only to written on filmed works, but also to the architectural ones.

Therefore, another opinion and view to this issue came out of the mind of an American architectural historian and cultural theorist, Charles Jencks, which concerns exactly this field of postmodern output. Jencks claims that: *“Post-Modernism is fundamentally the eclectic mixture of any tradition with that of the immediate past: it is both the continuation of Modernism and its transcendence. Its best works are characteristically double-coded and ironic, because this heterogeneity most clearly captures our pluralism. Its hybrid style is opposed to the minimalism of Late-Modern ideology and all revivals which are based on an exclusive dogma or taste.”*<sup>11</sup>

Many other famous critics, philosophers or theorists have their own opinions and theories to that issue. Nevertheless, all of them basically share the same thought that Postmodernism and intertextuality reveal things which have already been revealed. The only difference, however, is the point of view.

Signs of intertextuality can be, surprisingly, found also in connection with the cyber world. For instance, David Coughlan, a British philosopher, compares the computer space (or universe), called World Wide Web or Net, with literary intertextuality. The word “Net” points out both to the concept of the cyber world, involving all of the sounds, images and words that those connected computers may concern; and also to a relation between dozens of computer terminals world-wide. David Coughlan describes that connection this way: *“Perhaps intertextual space exists in the same way, flowing between the texts which form it, each text*

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<sup>10</sup> ALLEN, Graham. *Intertextuality*. Routledge. London, 2000, 184.

<sup>11</sup> JENCKS, Charles. *What is Post-Modernism?*. Academy, New York, 1989, 7.

*acting now as a terminal through which to access this network, quotations and references serving as hypertext, transporting the reader to another page on the web, to another part of the textual space.*

*If the computer is the point of intersection between physical space and cyberspace, then the text is the porthole to the space of intertextuality, each text simply one exposed section of a limitless network of other texts which are, some would say, already present within that one text.”<sup>12</sup>*

## EXAMPLE OF AN INTERTEXTUAL TEXT

One of the examples of an intertextual text (and also allusion to another literary work) might be represented, for example, by a short story named *A Study in Emerald*, which was written by Neil Gaiman, and which relates to one of the most famous literary works *A Study in Scarlet*.

Hereafter, I would like to demonstrate a brief analysis of both of the works *A Study in Emerald* and *A Study in Scarlet*, and to point out some of the features which both of the works share together. Some of those features are very similar to each other, some of them are presented rather as parallels.

### *A Study in Scarlet*

*A Study in Scarlet* is a world famous novel, written by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in 1887, recounting a story of Sherlock Holmes, calling himself a consulting detective, and his loyal friend John Watson, a military doctor returning back to London from Afghanistan where he served in the Second Anglo-Afghan War. They both together investigate a murder, a murder of Enoch Drebber and his secretary, Joseph Stangerson.

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<sup>12</sup> COUGHLAN, David. *Writing on Society: Henri Lefebvre and the space of literature*, M. Phil. diss. University College, Cork, 1997, 116.



The novel's title itself is related to a Sherlock Holmes' description of the whole murder investigation. He provided all of the details and information relating to the murder to his friend, John Watson. Therefore, the key reason for the novel's name is derived from exactly this Holmes' description of the murder's investigation – as he himself called it as his study in scarlet. "*There's the scarlet thread of murder running through the colourless skein of life, and our duty is to unravel it, and isolate it, and expose every inch of it.*"<sup>13</sup>

### A Study in Emerald

This tale recounts the story mention above, however, not that precisely but rather in light parallels. The author, Neil Gaiman, pastiches the original Sherlock Holmes story to the universe, called the Cthulhu Mythos universe, created by an American writer Howard Phillips Lovecraft who is famous for his fictions that are characterized by containing a great amount of fantasy, science, weirdness and especially horror fiction.

The story of *A Study in Emerald* concerns a crime of a murder of Prince Franz Drago of Bohemia, however, between the lines there can be found few occurrences of allusion relating to the original "Sherlock Holmes' story", *A Study in Scarlet*.

### Analysis

Firstly, even though the tale and the characters themselves in *A Study in Emerald* might remind the original story and its key characters, because of the information provided about them, in this version, *A Study in Emerald*, the key figure is never called Sherlock Holmes and his loyal friend is never called John Watson or Doctor John Watson at all. They call each other just "my friend". Moreover, the narrator, who is supposed to be that John Watson, signs his name at the very end of the story with abbreviation 'S.M.' which is, actually, a short version for the name Sebastian Moran. So even though the key characters are supposed to represent

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<sup>13</sup> DOYLE, Arthur, Conan. *A Study in Scarlet*. Penguin Books, Harlow, 2011.

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson, it is actually Professor James Moriarty and Colonel Sebastian Moran who it is dealt with.

Furthermore, whereas one of the suspects men, the “Limping Doctor”, is described as a military doctor coming back from Afghanistan, the narrator of the story (supposed to be the John Watson) is not described in that way at all. Actually, it is the “Limping Doctor” who is literally described as the John Watson. Nevertheless, and perhaps surprisingly, the chief of the Scotland Yard is still called Lestrade as in *A Study in Scarlet*.

The tale, *A Study in Emerald*, is about a murder investigation relating to a mystery death of Prince Franz Drago, as it has been already said. During the investigation the author also points out to some other famous literary works and characters such as Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Jack the Ripper or Count Dracula, for instance. They all are mentioned in short paragraphs at the beginning of each single chapter. For example, chapter 3, called “The Palace”, begins with a paragraph talking about Doctor Henry Jekyll’s Powder which is designed for inner and outer cleanliness and offers an immediate and rapid help. In that case, Gaiman compares this “cleanliness” to a constipation. In the way, at least as I assume, as a constipation of two souls in just one body. In other words, one of the souls should abandon the body in order to make the body clear (not in the physical way, naturally). And thanks to it, the exterior would be clean as well. While with the constipation, it is meant as a physical purifying of an interior (that tangible thing or things should leave the body to make it clean and empty). Thus, features of intertextuality can be found precisely in those short paragraphs.

Another example of comparison and connection between these two literary works might be found in the description of Prince Franz Drago’s blood. Firstly, Prince’s blood is green which is quite unusual because royal line, in general, is tent to be described with blue blood. Nevertheless, and secondly, based on that blood colour, there can be found the connection with the original story because even in that case the name of the novel itself relates to victim’s blood colour. However in *A Study in Scarlet* the scarlet colour relates to a red blood sign on the wall, in *A Study in Emerald* the emerald colour relates to a green blood sign of Prince’s blood. Though, both of the signs indicate the same word “RACHE”.

Last but not least. Whereas in *A Study in Scarlet* the figure of Sherlock Holmes is highly interested in specific fields of science such as chemistry, soil types characteristic for particular parts of London or poisons, the character of Holmes in Gaiman's story, compared to that, keeps rather on theoretical physics involving energy or the hypothetical speed of light.

To sum up, both of the stories seem to be very similar in several points and, yet, they are fundamentally unique parallels recounting their own stories.

## Irony

The original form of that term comes from Greece and means "dissimulation in speech", Greek - *eironeia*. It can be described as taking the form of both understatement and understatement in which the purposeful meaning is usually right the opposite of the apparent one. In other words, the ironic meaning (the one which is actually meant) is right the opposite of the literal meaning (the one which is said).<sup>14</sup>

Even though irony is one of the figures of speech, therefore it is apparently connected to literature in general, a huge number of people use it in their everyday conversations, sometimes even without noticing or being aware of that.

For instance, a person using irony intends to her or his true meaning to be deduced by the listener or reader, and highlights that precise meaning through gesture or specific tone of voice.<sup>15</sup>

An essential role in understating irony in the context in which the statement is said, otherwise it will be pointless at all and the ironist might end up in an embarrassing position.

Overall, irony might seem concealing the meaning (which is really meant), only the more effectively to expose that.

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<sup>14</sup> FURNES, T., BATH, M. *Reading poetry. An Introduction*. Simon and Schuster International Group. Hemel Hempstead, 1996, 185-186.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 186.

*"It is a mask which is not meant to deceive."*<sup>16</sup>

In literature, irony can be sometimes connected and also applied in reading a text and immediate understanding of its meaning without mentioning it – *reading between the lines*.<sup>17</sup> That there are no written words related to the author's point or thought, and, yet, a reader fully understands and sees that point (because of the context and also sort of common sense).

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<sup>16</sup> FURNES, T., BATH, M. *Reading poetry. An Introduction*. Simon and Schuster International Group. Hemel Hempstead, 1996, 186.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 186.

## LITERARY ANALYSIS OF THEODORA GOSS' NOVEL – THE STRANGE CASE OF THE ALCHEMIST'S DAUGHTER

*The Strange Case of the Alchemist's Daughter*, published in 2017, is an extraordinary example of an intertextual work. The novel combines elements of original romantic and late Victorian classics works (such as *Dracula*, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* or *Frankenstein*, for instance) with elements of a modern fantasy world. Although it contains familiar mysteries and secrets, it is still a completely original story.

In the novel we can observe how Theodora Goss, the author, literally plays with the original plot lines, with their characters or well-known facts, for instance. Furthermore, we can notice between the lines how the author then enriches all this with her own ideas, which eventually leads to a whole new and original work, yet with elements of familiar ones. In the end, an intertextual work is created.

The aim of this diploma thesis is to prove that the novel of *The Strange Case of the Alchemist's Daughter* is indeed an intertextual work. To do so, I would like to discover and analyse elements of the original works (such as their characters, plots, background details, etc.) and to find their connection with Theodora Goss' novel.

### Chapter I – The Girl in the Mirror

#### Summary

The first chapter introduces us one of the key characters of the novel – Mary Jekyll, a daughter of Doctor Henry Jekyll and his wife, Ernestine Jekyll. Mentioning Mary and Ernestine Jekyll, we cannot omit the fact that both Mary and Ernestine did not appear in the original Stevenson's story. Both characters were created by Goss.

We are being acquainted with Mary's household surroundings including all of the employees - Nurse Adams; Cook, Joseph; Alice, the scullery maid; Enid; and especially Mrs. Poole, the housekeeper.

The chapter begins with the notice that Mary's mother, Ernestine Jekyll, had become mad and recently, unfortunately, passed away.

All of the people in the house are gathered in the hall to pay tribute to the deceased Mrs. Jekyll, to say goodbye to her and also to express their condolences to the residuary daughter of hers, to Mary.

Shortly after that, one afternoon, Mary sets off on a way to Mr. Guest who takes care of the Jekylls' financial business.

Mary was told, by Mr. Guest, that her mother, before she passed away, had opened another bank account in Clerkenwell. And that a certain amount of money had been withdrawn at the beginning of every month. Each of those payments and transactions had taken place in the very same way – *Payment to the Society of St. Mary Magdalen* - with the amount of 1 pound – *For the care and keeping of Hyde*.<sup>18</sup> And this account, after Mary's mother's death, has become Mary's, currently with the credit of twenty-three pounds. She was quite surprised by this sudden revelation of her mother's previous actions. Nevertheless, Mary was determined to get the money and then to close this account at all.

One more thing she has brought home, literally, from the visit by Mr. Guest was a portfolio full of papers of multiple sorts such as envelopes with letters, receipts (most of them were from Maw and Sons company which had provided Doctor Jekyll chemicals for his experiments) and a book. And it was right this book, actually a notebook, which contained her father's notes relating to his scientific experiments while he was still alive.

The whole chapter eventually ends with the very question asked by Mary aiming to Mrs. Poole: "*What do you remember about Edward Hyde.*"<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> GOSS, Theodora. *The Strange Case of the Alchemist's Daughter*. Saga Press. New York, 2017, 15.

<sup>19</sup> Goss, 20.

## Analysis

As it can be noticed from the very beginning, the main character of this novel refers to another well-known and famous literary work, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*<sup>20</sup>, a novella written by Robert Louis Stevenson in 1886. In this story, however, the key character is presented as Jekyll's daughter, Mary Jekyll.

Another similarity relating to the original story involves the Jekylls' housekeeper. Whereas in the Stevenson's story the housekeeper was a male (Mr. Poole), here, in the contrary, the housekeeper was introduced to us as a female, therefore as Mrs. Poole. Though, the figure of Mr. Utterson, for example, Jekylls' family clerk, is still represented as a male one.

Nevertheless, mentioning the character of Mrs. Poole, there is one interesting thing to be pointed out. Later on in this novel, it might be noticed that the character of Mrs. Poole slightly resembles a female character from another well-known literary work in her appearance and behaviour – Jane Eyre, the main character in the novel *Jane Eyre: An Autobiography*<sup>21</sup>, written by Charlotte Brontë. Therefore, the character of Mrs. Poole can be considered another manifestation of intertextuality. Although the two characters (Mrs. Poole and Jane Eyre) differ in name, their behaviour and demeanour have something in common – an emphasis on feminism. As we gradually learn from the text of this novel, and also as Gilbert and Gubar describe in their book<sup>22</sup> (in which they focus on Victorian literature from a feminist perspective), both of these characters were basically characterized by women's confidence in themselves and independence from men. That they are allowed to control their own lives. In this novel, it relates not only to Mrs. Poole's practicality and ingenuity, but also to Mary, as she is also an orphan, quite shy, clever, humble and industrious. Nevertheless, this sort of connection between the characters of Jane Eyre and Mary will be seen several times later on.

Last but not least, even the figure of Mr. Hyde was mentioned in this chapter. Yet we have not learnt much about the character so far. The only piece of information relating to this person,

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<sup>20</sup> STEVENSON, R. Louis. *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. Longmans, Green & Co. London, 1886.

