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Bakalářská práce

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A Comparison of *Coraline* and *Stardust* by Neil Gaiman

Prohlašuji, že jsem tuto bakalářskou práci vypracovala samostatně a výhradně s použitím uvedené literatury.

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis was to compare and contrast two books by Neil Gaiman, *Coraline* and *Stardust*. The thesis focused on the author and on the contents of the books as works of fantasy and as fairy tales. The analysis focused on the fantastical elements of the books, on the magical beings and objects, on the main villains and also on the bravery of the main characters. The following analysis was of fairy tales as a genre and the difference between fairy tales for children and for adults. It was found that both books share many elements and were proven to be fairy tales. It was also determined what makes the first one a book for children and the other one rather for adult audiences.

Introduction

Literature has always been a passion of mine. I have been reading books for as long as I can remember and before I was able to read, my mother read to me before bedtime. She has not only read the usual stories and tales, she has also read the entire *Harry Potter* series to me and that is when my fondness of fantasy began. Besides reading a lot of fantasy, I have also been interested in many film adaptations of these books. This is where I came across *Coraline* and *Stardust*. I have first experienced both stories as films and after watching them many times with my family, I have decided to read them. After reading both books, I have realised that they have much in common, even if it might not seem so at first. I have set on the quest to find why these two books seemed so similar to me. Evidently, they were both written by the same author, Neil Gaiman, however, they also possessed some of the same elements that I have seen in other works of fiction. I found that very interesting and decided to look further into what connected them. As both books are constructed as fairy tales, this is where my research began.

Fairy tales are a part of everyone's lives at one point or another. Fairy tales are read to us in bed by our parents, in kindergarten and school by the teacher. There were many instances where schools would take the classes to libraries for a reading. Fairy tales can also be read by adults, not only to their children, but also for themselves. Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) are amongst the most well-known fairy tales that are enjoyed by both children and adult audiences. All around the world, magical stories were told and spread, generation by generation, forming a large mass of stories that we now call fairy tales. As Zipes (2012) states in his book, *The Irresistible Fairy Tale*, "people told stories to communicate knowledge and experience in social contexts." Zipes (2012) combines oral and literary tradition and describes fairy tales as a way of finding "a magical instrument" to help one find a peaceful life. It is a way of fitting in with other people. Fantasy, on the other hand, as defined by Clute and Grant (1996), is either a narrative set in our reality with a story that we "perceive as impossible" or a narrative set in a secondary world with a story possible for that world. In short, "at the core of fantasy is a story" (Clute and Grant, 1996, p. 8). While fairy tales come from an oral tradition of stories, collected by folklorists all over the world, fantasy is a literary genre that finds most of its authors in the 19th and 20 century, amongst which are names such as L. Frank Baum, E. Nesbit, J. R. R. Tolkien or Alan Garner (Clute and Grant, 1997, p. 340).

Finding what made a story a fairy tale and what elements had to be included for a story to be considered a fairy tale was something that really interested me and as a future teacher, I hoped for this research to be beneficial to me in my career.

I have been teaching English privately for around five years now. In my classes, I use stories almost every lesson that I can. I strive to make my worksheets interesting and enjoyable for my students and the best way to do so is to include a story in them. It is also better to use a story that the students are already familiar with and so fairy tales are the best resource for this. Reading comprehension, listening, speaking, even grammar can be all practiced on worksheets full of fairy tales and stories.

While researching fairy tales and the elements of fantasy, I was able to find a few works that touched upon fairy tales, fantasy and *Coraline*. There was only one thesis that also mentioned *Stardust*. After this discovery about the lack of academic sources about Gaiman's *Stardust*, the aim of this thesis is also to shed light on the insufficient number of academic sources regarding some of the works of Neil Gaiman. In this thesis I will gather information from several books, encyclopaedias, thesis and also internet resources, including video documentaries, to compose a work about *Coraline* and *Stardust*, as these two books have introduced me to the body of Gaiman's work. I will also try to explain why these two books are considered fairy tales, what elements of fairy tales and fantasy they use and also what connects them and, on the contrary, what separates them.

1 Neil Gaiman

“I want to be remembered as somebody who told good stories,” states Neil Gaiman at the beginning of a documentary feature called *Dream Dangerously* (2016) that records the last ever signing tour according to Gaiman and his team. These signing tours usually took place in the United Kingdom or the United States, there were also special tours in a few European and South American countries and had over 1000 visitors per day (Gaiman, 2012). Due to the huge number of signatures his writing hand even started to hurt unbearably which is why Gaiman was prescribed ice baths for his hand and forearm. The dedication to his fans is one of Gaiman’s fortes as he has become a cult author who writes for people of all ages and interests all over the world. However, his fandom mostly consists of “weird” or “different” individuals that have found themselves in Gaiman’s stories and have felt accepted and seen for what seems like the first time. He loves meeting his fans and talking with them, listening to them, giving them advice. His lifelong friend Haley Campbell writes in her book *The Art of Neil Gaiman* (2014) that his fans are not some anonyms in the crowd – he knows them and spends time with them even after the signing is supposed to be long done. He also loves live reading during conventions: “... the joy of reading a story to a bunch of people who laugh in the right places cannot be overestimated” (Campbell, 2014, p. 17).

Born in Portchester on November 10th, 1960, Neil Gaiman is in his words a writer of stories but as far as his career goes, he has proved himself to be a brilliant novelist, short-story writer, comic book writer, screenwriter, producer and more. He has been awarded many prestigious awards, for example Nebula, Hugo or Locus awards or the Carnegie Medal. Haley Campbell (2014, p. 12) describes his style as a “collection of spices” as “[Neil] doesn’t conform to single genres.” From a very young age, Gaiman would lose himself in stories, films and books and as a small child he would make up stories himself. Before he could write he would dictate poems to his mother who would then write them down instead of him. While making up stories he would go as far as to terrify himself. One particular story he mentions in the *Dream Dangerously* documentary feature is a time he went home from school and imagined his family at home would be replaced by a different family which could be very much the inspiration for the other family in his novel *Coraline*. He himself describes reading as one of his best childhood memories (Gaiman, 2016). Some of his favourite writers and inspirations are Robert Silverberg, Charles Dickens, Arthur Conan Doyle, J. R. R. Tolkien, Ursula Le Guin, C. S. Lewis, Rudyard Kipling, Ray Bradbury, Lewis Carroll, Roger Lancelyn Green, G. K. Chesterton (who would describe London as a “wonderful, mythical, magical place”, and would

later become the inspiration for Fiddler's Green in *Sandman* – Campbell, 2014, p. 11), Enid Blyton (with her colourful character Noddy), William Burroughs, H. P. Lovecraft, Bram Stoker, James Branch Cabell or Kurt Vonnegut. He would dream he was the author of *The Lord of The Rings*, and Middle Earth would later become an inspiration for the world in *Stardust*, even if the Stardust world is more fairy tale like. The creation of fantasy lands is a major part of Gaiman's work, he himself states that you could always tell if you were in Narnia or Middle Earth or the more subtle world building of Mary Poppins that seemed so real to him when he was a child (Gaiman, 2019). Another influence on young Gaiman would be Hope Mirrlees' novel *Lud-In-The-Mist* or Ursula Le Guin's books with beautiful maps that would inspire Gaiman to draw maps of fantastical places. "He has an entire filing cabinet of stories and trivia in his head that come out occasionally over dinner and disappear only once he's found a home for them in his work," writes Haley Campbell (2014, p. 11) in her biography about Gaiman.

As Gaiman grew, his teachers would typically tell him that he will never achieve anything and as a very creative and sort of odd individual, Gaiman found himself enthralled by rebellious punk music and its culture. He even had his own punk band called Ex Execs that he wrote lyrics for and that style can be later seen in some of his literature, especially *The Sandman* comic books (Notkin, 2016). Lou Reed was a big inspiration for young Gaiman as he loved how little words he used in his lyrics but you could still see the whole picture and feel the right feelings, which is something that you also have to do when you are writing a short story. In a way, Lou Reed wrote 3-minute novels in his songs and that is what fascinated Gaiman (Gaiman, 2019). Gilbert and Sullivan musicals were another source of inspiration as they worked with "the magic of words, questions of identity" which is something Gaiman uses in his works as well (Campbell, 2014, p. 26).

