

INTRODUCTION

Moral dilemmas within each of us, and the resolution we took to overcome it, is connected to the identity that we have built during adolescence (Erikson, 1968). As such, both themes of morality and identity is especially interesting when explored in teen literature. Teen literature often explores the theme of identity because adolescence is a critical period for self-discovery and personal growth. In these stories, protagonists frequently grapple with questions about who they are, how they fit into society, and what their values and beliefs are. Through experiences such as facing challenges, building relationships, and overcoming internal and external conflicts, teen characters often embark on journeys of self-discovery, making identity a central theme in young adult fiction. Literature has always been an excellent means for discussing ethical dilemmas given that it helps readers aim to understand challenging moral problems while remaining safe in the stories they read. Literature examines at what it means to live a moral life, the difficulties of making moral choices, and the results of those choices through the stories of people, conflicts, and societies. This investigation isn't just about making clear lines between right and wrong; it also touches on the unspoken subject where moral uncertainty lives, giving readers a chance to think about their own beliefs and values. Moral questions are an important part of writing because they get people thinking about the moral aspects of life. In his book *The Company We Keep: An Ethics of Fiction*, Wayne C. Booth says that literature affects readers' moral growth in a special way by making them think about the moral consequences of characters' actions and the moral problems they face. One important way that writing can change and improve our understanding of morality is by bringing up moral questions.

The moral issues presented in literature often reflect the societal norms and values of the time, yet they also have the potential to challenge these norms, offering alternative perspectives on what constitutes moral behavior. Thus, the medium of literature reflects and critiques society's moral landscape, making readers to examine themselves and their world through the lens of fictional characters and situations. This positive, reflective trait can make readers acquire a more sophisticated understanding of human morality as a whole, challenging their own preconceived notions of right and wrong. One that readers consider a most interesting theme in literature is the presence of moral ambiguity, where characters and situations are not easily classified as entirely good or evil. Martha Nussbaum, in *Love's Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and*

Literature, argues that literature's portrayal of morally ambiguous situations cultivates a sensitivity to the complexity of ethical life, helping readers develop a more nuanced moral understanding. When moral talks or situations aren't clear, it's like real life, where decisions are based on values that aren't always the same or that are specific to the situation. It's not black and white like most people think. Literature gives readers a chance to experience the difficulties of making moral choices through characters who have to deal with these moral conflicts. This makes readers more morally aware. In literature that deals with moral problems, empathy is also very important. Literature builds empathy by connecting readers to characters. This helps readers understand and share the feelings of others, even those who are very different from them. Suzanne Keen, in *Empathy and the Novel*, discusses how narrative fiction encourages empathy by allowing readers to step into the shoes of characters and experience their struggles, triumphs, and moral dilemmas. This empathetic engagement is not just an emotional experience but also a moral one, as it allows readers to consider the ethical dimensions of the characters' actions and decisions. People can understand morality in a deeper and more complicated way when they read and see works of art that make them feel what other people are feeling and think about things from their point of view. As for literature being an important way to teach morals, it has been known for a long time. This is because literature makes moral problems interesting and makes people think. To teach morals, Bernard Williams writes in *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* that literature helps because it shows how difficult moral life is and how different things, like personal wants, social pressures, and cultural rules, can change moral choices. Literature gives readers a deeper understanding of morality by showing them characters and their struggles. This knowledge is based on the complexity of real-life situations rather than general moral theories.

Academic discourses exploring these themes can help in understanding how people think and change over time. M. H. Abrams says in *A Glossary of Literary Terms* that themes like these are crucial to literature because they give readers the opportunity to explore the human condition and delve into the deeper meanings of a work through its "central unifying subjects or ideas that express the underlying messages" (Abrams, 1999). These ideas have lasted a long time because they speak to universal concerns about morality and identity, which are applicable in all eras and civilizations. The issue of identity is of particular significance in this research due to personal struggles with it,

making the exploration of characters' self-discovery especially relevant and meaningful, and by looking into these topics, we can better understand how stories both show and affect the moral and mental parts of our lives. For instance, in many literary works, the protagonist or heroine on a personal journey of self-discovery that is closely linked to their encounters with the external world. This search for identity frequently serves as the basis for those journeys. To paraphrase Abrams (1999), literature in this context serves as a tool for introspection by encouraging readers to consider and maybe question their own moral and personal convictions. Moreover, when individuals face challenging dilemmas about morality, it often reveals their personal conflicts. This conflict illustrates the issues of ethics that individuals encounter every day, emphasizing an argument between two opposing forces: the virtuous, including qualities such as benevolence, magnanimity, and altruism, and the malevolent, encompassing traits such as self-centeredness, injustice, and brutality (Nussbaum, 1990). Because of this, literature provides a way to investigate and comprehend these distinctions and raises the question of how one's ethical behaviour may be assessed. Literary stories not only show the complexity of human nature but also investigate the state of humanity and the related ethical issues, therefore reflecting societal reality. Here, morality and identity change in reaction to the experiences and choices the heroes and antagonists of the story go through rather than being set concepts. Entering these topics will help us to better understand both the ethical challenges we face and ourselves (Blau, 2020). This is consistent with the belief that literature plays a significant role in shaping persons' moral and ethical principles and in assisting them in gaining a deeper and more nuanced comprehension of their natural surroundings (Jung, 1968).

This study has two research objectives, describing how Coraline's identity formation develop through the application of Jungian archetypes in Neil Gaiman's *Coraline*, and describing how Coraline's moral decision-making align with Kantian ethics in her confrontation with good and evil forces. It focuses on Coraline's internal psychological processes, particularly through Jungian archetypes and Kantian ethics, but it overlooks the role of external influences like her familial relationships. The neglect and emotional distance from her parents likely impact her development, yet this area remains underexplored. Future research could examine how these external factors shape Coraline's psychological and moral growth, offering a more comprehensive view of her character.