

Seeing and Being Seen: The Gaze, Surveillance, and Power in Neil Gaiman's *Coraline*¹

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Abstract

Neil Gaiman's *Coraline* (2002) is a major piece of modern children's and young adult literature that addresses the concepts of autonomy, fear and power through the common motifs of vision and observation. The paper focuses on the concept of the gaze and surveillance as mechanisms of control, identity formation and resistance in the novel. Using Foucauldian notions of panopticism, Lacanian psychoanalytical ideas on visual power relations, and feminist thinking on visual power relations, the study explores the use of surveillance and visual domination to control Coraline and the inhabitants of Other World. It also uncovers that Coraline develops psychologically and acquires moral agency as she comes to recognize the practice of observing and the capacity to defy visual means of control. Special focus is placed on the symbolic meanings of button eyes, mirrors and the omnipresent gaze as expressions of objectification, discipline and resistance. The results indicate that the novel is a critique of oppressive systems of power and conveys perception and critical awareness as key tools for self-determination. This paper foregrounds the politics of seeing and being seen and is a part of a wider conversation about surveillance, subjectivity, and visual culture in children's and young adult literature.

Keywords: children's literature, gaze, panopticism, power, surveillance, visual culture

Introduction

The sophisticated exploration of themes like identity, autonomy, fear, and psychological growth positions Gaiman's *Coraline* (2002) a prominent place in modern children's and young adult literature. The novel is a work of fantasy, some Gothic fiction,

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and horror, the story of a young girl, Coraline Jones, who finds another world that seems more attractive than the one she lives in. She unearths that another world is a place of manipulation, surveillance, and control. Gaiman discusses how children deal with authority, their growing self-awareness, and their sense of independence in the presence of elements of control. Gaiman examines the ways in which children learn to assert themselves against oppressive power structures, their sense of self-awareness as they grow up, and how they negotiate authority.

Coraline has been subject to various studies by researchers, such as childhood development, Gothic imagination, gender, and identity formation. The fear is not just a device for generating suspense but also one for the individual's growth and discovery. Gaiman (2002) reveals that the narrative of *Coraline* is a journey of discovery that is as much about the dangers he faces as it is about the uncertainties within him. Existing research has explored these thematic issues, but much has not been written on the centrality of looking, seeing, and vision as a key mechanism of power in the narrative.

Many themes related to power are expressed in *Coraline* through visual elements such as button eyes, mirrors, windows, reflections and observation and sight. The aesthetic relationship between seeing and being seen is complex and represents a site of resistance and a means of domination. The authority of the Other Mother isn't just enforced by the presence of a physical cage, but also an all-seeing eye that watches, regulates and objectifies residents of the Other World. Thus, in the novel, the process of seeing is a politically and psychologically charged and hence a process of making subjectivity and deciding access to power.

This paper analyzes these issues in the theoretical frameworks of Michel Foucault's theory of panopticism, Jacques Lacan's theory of mirror stage and the gaze, and feminist analyses of power relations within the picture. Foucault (1977) maintains that contemporary power is exercised through a process of surveillance, in which people become observers of themselves and monitors their own actions. The panoptic model can help us to understand how the Other Mother's authority is based on constant visibility and psychological control. Likewise, Lacan's (1977) theory on the mirror stage sheds light on the role of the mirror as a symbol of identity formation and visual recognition and misrecognition, and this is evident in the novel. In this respect feminist theories of the gaze also play a part in the discussion, showing how visual regimes may objectify people and reinforce hierarchical relations of power (Mulvey, 1975).

This paper explores the relationships between gaze, surveillance, and power in Neil Gaiman's *Coraline* to examine the visibility of power and resistance. Growing awareness and rejection of the Other Mother's surveillance signals psychological growth and development of self-awareness, agency and autonomy in the case of Coraline. *Coraline* rejects these dominant modes of seeing and creates an identity that challenges the systems of domination and control. The novel thus brings into the foreground the political nature of perception, the formation of the subjects of action and of power. By examining visual surveillance and resistance, this study contends that *Coraline* is an exploration into forms of disciplinary power and the transformative power of critical vision in children's and young adult's literature.