<sup>21</sup> BRONTË, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre: An Autobiography*. Smith, Elder & Co. London, 1847.

<sup>22</sup> GILBERT, S., GUBAR, S. *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*. Yale University Press. New Haven, 1979.

which the author has given us so far, was that Ernestine Jekyll, Mary's mother, had had a bank account in Clerkenwell from which a certain amount of money had been withdrawn every month. And each transaction was aimed just to Edward Hyde. Moreover, even in this story is the character of Mr. Hyde described rather in negative way as - *a pale, hairy, misshapen man, with a wicked leer.*<sup>23</sup>

The character of Mr. Hyde and his presence in the story can represent the notion of the uncanny. This term was further analysed and described in the work of Nicholas Royle – *The Uncanny*<sup>24</sup>. This book is actually devoted and refers to Freud's essay called *The Uncanny (Das Unheimliche)*, which concerns the term of the uncanny as well. However, their views sometimes vary in some respects. For instance, according to Freud, the experience of the uncanny occurs anytime repressed or surmounted material reappears in consciousness. In contrast, Royle gives us no analysis of the relevance of repression in the experience of the uncanny. Instead of that, we are treated to unfocused discussions of the experience of the uncanny as a blending of the familiar and the unfamiliar, as the experience of something that should have remained secret.<sup>25</sup>

Nevertheless, similarities, relations and connections between *The Strange Case of the Alchemist's Daughter* and *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (and not only between this novella, but also between many other literary works), are going to accompany us through the whole book. Moreover, those similarities concern not only characters, but also some typical features including theme, atmosphere or tone, for instance. In the beginning of this chapter we can find just one of these particular similarities in the theme of madness in the Jekyll family during Mrs. Jekyll's funeral. The element of madness is generally found in Victorian fiction, e.g. in *Jane Eyre*, or in Dr. Jekyll himself, in a certain way.

Through the references to intertextuality, the reader is either to remind themselves of Stevenson's novella or to reread it if they had read *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* before. There is a parallel between the reader's experience and the main protagonist's in the

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<sup>23</sup> GOSS, Theodora. *The Strange Case of the Alchemist's Daughter*. Saga Press. New York, 2017, 15.

<sup>24</sup> ROYLE, Nicholas. *The Uncanny*. Manchester University Press. Manchester, 2003.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.



way that the heroine is too young to live in the decades of her father's life, and so is the young reader. The impulse while reading might be the reader's interest in the classics, e.g. Dr. Jekyll's and Hyde's story.

Finally, I would like to point out that the narration itself contains also short comments inserted which are outspoken by other characters (Diana, Beatrice or Catherine, for instance). Moreover, at the very end of this chapter, there is even a note from the author herself. Based on those embedded comments and notes, spoken either by the characters and the author, there is an emphasis on the feeling of authenticity with the author's aim to illustrate and portray lively and independent heroines in comparison with the classic Victorian novels where the characters are portrayed from the third person's objective or omniscient point of view and thus the reader might feel sort of detached from their story. In conclusion to this, it can be said that Goss is therefore more personal as an author and a feminist.

## Chapter II – Consulting Mr. Holmes

### Summary

In this chapter Mary is determined to find out more information relating to Mr. Hyde – who is actually is, was (as he was mistakenly thought to be dead).

At first, she starts asking the housekeeper, Mrs. Poole, whether she know anything about him. Unfortunately, she does not know much. Mrs. Poole defends herself with the fact that she, as an employee, was not allowed to see or to meet the Mr. Jekyll's gentlemen guests. Therefore, she has met Mr. Hyde only exceptionally, when he was leaving, for example.

Nevertheless, Mary got the information that fourteen years ago there was a murder of Sir Danvers Carew in which Mr. Hyde was one of the key suspects. There was a even a reward for bringing him in. Unfortunately, after this dreadful murder, nobody had ever heard of Mr. Hyde anymore. Until Mary's mother passed away. Then Mary has found out her mother's bank account in Clerkenwell and its connection to the person of Mr. Edward Hyde.

Mary was firm about finding out if the reward, even after those years, is still being offered. She starts out on a way to the certain place – 221B Baker Street, a flat owned by Mr. Holmes and his associate, Dr. Watson.

When she came in and they told her all the rest of information that *they* had known, Mary and Dr. Watson set off on a way to the Society of St. Mary Magdalen (a place, where all the payments from her mother's bank account had been made). Sherlock Holmes, on the other hand, was about to meet Inspector Lestrade, who was working for Scotland Yard.

### Analysis

This chapter consists of two famous stories blended into one. The first one is the ongoing story of Mary Jekyll who tries to find out more information about mysterious Mr. Hyde and to find out Hyde's connection to her mother. The second one, which is actually becoming an essential part of the first one, refers to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes and his loyal associate, Doctor John Watson.

Theodora Goss has put those two literary works together in that way that Sherlock Holmes is going to help Mary Jekyll to unfold the whole mystery about Mary's mother's bank account with the relation to Mr. Hyde, and also the case of Sir Danvers Carew's murder in which Mr. Hyde has taken his part as well.

The author carries on putting several comments and parenthesis within the narration itself. Parenthesis, which are being told by the characters of the book (those characters are actually creators or participants of the whole case) and also parenthesis which, from time to time, comment on the current situation, the overall happening or feelings etc. at a certain point of the narration.

*Mrs. Poole: "It was most improper of him to send you there, miss!"*

*Catherine: "I have not yet gotten to the part where he actually sends her, Mrs. Poole. Please don't anticipate the action for our readers."* <sup>26</sup>

Based on those comments, it is very obvious that Theodora Goss has come up with something quite new and unusual in literature – she tries to make a contact with a reader, with us. Furthermore, there is also the aspect of humour present in the dialogues, as all female protagonist are lively and enjoying each other's company, teasing each other slightly, making jokes at each other etc. All of that makes therefore the whole plot and the whole impression of it much more engaging.

### Chapter III – The Magdalen Society

#### Summary

This chapter gets Mary closer to the disclosure and understanding why her mother has opened the "mysterious" bank account in Clerkenwell and who is the Mr. Hyde whose name is connected with the very bank account.

Not only is she told the reason for opening that bank account by Mrs. Raymond who is the director of Society of St. Mary Magdalen – *".. a society for fallen angels of the Lord.."* <sup>27</sup>, but she also meets the reason in person. Mary was introduced to Diana Hyde, a daughter of the mysterious Edward Hyde and also Mary's sister, at least as Diana has called her so - *".. any gentleman friend of my sister is a gentleman friend of mine."* <sup>28</sup>

Therefore, Diana was the reason why Mary's mother had opened the bank account up for. As Mr. Hyde had become missing, someone had to take care of this child, to let her bring up somewhere by someone and, naturally, to pay for her maintenance at all. Nevertheless, *why* it was Ernestine Jekyll who had paid for it all, that remains a mystery to Mary.

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<sup>26</sup> GOSS, Theodora. *The Strange Case of the Alchemist's Daughter*. Saga Press. New York, 2017, 37.

<sup>27</sup> Goss, 48.

<sup>28</sup> Goss, 50.

At the end of the chapter we are being told, by Charlie – a London young boy of the street and also one of Holmes' little acquaintances - that there had been another murder and so that another body has been found. Watson along with Mary and Diana head right to the murder scene at once.

#### Analysis

As Diana calls Mary *a sister*, there is an obvious connection between Dr. Jekyll (Mary's father) and Mr. Hyde (Diana's father). As the plot moves forward, we will find that the girls' "fathers" are actually the same person. Though, in Stevenson's story there was no hint that Dr. Jekyll (or Mr. Hyde) is supposed to be someone's father at all.

Nevertheless, there is a new reference pointing out to another famous literary character. This remark on intertextuality concerns the little urchin, Charlie. Charlie seems to represent Dicken's Oliver Twist<sup>29</sup> who also was a boy of London streets. However, a difference between Dicken's Oliver and Goss's Charlie relates to the time. Whereas *The Strange Case of the Alchemist's Daughter* is supposed to be happening in more modern times, the story of Oliver Twist took place in the early 19th century.

#### Chapter IV – A Murder in Whitechapel

##### Summary

Following the end of the previous chapter (concerning the murder), in this one we gain new information related to it.

In comparison to the other girls/women, who were found murdered as well, the latest victim is missing her brain, which has been removed using a scalpel, and has a broken neck. Therefore, one of the suspect killers was either knowledgeable in medicine (in surgery, to be

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<sup>29</sup> DICKENS, Charles. *Oliver Twist; or, the Parish Boy's Progress*. Bentley's Miscellany, London, 1837-1839.

specific) or knows a bit about human's anatomy, and the other one is supposed to be a man of a great strength.

*"Two men are most definitely indicated: one strong enough to break a woman's neck and saw through her skull, another with the knowledge and skill to take out her brain."*<sup>30</sup>

Mentioning *the suspects* – as we are being told, based on Holmes' overall examination of the body and its surroundings, there were two men taking part in committing a murder of that poor girl, named Molly Keane.

*"One left two footprints in the mud under that overhang, where the rain has not erased them... By the distance between them, I would put him at not much above five feet. By the distance his boots sank into the mud, he is not a heavy man, eight or nine stone. And they are undoubtedly the boots of a gentleman... The other man has left not traces. But Molly Keane's neck is broken, and I don't think the man we've been describing would have the strength to break her neck... One of them is straight, the other bent, almost as though he had a club foot, although without deformity."*<sup>31</sup>

Though, this murder was committed in kind of tenderer way than the rest. *"This was a more delicate operation than Pauline Delacroix, whose entire head was missing."*<sup>32</sup>

Moreover, unlike the others, Molly Keane had been a lady before has fallen, fallen into sin.

The whole murder investigation naturally contains either interrogation of some people who have known Molly Keane, such as Poor Richard and Kate Bright-Eyes, and a finding of a little subject in the victim's hand – a watch fob with engraved letters S. A.

The witnesses' description of one of the suspects fits to a description of Mr. Hyde.

Notwithstanding, at the end of this chapter, an essential revelation has been told by Diana – that her dad and Mary's dad was one and the same person. And so the mysterious connection

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<sup>30</sup> GOSS, Theodora. *The Strange Case of the Alchemist's Daughter*. Saga Press. New York, 2017, 64.

<sup>31</sup> Goss, 63-64.

<sup>32</sup> Goss, 64.

between Mary and Diana; and between *their* fathers has moved forward. Though, the question how is it possible remains unanswered. “*Jekyll’s dead, according to Miss Mary, her. That means Hyde’s dead. My mum told me that Hyde was just another name for Jekyll. Hyde was a disguise Jekyll used when he didn’t want to be found out. Like a cloak.*”<sup>33</sup>

### Analysis

At first sight, the murder might look like another one committed by Jack the Ripper, because the corpse is missing a part of the body as it was with the previous murders. However, this was different from the previous ones. This has been done a bit more delicately and, therefore, by someone who actually knows *how* to do it properly (as it has been already mentioned above). Yet, there is a certain similarity or connection between Jack’s murders and Stevenson’s novella. The connection is not only with this novella though, but also with other literary works. Three weeks after Stevenson’s story about dual nature of his main character/characters was adapted, and so the society became aware of it, a prostitute was found murdered in Whitechapel which was considered to be the start of the series of murders known as the “Jack the Ripper killings”. Based on that, many people then connected Stevenson’s outwardly noble Dr. Jekyll and the evil Mr. Hyde with this invisible East End killer. Moreover, the newspapers also referred to the murderer as Mr. Hyde. Other parallel, for instance, may be found in Stoker’s *Dracula*. In this case it concerns a few more similarities, such as five women murdered in Whitechapel and Dracula’s five ‘brides’; van Helsing and his friends form a ‘vigilance committee’, while in Whitechapel there was the Mile End Vigilance Committee that patrolled the streets; or the society’s conviction that the Jews were responsible for this terrible act (as they are said to be too vile) and Stoker’s transformation of this prejudice, this fear of the Eastern European stranger, into art. Also other writers such as Oscar Wilde or Charles Dickens were interested in this topic.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> GOSS, Theodora. *The Strange Case of the Alchemist’s Daughter*. Saga Press. New York, 2017, 73.

<sup>34</sup> FLANDERS, Judith. „Jack the Ripper“ *British Library*. 15 May 2014, <https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/jack-the-ripper>.

The author tells us, through the characters, that the murder might have been done by Mr. Hyde. This assumption leads us again to the reference with Stevenson's original story – that even in *The Strange Case of the Alchemist's Daughter* Mr. Hyde is a cold-blooded murderer, though, with kind of a sense of precision and, not surprisingly, with knowledge in a human anatomy.

*"But Mr. Holmes... this man, this twisted gentleman with the low voice who looks like Punch. That's description of Mr. Hyde. I thought of him immediately, after we saw Molly Keane's body. Remember that he was my father's assistant – he has surgical knowledge."*<sup>35</sup>

I would like to focus on the *disguise* in more detail. In the Stevenson's book, there is written that Dr. Jekyll would use this kind of disguise – represented by transforming into the person (in both physical and mental way) of Mr. Hyde – to literally hide himself from people around him, in order not to be recognized. But what does it actually mean to *hide himself*? From my point of view, every individual person has his/her "dark" side and the "light" side. Some of us may have one of those sides more suppressed by the second one. Though, no one is perfect and everyone makes mistakes. We are *just* humans. Humans, with everything that goes along with it – feelings, desires, wishes, thoughts (either of "good" or "bad" things), mistakes and much more. Yes. But the difference between every single person is that some of us do not care about being wrong or doing something wrong, they do not have to even care about the others at all. They are absolutely unconcerned about anything. On the other hand, some of us might feel ashamed or being sorry for they have done, for they have thought about or even for they have wished for. And based on that assumption of mine I assume that Dr. Jekyll (as it was actually described in the original Stevenson's story) wanted to hide those longings, thoughts and eventually deeds. He did not want to be seen as a "bad person" or a person doing things which do not belong to his status in the society of that time. He basically wanted to do whatever he wanted, no matter what other people said or thought about him. He did not want to listen to any comments or judgements aimed to his personality of *the* Doctor Henry Jekyll. He just wanted to feel free. Absolutely free. Though, this freedom cost him a lot.