At 21 years old, insomnia started to gnaw at Gaiman and he would think about the world and its people when he couldn't sleep. In these moments, Gaiman (2016) realised: "I am a writer ...(even without finishing any story or book)... I have to try or else on my deathbed I would never know if that was a wasted opportunity." As the career of a young writer is quite a difficult one and his stories didn't get published at first, Gaiman started his career as a journalist, as he wanted to see the world, meet new people and have conversations with them. This was the way to understand the world – by asking questions. "And if you ask questions then you know more about the world and then you can be more honest in your stories" (Gaiman, 2019). Honesty is a big part of Gaiman's work. He first realized the power of honesty at a

workshop where he discovered that you have to be true about who you are and show more than you are comfortable with. Then people will find your stories more realistic and relate to them because you were being honest (Gaiman, 2019). Penthouse UK offered him a well-paying job as their journalist but Gaiman gladly declined because he wanted to write fiction and did not want to give up his dream. He later reflected on this moment and was very happy he made the right decision (Gaiman, 2019).

Before Gaiman started writing novels, he made his name in comics. The cooperation with Dave McKean brought to life *Violent Cases*, *Black Orchid* and finally *The Sandman* – a cult classic about the Lord of Dreams. *Sandman* was created for Gaiman himself and was vastly different from the usual comic books about Superman or other heroes. Gaiman created his own mythology, and drew female readers to comic book stores with the creation of a female hero – The Angel of Death. The first published novel after comic books was *Good Omens* which was written in cooperation with Terry Pratchett. Gaiman would be stuck at some point in the story and send it to Pratchett who sent a continuation back and this went on until the book was finished (Gaiman, 2016). After moving to the USA, Gaiman wrote *American Gods* for he thought the Americans were quite odd and so he created a book about the modern world with mythological gods and beliefs. Other famous works are *Neverwhere* about the people who slip in between the cracks in London, drawing attention to homeless people and their lives. *Good Omens*, *American Gods* and *Neverwhere* all became successful TV shows that Gaiman himself worked on. *Anansi Boys*, *The Graveyard Book* (inspired by true events when his 2-year-old son was riding a bicycle around a graveyard), *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* (which Gaiman describes as one of his most personal works – Gaiman, 2016 and 2019) and of course *Coraline* and *Stardust* are some other well-known and very loved examples.

1.1 Neil Gaiman and His Views on Writing

The style of Neil Gaiman is mostly a mixture of horror, sci-fi, myth and most importantly fantasy. For Gaiman, fantasy is a way of looking at the world from a slightly different angle. “You’re taking the thing that you know. You’re turning it 45 degrees. Showing people something they’re kinda familiar with in a way that they’ve never seen before. You can look at something 999 times but if you look at it the 1000th time you run the risk of seeing it” (Gaiman, 2016). Difficult situations from his life, meet-ups with various people, daydreaming – all of these are Gaiman’s inspirations. He always has a notebook in his pocket and he writes down encounters with people, overheard conversations, ideas, characters and daydreams that

he has throughout the day. When he is writing a story or a novel, he writes with a different coloured ink everyday so that he knows how much he wrote that day. The job of an author tends to be quite lonely but that is what makes you look deeper into your own mind and search through your thoughts. Gaiman states that in your work you have to be completely honest but hide the truth behind lies – or that your truth has to be fictional. Stories are truths told through lies and in the end the important thing is that something honest has to stay with the reader (Gaiman, 2019). Writing a story and creating its world is described by Gaiman as “throwing things onto a compost heap.” You throw all your ideas, characters, overheard conversations, made up thoughts about people you see and so on onto the heap and from it a beautiful flower – a story – grows (Gaiman, 2019). The best ideas come to Gaiman when he is bored or doing something he does not enjoy – he tends to think about other things in these situations and he starts to create “what ifs” and then thinks about what would come before and after these “what ifs” and suddenly a story is brewing in his head (Gaiman, 2019). There is also a lot of thinking about things as if they were something else or seeing them from a different angle. In his Masterclass (2019), Gaiman draws this example on the story of Snow White. He tells the students to see Snow White as a vampire princess and the prince as a sort of a necrophiliac and suddenly the Evil Stepmother becomes the hero of the story for she wanted to banish the monstrous Snow White from the kingdom.

Haley Campbell (2014, p. 11) points out that a major part of Gaiman’s work is that he creates his own mythology. The note “create a mythology” can be seen throughout almost all of his notebooks. She also recognizes that Gaiman’s stories feel as if they already existed and Gaiman “only” discovered them and wrote them down. Gaiman is also not afraid of using themes such as fear, gods, sexuality and death which might be taboo for some writers and readers.

For Gaiman, the most important thing about being an author is the writing itself. If someone wants to be a writer they should write. The characters should be discovered instead of invented. The author should then only listen to his characters, learn how they speak so they would be represented correctly. For Gaiman, the way the character talks makes the character themselves. In dialogues there is not only plot but also the personality of the characters. This is something that he realised when interviewing – there was a recording tape and a transcription of 10000 words and he had to edit it into about 3000 words but it had to sound as if the same person was talking (Gaiman, 2019). Writing should be enjoyable. The author should be writing and writing and suddenly they will realise they have finished a story or a book. Another thing

about being an author that is important for Gaiman is not to tell the reader how they should feel. He writes in a way that lets the reader interpret the situation by themselves and the writing itself makes one react in the way that is intended, there are no suggestions of how one should feel. This can be seen in *Stardust* in a scene where the Unicorn dies – “I’m not gonna tell you how sad the Unicorn death was, you react to it yourself” (Gaiman, 2019).

A good story should make you turn pages and not be disappointed in the end. It should make you ask “And what happened next?”. All of your characters should be specific and different – Gaiman (2019) calls this giving your characters a funny hat. You have to know the rules of the genre you are writing in and then break them. And if you want to create fantastical worlds you have to take inspiration from the real world and not other fantastical places. You have to take a real place and make it bigger, smaller, make it fly in the clouds or be under water. Every little detail from the real world has to be smuggled in so that the reader cares about these unreal worlds and so they are more palpable to them (Gaiman, 2019). You have to know everything about this world, even if you will never talk about these details in your books. And most importantly, live a life, meet people – you will need all of this in a story. In the beginning it will be difficult but “when things get tough this is what you should do: make good art” (Gaiman, 2012).

2 *Coraline* - Summary

The novel *Coraline* was inspired by Gaiman's daughter, Holly. Holly would dictate many stories for her father to write down. In one of these stories, Holly would insert herself into the plot and tell her father how she would go to her mother but the mother would be evil and lock her in a dungeon with some friendly ghosts and together they would go find her real mother and bring her back (Gaiman, 2019). This exact scene with friendly ghosts can be seen in the novel on page 99, where Coraline is locked behind a mirror. *Coraline* is a children's book but is often times reviewed as being too scary for children (The Guardian, 2015; Erin W. and Mary C., 2018). Gaiman (2016) himself states that girls would read this book when they were around 12 years old and how they would later come up to him at his signing tours and talk about the influence it had on them in this stage of their lives.

Coraline is about a young girl that moves with her parents to a new town and a new house full of peculiar neighbours – Misses Spink and Forcible, and an old man Mister Bobo. She feels as if she was taken out of her environment and had to abandon her friends. Her parents do not pay attention to her, she hates the food they give her and she is bored so she starts to wander around and finds an old well outside (p. 13). In the new house, she discovers a wooden door in a drawing room that draws her attention. Behind the door is a bricked-up wall. Mister Bobo warns Coraline that the mice advised her against going through the door (p. 25). Miss Spink reads Coraline her tea leaves and also sees that she is in “terrible danger” (p. 29). The misses give Coraline a stone with a hole in it (p. 30) and tell her it will help.

One day, Coraline is alone at home and she goes to explore the wooden door again. However, there are no longer any bricks there but a dark hallway appears (p. 37). After Coraline goes through it, she emerges in a room that is identical to the drawing room she came from, the only difference being a picture of a boy who seems to have a different, more sinister look on his face (p. 38). Coraline is called by her mother but she is far paler than her usual complexion and has sharp fingernails. The mother has black buttons for her eyes and says she is Coraline's other mother. In this strange world behind the door, there is also the other father and all the neighbours have their counterparts with buttons for eyes here. They are all very kind to Coraline and entertain her, play with her and grant her every wish. The mother cooks delicious food and the toys she gives Coraline are magical and alive. The only character without buttons in this world is a black cat that Coraline has also seen outside in the real world. The cat talks and tells Coraline he is no other (p. 47). The other mother wants Coraline to stay forever (p. 57) but

under the condition that she will allow her to sew buttons into her eyes. Coraline refuses and comes back to the real world but she finds that her parents are missing. The cat finds Coraline and shows her a mirror in a corridor and when Coraline comes closer she sees her parents trapped inside (p. 65). She gathers up her courage and goes back behind the wooden door to save them.

