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**POSTKOLONIÁLNÍ GOTIKA:
POSTKOLONIÁLNÍ ANALÝZA KNIH
JANA EYROVÁ A MEXICKÁ GOTIKA**

Bakalářská práce

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**POSTCOLONIAL GOTHIC:
A POSTCOLONIAL ANALYSIS OF
JANE EYRE AND MEXICAN GOTHIC**

Bachelor Thesis

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis focuses on a book written by Silvia Moreno-Garcia, *Mexican Gothic*. The author's, Silvia Moreno-Garcia's, family has a Mexican heritage which often portrays in her work. The fantasy, historical, gothic horror novel backgrounded in Mexico's countryside, *Mexican Gothic*, represents feministically oriented contemporary literature. Many readers point out its resemblance with Charlotte Brontë's novel, *Jane Eyre*. This reality raises a question of whether the *Mexican Gothic* is an homage or a critique of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*. This thesis aims to examine the *Mexican Gothic* using a postcolonial, feministic, and gothic literature theory to find similitudes, coming from motifs to whole characters that connect both books, *Mexican Gothic* and *Jane Eyre*. The results demonstrate the relationships between the parallels, whether the characters and motifs from *Mexican Gothic*, which project characters and motifs from the English classic *Jane Eyre*, are constant, exaggerated, or subdued. This thesis goal is to answer the question of whether the *Mexican Gothic* is an homage or a critique of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*.

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I. INTRODUCTION

This thesis uses postcolonial theory to compare Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* to the contemporary novel *Mexican Gothic*. It discusses many common themes and topics portrayed in those two novels as well as highlights their differences.

The book *Mexican Gothic*, written by Silvia Moreno-Garcia, was published in 2020. It is a contemporary historical novel, and the story is set in 1950s Mexico when colonialism was ending. *Mexican Gothic* recreates horror and magic themes but, at the same time, deliberately shows how colonialism manifested itself in the Mexican environment. The author was born in Mexico, so we can regard her as a contemporary postcolonial author of the colonized. She now lives in Canada in Vancouver, British Columbia. Silvia Moreno Garcia has acquired a MA degree in science and technology studies at the University of British Columbia. She is an award-winning author of several books, featuring *Gods of Jade and Shadow* (Ignyte Award, Sunburst Award for Excellence in Canadian Literature of the Fantastic), *Velvet Was the Night* (finalist for the Los Angeles Times Book Prize and the Macavity Award), and the main topic of this thesis *Mexican Gothic* (Aurora Award, British Fantasy Award, Goodreads Award, Locus Award, Pacific Northwest Book Award). She is also a publisher of Innsmouth Free Press, a micro-publisher interested mainly in the horror and dark fiction genres. Concerning her field of occupation in writing, we can derive from her works that Silvia Moreno Garcia's writing genre combines fantasy, historical, and horror.

On the other hand, *Jane Eyre* is an English classic written by Charlotte Brontë, first published in 1847 in the full heyday of colonialism. *Jane Eyre* describes a life story of a woman in the Victorian Age from her childhood till her adulthood. The book is remarkably progressive with feminism but not so progressive with the postcolonial question. Charlotte Brontë is British, so she belongs to the authors of the colonizers.

Both books extract different points of view on colonial oppression towards the native people in the colonized areas. In *Mexican Gothic*, we sympathize with the main character Noemí Taboada, a young Mexican girl. She is a member of the oppressed colonized nation. In *Jane Eyre*, we sympathize with a young British girl, a citizen of the colonizing country. The shift from a colonial to a postcolonial approach in analyzing literature gives us a completely different point of view on this well-known story. This book's principal postcolonial theory theme is Mr. Rochester's Creole wife imprisoned in the attic throughout the novel.

Postcolonial theory or postcolonialism is a critical approach to art. According to

McLeod, the term postcolonialism identifies 'a historically grounded and transformative approach, position, standpoint or way of thinking.' (2000, p.39). It aims to study art, mainly literature, written by people living in countries with a colonial history, immigrants from countries with a colonial past, or their descendants. One of the main tasks of the theory is rereading books written during the colonial era by members of the colonizing or colonized countries and analyzing the features that represent the arguments of postcolonialism. Some of those books intentionally mention the experiences of people in the Empire. However, many literary works have their postcolonial motives hidden under their own stories.

Postcolonialism concentrates on the influence reflected primarily in education or culture, the exploitation of natural resources, and violence against the native population created by the Empire. English history, literature, and much more influences the decolonized countries' school curriculums. Many formally colonized ethnicities have their customs and traditions influenced by the Europeans.