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<sup>35</sup> GOSS, Theodora. *The Strange Case of the Alchemist's Daughter*. Saga Press. New York, 2017, 72.

Because no kind of *disguise* may allow us to commit a crime at all. There is no excuse and no understanding for committing a crime, especially a murder. Never.

Nevertheless, that is why he “created” this Mr. Hyde with his very deliberate name, at least as I suppose.

Last but not least, I would like to briefly mention and highlight two names from the story, which may also contain a slight sign of intertextuality - Molly Keane and Pauline Delacroix. In this novel, either Molly and Pauline were both murder victims. Their names however coincide with names of famous female artists. In the first case it is Molly Keane, an Irish novelist and playwright; in the case of Pauline Delacroix it is a coincidence of her name with Pauline Delacroix, a French painter. Therefore, there is a specific playfulness in Theodora Goss' writing, which supports the readers' curiosity once the device of intertextuality is being used as the method of writing a contemporary fantasy novel.

## Chapter V – The Letter from Italy

### Summary

This brief chapter gives us further piece of information relating to the revelation as well as understanding who Mr. Hyde, and also Dr. Jekyll, actually was/were.

Mary and Diana are going through the envelopes, letters and other stuff of that sort which Mary's mother has left for her. In one of those letters a very fact has been found out.

As the letter *tells* us, Dr. Jekyll worked on some experiments concerning a sort of transmutation. His colleague in this matter was a Giacomo Rappaccini, an Italian scientist from Padua who also was interested in scientific experimentalizing, though, in a bit different field of science. Moreover, whereas Rappaccini did his experiments on someone else (on Beatrice, to be specific, his daughter), Dr. Jekyll did it all on his own person. And right this information is exactly the essential one. Based on it, Mary could finally understand and actually explain to herself how it is possible that Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde can be one person. And, besides, what some of the notes written in his notebook mean. Notes such as: *“Today, I let out the beast Hyde. He is stronger than I am. What will he do when I can no longer control his impulse? The*



*sight of my face in the mirror. The horror! The horror! He has gained the power to transform at will, and I cannot stop him. All is lost. All, all lost, and I am a dead man.”*<sup>36</sup>

In other words, as a result of doing experiments involving human transformation or transmutation and on his own person, Dr. Jekyll was therefore able to literally transform himself into the Mr. Hyde. But not only physically, but also mentally (because Dr. Jekyll was no criminal or murderer, whereas Mr. Hyde was one of that sort). Dr. Jekyll has even been told by Giacomo Rappaccini not to try those experiments on himself, though, Dr. Jekyll did not listen to this advice and kept on doing it this way. *“A scientist should not experiment on himself.”*<sup>37</sup>

Finally, at the end of the chapter, Mrs. Pools mentions that the next day there is going to be a kind of scientific session in which, coincidentally, Beatrice Rappaccini is going to be presented as a scientific marvel: *“Beatrice Rappaccini, the Beauty who Breathes Poison.”*<sup>38</sup> At once, Mary connects this name with the letter coming from Italy, in which the same name of Beatrice Rappaccini has been mentioned, and so she is highly determined to meet this Beatrice in person.

### Analysis

Apparently, there is an obvious continuing pastiche<sup>39</sup> of the original Stevenson’s story. Either in Stevenson’s and in Goss’s books the character of Dr. Jekyll has practised chemicals and various experiments concerning transformation or transmutation on his own person. In both of the stories, Dr. Jekyll eventually was able to transform himself into person of Mr. Hyde, and, furthermore, even Mr. Hyde was capable of transforming himself, by his own will. He was basically capable of taking the control over the body and mind of Dr. Jekyll (even though they

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<sup>36</sup> GOSS, Theodora. *The Strange Case of the Alchemist’s Daughter*. Saga Press. New York, 2017, 82-83.

<sup>37</sup> Goss, 87.

<sup>38</sup> Goss, 90.

<sup>39</sup> Pastiche - an artistic work of any kind that is created by deliberately imitating the style of somebody else, or the style of another period, work, etc.).

both were one person, it was actually more like two absolutely different people in just one body).

However, a new piece of intertextuality has occurred in this chapter. In that case there is a reference relating to the work of Nathaniel Hawthorne, an American author of the early Romantic period. *Rappaccini's Daughter*, a Gothic short story published in 1844, recounts a story taking place in Padua, Italy, about Doctor Giacomo Rappaccini and his daughter, Beatrice, with whom a young man, Giovanni Guasconti, falls in love. As a part of his experiment, Dr. Rappaccini lets her daughter be brought up in a garden full of poisonous plants and flowers. As time goes by, Beatrice creates a very close relationship with those flowers, gains a certain immunity and eventually becomes resistant to those poisons. However, she is not only resistant to the poisons, but she even becomes *poisonous* to the people around her.

During the process of this kind of "transformation", Beatrice and the young man, Giovanni, fall in love. However, due to their secret meetings, even Giovanni himself eventually becomes poisonous to his surroundings, for which he blames Beatrice.

At the end of the story, Professor Baglioni, Dr. Rappaccini's rival who has warned Giovanni from this Dr. Rappaccini's work and experiment, gives him a cure. Nevertheless, once Beatrice drinks that drug, she dies.

Both Hawthorne and Stevenson's stories have three things in common. Firstly, a process of human transformation itself. Whereas in Stevenson's story Dr. Jekyll experiments on his own person, Hawthorne's Rappaccini carries out the experiment on his daughter Beatrice. Secondly, the person (either Dr. Jekyll or Beatrice) whom the experiments are being carried out on, eventually dies. Lastly, another aspect the works have in common is Romanticism, tragic death etc. Stevenson is also referred to as a Neo-Romantic author.

## Chapter VI – Diana’s Story

### Summary

Following Diana’s recounting her life story, we are gaining new pieces of information about her as well as about her mother and her father.

During her narration, Diana mentions several fundamental notes which helps Mary to resemble all of the *jigsaw pieces* she has been acquainted with so far. Those concern - Mr. Hyde’s hypothesis about bringing corpse back to life: *“He was talking about life and death, about how the dead could be brought back to life.”*<sup>40</sup> . Her mother working at Barstowe’s (where she had met Mr. Hyde): *“... It was run by a Mrs. Barstowe, and it was described in the Gentleman’s Guide to London as a superior place, catering principally to doctors, lawyers, and politicians... My father took a particular fancy to Mum.”*<sup>41</sup> . Her father wishing to have a baby girl: *“She was surprised, because gentlemen usually want a boy, but no, he was particular and said if it was a girl, he would be most pleased.”*<sup>42</sup> . And a very vital one – that it was Mr. Utterson who actually had made all the arrangements for Diana (the bank account and all of the documents related): *“... He must have been acting for her mother... This explained it: the lawyer had done all.”*<sup>43</sup>

Therefore, Mary was a bit closer to understanding this whole affair. Though, several questions have still remained unanswered to Mary. Questions such as *Who is Beatrice Rappaccini? What S. A. means? Who actually killed the girl and cut out her brain? And Why did Mr. Hyde want a girl precisely?*

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<sup>40</sup> GOSS, Theodora. *The Strange Case of the Alchemist’s Daughter*. Saga Press. New York, 2017, 93.

<sup>41</sup> Goss, 97.

<sup>42</sup> Goss, 98.

<sup>43</sup> Goss, 103.

## Analysis

In relation to the role of Mr. Hyde in this chapter, I would like to mention two interesting points or conjectures.

Firstly, his hypothesis concerning bringing corps back to life is worth noting because here we come across the interconnection of topics from the late Victorian novels (including transformation, the other identity) and the Gothic/Romantic topic from Frankenstein (creating new life from death).

Secondly, the fact that he specifically requested a girl again lightly points out to the author's emphasis on feminism, as it could have been noted earlier.

One last note to this chapter, unanswered questions and mystery are both typical features of Gothic horror genre.

## Chapter VII – The Poisonous Girl

### Summary

Mary and Diana visit the Royal College of Surgeons and where the scientific event takes place. Event, which is described as *“The Poisonous Girl! A wonder of modern science! Discovered by Professor Petronius, M. D., D. Phil., member of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland.”*<sup>44</sup>

The girls take a seat a watch the “show”.

In the very beginning of the performance, Professor Petronius introduces Beatrice to the audience and recounts how she has become that poisonous, who is responsible for it, and emphasizes not to touch her as she is deadly for the others. Once he is done with talking about Beatrice, the performance may begin.

Beatrice is told to hold a Madonna lily, a white flower, for a while, then opens her mouth and breathes on that flower. During just few seconds, the flower turns brown and dries up. This

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<sup>44</sup> GOSS, Theodora. *The Strange Case of the Alchemist's Daughter*. Saga Press. New York, 2017, 108.

process is then repeated with an apple, bees, a snake, and, at the end, even with a canary. All of them eventually die.

However, that was not the end. Professor Petronius asked the audience if there had been any male volunteers brave enough to get a kiss from the Poisonous Girl. Two men came forward and let themselves be kissed from Beatrice. They did not die, luckily, but the skin on their necks had red marks from her lips.

When the performance was over and Professor Petronius started to talk to the audience and answered their questions, Mary was secretly talking to Beatrice and arranged a meeting with her.

After an hour and half Beatrice finally came to a garden, where Mary and Diana had already been waiting for her. Even though they were talking to each other just for few minutes, as they were interrupted by Professor Petronius's coming, Mary learnt something very important from Beatrice. She has learnt that the mysterious S. A. is an abbreviation for Société des Alchimistes.

While they were on the way to 221B Baker Street to share this piece of information with Mr. Holmes, Mary had to think about the connection between this Society, the dead girl Molly and also the letter for her father coming from Italy.

Once they reached their destination, after a short discussion they set off on another journey. This time the girls were in a company of with Mr. Holmes, Dr. Watson and Lestrade, all of them heading to Purfleet Asylum, to interview a Renfield man who was kept in there as he had confessed to the murders. *"A madman by the name of Renfield claims he committed the murders."*<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> GOSS, Theodora. *The Strange Case of the Alchemist's Daughter*. Saga Press. New York, 2017, 120.

## Analysis

Firstly, and also doubtlessly, there is an obvious link with the story of *Rappaccini's Daughter*. As in Hawthorne's story, as in Goss's, Beatrice has become poisonous for her surroundings as a result of her father's experiments being carried out on her. Nevertheless, in this story Beatrice had no lover, at least none was mentioned. On the contrary, in *The Strange Case of the Alchemist's Daughter* Beatrice is presented more like as a hostage of Professor Petronius. He wants to keep her for himself as she brings him a public attention and, especially, a lot of money related.

*"... but he has become greedy, and I believe he will not willingly let me go. Each night, he locks me in..."*<sup>46</sup>

The whole matter concerning the character of Beatrice and her story may be also found as another sign of Goss's feminism since men are more and more frequently portrayed as evil by the author and women, on the other hand, as victims.

Secondly, concerning the Royal College of Surgeons and the scientific events happening there, and also the connection with the previous mention of the dark Romantic author, Nathaniel Hawthorne, here we can notice a slight demand for objective reasoning associated with the Victorian era. Plus Romantic desires projected into pseudoscience.

## Chapter VIII – The Man Who Ate Flies

### Summary

Mary, Diana, Mr. Holmes, Dr. Watson, Lestrade and Sergeant Evans are on their way to Purfleet, the asylum, where Renfield (the lunatic) is being kept.

During their journey, they are putting all pieces of information, they have gained so far, together. And step by step, the jigsaw puzzle is slowly becoming something clearer. *"The death of Molly Keane, and perhaps the other girls, can be connected to this Société des Alchimistes. The watch fob in her hand, the seal on the letters, and Miss Rappaccini's words*

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<sup>46</sup> GOSS, Theodora. *The Strange Case of the Alchemist's Daughter*. Saga Press. New York, 2017, 117.

*create a logical trail from the body in Whitechapel to the society. We know the society was conducting experiments on women – young women. We know that at least three scientists were involved: my father, Dr. Rappaccini, and a colleague of theirs named Moreau.”*<sup>47</sup>

When they finally reach their destination, Dr. Balfour (the assistant director of Purfleet) takes Mr. Holmes, Lestrade and Mary to the lunatic man, Renfield. Meantime, Dr. Watson along with Diana and Sergeant Evans stay behind and wait for them.

Renfield was asked if he had actually committed those murders. He admitted to all of them with no doubt. Lestrade, as a Scotland Yard detective “bought” it and believed every his word. *“Not as simple as Lestrade thinks... He’s used to seeing what he expects to see..., a dirty lunatic with blood on his clothes.”*<sup>48</sup>

However, Mr. Holmes was not that sure about his utterance. *“There were no bloodstains on his knees... How could he have cut her brain out without kneeling on the pavement?... The asylum uniform has no pockets. That leaves the job in Molly Keane’s hand unexplained.... And what of the man with the low, whispering voice Kate Bright-Eyes described?... There was no dirt under his fingernails. After sleeping outdoors in London for a week, after scavenging for food in heaps of refuse, his nails should have been filthy. And how did he kill those women without getting blood under his nails?”*<sup>49</sup>

As Renfield was taking to the wagon, with handcuffs on his hands, he stole a glance at Diana. When he was told who she is, his face expression has suddenly changed, and furthermore, he asked Diana to tell her father that he had done everything as he had been supposed to do.