The other mother shows Coraline illusions of her parents being happy without her (p. 76). Coraline does not trust her and tries to avoid her by going outside. Outside, she meets the cat who advises Coraline to challenge the other mother to a game (p. 79). Coraline wanders through the home and finds a new thing in the drawing room – a snow globe with two characters on the inside. The other mother discovers her here and they have an argument. The other mother feels Coraline is disobeying her so she locks her inside of the mirror in the corridor (p. 95). Inside the mirror, there are three ghosts (p. 99) of children who were kidnapped by the evil mother in the past. Coraline discovers that the other mother stole the children's souls and trapped them inside her world forever (p. 101). The children help Coraline by telling her to challenge the mother to a game and to use the stone with a hole in it to find their souls. Coraline is then taken out of the mirror by the other mother and challenges her to a game. If Coraline finds the three souls and her parents, she gets to go back home safely. If not, the other mother can keep her forever and sew buttons into her eyes thus taking her soul away.

Coraline sets to find the souls and when she looks through the stone, she only sees grey colours until she finds the first soul, a glowing marble in her other bedroom. The second soul is in other Misses Spink and Forcibles' apartment and the third is in Mister Bobo's topmost flat. Coraline realises that her parents have to be trapped inside the snow globe and so she goes into the drawing room. The other mother is waiting there and Coraline tricks her into opening the dark passageway to her real house by pretending to think her parents are hidden in the said passageway. After the other mother opens the door, Coraline throws the cat onto her and runs to the door (p. 153). After scratching the other mother, the cat joins Coraline in the corridor as she tries to close the door. She hears the voices of her parents and of the saved children and after her mother says: "Well done, Coraline" (p. 155), Coraline gathers all her strength and closes the door, hearing something snap. Back home, Coraline is happy to find her parents intact, not remembering anything. She eats all her food and is very grateful. When she goes to sleep, she hides the marbles with children's souls under her pillow and goes to sleep (p. 162). In her dreams, they all have a picnic and the children thank Coraline for saving them. They warn her the fight is not over yet (p. 165).

Coraline wakes and hears strange noises outside her bedroom. After a while, she realises what snapped when she closed the door behind the awful other world – the other mother’s hand (p. 169). Coraline sets up a trap for the hand over the old well she discovered at the beginning of the story and successfully traps the hand that falls to its demise in to the well.

2.1 *Coraline* - Themes

The main theme of *Coraline* is definitely the bravery of the title character. It is visible from the start of her story and mostly when she decides to go save her parents from the evil mother. *Coraline* is a dark tale so there is also the theme of fear and its manifestation through characters and also the environment around Coraline. The main plotline revolves around Coraline and her parents and the relationship that they have – or do not have – in Coraline’s opinion at the start of the book. The relationship does not change overall, only the perspective from which Coraline sees it does. In the end, she is definitely more grateful for what she has and she does not blame her parents for not paying so much attention to her because she realises, they love her in their own way.

2.2 *Coraline* - Characters

Coraline is a brave young girl that feels as if her parents do not care about her at all. She realises that they do love her after she escapes from the other mother. Her bravery is shown through a series of events where she has to face the creations of the other mother and has to conquer her fear to save her parents and also the souls of the children that the other mother attacked in the past. At the end of the novel, Coraline is happy to be where she is and she loves her parents very much.

The other mother is an evil spider-like creature that feasts upon the fear of others and kidnaps children to take their souls from them. She is able to bend reality and create spectacles that the children find alluring – be it food, people, entertainment or else. She then promises the children to be this sweet to them forever, under the condition that they let her sew their eyes with buttons. When she does this, she takes possession of their souls and the children become only empty shells – or ghosts – that are trapped and forgotten behind a mirror in a cold, wet and dark place forever while she traps other children in her web.

The cat is a very important character that helps Coraline survive the other mother’s game. He can talk while they are inside the other world and he says he is the same as in the real world (p. 47). Coraline finds him somewhat “self-centered” (p. 48) but decides to be kind to him. He

is very smart and seems to know the other mother very well. He guides Coraline through the other world and plays a vital role in securing the souls of the lost children (p. 143) and in the other mother's defeat (p. 153).

Coraline's parents are very busy with their work and they ignore their daughter after their arrival at the new house. They do not listen to Coraline's needs and they do not entertain her as much as she would like. Coraline also hates the food that they prepare for her. She calls her father's meals "recipes" (p. 19) and does not even taste them. Food is one of the things that the other mother uses as a tactic to keep Coraline with her. Both parents are busy with their work and they dismiss Coraline whenever she talks to them. The father also does not decide for himself and only tells Coraline to do whatever her mother says. Her mother cares for Coraline but does not want to buy her special green gloves (p. 33) which is another thing that bothers Coraline to her core. They both love Coraline as any parent would and she realises this after it is too late and the Other Mother has already taken them hostage. Coraline saves them in the end and feels they are proud of her when they help her escape in the corridor. They do not remember any of the things that happened to them.

Mister Bobo is one of the occupants of the house. He is old, has a moustache and he smells of cheese and says that he owns a mouse circus (p. 12). He talks with his mice and gives their messages to Coraline. He calls Coraline "Caroline" but changes it after the other mother is defeated in the end. In the other world, Mister Bobo is very scary and instead of white mice, he owns black rats that are evil and are the other mother's spies.

The two actresses, Miss Spink and Miss Forcible, are also Coraline's neighbours and they talk about their life as beautiful celebrities and bicker around. Now they are "old and round" (p. 11) and they own many Highland terriers. They also keep calling Coraline "Caroline" and this bothers her a lot. They are kind even if they are always arguing together. In the other world, the two misses host a show for Coraline and they come out of their old shells and look young again (p. 52). In the end, they are only a sack of slime and wax and they protect one of the souls for the other mother. Their dogs are also changed in the other world and they look like deformed, "jellyish" bats (p. 117).

3 *Stardust* – A Summary

Stardust was written by Gaiman after he saw a falling star that looked like a “blazing diamond on a background of black velvet” in Arizona. He decided to situate the story into a town of Wall that has been in his mind for quite a while. Gaiman drew inspiration from authors Hope Mirrlees, Lord Dunsany, James Branch Cabell or C. S. Lewis who reminded him that “fairy stories were for adults, too” (Gaiman, 1998).

The novel starts with Dunstan Thorn who lives in the village of Wall in England, that got its name from a long wall that separates the town from a magical land called Faerie. A stranger asks Dunstan for a place to sleep at. In exchange for a lodging, the man offers Dunstan money and also his Heart’s Desire (p. 13). On the night of the Faerie Market, Dunstan goes behind the wall and meets a beautiful woman that is chained to a stall. Later they spend the night together (p. 29). After the Market is over, Dunstan goes on with his life and marries a girl from the village. Some time goes by and Dunstan receives a wicker basket with a baby called Tristran Thorn that someone left by the wall (p. 33). Tristran grows up, unaware of his origin, and falls in love with a local beauty, Victoria Forester (p. 38). One evening, he walks her home and Tristran promises to bring her a fallen star they have seen, if she marries him (p. 49). Victoria laughs at him and jokingly agrees to the proposal. However, Tristran is serious and he embarks on a journey to bring the fallen star to his love.

We then move to Stormhold, a castle in Faerie, where the Lord of Stormhold is dying (p. 57). His seven sons are standing around him – four already dead in their ghost form, three still alive. The alive sons are called Primus, Tertius and Septimus (p. 58). The Lord says that only the one who possesses the silver chain with a topaz that he is holding can be the next Lord of Stormhold (p. 62). He then throws the necklace out of the window. However, the necklace does not fall, on the contrary, it goes up to the sky where it collides with a star.

At the same moment, in a different part of Faerie, three women are walking around in a hut. These women are the Lilim, or the witch-queens (p. 66). They can see that a star is falling from the sky. They want to get it and so the oldest witch-queen eats a small bit of a star that they had left and she turns into a charming young woman (p. 68). The star falls to the ground and in the crater is not a rock but a fair-haired woman.

Tristran meets a little hairy man in Faerie and he tells him about the star (p. 75). They walk into a serewood, where trees have leaves and branches as sharp as knives and they trap and kill anyone who does not walk on the true path. Tristran manages to find the true path (p.

84) and they escape. They discover that Tristran knows where every place in Faerie is without ever knowing it even existed before (p. 88). Meanwhile, Septimus poisons his brother Tertius with a bottle of wine (p. 93).

The little man gives Tristran a Babylon candle that takes him to the star (p. 103). Tristran sees that the star is a woman and he binds her with a chain that he also got from the little man (p. 106). The star does not want to go with Tristran but she has no choice.

The witch-queen meets another, lesser witch, called Ditchwater Sal (p. 121) who gives her Limbus grass that makes one speak only the truth (p. 122). This makes the witch-queen say that she is looking for a fallen star that is going to make her and her sisters young and beautiful again. After admitting this, the witch-queen gets angry and curses Sal to never see or hear the star even if she stood right in front of her (p. 124).