Literature Reviews and Research Gaps

Coraline has received a fair share of critical reviews due to its allegorical exploration of childhood, identity, independence and power and its gloomy imaginative storyline. The Gothic themes and use of the uncanny to shatter the boundaries of agency and selfhood has been a focus of academic attention. According to Rudd (2008), *Coraline* complicates traditional constructions of childhood innocence by presenting a protagonist who is compelled to navigate significant psychological and existential threats. Rudd argues that the act of the Other Mother to provide button eyes, a disturbing act that literally eliminates individuality, make the act of looking into becoming seen, manipulated, and commodified. This definition is based on the view that vision is a powerful coercive force. Similarly, Nikolajeva (2010) stresses the novel application of the uncanny to the gaze of the Other Mother as a frightening maternal ability that disrupts traditional relationships between mothers and children and distorts the boundaries between power and empathy.

These reviews have been extended by critics into the analysis of how *Coraline* dramatizes the regimes of visual control based on Foucauldian concepts of surveillance and disciplinary power. As Sousa (2014) inscribes, the pervasive gaze of the Other Mother can be compared to an idea of Foucault (1977) about the panopticon, which presupposes that behavior is regulated and socialized because of the constant control. According to Sousa, there is some huge surveillance apparatus around Coraline that tries to turn her into a good and docile little girl. Moreover, as Karen Coats (2011) transcribes, the final rebellion of this visual regime in *Coraline* means that it is subjectivity and

defiance. Vision is used in structuring and contesting power in this case and not merely a theme.

Gendered dynamics of control and vision in the novel have been given useful insights by feminist critics. Friedman (2012) states that the desire of the Other Mother to physically re-create Coraline in Friedman image, namely, the figurative extraction of her eyes, may be viewed as a metaphor of domination of female bodies as to aesthetics. This forceful mature empathy, masquerading as care, enforces conformity of behavior and appearance as an imprint of bigger social structures that govern the female subjectivities. In this respect, Trites (2000) would classify *Coraline* as part of the tradition of the feminist bildungsroman and portal fantasy, in which identity negotiation and the critique of adult, especially motherly, authority occur in alternate worlds.

Although the body of existing research on *Coraline* is growing, the critical discussion often neglects the aspect of the vision as a psychological or symbolic motif without in-depth examination of the way in which the vision is also connected to the processes of ideological control and surveillance. Another significant concept for comprehending the gaze of the Other Mother is the notion of perception as articulated by Berger, which posits that vision is historically and politically constructed (Berger, 1972). This framework elucidates how the Other Mother's gaze influences Coraline's understanding of reality. Though the theory developed by Mulvey (1975) is based on the film research, the male gaze theory illustrates the surveillance of the Other Mother. It is similar to the manipulation of the male body as a form of control to objectify the subject and adjust it to the preferences of the spectator. The idea of the right to look, suggested by Mirzoeff (2011), builds upon this practice by suggesting that looking is a political action of claim-making where the act of seeing and being seen are closely bound together with the problem of power, visibility and recognition.

Moreover, the echo of the novel with current issues in datafication, digital surveillance, and in the technologized gaze are seldom addressed in the more recent criticism. Coraline feels newly timely in an era of mass surveillance, of algorithmic surveillance and of parental surveillance software. The totalizing visual regime of The Other Mother can be read as a metaphor of the digital panopticon that is gaining more and more power in the lives of kids and teens in the world where media are everywhere (Lyon, 2018; Couldry and Mejias, 2019). As a result, *Coraline* places the sphere of vision

as a contradictory site of oppression and liberation in advance and criticizes the mainstream of the surveillance culture.

Despite much research having been conducted on the themes of vision, identity, and surveillance in *Coraline*, there is yet to be done in integrative analysis, which investigates the interplay of these elements in maintaining and subverting systems of domination. Although they are relevant to the visual politics of the text and the dialectic of seeing and being seen, there has been no systematic application of significant visual theorists like John Berger, Laura Mulvey and Nicholas Mirzoeff to the text. Furthermore, *Coraline* is seldom explored through the lens of posthumanist philosophy or it is in connection with the current issues of algorithmic surveillance and hyper-visibility. The previous research has recognized the resistance of Coraline, still, the visual tricks she uses to become a gaze owner and assert her power have not attracted enough attention.

Sealing these gaps gives the opportunity to expand the critical debate on the visuality, power, and resistance in contemporary young adult and children literature. Therefore, further studies that combine the feminist critique of the surveillance studies and the visual theory are still needed. This paper attempts to fill this gap, by discussing how the politics of vision is used in the novel to explore the relationship between power, surveillance and resistance in children and young adult narrative.