*“... this is my sister, Diana Hyde. At that, Renfield’s face took on a sly, crafty look... When you see your father, tell him I did well... You tell him I did everything I was told.”*<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> GOSS, Theodora. *The Strange Case of the Alchemist’s Daughter*. Saga Press. New York, 2017, 125.

<sup>48</sup> Goss, 141.

<sup>49</sup> Goss, 141.

<sup>50</sup> Goss, 140.

Apparently, as it could have been assumed, there was a certain connection between this Renfield man and Mr. Hyde.

Nevertheless, this was not the only mystery of that chapter. Another one related to an envelope that Diana and Dr. Watson had found while waiting for the rest of the group. An envelope with a red wax seal stamped by the very recurrent sign S. A.

### Analysis

As it has been already mentioned, there are two certain references.

First of them is a link is between the lunatic Renfield and Mr. Hyde, and the second one is related to *Société des Alchimistes*, the S. A. marks and all of the information provided by Beatrice Rappaccini.

However, we will be told later on what this all actually means. Or will be not?

Nevertheless, I would like highlight one important note which regards to the asylum itself. *“The wall is high enough between the road and the asylum, but on the other side is Carfax House, which has been empty these many years. It’s surrounded by woods – Carfax Woods, they’re called – and they stretch back a ways, wild, and overgrown.”*<sup>51</sup> Precisely this place, this Carfax House, is an obvious reference to Dracula – because it was Count Dracula who owned this property and who is connected to this place. Thus this is no coincidence that the author, Theodora Goss, has used this particular location. It is rather another use, and actually an occurrence, of intertextuality. Hence this time the story of *The Strange Case of the Alchemist’s Daughter* points out to Bram Stoker’s novel, *Dracula*<sup>52</sup>.

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<sup>51</sup> GOSS, Theodora. *The Strange Case of the Alchemist’s Daughter*. Saga Press. New York, 2017, 131-132.

<sup>52</sup> STOKER, Bram. *Dracula*. Archibald Constable as Constable & Co. Edinburgh, 1897.



## Chapter IX – A Rescue at Night

### Summary

As the curiosity and tension about the envelope was too high, Mary opened it and started reading its content aloud. The letter said that some other experiments had been conducted, and also mentioned few more names – Arminius, Seward, Prendick, and, especially the author of the letter, Abraham Van Helsing.

Therefore, it was obvious then that the society of scientists had more members than they had thought before, and that there certainly is a connection between them and the murders in Whitechapel. However, Mary and the others still did not *how* or *why* are those things related.

While brainstorming, they were suddenly interrupted by a young guy, Charlie, who told them that another murder had happened and that Sherlock Holmes is being expected to examine the found body.

When Holmes left them, Mary, Diana and Dr. Watson were about going out again. This time, to release and to help Beatrice Rappaccini.

After Diana's attempt to contact Beatrice and to give a key to unlock the door, they were waiting for her in the park. Beatrice made that escape and met them in the park. Unfortunately, after a while, when Professor Petronius and the rest of the house found out Beatrice is missing, they sent a dog, Fidelis, to hunt them. Beatrice knew him, they were actually friends with the dog as she had given him a gingerbread the day before. She stopped him, talked to him, calmed him down, put her hand on him, which, eventually, made him still. Dead. She didn't mean to hurt him, however, she was too poisonous for him. *"I meant only to render Fidelis unconscious for a while."*<sup>53</sup>

Eventually, they all came back to the Jekyll's, along with the new tenant, Beatrice. And for she was poisonous and therefore dangerous for anyone around her, she was offered to sleep in Dr. Jekyll's office, across the courtyard, to ensure everyone in the house is safe.

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<sup>53</sup> GOSS, Theodora. *The Strange Case of the Alchemist's Daughter*. Saga Press. New York, 2017, 156.

After a long, exhausting day, they all went to sleep. All but Mary. She had too much on her mind. It took her a while until she finally fell asleep. Nevertheless, once she did, she had nightmares about the murdered women. “... of women with their heads or arms or legs missing, stumbling or dragging themselves through the streets of London, calling if they had mouths, gesturing if they had hands. But she could not hear what they were calling, or understand what, if anything, they were trying to tell her.”<sup>54</sup>

### Analysis

John. Abraham Van Helsing. An undoubted link to *Dracula*, an epistolary gothic novel, written by Bram Stoker in 1897, recounting a very famous story about Count Dracula - a vampire trying to plague the town of Whitby, England.

There is not said a lot about this connection, though, it is quite obvious that the story of Dracula, or at least its characters, will play a certain role in the whole investigating process led by Mary et al. Process, which now concerns much more than “just” the mystery of her father and Mr. Hyde. There is more and more questions regarding the murders in Whitechapel, the society, the Poisonous Girl, even the lunatic guy and all of the other clues, pieces of evidence and indicia related. Therefore, it can be said that the structure of the novel operates on the principle of the Gothic novel and a detective story related mystery.

Yet, if we look more closely at other names mentioned in the letter (e. g. Seward, Prendick), we can also notice a certain link with names in other works – particularly, and not surprisingly, in *Dracula* and *The Island of Dr. Moreau*. In Stoker’s *Dracula*, Dr. Seward plays the role of a psychiatric doctor who is in charge of a mental institution. Thus, he is considered sane and rational in order to deal with his patients. Seward records his diary by a special tool - phonograph - which represents a symbol of progress and also modernity. Last but not least, this character is generally characterized with the most sceptical attitude about the supernatural. In the case of *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, it concerns the character of Edward Prendick, a wealthy and well-educated gentleman who is shipwrecked and then rescued by

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<sup>54</sup> GOSS, Theodora. *The Strange Case of the Alchemist’s Daughter*. Saga Press. New York, 2017, 160.

Montgomery, bringing him to the island of Dr. Moreau. He starts to live amongst the Beast Folk and also try to make them believe in Moreau's god-like power. Eventually, he finds too much of the similar "animalism" of the Beast Folk in human beings as well, particularly in Moreau himself. Therefore, he escapes the island having been horrified by Moreau's cruelty. Both Seward and Prendick play essential roles, in their own stories, in relation to the processes of transformation and transmutation, in a bit different way though. In the Wells' story, Prendick calls the beast transmutation a "taint", which may represent a link back to Dracula and the character of Mina, calling herself "unclean" due to the "taint" she got after being bitten by Dracula. Furthermore, it also relates to the Victorian idea of devolution or degeneration, which at the time raised a fear that if mankind had evolved to such a higher level of reasoning, they could devolve, back to the animals they came from as well. This idea concerns both the physical and mental spheres, including the idea of ethics and morality.<sup>55</sup>

## Chapter X – Beatrice's Story

### Summary

Now it is Beatrice's turn to tell her story – from where she is, how she has become poisonous and why, what she knows about the society and Mary's father's experiments etc.

At the very beginning of the chapter, before Beatrice's narration itself, we are getting to know that she does not actually need food. Food, in the way we are used to eating. *"I have no need of food, you see. Only the nutrients themselves, and sunlight."*<sup>56</sup> Until the poison leaves her body system, she is going to eat only that as well as she is going to be poisonous and dangerous to her surroundings.

Nevertheless, Beatrice eventually starts to recount her "life story". Moreover, through the author's comments, which are actually the book characters' ones, Beatrice is literally kind of forced to tell her story. The author, Theodora Goss, is saying through their narrative that it is

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<sup>55</sup> PLAYFORD, Sarah. „Through the lens of the Modest Witness: issues within science in Dracula and Dr Moreau“. *Academia.edu*, July 5 2015.

<sup>56</sup> GOSS, Theodora. *The Strange Case of the Alchemist's Daughter*. Saga Press. New York, 2017, 162.

crucial for us to know each of their stories, as every of their “life stories” play an essential role in the whole plot (e. g., how they have got together; for what reason; what are their causes for being or feeling as *a monster* – as they have mentioned many times that they are ones, etc).

So, Beatrice is telling the others about losing her mother while giving her a birth. Then about her father, the greatest physician Dr. Rappaccini, and his connection to the Société des Alchimistes and also about his dedication to experiments in transmutation conducted on her, on his own daughter. Experiments, during which he was keeping Beatrice in his garden full of poisonous plants and flowers, which eventually have made Beatrice poisonous as well as immune to them. She went on recounting about a guy, Giovanni, whom she had made poisonous too. And, unfortunately, who eventually passed away when trying to cure himself from that poison due drinking an antidote made by Dr. Rappaccini’s rival, Baglioni.

Notwithstanding, during her narration about her father’s work, Beatrice mentioned one important name and a certain experiment related to it. Victor Frankenstein and his monster.

Frankenstein’s experiment was about proving a theory of his that dead matter could be possibly again be brought to its life via putting parts of a human body together. To be specific, *“To take parts of the dead and create a living being. To sew those limbs together... a living corpse who became a monster.”*<sup>57</sup> And even though Frankenstein’s experiment had been done a century ago, both Dr. Rappaccini and Dr. Jekyll were inspired by it as they both had devoted themselves to a transmutation theory. However, according to Beatrice’s words, both of them were supposed to be conducting their experiments rather in a noble way, not meant to hurt anyone: *“The experiments of my father and his colleagues were subtle and theoretically sophisticated. They sought to advance humanity in particular directions. My father wished to strengthen humanity through the incorporation of plant essences. Dr. Moreau and your father were exploring what separates the human and animal, in an attempt to raise the human even higher, about our animal natures. They were attempting to refine and purify humanity. Their goals were noble, and when I was young, I thought they were the wisest men in the world, that*

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<sup>57</sup> GOSS, Theodora. *The Strange Case of the Alchemist’s Daughter*. Saga Press. New York, 2017, 167.

*they would lead us to a new golden age.*"<sup>58</sup> Despite this "high way" of approach to science and humanity, there are two facts opposing to it. Firstly, Frankenstein's experiment was not noble at all. *"But Frankenstein's experiment was crude, inelegant."*<sup>59</sup> And, secondly, the remaining connection between the society and the murdered women in Whitechapel. Actually, according to Beatrice's narration, it seemed to be much clearer now that those murders were somehow based on Frankenstein's experiment. And, furthermore, it has become more apparent, that the murders had been done right by someone from that society.

Finally, Mary and the others were told that another murder had been committed, again. Once Mr. Holmes and Dr. Watson went to examine the body and to investigate that crime at all, Beatrice uses this privacy and admits to girls that she has received another letter, whose author would like to meet her. And, furthermore, whose authors is Catherine Moreau. *The Moreau*, whose father has taken part in experiments concerning raising humanity over its animal nature.

#### Analysis

Based on Beatrice's narration, it is clear that her story in this book, *The Strange Case of the Alchemist's Daughter*, is very similar to the one written by Nathaniel Hawthorne. Therefore, another occurrence of intertextuality has come to light.

However in the Hawthorne's original story Beatrice eventually dies when drinking the antidote, in Goss's story she survives and Giovanni dies. *"He took the vial from my hand and drank the emerald liquid... But in a moment it was over. Giovanni lay in my arms, dead.... I took up the vial he had let fall and drank the remaining antidote, intending to die myself. But nothing happened."*<sup>60</sup> And, consequently, she blames herself for that. That it is her responsibility that Giovanni dies. Beatrice actually feels responsible even for her mother's death - when her mother was giving birth to her. *"She was a farmer's daughter, and I – was a*

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<sup>58</sup> GOSS, Theodora. *The Strange Case of the Alchemist's Daughter*. Saga Press. New York, 2017, 167.

<sup>59</sup> Goss, 168.

<sup>60</sup> Goss, 172.

*monster. I hold myself responsible for her death.”*<sup>61</sup> As if this was not enough, she even puts on her for her father’s death as well. After Giovanni’s death she left her father and so it was up to him to take care about the garden, Unfortunately, he was not as immune as Beatrice was to them, which eventually led to his death. And that is why she blames herself even for his father’s death. *“He had been found in his garden, among the poisonous plants... Always, I had been the one to tend his garden. The plants could not harm me, but he was too frail and had succumbed to their poison.”*<sup>62</sup>

From my point of view, even though it was not her fault (none of the deaths), I understand her calling herself *a monster*, in fact. At first, she is poisonous and also dangerous to anyone and anything around her, which is quite frightening and very unusual, in comparison to other, “normal”, people. And, secondly, three deaths of her closest ones, in all of which she might/might not be the reason for their passing. And that’s it, that she *might be*. Not only that she is poisonous to her surroundings, primarily feels she the responsibility for those people she has lost. Being poisonous, and feel guilty for something, especially for three deaths, those are two different things, though, both of them can easily make one feel as *a monster*. And Beatrice calls her so, many times. It is not easy to say which of those reasons for calling herself a monster outbalances as both of them are tough to accept, at least as I feel it that way. However, I am of that opinion, that when someone *somehow* differs from the others, he or she is definitely not a monster, not at all. That person is rather unique or special. And that is the point. Every person is an original individuality, rare as much as one can be. Of course, as long as one does not hurt anyone else. And therefore, no one should oneself a monster, just because of being *different*. And, in addition to this, I firmly believe, that when one feels responsible for something that could have not be affected anyway, and hence it even cannot be one’s fault, that person in no monster, but *a human*. A human with “a heart on a right place”. Because, as I assume, if one feels bad or guilty for something that has happened and one could not do anything about it, that person has real and very sensitive feelings, has a heart, and, is *a human*. No monster, just a human.