There are some issues connected with Postcolonial theory. One of the arguments connected with the lack of this theory is that the term postcolonial means after-colonial. Critics argue that the colonial era has not ended; it only changed into neo-colonialism. The world powers still significantly influence the less influential states or developing countries. The factual assertion is that many nations are still under 'internal colonialism.' Australian Aboriginals, South Africans, and Native Americans are living as minorities in their native countries, still essentially under the rule of their former colonizers. Due to this opinion using the term postcolonialism is misleading and offensive towards the colonized nations. This argument appeals to people to continuously change their behavior concerning the question of 'postcolonialism' in today's society.

On the other contrary, the postcolonial theory brings up many wrongs from the past. Rereading English classics displays many ideas that were completely normal in colonial times but nowadays are considered racist and discriminating. Society condemns and bans those novels. It is essential to find the correct measure to create these imaginary boundaries and to realize that people lived in different social situations back then. Often books in which the question of colonialism is not the main essence are condemned because they mention some elements related to the perception of colonized nations at the time. It was the general consensus about the non-Europeans created by historical British society, but nowadays, societal conventions portray the colonial age thinking as racist. Banning and censorship of literature would not improve the status of people in the late colonies. Reading, thinking about what we

read, forming opinions, and rethinking are essential when we use critical approaches to evaluate literature. Learning about colonialism affliction, discussing the deceitful sections in the books, and searching their contexts may ease the generational traumas and equalize us all.

Literature of the colonized, written by people with origin from former colonies, primarily aims to demonstrate their nations' traumas, oppression, and exploitation. These authors started their work with the emergence of postcolonialism, so we consider them contemporary authors. The best-known works and their authors are *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe, a Nigerian author; *Orientalism* by Edward Said, a Palestine-American author; *The Satanic Verses* and *Midnight's Children* by Salman Rushdie, an Indian-British author; *Can the Subaltern Speak?* by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, an Indian author, and critique; *In the Ditch* by Buchi Emcheta, a Nigerian-British author; *Foe* by John Maxwell Coetzee, a South African-Australian author; and *Wide Sargasso Sea* by Jean Rhys, a Dominican-British author. We can integrate Silvia Moreno-Garcia's Mexican Gothic into this class of literature.

Literature of the colonizers, written by people from the colonizing nations, mainly the former British Empire, frequently described the colonies' otherness, difference, and exoticness. It portrayed their citizens as savages or illiterate barbarians. Primarily empires authors wanted to describe their impressions and experiences for their 'home' audience but, unfortunately, with the condescending and judgmental gaze of a colonial-era European. This critical perspective of natives and tolerance of injustice in the colonies brings today's condemnation of these authors and their works. A few examples of the literature of the colonizers judged or highly discussed by postcolonial critics are *The White Man's Burden* by Rudyard Kipling, *Shooting an Elephant* by George Orwell, *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad, *A Passage to India* by Edward Morgan Forster, *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe and one book important for this thesis *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë.

Gothic theme is perceptible in both novels. Andrew Smith (2013) states that Gothic "represents certain persistent features which constitute a distinctive aesthetic. Representations of ruins, castles, monasteries, and forms of monstrosity, and images of insanity, transgression, the supernatural, and excess, all typically characterise the form." (p.4) Many of those characteristics form a mysterious atmosphere, which accentuates the plots of both literary pieces.

Chapter one of the thesis presents the main character Noemí Taboada from Mexican Gothic as Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*. It discusses their associations through their lust for education, the question of feminism, their social position in the postcolonial theory question,

or the difference of their class in the societal hierarchy.

Chapter two focuses on the villains in both books, Mexican Gothic's Howard and Virgil Doyle and Jane Eyre's mysterious, romantic hero and, parallelly, a desecrator of happiness, Mr. Rochester. This chapter compares them by analyzing connections with sexism, racism, or postcolonial theory questions. It furthermore explores both books' gothic or horror themes.

Chapter three emphasizes the victims Catalina from Moreno-Garcia's Mexican Gothic and Bertha Mason, "The Woman in the Attic", from Jane Eyre. It examines the victims' origin, reason, and form of their imprisonment. In the case of Mexican Gothic, it also reports about some of Howard's other victims, Agnes and Alice Doyle, sisters, both wives of Howard Doyle, Ruth Doyle, Howard's daughter, and Florence Doyle, Howard's niece, who instead surrendered to Howard's oppressive system rather than suffer forever.

The thesis aims to show whether the Mexican Gothic is a homage or a critique of Jane Eyre. It designs to present Mexican Gothic's main themes and compare them to the ones in the Jane Eyre novel. Through the analysis, we want to find the key to understanding the growth and metamorphosis of the personalities of Jane Eyre characters, the personalities attributed to Mexican Gothic characters, especially Noemí Taboada, which concerns personal conflicts regarding mainly postcolonial theory.