Theoretical Framework & Methodology

This paper employs three overlapping theoretical models, Jacques Lacan's mirror stage, Laura Mulvey's gaze theory and Michel Foucault's panopticism to analyze how the vision, surveillance and power relations work in *Coraline*. It is based on poststructuralist, feminist, and psychoanalytic traditions. These theories provide the critical optic through which it is possible to see and be seen to construct subjectivity, and create resistance. In this paper, the concept of identity, agency, and control in *Coraline* are explored with reference to the theoretical approaches of visual metaphors and power dynamics.

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1977) theorizes the concept of panopticism on the basis of the logic of surveillance. The concept of panopticism adds the idea of the inmates being governed by the center watcher to all the prisoners in the prison. And all the captives govern their own behaviors. The gaze mechanism is transformed into a system of discipline and control. The Other Mother establishes an atmosphere of panoptic by ever surveilling and managing Coraline and other children in the Other

World of *Coraline*. Black buttons sewn over the victims of the Other Mother that takes away their visual agency are left as the most effective symbol of how she dominates her victims forever. This strategy is analogous to the Foucault (1977) theory of surveillance that serves as a hidden psychological weapon of power within social and architectural organization besides imposing rules of conduct.

Laura Mulvey works on the theory of gaze which provides the vision and power with feminist approach. Mulvey (1975), in her influential essay *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*, argues that traditional visual narratives, particularly in film, are structured through the male gaze, positioning women as passive objects of visual pleasure and male desire. While Mulvey's (1975) analysis primarily addresses cinematic representation, her theory provides a useful framework for understanding the Other Mother's treatment of Coraline, whose objectification and attempted possession exemplify the operation of power through the gaze and the reduction of the subject to an object of control. Her intention is to project Coraline, rather than merely look at her. However, Coraline willingly rejects this objectification by asserting her gaze by reflecting, exploring and by negotiating with the Other World on her terms. With this inversion, the female protagonist is back in control and challenges the hegemony of the controlling gaze. The theory created by Mulvey (1975) is thus central to understanding how *Coraline* breaks some fundamental rules of gendered surveillance and visual power.

The concept of the mirror stage by Jacques Lacan adds more weight to the discussion of identity creation that *Coraline* has. According to Lacan (2006), the mirror stage occurs when a baby makes the initial identification with the reflected image and this leads to the formation of the ego by way of misrecognition. Separation of the actual self of the subject and the idealized self-causes a tension between the subject and their ideal self throughout their lifetime. The Other World becomes a distorted reflection of reality, a mirror of fears and desires of Coraline. Her encounters with her twin, impersonation of her parents, and illusion of places she frequents symbolize the Lacanian concept of misrecognition. Coraline realizes how to draw a line between her real self and these mirrored illusions, and the process is dramatized throughout the book. Coraline emerges more confident and intact as a person when she refutes the dreamy but unreal world of the Other Mother. The observations made by Lacan (2006) help to see the importance of visual representation and recognition of Coraline in the context of his psychological development and individuation.

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These all theoretical approaches illustrate that, beyond the limits of children's fantasy genre literature, *Coraline* is a deep consideration of subjectivity, visual strength, and surveillance. The novel is an exploration of how vision is a tool to form identity and control behavior as it is introduced through the lens of a concept of disciplinary surveillance by Michel Foucault, a theory of the gaze by Laura Mulvey, and a theory of the mirror stage by Jacques Lacan. Foucault's analysis uncovers the methods of control that the Other Mother employs, through constant surveillance, leading to a system in which subjects become self-regulating through the processes of surveillance. Mulvey's theory also accounts for the relationship between act of looking and the power dynamics; Coraline can be seen as an object of looks, but she is also a subject of looks and one that does not go silently. Similarly, in Lacan's mirror stage, how the self is established through processes of recognition and misrecognition come to the fore. These visions speak to one another, evoking a sense of identity, a power dynamic, and a potential for resistance, autonomy, and self-determination.

This paper employs 'close reading' to analyze textual features – imagery, motifs, characterization, symbolism, and narrative development – which help to represent vision, surveillance and power in Gaiman's *Coraline*. The study examines the ways in which these literary traits contribute to the novel's processes of identity construction, subjectivity and resistance through detailed examination of them. In order to interpret the text and draw the reader's attention to the various elements at play, the research uses a theoretical framework from an interdisciplinary perspective, which includes approaches from a feminist, psychoanalytical and poststructuralist perspective. Theories of subjectivity, visual culture and surveillance are particularly addressed in regard to the dynamics of seeing and being seen. Combining insights acquired from these key approaches, the paper explores how visual power is used in the narrative and how *Coraline* is negotiating the systems of observation, control and self-recognition, before coming to her own conclusions of agency and autonomy.