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<sup>61</sup> GOSS, Theodora. *The Strange Case of the Alchemist’s Daughter*. Saga Press. New York, 2017, 164.

<sup>62</sup> Goss, 173.

Nevertheless, talking about monsters, it brings us to Frankenstein and his creation.

To start with, it is interesting and quite remarkable that the characters of *The Strange Case of the Alchemist's Daughter* point out to this famous literary character<sup>63</sup> as well as it is treated as a real thing. “Was there not an account – written by the wife of the poet Shelley, I believe? Frankenstein: A Biography of the Modern Prometheus, or some such... No. It is more bunk than I am. The public may have considered it fiction, but the members of the Société knew that Frankenstein had existed, and he had created a monster. At least, so my father told me.”<sup>64</sup>

I personally find it very attractive and also kind of engaging to read a story where fiction of a fiction story is eventually considered as a real story. Fundamentally, the whole Goss's novel is based on this principle. Principle of fusion of different realms, of linking facts and fiction, fiction and another fiction, and eventually of making a whole new story consisting of many different stories. This is however what intertextuality itself is about. To include and to point out to other stories or plots in newly written one.

Thus, in this particular story, Frankenstein and his monster are considered as real ones. Furthermore, as it has been already mentioned before, though Frankenstein had come up with his theory (of bringing a dead matter back to the life via putting and sewing limbs and other parts of body together) a century ago, his experiment has still remained as an inspiration for future scientists, as in this case, for Dr. Jekyll or Dr. Rappaccini.

Nevertheless, I would like to highlight one thing, one opinion of mine. When saying “A Frankenstein's monster”, everybody (either in any book or in the real world) visualizes a frightening giant whose body parts have been stitched together, who has screws all over his body as well as huge and long scars, with a murderous look in his face. People usually treat *him* as something which is not supposed to be a part of this world. They tend to say that he is dangerous. Scary. A monster. But, is that actually true? Is *he* the monster? Personally, I do not share this point of view. Frankenstein's monster, who actually even has no name, he is just called *a monster*, is rather “a poor creature” to me. Though he did bad things (at least in the

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<sup>63</sup> SHELLEY, Mary. *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*. Lackington, Hughes, Harding, Mavor & Jones, London, 1818.

<sup>64</sup> GOSS, Theodora. *The Strange Case of the Alchemist's Daughter*. Saga Press. New York, 2017, 177.

literary version), he did not choose to be a monster, he did not choose to exist at all. He was *made* to be a monster, which eventually caused that he also behaved like one. Because all of further circumstances made him feel abandoned, misunderstood, and eventually longing for revenge. *That* actually made him a monster. And all of that was on account of Victor Frankenstein's decision to create him. So even though he did not choose this way of life, he did not choose to live at all, and Frankenstein's intentions were even intended in the first place as noble ones (there is an obvious difference between the intentions of creation -while Mary Shelley's monster were created with a noble and good intentions, Goss's Frankenstein were created, by contrast, with more an evil purpose), yet it is still him who he had to deal with the subsequent consequences of his creator's choice to bring him alive. Because *he* was marked as a monster, not Frankenstein, though he did not want to or choose to be one. So, is *he* the real *monster*?

From my personal point of you, I do not think so. I am convinced, that in the case of this novel, it is the society that creates these *monsters*.

## Chapter XI – The Marvelous Circus

### Summary

An assembly. That is an option how the chapter could be simply described.

Mary, Diana and Beatrice arrived at the fields of Battersea Park, where the circus – *Lorenzo's Circus of Marvels and Delights* - had taken place, and where they were supposed to meet with Catherine Moreau. As they did not know what she looked like or where exactly they were supposed to meet, Mary bought girls tickets for the show hoping that Catherine would find them herself. And she *did*.

When it came to the Cat Woman performance, everything began to happen.

Beatrice was called to touch the cat by herself. Once she went to do so, the Cat told her something in Latin. Mary asked Beatrice what was going on between the two of them and Catherine responded and said, that the Cat is actually Catherine Moreau and that she wanted



to meet with them. *“The Cat Woman is Catherine Moreau. She told mee to find her tent and meet her there once the circus begins.”*<sup>65</sup>

They found the tent a met with Catherine. However, Catherine was a Cat Woman no more. *“She put her hands to her throat and fumbled there for a moment. Then she put her hands on her ears and lifted off – not only the eras, but the entire cat head. Underneath, she had dark brown hair coiled into braids so it would lie flat under the headpiece... network of lighter scars that covered Catherine Moreau’s body.”*<sup>66</sup>

After a minute, Catherine introduced the girls one more.. giant *individuality*. It was Justine Frankenstein, a daughter of Victor Frankenstein (at least it Goss’s book she was treated that way), who was created by putting her body parts together. Catherine intended to tell them more about Justine and her father, however, she suddenly smelled something. A danger. *“No, I smell something. Something like a man, but not like a man. I think we’re in danger.”*<sup>67</sup>

To get away from that possible danger, they disguised themselves in men clothes, so not to be recognized among other people in the city, and started to run away. Diana, for instance, took the role of ‘pretend to be a boy’ too seriously, thereupon she even cut her hair. *“... and off had come all her red curls...”*<sup>68</sup>

During their escape, they separated. Mary, Justine and Beatrice ran together, and Diana was accompanied by Catherine. The final destination was clear – Mary’s house which was supposed to serve as a sanctuary for all of them.

While Diana and Catherine were trying to get there, they had to deal with the men hunting them down, literally. The men were not ordinary men. According to Catherine, they were something more. *“I know what they are, but it’s impossible. They look like the creatures my father made. Like Beast Men.”*<sup>69</sup> Luckily, they were able to shake them off, via such an

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<sup>65</sup> GOSS, Theodora. *The Strange Case of the Alchemist’s Daughter*. Saga Press. New York, 2017, 185.

<sup>66</sup> Goss, 187.

<sup>67</sup> Goss, 189.

<sup>68</sup> Goss, 191.

<sup>69</sup> Goss, 198.

impressive way of escape, though. Not only to get rid of the men, but also to cross the whole city, Diana and Catherine travelled across the roofs. As if they were real cats.

Eventually, they all safely assembled at Mary's house. However, not every person in the house was safe. *"Come in, come in quickly... Poor Miss Frankenstein has killed a man!"*<sup>70</sup>

## Analysis

We have already become acquainted with Diana's life story as well as with Beatrice's one.

Now, it is time to get to know Catherine and Justine a little bit (because their single separate stories will be focused in more detail later on).

Therefore, not surprisingly, we have been given throughout this chapter just few pieces of information relating to those two girls. Though, it is more than obvious that both of them are very special and sort of noteworthy individuals.

Catherine Moreau, a girl with light scars covering her body, with animal instincts and features as well (feline ones, to be specific), and undoubtedly with an interesting history, too.

Furthermore, even in Catherine's life a figure of her father played a certain and probably an essential role - in the way that even *her* father was responsible for *creating* her. As well as it was in Diana's, Beatrice's, and also Justine's case.

*"... Catherine looked like an ordinary woman, but her yellow eyes still had something wild in their depths."*<sup>71</sup>

*" For a moment, memory took Catherine back to the island, to the menagerie of Dr. Moreau."*

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<sup>70</sup> GOSS, Theodora. *The Strange Case of the Alchemist's Daughter*. Saga Press. New York, 2017, 201.

<sup>71</sup> Goss, 187.

<sup>72</sup> Goss, 198.

Justine Frankenstein, a giant girl, stronger than any other one, whose body parts were assembled to make her alive. But. Not quite *alive*, as she has not become any older yet. Moreover, not only does she not know *when* she dies, but she also does not know *if* she *can* die at all. Justine Frankenstein, a sad girl with a sad story, for all of which, again and again, her father is basically responsible for.

*“She had a long, gentle face and say eyes.”*<sup>73</sup>

*“Although I was completely innocent, I was hanged... And my father, Victor Frankenstein, took my body. He brought me back to life, or to a semblance of it. Am I alive? I have not aged like an ordinary woman. I do not know when I will die. SO perhaps I am not alive after all...”*<sup>74</sup>

It is also worth noting that her name, Justine, represents not only one of the main characters, but also points to the connection with the original Mary Shelley’s work, in which we can find a character of the Frankenstein family’s servant – Justine Moritz. Their life stories were quite different, yet they had something in common. Both Justine Frankenstein and Justine Moritz were kind, frank-hearted, clever and also very grateful girls who would do basically anything to help the people they love.

## Chapter XII – Catherine’s Story

### Summary

Examining the corpse lying in Jekyll’s parlor, Catherine immediately recognized this individuality. *It was not a man* actually, as it had been presumed by the others, but rather *a pig*. However, not an ordinary pig, though. *“What you have killed is a pig, specifically a boar pig, surgically transformed into a man.”*<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> GOSS, Theodora. *The Strange Case of the Alchemist’s Daughter*. Saga Press. New York, 2017, 188.

<sup>74</sup> Goss, 190.

<sup>75</sup> Goss, 207.

Obviously, this assumption, a definite one, needed an clarifying explanation. Thus, Catherine started to recount *her story*.

She told them about her original appearance and actual being – that at the very beginning, she was a puma. A puma, that was shipped to an island to serve as an experiment object.

In charge of all the biological experiments, concerning transmutation beasts into men, were Dr. Moreau and Edward Prendick, members of the Alchemical Society.

Day by day, Catherine had been taught to speak like an Englishman, to behave like on, and, eventually, to look like one. And although she was even given a name, Catherine (Cat in here), she has never felt as a human at all. “*Am I human? I don’t know.*”<sup>76</sup> She explained *why*, as she continued with recounting her story.

Firstly, she has scars all over her body. And, secondly, after all that had happened on the island she could have not felt as a human at all. Catherine killed Moreau. She even killed other Beast Men in order to survive. However, she killed them (and even ate some of them) not only to protect herself, but also to protect Prendick as he shad stayed with her, taken care of her, felt for her..

But one day, Prendick left Catherine on the island alone and sailed on a raft from her. He was probably scared of Catherine as she behaved like a real beast lately. So, consequently, Catherine remained all alone on the island.. just with some remaining beasts.

Nevertheless, after being rescued by a captain, followingly expelled from the Tibbetts, Catherine ended up in Lorenzo’s Circus of Marvels, from where she was found and released by Mary and the others.

One more note to this, Catherine was sure that Prendick perished on the ocean. However, according to one of the letters Mary has obtained, Prendick is still alive. This piece of

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<sup>76</sup> GOSS, Theodora. *The Strange Case of the Alchemist’s Daughter*. Saga Press. New York, 2017, 210.

information has made Catherine somehow.. surprised, for she felt for Prendick. *“Catherine opened her mouth, then closed it again, as though she could not continue.”*<sup>77</sup>

Once Catherine’s recounting ends, the chapter does as well, with one deed, though – burying the dead man, or, rather, the dead pig. *“Then they placed him under a tree near the Inner Circle, close to the pond, where beggar might be expected to lie down on a chilly, but not cold, spring night.”*<sup>78</sup>

### Analysis

An island. The name of Doctor Moreau. Beast Men. All of that undoubtedly refers to a science fiction novel, written by Herbert George Wells in 1896, *The Island of Doctor Moreau*<sup>79</sup>.

Even though, it is an obvious reference to this literary work of H. G. Wells, in this novel there are several alterations and differences in comparison to the original story.

Whereas in the Wells’ story the transformed individuals are called Beast Folks, in Goss’s story they are called Beast Men. For instance, *“When the Beast Men discovered that Moreau was dead, ...”*<sup>80</sup>

Secondly, in the original story Dr. Moreau hunted and chased after the Beast (Puma) Woman with a gun, and he eventually killed her. However in this story, Catherine (representing the Beast Woman) was called after, as she had been a lost cat – *“Here, Catherine, where are you, Catherine.”*<sup>81</sup> and it was precisely her who eventually had survived as well the subsequent fight as it all. And Dr. Moreau was the one who had died. *“I strangled him with my chains, which still hung from the manacles on my wrists. Montgomery found me standing over him as*

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<sup>77</sup> GOSS, Theodora. *The Strange Case of the Alchemist’s Daughter*. Saga Press. New York, 2017, 216.

<sup>78</sup> Goss, 222.

<sup>79</sup> WELLS, Herbert George. *The Island of Doctor Moreau*. Heinemann, London, 1896.

<sup>80</sup> GOSS, Theodora. *The Strange Case of the Alchemist’s Daughter*. Saga Press. New York, 2017, 212.

<sup>81</sup> Goss, 212.

*he lay on the ground, staring up at the sky with empty eyes. There was blood on my mouth. Perhaps I was still more animal than they had realized.”*<sup>82</sup>

Finally, in *The Island of Doctor Moreau*<sup>83</sup> there was no mentioning of the Alchemical Society as it plays a fundamental and also mysterious role in *our* story,.. again and again.

## Chapter XIII – Return to the Asylum

### Summary

While Beatrice was staying with Justine at home, Dr. Watson was accompanying Diana and Catherine to Whitechapel (to the Magdalen Society, to be specific), Mary along with Holmes and Mrs. Poole were on their way to Purfleet again.

They hoped to find out more information about the lunatic guy, Renfield – whether he had any partners in his crimes, or any associates when he had escaped. They did not get the answers they had hoped for, though, after visiting a former worker in the asylum, Joe Abernathy, they finally gained a piece of information. It was related to Renfield’s sort of weird experiment approach which had included eating flies. *“He wanted to know how much life he could get out of them, and then how much if the spiders were eaten by birds – but we never let it get past spiders, which he could catch himself.”*<sup>84</sup> Apparently, he wanted to find out the secret of life, and to prove the Alchemical Society that could be a worthy member . Yet, with no success. He was regarded a lunatic, a mad man, instead.