Tristran and the star ride a unicorn that they saved (p. 117) to a village (p. 133). Tristran unties the star and leaves her alone to get some food from the villagers. The star flees and when Tristran comes back, she is long gone. He goes to sleep, angry at himself and in his sleep, the moon talks to him. She says that her child, the star, is in great danger and begs him to save her (p. 142). Tristran wakes up and catches a carriage, its owner being Primus.

The witch-queen creates an inn out of her chariot (p. 151). Every spell that she performs costs her her beauty and youth and she is slowly turning old. The star reaches the inn (p. 160) and the witch-queen takes care of her so that her heart is burning and she can cut it out (p. 162). She is interrupted by Primus who is trying to get into the inn. He notices that the star is wearing the silver chain with the topaz (p. 168) and he goes to grab it but the witch-queen slices his throat with one of her knives (p. 169). The unicorn barges in but she manages to kill it too (p. 170). Tristran grabs the star and puts the remnants of his Babylon candle into the fireplace and they run away through the magical path to safety, away from the witch (p. 171). Septimus arrives at an empty meadow where he finds Primus' dead body and he promises to avenge him.

Tristran and the star, Yvaine (p. 178), experience many adventures and they start to like each other. We learn from the witch-queens that Yvaine cannot cross to the Village of Wall or she would turn into a rock (p. 182).

The witch-queen is hiding in a hut, waiting for the star when Septimus finds her and attempts to avenge his brother. He is not successful and the witch-queen kills him (p. 209). She

becomes old and withered (p. 248) and she cannot see the star anymore. This is because Yvaine's heart already belongs to Tristan (p. 249).

The caravan arrives to the Wall (p. 217) and Tristan tells Yvaine to wait for him before entering the village. Victoria feels an obligation to marry him. Tristan does not want this for either of them and gives Victoria his blessing to marry Mr. Monday (p. 234). He then meets his father who tells him about his true origin (p. 236). Yvaine never goes through the wall and waits for Tristan to come back to her. When he does, they celebrate and kiss (p. 242).

The chain on the bird of Ditchwater Sal disappears and the bird turns into a beautiful young woman. We find out that she is the Lady Una who was kidnapped as a child from the Castle of Stormhold (p. 253). She is Tristan's mother and she tells him that he is the only male heir to the Stormhold throne (p. 245). Tristan and Yvaine go explore the world together. After eight years (p. 255), they come back to Stormhold where they begin to reign. Tristan is a great Lord and the lands prosper under him (p. 256). After he dies, Yvaine rules and she is just as good as him (p. 257).

3.1 *Stardust* - Themes

The theme of *Stardust* is, just as in *Coraline*, the courage of the main character, Tristan Thorn. There is also magic and magical objects and creatures. The whole story is a one big adventure and could be written out into many more volumes if the author decided to describe Tristan and Yvaine's adventures even more. In *Stardust*, one of the main themes is also love. There is love between Tristan and his family, just as Coraline and her parents, but here, Tristan falls in love with a woman who he spends the rest of his life with. The book is also about growing up. While in *Coraline* this only means conquering her fears, in *Stardust*, Tristan grows also in the literal sense – he becomes a man and also a Lord.

3.2 *Stardust* - Characters

Tristan Thorn is an awkward boy that feels out of place in his village. He dreams of other big cities and sometimes even about fantastical lands with “knights and trolls and mermaids” (p. 42). He is in love with a local beauty, Victoria, but she does not reciprocate his feelings. He is very stubborn and a bit naïve as he sets on an adventure without any experience. He is quite lucky to meet nice people and creatures along the way that help him on his journey. Throughout the adventure, he discovers that he belongs in Faerie and that he can achieve more than he ever thought possible. Tristan is very courageous and tackles every problem head on.

He finds true love in Yvaine and exhibits his growth by letting go of Victoria and saying goodbye to his family to pursue other adventures and eventually settle as the Lord of Stormhold (p. 255). Even in his reign, Tristran shows what a kind and brave man he has become.

Yvaine is a fallen star that is in danger from the moment she gets hit by the Stormhold topaz. She is furious when she falls down and is captured by Tristran and she calls him all sorts of names throughout the start of their journey. She is hunted by an evil witch-queen and also the heirs to the throne of Stormhold but she takes this as her calling and is at peace with her destiny. Slowly, she finds out more about Tristran and falls in love with him. She is willing to sacrifice herself by going through the wall and turning into a rock just to fulfil her duty and pay off a debt to Tristran because he saved her life. She does not have to do this as Tristran loves her back and they spend the rest of their lives together. After Tristran dies, she rules over Faerie with kindness and is just as loved as Tristran was (p. 257).

The witch-queen is one of the three Lilim sisters that live in Faerie. They are the rulers of all witches and have been around for centuries (p. 66). They are cruel and they hunt fallen stars and eat their hearts which makes them stay young and beautiful. The witch-queen that sets to hunt Yvaine is the oldest of the three and she knows no mercy. She promises not to harm Ditchwater Sal but sends a curse upon her anyway (p. 124) which in the end damages her when Sal does not know that she has Yvaine in her caravan and so Yvaine slips right past the witch-queen (p. 212). Whenever the witch-queen uses her powers, she loses a bit of her youth and beauty. However, she is not afraid to use her spells and she takes no prisoners. She harms many people and creatures on her hunt for Yvaine and she pays for it as Yvaine has given her heart to Tristran and so that the witch-queen and her sisters can never have it (p. 249).

Lady Una is Tristran's mother even if he learns about this only at the end of the book (p. 245). She is the first and only daughter of the Lord of Stormhold and was kidnapped when she was only a child (p. 253). She has been enslaved by Ditchwater Sal who chained her to her caravan and turned her into a bird when she did not need her help with the stall. Una meets young Dunstan and sells him a glass snowdrop that serves as a protection for Tristran throughout his journey and helps Una recognise him when they finally cross paths. Una is very selfless and wise and plays a very vital role in Tristran and Yvaine's journey even if she is mostly in the background.

The brothers, or the heirs to the throne of Stormhold, are all cruel and hungry for power. They kill each other in order to be the next Lord of Stormhold. At the beginning of the novel,

four brothers are already dead and the fifth one, Tertius, soon follows them (p. 93). The brothers appear as ghosts and they keep watch on the rest of their family until no one is left. Primus is the firstborn son and is very wise and careful. He knows his brother Septimus very well and hides from him and his tricks, drinks his own wine and eats his own food not to be poisoned by him. He almost becomes the next Lord of Stormhold when he finds Yvaine and the silver chain with a topaz on her in the inn but he is then killed by the witch-queen and left there to be found by Septimus (p. 174). Septimus is cruel and cunning and hunts his brother all throughout Faerie. When he finds his brother's dead body, he sets to avenge him before taking the throne. He finds the witch-queen and wants to kill her but she outsmarts him and kills him with a venomous bite (p. 209).

Ditchwater Sal is a witch but she is nowhere as powerful as the Lilim. She owns a caravan and sells glass flowers at the Faerie Market. She also bought Lady Una and enslaved her by chaining her to her caravan and turning her into a bird. She is cursed not to see or hear the fallen star which then helps the star escape from the witch-queen. Una is freed in the end so Sal stays alone with her caravan.

The little hairy man is a creature that Tristran meets at the beginning of his journey. They share food and knowledge and Tristran saves them from dying in a serewood (p. 84). The little man then gives Tristran new clothes, a Babylon candle and a chain to catch the star with. We hear of the little man while on the sky-ship when Captain Alberic mentions a "fellowship" that is helping Tristran get to the Wall (p. 189).

Captain Johannes Alberic (p. 186) is in control of the sky-ship that Tristran and Yvaine end up on while being lost in the clouds (p. 185). He takes care of them and Tristran remembers their time on the ship "as one of the happiest periods of his life" (p. 187).

Dunstan Thorn is Tristran's father. He too dreams of big cities and other adventures and is drawn in by the land of Faerie (p. 5). He spends a night with Lady Una and gets Tristran to take care of. He does not tell Tristran of his origin until after Tristran comes back from his adventure with the star (p. 236).

Victoria Forester is a girl from the village who, in Tristran's words, is "in all probability, ..., the most beautiful girl in the British Isles" (p. 58). She thinks Tristran is only joking when he says he will get the fallen star for her and she laughs at him (p. 51). At the end of the book, she is in love with Mr. Monday and wants to marry him but she is willing to keep her word and

marry Tristan instead (p. 231). She is then relieved to hear that Tristan wants her to marry her true love and frees her of her promise.