A Critical Analysis of Surveillance, Gaze, and Identity in *Coraline*

The novel *Coraline* by Gaiman is apparently a simple narrative of a small girl going into a parallel world. It is an intricate commentary on independence, snorescoping, and politics of view. Early on, Coraline finds herself in a dilemma of the being observed and observer in the novel. The surveillance system described in the theory of panopticism by Foucault (1977), where the threat of being constantly surveilled is reflected in the

ubiquitous gaze of the Other Mother. Just like a panoptic building painstakingly designed to be attractive and watched, the design of the Other World gives an illusion of freedom, but is an instrument of absolute control. Coraline has a face-shaped garden and the strange similarities of the people living around her are indicators of a place where there is no privacy and all arrangements are ready to be viewed. The core of this visual superiority is the insistence of the Other Mother that Coraline have buttons instead of her eyes. This is more than just a symbolic gesture, but a pressurizing strategy, which consists of visual silencing and erasing the body.

Since time immemorial, the eyes have symbolized sight, action and the essence of being (Mulvey, 1975; Lacan, 2006). In *Coraline*, the Other Mother takes away Coraline sight, understanding and strength, and forces her to have her eyes replaced by dead buttons to take away Coraline control over her own image by others as well as her body. This substitution turns Coraline into a passive, objectified thing with no control of her own and the final disappearance of subjectivity. Gaiman presents the sinister overwriting of the interior identity of Coraline by giving a strong comparison to the buttons and the overwriting of individuality. According to her, her eyes were black buttons and glistening as empty holes (Gaiman, 2002, p. 75). In this way, depriving Coraline of her eyes is a forced submission to the gaze of the Other Mother, a repetition of Foucault's concept of panopticism, which focuses on internalization of visibility that surveillance disciplines. Coraline faces a visual tyranny that controls not only the body but the mind by robbing her of the capacity to see, think and perceive.

Moreover, this visual predominance features the vile nature of power by being presented as an illusion of kindness and safety instead of being open aggression. Other Mother reminds Coraline that you remember how tyrannical domination often veils itself as benevolence, I will give you everything you want (Gaiman, 2002, p. 57). It hides her dominating motives under the mask of caring (Foucault, 1977). This is connected to the analysis of the gaze by Mulvey (1975) who discusses it as a method of possession that is all about dominance although it appears pleasurable. Through this symbolism, Gaiman criticizes the manipulative methods that repressive authority employs to keep their actions in the shadow and mask them as love or safety, and this makes the reader conscious of how the altruistic measures used by such controls can infringe on the individual freedoms.

The psychological and spatial organization of the Other World, the concept of panopticism by Foucault, underscores the complexities of gaze. The well planned scene resembles the world of *Coraline*, however there is also logic of monitoring. The presence of anthropomorphic rats that protect Coraline, the garden in her face, and the mysterious nature of the Other Mother all reinforce the notion that Coraline is in a world of regular observation. The probability of being watched at all times creates fear and obedience similar to Foucault's panopticon. The internalized surveillance is realized through the refusal of Coraline. Her denial to succumb to the comforts and illusions of this environment itself signifies her rejection of the internalized surveillance. She displays her disobedience in the clearest way when she states that I do not want whatever I want. Not a single one does. Not exactly. What a life would I live to see everything I desired? (P. 88, Gaiman, 2002). The given example demonstrates that she is becoming increasingly aware that the Other World offers her all the freedom that is also a lie and suppressive.

Objectifying Coraline in the Other Mother is one of the primary points that the visual dynamics in *Coraline* also closely correspond to the gaze theory developed by Mulvey (1975). The visual culture of patriarchy often dictates that women are passive visual objects of pleasure and domination, and that is brought to the fore by Mulvey seminal concept of the male gaze. Although she is more focused on film, the thesis of Mulvey can be applied to any story where seeing is power (Mulvey, 1975). In addition to love or care, the possessive and consuming stare of the Other Mother in *Coraline* is a desire to tame Coraline and turn her into a spectacle to be handled. The Other Mother raises Coraline and provides food and entertainment but these are calculated trapping rather than goodwill actions. When discussing the attentions of the Other mother, Coraline notes that everything was perfect there, yet not so real (Gaiman, 2002, p. 54) and that the attentions are deceptive and rather a veil of a higher control end.