Nevertheless, based on some notes, which Mary had taken down during their visit in Purfleet, they have connected Renfield’s name with another name, already mentioned one, Edward Prendick. *That* Prendick from Catherine’s story. And, moreover, *that* Prendick mentioned in Professor Van Helsing’s letter. It could not be a coincidence. There had to be a certain connection, a certain reason of his presence and kind of collaboration in the whole case.

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<sup>82</sup> GOSS, Theodora. *The Strange Case of the Alchemist’s Daughter*. Saga Press. New York, 2017, 212.

<sup>83</sup> WELLS, Herbert George. *The Island of Doctor Moreau*. Heinemann, London, 1896.

<sup>84</sup> GOSS, Theodora. *The Strange Case of the Alchemist’s Daughter*. Saga Press. New York, 2017, 243.

Hence, it was more than clear to find him and solve it. *“I believe our next course of action is to return to London and pay a visit to Mr. Prendick.”*<sup>85</sup>

## Chapter XIV – The Twisted Man

### Summary

When Mary, Mr. Holmes and Mrs. Poole came back to 11 Park Terrace, Mary’s home, they were shocked. They found another Beast Man (a Bear Man, to be specific) dead and, more importantly, that Justine and Beatrice are missing. The only things that have left were a mess and lot of damages indicating signs of fight and struggling. Even though, her friends were missing, Mary accompanied Holmes on his way to Soho to search for Prendick as he is probably the only one who know how to create Beast Men, and therefore, one of *those* who *must* be connected to everything that has been happening.

Another “progression” has taken a place in the Magdalen Society to where Catherine tried to get in disguise pretending to be one of the “not a good girls” who want to save their souls. During the night Catherine sneaked out of her bed and tried to find Mrs. Raymond’s office, as she is in charge of the Magdalen Society, and find further information about the murdered girls (because all of them were also connected to this place). However, Catherine has got much more she could have hoped for. Once she reached Mrs. Raymond’s office, she heard Mrs. Raymond talking to another man. They were discussing a matter of providing girls and paying for them. Moreover, Diana’s name was mentioned. *“I already know where Diana is, Mrs. Raymond.”*<sup>86</sup> Above all, it was right Diana’s father, and probably Mary’s as well. Mr. Hyde, whom Mrs. Raymond was talking to. *“I don’t think much of you or your organization, Mr. Hyde, ...”*<sup>87</sup> No doubt, Catherine has just found Mr. Hyde who is real and alive! But suddenly, Mrs. Raymond and Mr. Hyde were interrupted by a sound. It was Alice actually, Catherine’s roommate, who was spying on her. Luckily, Alice did not tell anything about Catherine to Mrs. Raymond. However, what was not that lucky was what the thing following. Mrs. Raymond

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<sup>85</sup> GOSS, Theodora. *The Strange Case of the Alchemist’s Daughter*. Saga Press. New York, 2017, 239.

<sup>86</sup> Goss, 262.

<sup>87</sup> Goss, 262.

grab the little girl and gave her to Mr. Hyde to keep her. “... *her hands are as red and raw as a scullery maid’s... But you might as well take her with you.*”<sup>88</sup> After that, Mr. Hyde left, accompanied by Alice and another Beast Man, who was there for the whole time as well.

Once this “meeting” over, Catherine got out of that place at once and met with Diana who was waiting for her outside the gate of the Magdalen Society. Reunited again, Catherine told Diana about meeting her father. Diana, quite surprisingly, responded with those words: “*If I’d known, I would have looked at him more closely.*”<sup>89</sup> After providing this piece of information, both of the girls rushed as fast and faraway of that place as possible.

## Chapter XV – The Streets of Soho

### Summary

The whole plot and the whole investigation in general is gaining momentum. Mysteries are step by step becoming clearer and clearer, and also mysterious people are coming to the light and becoming *visible*.

Holmes and Mary reached a place where Mr. Prendick had been supposed to have dinner at. And he did. After he had finished his food, Mary and Holmes followed him through the streets of Soho to the docks. Mr. Prendick entered one of those warehouses, and Mary and Holmes waited outside watching what was going on inside through a window.

They could see Mr. Prendick, several Beast Men and also their friend Justine tied up and laying on a desk. In a while, another individuality has shown up. He was giant and obviously very strong, and he was talking to Mr. Prendick, shouting on him with a fury, actually. He was Adam, a “monster” created by Victor Frankenstein. The monster which was supposed to be perished. But it has not. He was standing right there, shouting commands on Mr. Prendick to replace Justine’s brain with one of the murdered girls’ one. The reason, why Adam wanted Mr. Prendick to do that, was because Justine did not love him. And he wanted her to love him. So

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<sup>88</sup> GOSS, Theodora. *The Strange Case of the Alchemist’s Daughter*. Saga Press. New York, 2017, 263.

<sup>89</sup> Goss, 267.



the “only way” to get that what to replace her brain with a different one willing to do anything Adam says.

Meanwhile, Diana along with the help of the little boy Charlie was trying to save Beatrice, who was being kept in one of the warehouse’s rooms. Even though her room was filled with her poison, Diana and Charlie were able not to get poisoned (thanks to Charlie’s handkerchief), or get burnt by her, and so they successfully got Beatrice out of that place.

Moreover, even Hyde was about to be seen in there. Mary finally saw him.. saw her father, but in a different body. *“That’s Hyde. He looks exactly as he did when I was a child. But that’s not possible. He died. My father died.”*<sup>90</sup>

Eventually, all of them gathered in one of the rooms, in the one where Justine was. And there they were – Mary, Beatrice, Catherine, Justine, Diana, Charlie, Dr. Watson and Mr. Holmes – standing against the giant Adam Frankenstein, his Beast Men, Mr. Prendick and, also, Mr. Hyde...

### Analysis

We have seen a lot of features of intertextuality in this novel so far, and right in this chapter we could find another, very specific one (besides the characters’ comments to the story and references and links to other literary stories).

In this case, it relates to the figure of Adam, a monster created by Victor Frankenstein who was supposed to be perished. Not only is he alive, but he is also determined to make Justine love him by replacing her brain with a different one.

Nevertheless, *the connection* between Adam and intertextuality concerns the way Adam (and Victor Frankenstein himself as well) is treated. On one hand, there he is. Tall, strong and alive. *“He was the largest man she had ever seen, at least seven feet tall, but it was not his height that struck her most. No, it was the breadth of his shoulders, the thickness of his arms and*

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<sup>90</sup> GOSS, Theodora. *The Strange Case of the Alchemist’s Daughter*. Saga Press. New York, 2017, 276.

*legs, muscled like the strongest of circus strongmen.*"<sup>91</sup> On the other hand, he is still treated as Mary Shelley's book character<sup>92</sup>, especially by Dr. Watson. "*But the monster perished... It says so in Mrs. Shelley's account.*"<sup>93</sup> The fact he is treated that way once again represents a postmodern feature of intertextuality, in which the reader is aware of the fictitious nature of the next, the things unreal, impossible, textual and intertextual, etc.

Theodora Goss literally puts a literary character from another book (actually characters from more literary works) into her literary work, into her literary *world*. And, moreover, Goss's realm is being told and narrated by its characters themselves, as it has been already mentioned before. By characters who are considered the authors of the whole story, and of this novel at all (representing another postmodern feature – authorial self-reference). In conclusion to this, now there are actually at least three realms, three "worlds", combined and put together into just one story.

## Chapter XVI – Into the Warehouse

### Summary

Tension. Chaos. Shots. Danger. Relief. With those words Chapter XVI might be simply described with no doubt.

The increasing tension between that two "tribes" – on one side Mary and her companions, on the other side Adam Frankenstein and his villains. The whole situation was step by step getting out of control. Beast Men were full of anger; and whereas Adam was very indignant and determined Justine not let go no matter what, as he had been so deep in love with her, Holmes was strongly resolved to save her.

While Holmes and Adam were talking to each other with sort of resistance, Justine was able to untie herself and escape. Nevertheless, based on Justine's explanation about how she had

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<sup>91</sup> GOSS, Theodora. *The Strange Case of the Alchemist's Daughter*. Saga Press. New York, 2017, 274.

<sup>92</sup> SHELLEY, Mary. *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*. Lackington, Hughes, Harding, Mavor & Jones, London, 1818.

<sup>93</sup> GOSS, Theodora. *The Strange Case of the Alchemist's Daughter*. Saga Press. New York, 2017, 278.

managed to do that, someone must have helped her to untie her ankles.. Actually, not just *someone*, but Hyde himself with the help of one of the Beast Men have helped her.

Once Justine was safe, the next step was clear – to get out of that place. Not only because Justine was safe and compared to that the warehouse was unsafe, but also because Dr. Watson was hurt and his wound was a serious one. He needed help. Immediately. Moreover, as if that were not enough, during the chaotic and dangerous struggling among each other, piles of paper lying on a desk lit and after a while the whole room broke out in the fire.

Luckily, all of them were able to eventually get away from the warehouse before the fire spread all over the building. All but one. Adam. He did not make it and so he had stayed captive in the igneous place.

When there was no more danger around, and because Dr. Watson’s wound was getting worse, Beatrice realized she could use her poison touch to heal, or, at least, to make it stop bleeding. And she was successful. *“Where she touched, the dried blood bubbled away and the skin burned. But it was clean, as though disinfected by fire.”*<sup>94</sup>

Eventually, Charlie, Sherlock’s little helper, found them a boat so they were able to get Dr. Watson to the hospital. And there they were heading to the boat – Catherine, Justine, Dr. Watson, Holmes, Mary, Alice and the madman Renfield. Diana and little Charlie were not accompanying them for they were on their way to alert a fire station to put out the fire.

And last but not least, even though Prendick’s whereabouts has remained unknown, Hyde’s whereabouts, at least, was for the first time finally known as he walked with them. Handcuffed by Holmes, though.

To sum up, in this chapter has happened a lot, and much more has been revealed (for instance, that Adam had murdered all of those women as he had wanted to find the one who would have looked like Justine as much as possible; or the fact that Hyde had been helping Adam with good intentions at the very beginning before Adam had gone mad about Justine etc). Yet, there are still few mysteries which have remained unsolved.. *“How had her father, or rather*

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<sup>94</sup> GOSS, Theodora. *The Strange Case of the Alchemist’s Daughter*. Saga Press. New York, 2017, 305.

*Hyde, convinced him to confess to murders he had not committed? And why Renfield in the first place? What was his connection with the society, and with Hyde?”*<sup>95</sup>

## Chapter XVII – A Boat on the Thames

### Summary

“Our” group of investigators are finally on the boat named *Hesperus*, heading to hospital in Chelsea to let them take care of wounded Dr. Watson.

During their voyage, Holmes proved the captain, George Mudge, that he really is the Sherlock Holmes who is kind of master in deduction, detection and also telling things just from little signs or details. Thanks to that proof the captain had no problem with letting them board without paying the whole prize.

The rest of the crew were thinking about lives, how it could have been if... Alice had not left the Jekyll's, if Catherine had not become one of the Prendick's Beast Men, if Justine had not become the Giantess made of pieces put together, if Beatrice had not become the Poisonous Girl. And Mary. Mary was thinking if she can ever forgive her father, and also Mr. Hyde, all the things he had done. *“I could forgive him betraying me, but betraying Mama – never.”*<sup>96</sup>

However, if it weren't for all of this, the girls would have never met each other and so they would have never become this sort of *family of monsters*.

Meanwhile Diana and Charlie warned the fire station about the fire at the warehouse, even though one of the firemen did not believe them, and rather accused them of setting the fire. Eventually, after Diana's attempt to explain that, he believed them and so with the rest of the firefighters went to do their duty. Once the problem with fire was secured, Diana and Charlie hit the way back home, to Park Terrace.

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<sup>95</sup> GOSS, Theodora. *The Strange Case of the Alchemist's Daughter*. Saga Press. New York, 2017, 303.

<sup>96</sup> Goss, 319.

## Chapter XVIII – Back to Park Terrace

### Summary

Finally, they all made it to the hospital, to the Royal Hospital, a home for veterans, actually where Dr. Watson's wounds could be treated as anywhere else in London.

Once it was taken care of Dr. Watson, Holmes along with Catherine were on their way to Scotland Yard to bring Hyde and Renfield to justice.

Mary, Alice, Justine and Beatrice came back to Park Terrace to finally have breakfast prepared by Mrs. Poole.

Unfortunately, before they started to eat, Justine had fainted again. Even though she was the Giantess and stronger than any women, in her heart she was not that strong. She was very sensitive, and therefore when she was passing the place where she had killed one of the Beast Men before, she fainted. Girls immediately took her to Mr. Jekyll's bedroom to let her rest for a while, until Mr. Holmes came to ask her a few questions relating to Adam Frankenstein.

After Holmes's and Catherine's arrival from Scotland Yard, Justine was about to tell her story. But. Before that, Beatrice had picked up a book from the table and handed it to Holmes. It was called *Frankenstein: A Biography of the Modern Prometheus*. Holmes was fascinated by the book and also determined to read at once. Nevertheless, all of them, including Holmes, wanted to hear the same story told by Justine first, so they could see how truthful the book actually is. "*Miss Frankenstein will tell us to what extent it can be trusted.*"<sup>97</sup>

And so Justine started to recount her story..