II. NOEMÍ TABOADA AS JANE EYRE

"'Jane Eyre' Meets 'Dracula' In This Sharp, Inventive 'Mexican Gothic' Tale" (Corrigan, 2020), "31 Days of Spooky Reads: A Mexican Jane Eyre – Mexican Gothic" (Reading Between the Dunes et al., 2020), "Jane Eyre meets H.P. Lovecraft *Mexican Gothic* by Silvia Moreno-Garcia" (Wanderlustful, 2021) are the titles of book reviews of Mexican Gothic which connect this book to Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre. There are many resemblances and oppositeness to the main characters of those two books, Noemí Taboada and Jane Eyre.

One of the most objective similarities is that both women seek to educate themselves. Jane Eyre's education is intense for a woman in the 19th century. Its portrait is in her eagerness for education: "I had the means of an excellent education placed within my reach; a fondness for some of my studies, and a desire to excel in all, together with a great delight in pleasing my teachers, especially such as I loved, urged me on: I availed myself fully of the advantages offered me. In time I rose to be the first girl of the first class; then I was invested with the office of teacher; which I discharged with zeal for two years." (Brontë, 1993, p. 78-79) Jane works as a governess in Mr. Rochester's mansion, and letting her spread her wisdom liberates her from the oppressed society of women in Victorian England.

Noemí Taboada is a young Mexican woman who desires to explore everything, which also associates with her motivation to continue her university studies after finishing her bachelor's degree, even though her family disapproves it because it is uncommon and inappropriate for a woman to study at university. Noemís father believes: "this was both a waste of time and unsuitable with all those young men roaming the hallways and filling ladies' heads with silly and lewd thoughts." (Moreno-Garcia, 2021, p.17) Noemí was aware of one of the reasons her family was so skeptical of her grand plans: "She supposed that her family was right to view her university studies skeptically, seeing as she'd changed her mind already thrice about where her interests lay, but she knew rather fiercely that she wanted to do something special with her life. She hadn't found what exactly that would be, although anthropology appeared to her more promising than previous explorations." (Moreno-Garcia, 2021, p.53) Her family wants her to get married to a suitable husband instead of her studies and start her life career as a mother and a woman in the household. According to her mother: "Girls were supposed to follow a simple life cycle, from debutante to wife." (Moreno-Garcia, 2021, p.17) Noemí has very progressive thinking for a woman of her time, so she stubbornly persuades her father to continue her university education orienting on anthropology studies. Anthropology studies humankind from biological, social, cultural, and many more aspects.

Noemí's interest in this scientific field does not allow her to acknowledge Howard's racist and sexist statements without a negative reaction: "'What are your thoughts on the intermingling of superior and inferior types?' he asked, ignoring her discomfort." (Moreno-Garcia, 2021, p.35) Noemí responds rather boldly: "I once read a paper by Gamio in which he said that harsh natural selection has allowed the indigenous people of this continent to survive, and Europeans would benefit from intermingling with them," she said, touching her fork and feeling the cold metal under her fingertips. "It turns the whole superior and inferior idea around, doesn't it?" she asked, the question sounding innocent and yet a little bit mordant." (Moreno-Garcia, 2021, p.35) It also forms Noemí's view of the colonial situation in Mexico as progressive, and her manifestations against injustice are relatively fearless for that time.

The inspiration for Moreno-Garcia in this educational conflict was her grandmother, as she describes in an interview: "My family on my mother's side was poor, my great-grandmother was a maid and my grandmother wanted to be a doctor, but her father forbade it. He said she couldn't go to medical school because there would be men there. Plus, they expected her to bring money in for the family. So at 15, she finished secretarial school and by her early twenties she married, which was what you did in the 1950s." (Webmaster Sujatamassey.com, 2020) Moreno says she wanted to give a woman from the 1950s in her book more options than her grandmother had.

The education argument is well connected with the feminist question connecting both main characters. Noemí and Jane are both oppressed women in a male-oriented society. In Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, the question is more hidden because of the social rules of the mid-19th century. Charlotte Brontë even had to publish under a male pseudonym to succeed with her literature. Silvia Moreno-Garcia can be much more open with this topic, writing it in the 21st century. Noemí depicts a young female on the verge of changing times. The colonial exploitation of Mexico has just ended, and modern thoughts about social roles are conquering the world. She represents a generation in Mexico that is to change the established order of traditions in the society. That is why she regresses into conflict with many characters in the book, for example, Howard and Virgil Doyle or Florence, who represent the unchangeable society with obsolete views. As mentioned before, she also has a different outlook on life values than her family, mainly about her further education and marriage. Her parents depict a society that is more flexible with their opinions. They have different beliefs but are more willing to change them with time. Noemí's beauty and charm, connected with her intelligence, is how she handles these unpleasant arguments.

Both main characters are women who because of societal expectations of the time were required to be wives and take care of the household, however neither of them wants to accept that their fate is determined by that.