The concept of illusory character and command proves the argument of Mulvey (1975). The gaze is a dominating weapon which makes the subject to be possessed, often in the name of pleasure. In her attempt to devour, the very identity of Coraline and the stare of the Other Mother replicate the objectifying nature of the masculine gaze which is predatory, in spite of being feminine. She also exemplifies her visual ownership of creating buttons that she sews over the eyes of her victims to turn them into mute spectacles which she can do with as she pleases (Gaiman, 2002, p. 75). Coraline demonstrates her resistance to this objectification by reclaiming the gaze. She transforms

into an active subject who observes, questions and eventually goes against the power of the Other Mother. Coraline utters a form of empowered gazing as she uses magic stone to discern the illusions of the Other World, as argued by Mulvey (1975), in his call to have the traditional visual hierarchies dismantled.

Moreover, the visual agency of *Coraline* turns the traditional gendered relations of power upside down since it reverses the roles of the viewer and the viewed. The sight is the way Coraline defines herself and survives instead of succumbing to the domineering gaze of the Other Mother. This act of visual rejection indicates the feminist possibilities of the theory of gaze which asserts that the gaze can be taken to challenge and disrupt the established patterns of power (Mulvey, 1975; Doane, 1982). The statement by Coraline where she clarifies, “I am not afraid of you” (Gaiman, 2002, p. 96) confirms her determination to actively sense and shape her reality and the denial to be a passive spectacle. Through this inversion of visual control mechanisms challenges and inverts traditional visual control appliances.

This reversal of the gaze is a step in female resistance in *Coraline*. In contrast to an inactive object of the unremitting control of the Other Mother, Coraline rebels aggressively against the imposed visual regime. The beginning of her transformation into an object of control into an autonomous subject is symbolic by her intentional utilization of sight as an empowerment tool especially when she utilizes the magic stone with a hole to look through the illusions of the Other World (Gaiman, 2002, p. 71). This breaking of the surface look bears some semblance to the argument by Mulvey (1975) who asserts that to question the prevailing power structures in a visual culture, it is necessary to subvert the dominant gaze. The Other Mother is stunned in her manufactured spectacle when Coraline restores her critical sight and discovers its fiction and falsity.

Correspondingly, the empowered vision of Coraline is used to liberate the ghost children incarcerated by the controlling gaze of the Other Mother as well as to unshackle herself. These mute and helpless children are the ugly outcomes of objectification and visual predominance. The feminist theorists who emphasize the political potential of looking back as a resistance mode are congruent to the ability of Coraline to perceive their situational predicament and take action on their behalf (Mulvey, 1975; Hooks, 1992). Coraline also questions and refutes the mental manipulation involved in the gaze of the Other Mother saying, “You don't frighten me” (Gaiman, 2002, p. 96), which elucidates her unwillingness to internalize fear or submissiveness.

The resistance of Coraline echoes the concepts of Mulvey (1975) who claims that the disruption in the gaze can reassign the power differences, as well as reinvest the objectified subject with agency and narrative authority. Coraline destroys the passive spectacle by deconstructing vision as an instrument of empowerment and knowledge. The ability to manipulate appearance rather than be observed, as it is argued by Laura Mulvey, is among the most essential first moves towards resisting and changing the patterns of dominance assimilated within visual regimes (Mulvey, 1975). In illustrating the potential of vision as both a site of oppression and an instrument of feminist empowerment, Gaiman emphasizes that genuine emancipation necessitates a deeper examination beyond superficial appearances, as exemplified by Coraline's journey.

The mirror stage, a powerful psychoanalytic theory, of Lacan (2006) underpins the creation of identity of Coraline. The Other World corrupts Coraline's real life and offers her a false idyllic vision of what she desires that seems alluring but turns out to be false. The child identifies with the image of an external self that is both self and other, a moment of misrecognition that forms the basis of the ego. It generates an underlying split between the actual and idealized self as defined by Lacan (2006). This process is underlined in *Coraline* through the interactions as Coraline has with her Other Parents who are precise versions of her biological parents but have a disturbing made-up characteristic of having button eyes (Gaiman, 2002, p. 75). Such a shocking contrast leads one to consider that the Other World is a hollow illusion, a misidentification place where identity is torn apart and is risky.