4 The Comparison of *Coraline* and *Stardust*

In the upcoming chapter, the focus will be on the similarities and differences of the two novels. As both novels are fairy-tales and belong to the fantasy genre (defined below), the main points will include the magical aspect of both stories, including magical beings and objects, their origins and most importantly, their influence on the story and the characters. Next, the main villains will be discussed as they are both witches and ancient beings. And lastly, there will be a subchapter on the bravery and motivation of the lead characters as it developed and made the characters grow.

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines a fairy tale as “a story (as for children) involving fantastic forces and beings (such as fairies, wizards, and goblins)” or as “a story in which improbable endings lead to a happy ending.” The origins of fairy tales can be traced back to several theories. The mythological theory by the Grimm Brothers says that the origin of all fairy tales comes from Indo-European myths that were then fused with Christian motifs. Migration theory by Theodor Benfey traces the origins to India from where it then spread around the world. Scottish folklorist Andrew Lang, who was a collector of fairy tales, believed that the similarities found in fairy tales were there because of their origin in religious cults and rituals. This theory was called the anthropologic theory. Lastly, the geographically-historical theory or the Finnish theory expanded the migration theory by adding places such as Egypt or Arabian and Celtic nations to India as the places of origin of fairy tales (Peichlová, 2020, p. 9). As for authors and their works, it is vital to mention Charles Perrault’s *Tales of Olden Times* (1697), Grimm Brothers’ *Children’s and Household Tales* (1812–57), *The Tales of the Thousand and One Nights*, Hans Christian Andersen, or Walter Scott and Alexander Afanasyev (Warner, 2014).

Fantastic, defined by M. H Parkinson (2006), is then “a variety of fictional works which use the supernatural or apparently supernatural.” Examples could be found in works that contain “ghost stories, depictions of dream worlds or seemingly impossible worlds and events.” The fantasy books themselves then “create their own coherently organized worlds and myths” (Childs and Fowler, 2006). C. S. Lewis’s *The Chronicles of Narnia* (1950-56), Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (1865), Henry James’ *The Turn of the Screw* (1898), or Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886) are amongst the first and most prominent authors and works of fiction (Parkinson, 2006).

4.1 Magical Beings and Objects

The first parallel that has to be drawn between the two novels is the presence of the two portals into a different world. In *Coraline*, the title character enters the other world through a door in a new house. It is first mentioned on page 17 when there is a bricked wall behind it. After a while, Coraline is able to go through the door into a house that is the same to hers, with a few small changes. The door seems to have a character of its own, as Coraline “had the feeling the door was looking back at her (p. 68).” The door is also described as cold and smelly and when Coraline escapes through it, the wall is covered in fur and it moves, as if taking a breath (p. 146). Coraline knows that the corridor and the door that guards it has to be older than the other mother (p. 157). On the other hand, the wall in *Stardust* is not that mysterious. It is a simple stone wall that separates the village of Wall and Faerie like any other border would. It is guarded by people from the Wall and no one is allowed to cross it, except for the day of the Faerie Market. The fallen star, Yvaine, cannot cross this border or else she would turn into a rock (p. 181). Portals into different and fantastical worlds can be seen in many novels. Alice in *Alice’s Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There* (1871) goes through a door to enter Wonderland, in *Elidor* (1965) by Alan Garner, there’s a door from Elidor to the real world (Zipes, 2000, p. 195) and also *Howl’s Moving Castle* by Diana Wynne Jones has a door into four dimensions (Zipes, 2000, p. 272). Bottigheimer (2014) also mentions *Liombruno* and the double-doors portal (p. 128). Zipes (2000) describes the portals into Secondary Worlds as the “principal pattern” of fantasy that finds its origin in fairy tales. As for the “breathing” corridor in *Coraline*, a connection could be made to Cardea, the goddess of hinges whose power is to “open what is closed and close what is open.” She is supposed to protect children from evil entities (Illes, 2009, p. 447).

The doors and the hole in the Wall lead the main characters into new territories. For Coraline, it is the same house that she now lives in, except for a few small changes and the presence of the other mother, a spider-like creature that wants to eat her soul. The other world is created by this other mother and she did not care to create much besides the house itself (beyond there is only “pale nothingness” p. 87). The world of Faerie, on the other hand, is a magical and whimsical land. It is also full of danger, there are witches, a serewood with leaves as sharp as knives and magical creatures of all kinds. However, the danger is lurking in the background and it is not attacking Tristran as intensely as Coraline. Coraline is the main object of the other mother’s desires while Tristran happens to be in the middle of a fight for a fallen star and the necklace that had brought her down. Faerie is also “bigger than the world” (p. 64)

while the other world is focused only on the house. In Faerie, there are many people and creatures that help Tristran on his journey (the little hairy man on p. 74, the moon p. 141, the oak tree p. 142 or the Captain of the sky-ship p. 185). Coraline is mostly on her own, the only help she gets is from a black cat and this cat comes from our real world and not the other world. Faerie is a welcoming world, for Tristran it is a home and he finds his true love here. The other world is a nightmare for Coraline and she does everything in her power to get out of there and to make sure that this world is not entered by anyone ever again. As for other literature, the most well-known other worlds might be Lewis Carroll's Wonderland or C. S. Lewis' Narnia.

As far as creatures go, the most important creature in *Coraline* has to be the black cat that helps her defeat the other mother. Black cats have been associated with witches for centuries as their "familiars". According to Illes (2009), "a familiar is a creature with whom one possesses extremely intense, close bond and relationship: a soul partner." This description could be compared to the relationship that Coraline and the black cat have. Coraline even describes hearing the cat talk for the first time as the voice she hears in the back of her head (p. 47). Animals can also be viewed as allied spirits or guardians (Illes, 2009, p. 250). John and Caitlin Matthews (2005) describe cats as centres of myths and legends, dating back to ancient Egypt, Thailand, China, Japan or the Zoroastrians, Persians or Romans. Even in the American Indian myth a cat has its part. In *Stardust*, there is also a black cat. It is clear that this cat is in fact Una, transformed from her usual human-self. Una is described to have cat ears even in her human form (p. 19). Briggs (1976) mentions the Highland fairy cat that was a witch who turned into the form of a cat. Una spends only a small portion of time in her cat form; however, this time is still used to watch over her son, Tristran. As for the cat in *Coraline*, there is no real reason for the cat to care so deeply about Coraline. It only might be its good character or the fact that it knew much about the other mother (p. 79) and wanted to make sure that no other child is harmed by her.

Tristran is helped mostly by the little hairy man that he meets at the beginning of his journey. The little man gives him a Babylon candle to travel with and a silver chain to catch the fallen star with. He also gifts him new clothes and gives him advice on how to behave in Faerie. Coraline, besides the black cat, receives help similar to this from Mr. Bobo who gives her a warning message from his mice (p. 25) and from Misses Spink and Forcible who give her a stone with a hole in it (p. 30). The other helpful characters are the ghosts hidden behind the mirror.

The ghosts that appear in *Coraline* are of three little children that were trapped and killed by the other mother. They are hidden behind a mirror and they help Coraline find their lost souls and she manages to save them. They also warn her that the other mother had sent her right hand after her and that she has to get rid of it (p. 126). The ghosts are described as “small and cold” (p. 96) and “as pale as the moon in the day-time sky” (p. 99). There are also ghosts present in *Stardust*. Here, the ghosts are of the deceased heirs to the throne of Stormhold. They are described as “unmoving, grey figures, insubstantial and silent” (p. 58). Tristran is the only character that is able to see them or realises that they are there (p. 148). Ghosts famously appear in *Hobberdy Dick* (1955) by Katharine Mary Briggs or in Dickens’ *The Christmas Carol* (1843) (Zipes, 2000, p. 63, p. 73). Stableford (2009) also mentions the works of Pedro Antonio de Alarcón. Here, the ghosts are mostly scary and evil and they are parts of the story to scare the characters and consequently, the readers. This is mostly because of the consensus of ghosts being believed to be “disguised evils” or the apparitions of the dead set on a revenge (Briggs, 1976, p. 36). However, the ghosts in *Coraline* and *Stardust* are harmless or even helpful and so it is important to mention other ghosts with similar behaviours. Briggs (1976) mentions Knockers, Cornish spirits from mines, or a Phouka, the helpful Irish ghost, as some of the kinder examples of ghosts. Lecouteux (2016) then mentions Graumännchen, a guardian of treasures from Germany, or Herne the Hunter, an English ghost who also appears in Shakespeare’s *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (1602). Illes (2009) also describes ghosts as “dead souls” and describes rituals where “the living can intervene to help them transition.” This transition happens in *Coraline* when she finds the lost souls of the children and then puts them under her pillow, thus freeing them, and also in *Stardust*, where the witch-queen kills Septimus and the ghosts think that the last heir to the throne of Stormhold is dead so they are no longer needed to watch over the living heirs and they move on to the afterlife.