### Analysis

Here, once more, the book written by Mary Shelley has been mentioned again. For us, as readers, it can be treated as a perfect intertextual feature –an incorporation of a real book written by a real, once living author, to a made up a story occurring in a real book written by

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<sup>97</sup> GOSS, Theodora. *The Strange Case of the Alchemist's Daughter*. Saga Press. New York, 2017, 336.

a real, living, author. It is a bit tangled, but interesting and impressive though. Mixing real and unreal features, blending more stories together to make new and special one, these are exactly one of the characteristic features or principals of use of intertextuality in literature.

In this case, our heroes deal with the book of *Frankenstein: A Biography of the Modern Prometheus*. However, the original novel written by Shelley is called *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*<sup>98</sup>. Based on that, there is actually slight difference between those two literary works. Nevertheless, the author of either of the books is still Mary Shelley.

I find it very peculiar, but impressive and engaging as well, to read a story consisting of links and references to other stories. Therefore, from my personal point of view, I dare to say that Theodora Goss has done the job with her novel very well and therefore it is really a pleasure to read it.

## Chapter XIX – Justine’s Story

### Summary

It is finally Justine’s turn to tell her own life story.

Justine is describing her life, beginning with a description of her life as a young girl, Justine Moritz, a nursemaid in the Frankenstein’s family who was wrongly accused of a murder of the youngest member of the family, William, until the certain point she came across Catherine.

Even though, it was Adam (Victor Frankenstein’s first created monster, the eldest son of the Frankensteins’ family) who killed William, it was however Justine who was eventually blamed for his death, and therefore she was hang to death for that.

Nevertheless, Victor was begged and actually sort of ordered by Victor to “create” Justine and bring her back to life, otherwise he would kill his own family. Victor agreed on that. He created Justine from her former corpse. However, he did so not in Switzerland, but in England as there

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<sup>98</sup> SHELLEY, Mary. *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*. Lackington, Hughes, Harding, Mavor & Jones, London, 1818.

had been developed new surgical techniques he might have found very useful. And so Justine was created, calling Victor *her father* as he not only made her, but also taught her and took care of her. Actually, he did not want give her to Adam.

Notwithstanding, one day, Adam came for her. He was fighting Victor to get her, struggling him and eventually throwing him down to the sea. From that moment, Justine was all his. She did everything she had been told and supposed to do. She has not happy.

After a while living that way, Adam asked her if she had loved him. She did not respond, but he could see her answer in her face. He got angry. They started struggling. Eventually, Justine overwhelmed him and ran away. She did not know if she had killed him or not, but in case she had not, she tried to hide herself, and never tried to set fire not to attract Adam's attention.

In the end, she had been living in a small cottage, growing vegetable and eating seafood. She had been living so for a hundred years until she met Catherine, a Cat Woman, who had heard a lot about this mysterious Giantess living in a small cottage in the South of England and who had been determined to save her, as both of them had been created, ... and because both of them were monsters. "*Look. I, too, am made. I, too, am a monster. Monstrum sum.*"<sup>99</sup>

### Analysis

Justine's story in Goss's novel has both similarities and differences with the story of Frankenstein's monster written by Mary Shelley<sup>100</sup>.

The creator of both of the monsters, Victor Frankenstein, lived in Geneva in both of the stories. Also the character of Justine herself was originally described as a maid in Frankenstein's family. However, there is a substantial distinction, between those two literary works, which concerns what follows after William's death. Whereas in Shelley's story the monster, which is actually nameless, begged Victor to make a mate for him otherwise he would kill him during

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<sup>99</sup> GOSS, Theodora. *The Strange Case of the Alchemist's Daughter*. Saga Press. New York, 2017, 358.

<sup>100</sup> SHELLEY, Mary. *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*. Lackington, Hughes, Harding, Mavor & Jones, London, 1818.

his wedding night, in the Goss's story the monster called Adam ordered him to create a female for him or he would kill his whole family. Therefore, in both of the stories the monster threatens Victor to kill some of his loved ones.

On the other hand, what follows after the creation of monster's female differs. Mary Shelley narrates that Victor eventually decided to get rid of the body of the female monster as he had been so afraid of them to reproduce themselves. And, in order to eliminate this risk, he threw the body into the sea. Theodora Goss, unlike that, describes how Victor created Justine and, moreover, taught her and took care of her. Eventually, it was right him who was thrown into the sea by Adam, his first monster, as he had refused to let Justine be with him. In addition to that, Victor Frankenstein, creator of the monster, died in the end – either by an accident or being killed by Adam.

Another difference relates to the life of the monsters themselves, the ones who survived. While the Shelley's monster felt lonely, misunderstood, tormented by remorse of his deeds, Goss's Justine, our heroine, was alone too, however, soon she has become known and kind of famous for her strength and height. Before she met Catherine and joined the Circus of Marvels and Delights, she had been living in a small cottage by the seashore, growing vegetables and reading books. She had actually lived like a human, though, she had been not a human. She even had not aged. As the days passed by, Justine has been called the Cornish Giantess, and for being that "famous", the Circus of Marvels and Delights decided to find her and get her.

Mentioning Circus of Marvels and Delights, and the Cornish Giantess legend, it should again be noted that even now, in both cases, these are not random and newly created names and concepts by the author. The name, or the term, Circus of Marvels and Delights coincides with the title of a literary work written by Justin Fisher, *Ned's Circus of Marvels and Delights*<sup>101</sup>, recounting a story of a young boy Ned experiencing an engaging adventure full of spells, creatures from other worlds, villainous treasons and extraordinary magic, in which the power of friendship, loyalty and love are truly tested. In the second case, the legend of Cornish Giantess, it does not refer us to another literary work, but to existing legends relating to several places in the Cornwall area. One of those legends also includes a story, in which a

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<sup>101</sup> FISHER, Justine. *Ned's Circus of Marvels*. HarperCollins Publishers. London, 2016.



giantess (called Cormelian) performs - a legend of the origin and foundation of St. Michael's Mount.

*“St Michael's Mount was said to have been built as a home by the giant Cormoran and his wife, Cormelian, who were said to have lived in the forest now submerged beneath Mounts Bay. They quarried the granite of which the island is formed and Cormelian was forced by her husband to carry the stones in her apron. When he fell asleep, she decided to carry the lighter greenstone instead, but he awoke and caught her. He kicked her, her apron strings broke and she dropped the greenstone. However, a piece of it is still to be seen on the causeway leading to the Mount. Cormoran was eventually killed by Jack the Giant Killer who dug a deep pit on the Mount one night and disguised it with a cover of sticks and straw. He blew his horn to waken the giant and Cormoran rushed out and fell into the pit, whereupon Jack beheaded him with an axe.”*<sup>102</sup>

Last note relating to Justine's story in terms of intertextuality. In one of the conversations between the main characters, Catherine points out Shelley's story. Once more, Shelley's story about Frankenstein's monster is incorporated into this, Goss's, story and treated as common thing in their realm, in the realm of *The Strange Case of the Alchemist's Daughter*<sup>103</sup>.

## Chapter XX – The Athena Club

### Summary

After everything the girls had been through, all together, it was obvious they are going to stay together even further, though there had been some doubts about this idea at first.

After all, there they were – Mary, Diana, Catherine, Justine, Beatrice. A group of “monster girls”. The Athena Club. Also, not to be forgotten, Alice and Mrs. Poole whom had been playing essential roles in the previous events, were “members” of that club too.

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<sup>102</sup> “The Cornwall Guide”. *Giants of Cornwall*. Cornwall Guide, 2022, <https://www.cornwalls.co.uk/myths-legends/giants.htm>.

<sup>103</sup> GOSS, Theodora. *The Strange Case of the Alchemist's Daughter*. Saga Press. New York, 2017.

However the mysterious murder in Whitechapel had been solved, the mystery relating to the Société des Alchimistes has still remained opened. Moreover, another slight problem has come to light. This one concerned the question what they are going to do to make a living as they all had to eat something and also pay for Mrs. Pool for the help with housework.

Eventually, all of the girls were able to use their special skills to support themselves. Beatrice grew medicinal herbs and sold them to the Royal Hospital and also to the Royal College of Surgeons, Catherine wrote books which brought even in royalties, Justine painted pictures full of flowers (especially full of lilacs), and Mary became Holmes's personal assistant (as he had apparently needed someone to take care about his mess in papers). Even though Diana should have gone to school, as she had been at the age of schoolchildren, the girls couldn't afford to pay for school fees, and therefore Diana and Alice as well were taught at home by their friends.

Everything seemed to be fine. Everything but one thing. The escape of Hyde caused by Diana who had given him a hatpin to help him escape from prison. *"You gave it to him, didn't you?"... "Well, he's our dad! Whether you want to admit it or not."*<sup>104</sup>

At the end, the "number" of unsolved and remaining problems has increased over again...

## Analysis

One brief note to this chapter relating to intertextuality. Once more, Theodora Goss incorporated other literary works into her novel when Diana was looking for a book to read before going sleep.<sup>105</sup>

The books mentioned there included *A Child's History of England* (by Charles Dickens)<sup>106</sup>, *Poetical Fancies* (by Raymond L. Boelio)<sup>107</sup>, and *Alice in Wonderland* (by Lewis Carroll)<sup>108</sup>.

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<sup>104</sup> GOSS, Theodora. *The Strange Case of the Alchemist's Daughter*. Saga Press. New York, 2017, 385.

<sup>105</sup> Goss, 368.

<sup>106</sup> DICKENS, Charles. *A Child's History of England*. London: Bradbury & Evans, London, 1852-1854.

<sup>107</sup> BOELIO, Raymond L. *Poetical Fancies*. East Lansing, 1884.

<sup>108</sup> CARROLL, Lewis. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Macmillan, London, 1865.

## Chapter XXI – The Letter from Austria

### Summary

The very last chapter telling us how the lives of our characters go on. On Saturdays, the Athena Club, as they have entitled themselves, have official club meetings where they discuss upon certain topics. That time the discussion concerned issues such as how much money they have made; what news they have acknowledged about the Alchemical Society so far, if anything; what names they are going to give to two kittens found in the backyard, and, finally, a letter from Mary's former governess, Miss Murray, in which she's informing Mary about another girl to whom Miss Murray had recommended to contact the Athena Club as the girl had needed an immediate and sort of professional and very special help.

Therefore, Mary went on to read another letter, the one from the girl mentioned. She was writing about her concerns of being a subject of experiments carried out by her own father.. as well! Moreover, by her father who is also a member of the very Société des Alchimistes. And who is that girl actually? Lucinda Van Helsing, a daughter of Professor Abraham Van Helsing himself.

This letter and this Lucinda's calling for help meant only one thing - that the investigation, led by the Athena Club girls, continues...

*"And then we sat around the large mahogany table: Mary, Diana, Beatrice, Catherine, and Justine. Mapping travel routes, calculating expenses. Planning the future adventures of the Athena Club."*<sup>109</sup>

## Final Analysis and Interpretation

### Intertextuality

As it has been already said and also as it is very obvious, one of the key features relating use of intertextuality in literature is pointing to another literary works (or any other texts which has already been written). In the case of *The Strange Case of the Alchemist's Daughter* the

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<sup>109</sup> GOSS, Theodora. *The Strange Case of the Alchemist's Daughter*. Saga Press. New York, 2017, 395.

references include famous literary works such as *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, *Rappaccini's Daughter*, *Dracula*, *Frankenstein*; or, *The Modern Prometheus*; or *Oliver Twist*; or, *the Parish Boy's Progress* and others.

The links and allusions to those works might be apparent and decent (for instance, the character of little Charlie that might be representing the figure of Oliver Twist), or they might be very obvious. Those particular ones relate primarily to the names of the main characters – Mary Jekyll, Diana Hyde, Justine Frankenstein, Catherine Moreau, Beatrice Rappaccini, or to Sherlock Holmes and his loyal associate Dr. Watson as well – all of whom point out to famous novels or novellas (including either their main characters, stories, or settings) already written in the past.

Speaking of the main characters of this novel, in the narration and in the dialogues there can be found other typical features relating to intertextuality. These ones concern changing points of views of the narration (the story is recounting by multiple perspectives), changing narrators, and also switching between past and present (time frames).

### Theme

For this book being considered a Gothic and horror novel full of mysterious, fantasy and fiction themes. Throughout the story we can find much evidences and specific examples supporting and proving this statement.

To start with, all of the female main characters are treated as monsters. Moreover, even they call themselves monsters. *“Look. I, too, am made. I, too, am a monster. Monstrum sum.”*<sup>110</sup>

Secondly, the whole detective plot and investigation related concerning both the “old” murder of Sir Danvers Carew and the murders in Whitechapel. And, obviously, violence, death and

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<sup>110</sup> GOSS, Theodora. *The Strange Case of the Alchemist's Daughter*. Saga Press. New York, 2017, 358.

suffering cannot be missed while happening so. *“The Boar man moaned once, then lay dead at Diana’s feet, the blood from his jugular draining onto the floor.”*<sup>111</sup>

Thirdly, the Gothic allusions. One of those might be found right at the very beginning of the novel (Chapter 1 – The Girl in the Mirror) represented as a mirror image. And this very similar mirror image can be found also in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*<sup>112</sup>, for instance. Moreover, mentioning the book of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and its slight connections to Gothic allusions in this novel, double identity and changing personalities cannot be omitted.

Last but not least, a great majority of the allusions to other stories encompass scientific experiments, processes of transmutation, or vivisection. All of which might be considered a fantasy and even horror features. *“I was the puja, yes. After we disembarked, Moreau began the process that would turn me into a woman. Surgery, but also after a certain point, after my mind was receptive to it, hypnosis and education.”*<sup>113</sup>

#### Focus on Clothing

Throughout the novel we could notice several hints and remarks relating to feminist movement, women rights and also women clothing and clothing in general.