With this rejection of the idealized and de facto unrealized version of herself and the world around her leads differentiation and individuation of Coraline. This becomes apparent when Coraline chooses to challenge the real world instead of going back to the Other World though it is full of tempting comforts. Her clever out-manuevering of the Other Mother is an indication of her formative sense of identity that has now been defined by independence and critical self-awareness as opposed to outer projection or misguided self-wishing. Subjectivity is achieved by agonizingly recognizing the artificial and fractured quality of wholeness over making the fantasy of wholeness true (Lacan 2006). Coraline's choice to abandon the Other World symbolizes knowledge and the way of becoming psychologically complete.

These psychoanalytic ideas criticize the gaze and the theory of surveillance. They turn *Coraline* into a complicated tale of opposition, domination, and sight. The gaze

theory by Mulvey focuses on the objectifying and disciplining aspects of visuality, particularly gendered power relations, Lacan influences the theory of the mirror stage to explain the level of internal psychological conflict regarding identity and self-awareness and Foucault influences the theory of power by explaining how it operates through surveillance technologies that discipline the subject. All of these theories demonstrate the subtle approaches in which the novel by Gaiman explores the mechanics of seeing and being seen. They are not only as external actions, but as something that is entwined with subject development and resistance on a more complicated level.

The *Coraline* experience is, in some way, a journey of visual enlightenment. Among other things, she learns to recognize the oppressive structures and sharply analyze the world around her, as well as to understand her own location as a subject of the structures (Gaiman, 2002). Her resistance to both physical confinement and visual objectification makes her a quite different woman, a resistant victim who becomes an active and independent subject. The change goes in line with the broader themes of modern critical theory, which emphasizes the importance of critical vision and self-consciousness to resist existing power systems. In so doing, Gaiman develops a narrative that helps readers, and youth in particular, challenge themselves to think critically about those social and ideological forces that shape how individuals perceive themselves and how others identify them.

Conclusion

This paper explores the complexities of seeing and being seen blending gothic horror and fantasy particularly through the lens of childhood experience in *Coraline*. It scrutinizes a deep and dark study of sight, surveillance and power. It projects the strongest critiques of visuality as an instrument of power and influence rather than just passive observation of, a situation. The panoptic gazes of the Other Mother and the horrifying use of eyes instead of buttons mirror even greater processes that enforce conformity and limit freedom of choice especially among the vulnerable and the easily influenced young adults. Vision is being used as a means of control, surveillance and erasure of individuality in the novel.

Coraline also illustrates that tyranny does not always have to be instituted by vision. The effect of being autonomous agency is the unwillingness of the protagonist to submit to the demand of the Other Mother who wants the protagonist to have button eyes in a clear rejection of the forced identity and objectification of the visuals. One such

change of passive subject to active agent is the ability of Coraline to see beyond illusion by using instruments like the magic stone to decode the untrue appearances of the Other World. This visual awakening in the text aligns with the mirror stage theory as Lacan introduced it since Coraline is able to reconcile her divided identity and reject the tempting false imitation of the Other World. In the end, she confirms her identity through independent judgment and vision.

This transformation points to the necessity of visual literacy and in particular in the media-driven world today where children and adolescents are constantly watched, represented and called upon to negotiate complex visual environments. The necessity to cultivate the critical eye, to question images, challenge the supporting power structures, and prove your own identity regardless of the commodities and controlled visual discourses is metaphorically emphasized by the journey of Coraline. *Coraline* transcends children fantasy or horror as well as a complicated allegory and communicates fundamental problems of power, self-sufficiency, and perception politics in early life. The narrative puts the audience to ponder over the criticality of the role of visual control systems in their lives as well as the ability to exert agency by taking back the act of seeing by bringing out the tension between resistance and surveillance. Due to this fact, it is considered as the valuable source of understanding not only Gothic and fantasy narratives but also sociopolitical realities of the young generation in the modern world.

Therefore, in its imaginative application of the gaze, mirrors, and eyeballs as metaphor, this paper invites the reader to consider anew the politics of vision. It underlines the importance of alert consciousness of how gazing is deployed to enact and struggle with power. Ultimately, it confirms the transformative impact of awareness as a means of self-definition, resistance, and liberation.

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