The mirror also plays a vital role in both books. In *Coraline*, the mirror first shows Coraline that her parents have been kidnapped by the other mother and then it also hides the ghosts of the dead children who help her on her quest to defeat the monster. In *Stardust*, the mirror is connected to the villains of the story, the witch-queens. The witch sisters have a mirror in their hut, we can see their different, shadow form in it (p. 65). In the mirror, there is also a hall of onyx floors and obsidian pillars (p. 66). The witches use mirrors or reflections to communicate with each other (p. 181). In contrast, the other mother in *Coraline* does use the mirror to trap Coraline in it, but she also is deceived by it in a way. The mirror shows Coraline that her parents have been stolen and it also does not show the other mother’s reflection (p. 92).

The other mother mentions that “mirrors are never to be trusted” (p. 92). Illes (2009) describes magic mirrors as the ones made from obsidian. The witch mirror in *Stardust* is also said to be made from black glass (p. 65). Matthews (2005) then adds that fox spirits, for example, could be revealed only by their reflection, which could be connected to the fact that the other mother did not have a reflection at all, which exposed her as something unnatural. As for a world or a space behind a mirror, *Alice’s Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There* (1871) can be brought up again or the ancient French myth of Les Morts (The Death), where the afterlife (Ginen) can be entered through mirrors or water (Illes, 2009, p. 1065). Mermaids, or La Sirène, are also generally depicted with a mirror that is a gate between realms (Illes, 2009, p. 1354). Mirrors are also vastly connected to the Lilim, which will be touched upon in the subchapter 4.2.

The mice that appear in *Coraline* can also be referred to as “familiars”. Similar to cats, they can be helpful to the heroes. On the contrary, the rats, who are the other mother’s spies, are mostly always used as a bad omen or in connection to the dirty and evil, in literature as well as in the real world because of the rats’ connection to the plague. Clute and Grant (1997) describe mice as “faithful wee companions” while rats are more “ambiguous” or “ominous”. Mice can be found in C. S. Lewis’ *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (1950) while rats appear in H. P. Lovecraft’s *The Rats in the Walls* (1924) (Clute and Grant, 1997, p. 642).

Almost every fairy tale story or an adventure gives the hero an object or a spell that helps them on their journey to defeat the big evil. In Greek mythology, Luke and Monica Roman (2010) draw attention to the myth of Perseus who was helped by the gods Hermes and Athena who gave him, amongst others, an adamantine sickle, winged shoes or a shield. Coraline is given a stone with a hole in it. This stone serves as a protection from the other mother as well as a tool to find the lost souls with. When Coraline touches the stone in the presence of the other mother, the other mother’s hand “scuttles off Coraline’s shoulder like a frightened spider” (p. 58). The cat also calls the stone a “protection” and advises Coraline to “hang on to it” (p. 49). Coraline uses the stone to locate the lost souls because she sees that the stone glows in the mirror in the hallway (this could be another deception by the mirror to the other mother) (p. 112). When she looks through the stone, everything is grey but the souls (p. 114). In the end, she returns the stone to Misses Spink and Forcible and says that “it may have saved my life, and saved some other people’s deaths” (p. 184).

Tristran also has his “lucky charm” in the form of a glass snowdrop. His father has exchanged the snowdrop for a kiss at the Faerie Market (p. 21) and he then gifts it to Tristran when he sets on his journey to find the fallen star (p. 55). Tristran also touches the snowdrop and wonders if it is bringing him luck (p. 103). On page 197, he exchanges the snowdrop for a ride in Ditchwater Sal’s caravan and that is when Sal tells him of the power of the snowdrop. It is a very powerful talisman that protects its wearer from being enchanted or cursed. Sal then turns Tristran into a dormouse and puts him into her caravan (p. 200). Both totems are of great use to their wearers. Coraline would have no way of finding the lost souls and it is obvious that the stone was also giving her courage and the other mother felt its presence. Tristran also felt that the snowdrop helped him get through many trials and as we learn later, it was also protecting him from spells and curses. Both characters give away their talismans at the end of their journeys when they no longer need them.

Another important creature that should be mentioned is the Unicorn. The Unicorn appears in many other fairy tales and works of fantasy and is mostly regarded as a rare species, helpful only to the purest souls. Stableford (2009) says that “unicorn can be gentled only by a virgin” and its “extreme rarity justifies its crucial roles in such quest fantasies as Alan Garner’s *Elidor* and Peter S. Beagle’s *The Last Unicorn*.” The scene from *Stardust*, where a unicorn is battling with a lion, can also be seen in *Alice Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There* (1871) by Lewis Carroll (Zipes, 2000, p. 10). Another vital part of *Coraline* that should be discussed is the old well that Coraline traps the other mother’s right-hand in. Briggs mentions wells in great detail and connects them to spirits but also human guardians. Some of the characters connected to wells are Finn of Fianna, the previously mentioned Knockers, Lhiannan-Shee, Peg o’ Nell, Robin Round-cap or the legend of Loch Awe where Cailleach was in charge of the well but she let it overflow, thus drowning people and animals and creating Loch Awe in Scotland (Briggs, 1976, p. 59).

The other world in *Coraline* only has the other mother and her creations – the people with buttons in their eyes. *Stardust*, on the other hand, is abound with more “classic” creatures like talking animals, dragons, gryphons, wyverns, hippogriffs, basilisks, hydras, gnomes, princes and princesses under curses, fairies, hobgoblins, giants, talking trees and a moon and a star that is actually a woman who glitters and shines at night (p. 118).

4.2 The Witch

Both stories' main villains are some sort of a witch. The witch-queen in *Stardust* is referred to as a witch and she is told to be a part of Lilim. The other mother in *Coraline* is a more obscure character called the bedlam. She is a spider-like creature whose name is not mentioned in other literature but her spider-like form and behaviour can be compared to some works. Both creatures are able to transform into young, beautiful women and also into animals.

The other mother is vastly compared to a spider. She had a "hand like a spider" (p. 58); in the corridor, Coraline feels something "wispy, like a spider's web" (p. 73). She eats live blackbeetles (p. 93), sounds like an "enormous dead insect" (p. 137) and in her final form, she is "huge, very pale, the colour of a spider's belly, her teeth as sharp as knives" (p. 149). Clute and Grant (1997) mention the Anansi, who is a "trickster god in the shape of a spider." Giant spiders can then be found in the works of J. R. R. Tolkien, where Shelob appears in *The Lord of the Rings* (1965-55) (Clute and Grant, 1997, p. 654). Matthews (2009) talks about the spider as "one of the great creating creatures" who is able to weave fate. The other mother is also able to create her own realm and thus twist the fate of the children who get caught up in her web. In Japan, the legend of a Spider Woman who lived in the mountains and ate humans can be found (Matthews, 2009, p. 609). Japan also has a folk story of a giant spider Tsuchi-Gumo, a people-eater (Matthews, 2009, p. 658). Matthews draws a parallel between spiders and snakes. They are both cunning creatures, ancient in their origin and the use of both animals in legends, myth and stories is broad. By this similarity, the other mother could be connected to the witch-queen as her other form is that of a snake.

The witch-queen from *Stardust* is one of three sisters – the Lilim. They live in a dirty old hut with a mirror that shows three dark women in a hall of onyx floors and obsidian pillars (p. 65). They hunt and eat stars so they can stay alive forever. The stars also give them youth and beauty (p. 67) which can be compared to the bedlam who also eats young souls and can be transformed into young and pretty mothers to help her catch small children. The witch-queen can send curses and transform people, animals and things into whatever she chooses (p. 97). She communicates with her sisters through reflections and has knives made of bones and volcanic glass (p. 150). The Lilim, or the daughters of Lilith, are mentioned in detail by Illes (2009). She describes Daughters of Lilith as witches or "Lilith's mortal female devotees." These witches live in mirrors, gather at trees and they are told to "seduce men and lure them to ruin" (Illes, 2009, p. 936). In *Stardust*, we are also introduced to a lesser witch, Ditchwater Sal,

that could be compared to the European Jezibaba. Jezibaba might be helpful if the person is respectful to her (Illes, 2009, p. 765), which can be seen when she takes Tristran to the Wall. She turns him into a dormouse but does not harm him in any other way and then she also changes him back. Bottigheimer (2014) finds the origins of witches in Egypt or in Muslim Middle Ages. She describes witches as those “able to transform people into animals.” In literature, witches “perform magic that moves the tales of heroes and heroines toward the goals they pursue.” Witches have been perceived not only by literature but also by people throughout history. The witch trials and hunts in Modern Europe and Colonial America are amongst some examples, as witchcraft and black magic was connected to the works of Satan (Bottigheimer, 2014, p. 154).