During the narration, the author often highlights the references to dresses, clothes, and special range of undergarments such as petticoats, corsets or chemise. Therefore, for instance, we could come across several comments in the story on a clothing in regard not being appropriate for a woman / a girl to wear as some of the main characters associate with the early feminist movement (which took place in 1890s), on the other hand, there are even some comments concerning strict resistance to wear a woman’s clothes at all.

*“Why would anyone want to wear girls’ clothes unless they had to?”*<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> GOSS, Theodora. *The Strange Case of the Alchemist’s Daughter*. Saga Press. New York, 2017, 295.

<sup>112</sup> WILDE, Oscar, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Lippincott’s Monthly Magazine, Philadelphia, 1890.

<sup>113</sup> GOSS, Theodora. *The Strange Case of the Alchemist’s Daughter*. Saga Press. New York, 2017, 210.

<sup>114</sup> Goss, 233.

*“Why do women have to wear such rotten clothes? I mean, you’ve got the chemise, and then the corset, and then the corset cover, and that’s before you’ve even put on the shirtwaist. What’s that point?”*<sup>115</sup>

*“Women should just wear men’s clothes. They’re easier to move in, more hygienic...”*<sup>116</sup>

*“Really, your modern is one of the most annoying things about you. That and your absolute mania about Votes for Women and Dress Reform. And no, you can’t comment here about the importance of the suffrage movement or the dangers of tight lacing.”*<sup>117</sup>

The clothing in this novel might be considered as another key motif, and also sort of analysis of identity and indication of a class status or a social position. For instance, in Chapter XIII – Return to the Asylum, Catherine had to be dressed as a prostitute in order to be accepted to the Magdalen Society as part of the investigation of the Whitechapel Murders. *“This morning, she was wearing one of Mary’s day dresses, a brown tartan with pleated collar. Her hair was pulled back into a chignon at the nape of her neck ... You’re never going to fool old Ma Raymond dressed like that... You need to look fancy, with flounces and furbelows – but cheap.”*<sup>118</sup>

Clothes basically reflect the characters' personalities and attitudes, for example - Diana would have felt more comfortable in male clothing, as a tomboy a suit would be more appropriate for her. There are also references to gender, for instance - Justine who is very tall uses male clothing as a form of disguise. The issue of cross-dressing plays therefore a certain role in the novel as well.

#### Situational Humour and Irony in Dialogues

Even though the story is narrated and “written” by Catherine, from time to time dialogues between characters occur as well. And, moreover, some of them contain features of

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<sup>115</sup> GOSS, Theodora. *The Strange Case of the Alchemist’s Daughter*. Saga Press. New York, 2017, 192.

<sup>116</sup> Goss, 193.

<sup>117</sup> Goss, 372.

<sup>118</sup> Goss, 231.

situational humour or irony. For instance, in Chapter XX – The Athena Club, it can be found in the narration concerning Beatrice’s state of feeling and dialogues that followed.

*“Beatrice closed her eyes and dreamed whatever flowers dream.”*

*“That’s very poetic, but they don’t dream anything. Flowers have no cerebral cortex.”*

*“Oh, for goodness’ sake. Can’t you be the romantic heroine? Mary is too sensible, Diana is too impulsive, and Justine is too tall.”<sup>119</sup>*

Catherine is the narrator of the story, becoming a writer as she would like to publish some of her publish at the end. Her narratorial voice therefore also include many dialogues with “sisters” or with other characters such as Mrs. Poole or Sherlock Holmes etc.

#### Process of Transformation

The concept of transformation accompanies us through the story the whole time, whether it concerns a physical or a mental change of a character. Moreover, this phenomenon is most of the time linked to the Gothic elements (such as peril, the element of uncanny, supernatural terror, mystery, madness or generally to the atmosphere of dark romanticism) in a way, thus raising it to an even higher level and therefore further underlines its substantial role.

Nevertheless, this process does not only concern the characters in this novel, but also the Gothic novel as a whole too.

Classic Gothic romantic novel, European Gothic, is usually filled with castles, doomed love, crypts, vampires, darkness, or graves, for instance. The literature was step by step developed through authors like Charlotte Brontë, Matthew Lewis, Mary Shelley, Ann Radcliffe, or Bram Stoker. Though, there was still a certain strong bond on the past, haunting images, or themes of aristocracy and heredity. In contrast, America, and therefore the American Gothic novel, did not have this tradition and foundations to build on. And yet, in 1798, in the work entitled

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<sup>119</sup> GOSS, Theodora. *The Strange Case of the Alchemist’s Daughter*. Saga Press. New York, 2017, 372.

*Wieland: or, The Transformation: An American Tale*, Charles Brockden Brown made it. He managed to redefine the term “Gothic” for a newly established nation.<sup>120</sup>

*“The novels he subsequently produced were conscious attempts to combine elements from these various traditions into something new, something intrinsically American— an “American” novel, built around native scenery, native incidents, blended into the form and style of his European models.”*<sup>121</sup>

Brown’s work of *Wieland* was characterized by elements of grotesque, religious mania, murder and suicide, or rape. Those were the basics that would form American Gothic. Thus it was Brown who actually was able to achieve barely a flicker of recognition compared to either his contemporaries, or the European predecessors of the genre. He makes substantial reading for anyone wanting to set up an idea of where American Gothic comes from, and how and why it developed to become one of the most persistent and adaptable strains of Gothic in its pure sense. For instance, Brown took the aspects of violence and religious themes in general, echoing from their America’s Puritan past, adding the element of supernatural to one side of it and also giving them humanistic and relatable angle. Another idea, he came up with, related to Indian Savages as a wild and savage outsider threat. However, one of the most important devices, of which Brown laid the cornerstone, was doubling. It has served not only as a source of inspiration for other well-known authors of this and other genres, but also as a source of themes and material in the world of film (*Deliverance*, *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, etc.). As the time passed, the genre of American Gothic has kept on evolving and reinventing itself. Authors from Edgar Allan Poe, Howard Phillips Lovecraft, to Stephen King and many others gradually added another building blocks into this “recipe”, and have made it flexible and thrive in an American domain.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> ELLINGER, Kat. „GOTHIC: THE TRANSFORMATION, AN AMERICAN TALE“. *Diabolique Magazine*, June 11 2016, <https://diaboliquemagazine.com/gothic-transformation-american-tale-2/>.

<sup>121</sup> WEINSTOCK, Jeffrey Andrew. *Charles Brockden Brown*, University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 2011, 21.

<sup>122</sup> ELLINGER, Kat. „GOTHIC: THE TRANSFORMATION, AN AMERICAN TALE“. *Diabolique Magazine*, June 11 2016, <https://diaboliquemagazine.com/gothic-transformation-american-tale-2/>.



## CONCLUSION

The aim of my diploma thesis was to consider and to analyse the theme of intertextuality in the selected works of contemporary writers of British and American fantasy genre.

At the beginning of the thesis an example of an intertextual text was used. This example included a comparative analysis of two very similar, yet completely different works – *A Study in Emerald* (written by Neil Gaiman) and *A Study in Scarlet* (written by Arthur Conan Doyle).

Subsequently, the thesis focused on the analysis of the contemporary fantastic novel of *The Strange Case of the Alchemist's Daughter*, written by Theodora Goss in 2017, which is full of many outstanding and extensive intertextual features, themes and topics that basically represent an endless field of possible ways to explore and analyse this novel, and also to discover further clues and hints present in the text. What has been revealed in this diploma thesis so far, however, concerns especially the elements of the Gothic literary tradition with a hint of humour and irony, the element of feminism, process of transformation, then a sense of humour and irony, the exploration of the detective story, and most fundamentally the element of intertextuality.

I came to conclusion that Theodora Goss inserted the mentioned elements of humour and irony to elevate the traditional take on familiar story and to present it in a different light. The reason for that may be either to popularize the story or to change the classic story in the new context to make it more mysterious for the reader to explore the eternal human conflicts present in the British and American literary tradition. Furthermore, the more mysterious it is, the more the author makes the reader focus on the story more carefully or even makes the reader go back to the original works and stories (such as original Stevenson's story of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Shelley's story of Frankenstein, or Stoker's Dracula, for instance), so one has to reread them to get a new insight into the works of classic literature.

Another sign of popularization may also be the aforementioned element of feminism which could be noticed in the way the main characters act, in the way they express their opinions and thoughts, or generally hidden between the lines.

The phenomenon of transformation also plays an important role in this novel, and it is actually applied on two levels here. The first one refers specifically to the characters of the story (for instance, the internal and external change of Dr. Jekyll/Mr. Hyde, or Mary Jekyll's personal development). In the second case, it deals with the transformation of genres in the context of contemporary fantastic fiction, i.e. with a change in the conception of both the traditional concept of the detective novel and the classic Gothic novel in the way which would entertain the reader. Again, this may be another sign or attempt to popularize the canon of the Gothic and Victorian fiction.

Last but not least, the most fundamental feature of this novel is - intertextuality. The story of *The Strange Case of the Alchemist's Daughter* contains a lot of references to other world-famous literary works such as *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, *Dracula*, *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, etc. However, not only does it refer to such works, but also to personalities who are known in a certain way (e.g. Jack the Ripper) or to any other existing facts (e.g. the Cornish Myths and Legends).

In conclusion, it is basically up to each of us what direction one will take during the reading, and it is definitely worth reading literature like this.

## RESUMÉ

Cílem mé diplomové práce bylo zanalyzovat téma intertextuality ve vybraných dílech současných britských a amerických spisovatelů žánru fantasy.

Na začátku práce byl představen příklad intertextuálního textu. Tato část práce zahrnovala srovnávací analýzu dvou velmi podobných, a přesto zcela odlišných děl - *Studie ve smaragdu (A Study in Emerald)* od autora Neila Gaimana a *Studie v šarlatové (A Study in Scarlet)* od autora Arthura C. Doylea.

Následně se práce zaměřila na analýzu současného fantastického románu *Podivný případ alchymistovy dcery (The Strange Case of the Alchemist's Daughter)*, který napsala autorka Theodora Gossová v roce 2017. Toto dílo v sobě skrývá nespočet různých intertextuálních prvků, témat a námětů, které tak čtenáři poskytují různé cesty a způsoby, jak tento román zkoumat a analyzovat. To, co bylo v této diplomové práci doposud odhaleno, se však týká zejména prvků gotické literární tradice s nádechem humoru a ironie, prvku feminismu, procesu proměny, dále pak smyslu pro humor a ironii, zkoumání detektivního příběhu, a v neposlední řadě, a především, prvku intertextuality.

Během psaní této práce jsem došla k závěru, že Theodora Gossová poukazovala na zmíněné prvky humoru a ironie proto, aby nám poskytla jiný úhel pohledu na tradiční pojetí jinak známého příběhu. Důvodem pro tento autorčin přístup může dle mého názoru být buď snaha o popularizaci příběhu, nebo o změnu klasického příběhu v novém kontextu tak, aby byl pro čtenáře o něco více záhadnější – a to tím způsobem, že skrze tento příběh může čtenář zkoumat věčné lidské konflikty, jež jsou součástí britské a americké literární tradice. Pravdou také zůstává, že čím je příběh záhadnější, tím více se čtenář musí na zápletku soustředit, nebo se i dokonce vracet k původním dílům a příběhům (jako je například původní Stevensonův příběh Dr. Jekylla a pana Hyda, příběh Frankensteina podle Mary Shelley či Stokerův Dracula), aby si jej znovu přečetl a mohl tak získat nový pohled na díla klasické literatury.

Dalším znakem popularizace může být také již zmíněný prvek feminismu, který lze vyzorovat ve způsobu jednání hlavních postav, ve vyjadřování jejich názorů a myšlenek a kterého si celkově lze povšimnout čtením tzv. mezi řádky.

Důležitou roli v románu hraje také fenomén proměny, který se v díle projevuje ve dvou odlišných rovinách. V rovině první se tato proměna týká hlavních postav příběhu (například vnitřní a vnější proměny doktora Jekylla/pana Hyda nebo osobního vývoje Mary Jekyllové). V druhém případě jde o proměnu žánrů v kontextu současné fantastické literatury, tedy o změnu pojetí jednak tradičního detektivního románu, a jednak klasického gotického románu – a to tak, aby čtenáře četba takového románu bavila. Opět se může jednat o další projev či pokus o popularizaci gotické a viktoriánské literatury.

V neposlední řadě je samozřejmě zásadním rysem tohoto románu prvek intertextuality. Příběh *Podivný případ alchymistovy dcery (The Strange Case of the Alchemist's Daughter)* je plný odkazů na jiná světoznámá literární díla, jako jsou například *Podivný případ doktora Jekylla a pana Hyda*, *Dracula*, *Ostrov doktora Moreaua* a další. Tento román však neodkazuje pouze na slavná literární díla, ale také na různé osobnosti, které jsou určitým způsobem známé (např. Jack Rozparovač), nebo na jakékoli jiné skutečnosti a jevy (např. Cornishské mýty a legendy).

Podle mého názoru literaturu, která v sobě skrývá nespočet tajemství, záhad či různých tajuplných spojitostí, bez pochyby stojí za to číst. Je totiž jen a pouze na nás, jakým směrem se během jejího čtení vydáme. A přeci.. co víc si přát, než to, abychom si my sami určovali vlastní směr, vlastní pravidla, náš vlastní a jedinečný fantazijní svět.

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