The witch-sisters in *Stardust* come in three. According to Beveridge (2014), three just like seven, is the number “most frequently occurring and fundamental” in fairy tales. In *Stardust*, not only the witches come in three, but also the three alive heirs of Stormhold. In *Coraline*, there are three ghosts and three souls that need to be saved. The number of neighbours is also three and Coraline with her parents creates another unit of three. Beveridge (2014) mentions the importance of the number three in Romano-Celtic religions and the Holy Trinity of Christianity. Probably the most famous three witches appear in *Macbeth* (1606) by Shakespeare.

4.3 The Bravery and Motivation of Coraline and Tristran Thorn

Coraline is introduced by a quote from G. K. Chesterton: “Fairy tales are more than true: not because they tell us that dragons exist, but because they tell us that dragons can be beaten.” This quote summarizes the theme and purpose of *Coraline*. Her story shows young readers that even a small girl can defeat the evil if she is brave enough. *Stardust* is in the theme of bravery similar to *Coraline*, Tristran starts the novel as a boy who does not belong and ends it as a brave man, the Lord of Stormhold. C. S. Lewis’ take on bravery is then this: “Courage is not simply one of the virtues but the form of every virtue at the testing point, which means at the point of highest reality” (*The Screwtape Letters*, 1942). This quote was chosen, as it is true for both Coraline and Tristran. They are brave people but their bravery is tested by a trial that they have to overcome. Both are successful even if they are afraid, they stay kind and virtuous and that proves their courage.

Coraline is an explorer. When warned of the old well, she “sets off to explore for it, (...), to keep away from it properly” (p. 13). When pestered by her mother to go play with her toys, she doesn’t “want to do those things. (She wants) to explore” (p. 14). She also sets to explore the mist of the other world without knowing what lies behind. Julia (2019) sees this curiosity as a result of the authoritarian parenting style of Coraline’s parents. They control what Coraline does and make her feel as if she is a “disturbance” and that makes her adventurous.

Coraline is also afraid of spiders, they make her “intensely uncomfortable” (p. 20). Even though she finds them repulsive, she still sets to fight the other mother and rescue her parents. She is very much afraid of her but challenges her nonetheless. As soon as she sees her parents trapped in the mirror, she knows she has to go save them (p. 65). She confronts the other mother and tells her she is “not her real mother” (p. 93). When the other mother sends a sandstorm upon her in the hallway of the house, she is not afraid to stand her ground and tell the other mother to “play fair” (p. 115). She goes into a basement even if she knows it is a trap just to make sure that no soul is left there (p. 126). She even encourages the other father not to be afraid of the other mother and fight her (p. 131). She encourages herself throughout the story – she hugs herself and tells herself that she is brave (p. 133). She repeats to herself “I’m not frightened” (p. 135). She is smart enough to deceive the other mother and when she does so, she throws the black cat on her and distracts her long enough to escape (p. 153). She also accepts her faith when the children tell her that the fight is not over and she has to trap the other mother’s right hand. She manages to trap the hand on her own, without anyone’s help (p. 177).

The main motivation of Coraline is to save her parents. Although their parenting is not ideal and she feels as if they do not care about her sometime, she loves them and is determined to save them from the other mother. She also wants to save the souls of the dead children. What gives her the most courage is a memory of her father and her. They were at a dump when they found a wasp nest. The wasps started attacking them and Coraline’s father rushed them away. His glasses fell in the process and he knew he had to go back and so he went. Coraline sees true bravery in this. She says to the cat, “It wasn’t because he wasn’t scared: it was the only thing he could do. But going back again to get his glasses, when he knew the wasps were there, when he was really scared. *That* was brave. Because when you’re scared but you still do it anyway, *that’s* brave” (p. 71). This shows that Coraline knows that brave people can still feel fear. She was terrified to go back to the other world but she was inspired by her father and she knew it had to be done. She fought through her fear and faced the other mother. In the end,

Coraline feels as if “there is nothing about school that could scare her any more” (p. 185). She overcomes all her fears and is ready to face the next chapter of her life.

Tristran is a boy from a village who does not feel like he belongs. He daydreams of princesses, knights, trolls and mermaids (p. 42). He is in love with a girl and he is determined to get her love by any means. He sets on a journey into strange lands all alone. Tristran’s bravery comes more naturally to him. He is almost reckless or naïve in his behaviour and it is because of creatures around him that he gets out of troubles sometimes. He admits this to himself which pushes him further on his journey and also shows how he has matured (p. 145). Tristran discovers that he has the power of knowing every place in Faerie without ever knowing it existed (p. 88). However, he only uses this power when someone asks him to locate something. He is very excited to experience an adventure but he also complains: “Adventures are all very well in their place, (...), but there’s a lot to be said for regular meals and freedom from pain” (p. 183). Next to Tristran, Yvaine’s bravery also has to be mentioned, as she is thrown into a new world and she has to find her way through it. She also knows that she would turn into a rock if she crossed the Wall but she accepts her fate (p. 224).

Tristran is firstly motivated by the vision of him and Victoria Forester, hand in hand, married. What he realises later is that the true reason he was so drawn to Faerie was because he was born there and his true love awaited him there. Tristran’s courage has a more magical origin than Coraline’s. He is braver when a “wind blows from Faerie” and he feels “a certain amount of courage he had not suspected that he had possessed” (p. 44). This wind could be only the magic of Faerie calling to its lost son but it could also be the doing of Tristran’s mother, Una. Tristran finds himself in Faerie. He is praised for his knowledge of literature and poetry (p. 192) while no one in the village of Wall even notices this passion of his. He thinks that he is on the journey to please his family and Victoria, however, in the end he realises that he “had scarcely given his parents a second thought (...) he could no longer reconcile his old idea of giving the star to Victoria Forester with his current notion that the star was not a thing to be passed from hand to hand, but a true person in all respects and no kind of thing at all”; he had also “forgotten the colour of Victoria Forester’s eyes” (p. 216). This also shows that Tristran has grown and has realised the value that Yvaine’s life has and that he knows her and loves her more than he ever knew or loved Victoria. In the end, he feels that the people from Faerie “might as well be his own people, for he felt he had more in common with them than with the pallid folk of Wall” (p. 222). He arrives at the decision of letting Victoria go and blessing her

to marry Mr. Monday (p. 234). He talks to his father who tells him of his true origin and Tristran decides to go live in Faerie and become its new Lord.

The moment that both characters realise that they have changed and that their lives are far better now is when Coraline sees that “the sky had never seemed so *sky*; the world had never seemed so *world*. (...) Nothing, she thought, had ever been so *interesting*.” (p. 158). Tristran mirrors this thought: “There was a *skyness* to the sky and a *nowness* to the world he had never seen or felt or realized before” (p. 183). Coraline has finally found out that even her ordinary life is worth living and that there is adventure everywhere. Tristran has found his new home and found out who he truly is as a person.

5 Fairy Tales for Children and for Adults

Both books are titled and act like fairy tales; however, *Coraline* is truly written for children, especially for young girls, while *Stardust* has been dubbed as the Fairy Tale for Grown-ups. This chapter will take a look at why both books are meant for a different age group and why both fairy tales for children and for adults are equally important.

Šedivá (2018) mentions the Rites of Passage theory by Arnold van Gennep. It is a theory connected to the growth of a person. In fairy tales and stories, this can be applied to the hero's journey. First stage is the separation where the hero is disconnected from their environment and the people they know. Coraline is in the other world and she is also separated from her parents. Tristran faces the same separation from his village and also his family. The hero then goes through a transition. For Coraline, this is the hunt for the lost souls and the fight with the mother. For Tristran, this process is longer, it is his whole journey through Faerie and his many adventures that he experiences with Yvaine. The last stage is the integration. Here the hero is accepted into a new life, or they accept the new life they have. Coraline is finally happy with the life she has and she is ready to start her new life in the new city and find new friends at a new school. Tristran is accepted into the world of Faerie. He finds that this is where he truly belongs and he finds his purpose in life. Šedivá (2018) also refers to M. M. Bakhtin and his motif of the hero's trial. The hero's trial is a tool used for a story and its characters to evolve.

Gennep's theory is closely related to Joseph Campbell's the Hero's Journey theory (Koudelková, 2015, p. 8). This process has many stages and it is a pattern that can be seen in many myths, stories and legends and also in fairy tales and works of fiction. There are also three categories – Departure, Initiation and Return – but these categories are then divided and described in greater detail in other seventeen stages. Some of the stages that are visible in both *Coraline* and *Stardust* are: The Call to Adventure, Supernatural Aid, The Crossing of the First Threshold, The Road of Trials, Atonement with the Father/Mother, The Crossing of the Return Threshold, Master of Two Worlds and Freedom to Live.

Šedivá (2018) talks about literature for children and adolescents as literature that is focused on children's interests, needs and skills. Not only the topics have to be close to the children but also the language and composition has to be easily understandable and digestible. The characters should not be complicated. There should be black and white characters, inherently good or inherently evil. Children should be able to identify with the characters. The worlds of fantasy and of the real should be interconnected. Some of the newer literature deals

with this connection really well, amongst some of the authors mentioned are Alan Garner, Eoin Coffey, Helen Creswell or J. K. Rowling (Šedivá, 2018, p. 16). Ponte (2020) focuses on the depiction of space in fiction. He draws attention to how children and adults experience space differently. For them, a house for example, is the whole world and so a story like *Coraline* needs only a house to depict its plot, while *Stardust* that is meant for adults, needs to use a bigger map and many more locations.

Stardust might be considered a fairy tale according to everything that was mentioned above. However, its themes and the language in which it was written are not meant for the younger audiences. There are uses of vulgar words and sexual intercourse is mentioned. Marková (2008) also brings up the theme of raising illegitimate children, gender issues and the fight for power in a society of people of different origins and classes. The themes that *Stardust* and *Coraline* share are then the theme of “only the most open individuals being able to enter fantastical worlds” versus the mainstream characters who focus only on material things (Marková, 2008, p. 8).

Peichlová (2020) focuses on how fairy tales affect children and their development. She mentions that every good fairy tale should enable the child to “understand the incomprehensible.” The abstractness of feelings like love, hate, friendship or the differentiation between good and evil can be impossible to grasp by a child. Fairy tales help explain these things in form of play and by entertaining the child. Fairy tales also raise children and develop their personalities (Peichlová, 2020, p. 15). They show the boundaries of what is socially acceptable or unacceptable and what is morally good or wrong. What is most important, fairy tales explain how the human mind works and they present various problems to children without causing them any real harm. Children then see these problems and they also see their solutions. Fairy tales should all have something that the children can take away into their real lives. There is also no boundary set on the scariness of the story. Children like to be scared when in the safety of their parents’ arms, inside their bedrooms with all their toys around (Peichlová, 2020, p. 15). Fairy tales also serve as a kind of a therapy for their souls. Fairy tales are needed for the development of their minds, hearts and souls as literature breeds wisdom and emotional maturity not only in adults but also in children.

Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to analyse Neil Gaiman's books *Coraline* and *Stardust* and draw attention to their similarities and differences. It provided a summary of the author's life and work, a summary of both books and the books' characters and an analysis of the contents and elements that the books shared or that were not present in one or the other. Finally, an analysis of fairy tales and their function was provided, and it was found whether *Stardust* and *Coraline* fall into the category.

The first objective was to focus on the books *Coraline* and *Stardust* and summarize their plot, characters, and themes. It was summarized that *Coraline* is a book about a young girl, who discovers a world behind the door and an evil mother awaits her there and wants to eat her soul. Coraline is a brave girl and she manages to overpower the evil mother. *Stardust* is then about a boy who enters the magical world of Faerie and saves a fallen star from an evil witch. In the end, he becomes the Lord of this land. Both characters were described as courageous, adventurous and curious. The themes of the books were both focused on bravery of the main characters and the journey to the next stage of their lives.

The main objective was to compare the two books. The aim was to find similarities between the magical creatures and elements, between the two main villains and also between the bravery and motivation of both characters. It was found that both books have many elements in common. Both books contain some sort of a portal, a door and a wall. Through these portals, the characters are able to enter worlds that are different from the real, ordinary one. Both of these worlds have their good and bad creatures. The difference is that Faerie is magical and beautiful while the other world is scary, and it consists only of the house. Another feature that both books have in common is the presence of a helpful creature. In *Coraline*, it is a black cat that comes from the ordinary world that helps Coraline defeat the other mother. In *Stardust*, there is also a black cat that watched over Tristran but the more helpful character is the little hairy man. Other creatures present in both works are ghosts. The ghosts in *Coraline* are those of the victims of the other mother and they help Coraline. The ghosts in *Stardust* are not helpful at all, they only watch over the development of the story. Another important object in both works is the mirror. In *Coraline*, it is vital for the title hero, while in *Stardust*, the mirror is used by the villain. As for the protective talisman, both heroes have one. Coraline has a stone with a hole in it that helps her find the lost souls and Tristran has a glass snowdrop that protects him from spells. The difference between the two books is that in *Coraline*, mice and rats are

important, while in *Stardust*, there is a presence of a Unicorn as well as other legendary creatures.

The villains in both stories are witches. *Stardust* presents a typical old witch that is able to transform into a beautiful, young woman by eating stars and can use spells, while *Coraline* introduces a spider-like creature that can also transform, it eats the souls of children and is able to create her own world.

As for the bravery of both characters, it is similar in the sense that they both have to overcome their fears and navigate new lands with some help from others. However, the motivation behind their bravery is different, as Coraline is brave because she has to save her parents and herself while Tristran is brave because he wants to become a man and prove everyone wrong. They are both able to overcome many obstacles and grow in their own way. Coraline is ready to face a new city and a new school and Tristran has found his place in the world and is ready to rule Faerie.

The last objective was to summarize what a fairy tale is, what elements it has to contain and to find out if both books fall into this category and why they might be intended for different audiences. Both books are definitely of the fairy tale genre as they include fairy tale characters and distinguish clearly between good and evil. They also present a problem to its audience and can find a solution to it. Both books carry their meaning and lessons. The only difference is that *Coraline* is written for younger audiences, by its language, composition and tone. *Stardust* is rather for older audience, because of the language used and some of the themes that it touches upon.

The main aim of this thesis was reached by analysing the two works, *Coraline* and *Stardust*, and also by looking at the body of work of Neil Gaiman and the authors he was inspired by. Next, various sources, including encyclopaedias, academic thesis, books about fiction, biographies and documentaries were read and analysed and are referred to throughout this work. Neil Gaiman's influence and work is essential to work of fiction and so it is disappointing that there are not more sources or academic works about some of his books. Thus, more research and analysis of Neil Gaiman's work should be conducted. Many sources do mention *Coraline*; however, *Stardust* is almost never touched upon. Other research should be conducted in the genre of fairy tales and its importance and influence not only on children but also on adults.

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Résumé

Cíl této bakalářské práce je srovnat dvě knihy Neila Gaimana, *Koralina* a *Hvězdný prach*. Tato bakalářská práce se soustřeďuje na autora a obsah těchto knih jakožto knihy žánru fantasy a pohádek. Analýza se soustřeďuje na fantastické prvky těchto knih, na magická stvoření a předměty, na hlavní záporné postavy a také na statečnost obou hlavních postav. Následující analýza se soustřeďuje na pohádky jako žánr a na rozdíly mezi pohádkami pro děti a pro dospělé. Bylo zjištěno, že obě knihy sdílí mnoho prvků a bylo také dokázáno, že obě spadají do žánru pohádky. Bylo také zjištěno a vysvětleno proč je jedna z pohádek spíše pro mladší čtenáře a druhá pro starší.

Annotation

Jméno a příjmení:	Nela Kantorová
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Rok obhajoby:	2022

Název práce:	Srovnání <i>Coraline</i> a <i>Stardust</i> Neila Gaimana
Název v angličtině:	A Comparison of <i>Coraline</i> and <i>Stardust</i> by Neil Gaiman
Anotace práce:	Bakalářská práce je zaměřena na srovnání knih Koralina a Hvězdný prach. Hovoří o jejich autorovi i o knihách samotných. Knihy jsou analyzovány z pohledu jejich podobností v prvcích fantasy žánru. Jsou zde srovnané magické bytosti a předměty, záporné postavy a také statečnost hlavních postav. Také je zde analyzován žánr pohádky, a jak do něj obě knihy zapadají. Také je vysvětleno, pro jakou věkovou kategorii byly knihy napsány.
Klíčová slova:	pohádka, fantasy, magie, čarodějnice, statečnost
Anotace v angličtině:	The bachelor thesis focuses on the comparison of books <i>Coraline</i> and <i>Stardust</i> . It talks about their author and the books and their content. The elements analysed are those that are similar or fall into the fantasy genre. The thesis compares magical beings and objects, main villains and also the bravery of the main characters. The fairy tale genre is also analysed and the books are compared to this analysis. It is also explained for which age group the books were written.
Klíčová slova v angličtině:	fairy tale, fantasy, magic, witch, bravery
Přílohy vázané v práci:	-
Rozsah práce:	32
Jazyk práce:	Anglický jazyk