Jane defies the system by being independent which she achieves by becoming a teacher and governess. Jane furthermore perceives her dignity by refusing Mr. Rochester's offer to become his mistress even though she loves him. Also, when St. John offers her marriage, she rejects his proposal as Jane Eyre would rather stay unwedded than marry just for appropriate wife status.

Charlotte Brontë portrays herself as the protagonist Jane Eyre. Many situations portrayed in the book, such as studying at a boarding school, being a teacher and a governess, or long-term resistance in marriage, resemble the author's life, likewise, the life of the character she created.

In Mexican Gothic, Noemí defies the system by avoiding marriage, dreaming of a university degree, and essentially not being content with the future of being just a housewife. In an interview with Silva Moreno-Garcia, a question about female protagonists from a few of her books arose: "I like that you're not afraid to portray them as uncertain and that you send them on quests [. . .] You also show Noemí facing condescension and criticism for her many different career choices and romantic entanglements, but standing her ground with spirit. Is this aspect of feminism (women not having to be perfect to be equal) an important part of stories for you? Do you wish for your books to be seen as feminist works?" (Walker, 2020) She responded: "In fiction and real life, women still have difficulty navigating the world." she even emphasized Jane Eyre's love interest: "Mr. Rochester can be much older than Jane, not very attractive, bad-tempered, and keep a wife locked in his attic, and he's still a romantic hero. Then you have someone like Noemí, who thinks highly of herself and some people may say she's an a——, because she's confident." and uses the features of those two characters to underline how different women and men have opportunities to behave themselves: "A positive trait in a man is negative in a woman. Women are complex and that complexity should be reflected in books." (Walker, 2020)

The feminist theme of the novel similarly makes a connection to the author's own life. She mentions her family's experience with antifeministic behavior and describes how it displays in the presentation of Noemí: "Noemí is twenty-two. At her age, my grandmother was forced to get married. She felt great pressure to do this, and so I gave Noemí some of that pressure, but I also gave her opportunities my grandmother did not have." (Walker, 2020). Mentioning an experience of her great aunt: "that did marry had a bad marriage and

stayed for a while because she was terrified of what people would think if she separated" and her grandmother: "my grandfather abandoned the family and divorced her, but she couldn't say that publicly. They lied because if anyone knew about it, my father and his siblings would have been expelled from their Catholic school. There were a lot of secrets that we kept because of the prevailing morality" (Webmaster Sujatamassey.com, 2020), showing that being married does not always mean a happy life and that sometimes it is even what ruins lives. Moreno-Garcia created a young woman who is not perfect, still developing herself, but who is authentic. According to the author's description: "Noemí has many aspirational traits. She is smart, she is beautiful – I like making my women dark-skinned and beautiful, because my mother felt very poorly about herself due to colorism – and she is determined. But she's also young and hasn't quite figured out everything in life, which I think is fine. Part of feminism, I think, is allowing women the time to find themselves." (Walker, 2020)

The feminist issue is vigorously addressed by both protagonists, which was an earner considered a brave attribute. We can describe them both as fearless characters, but when we compare them, Noemí is much more outgoing. Jane, next to her, might seem withdrawn and resigned, but concerning the social context, Jane accomplishes a lot. Noemí is fearless and temperamental. On the contrary, Jane is fearless but still 'English': reserved, polite, and self-disciplined. The main characters' physical characteristics could additionally be used as an analogy. Charlotte Bronte described Jane as: "poor, obscure, plain, and little" (Brontë, 1993, p.234), causing Jane to be concerned about not being a representation of beauty: "I sometimes regretted that I was not handsomer; I sometimes wished to have rosy cheeks, a straight nose, and small cherry mouth; I desired to be tall, stately, and finely developed in figure; I felt it a misfortune that I was so little, so pale, and had features so irregular and so marked." (Brontë, 1993, p.92-93) At the same time, she created her uniqueness through her inner beauty: intelligence, kindness, and discretion. Bronte uses this to emphasize the importance of inner beauty instead of the more evident and first-sightly visible outer beauty. In contrast, Garcia-Moreno describes Noemí as a beautiful young woman who is aware of it and likes to emphasize it: "Noemí applied lipstick and lined her eyes with a little black pencil. She knew her large, dark eyes and her generous lips were her greatest assets, and she used them to excellent effect. She took her time going through her clothes and picked a purple acetate taffeta dress with a full, pleated skirt."(Moreno-Garcia, 2021, p.42) It may lead to the concern that Noemí is arrogant, but regarding current trending opinions, Noemí has a

good measure of self-love. She knows how to make a good impression and uses her good-looking and cleverness to get what she wants.

Noemí and Jane Eyre contradict each other in the question of Postcolonial theory. Jane Eyre is an English woman that implies she is a member of the colonizing society. However, Jane's character is controversial concerning the oppression question. As an English woman, she is the oppressor of the colonized nations; as a woman, she is oppressed by male-oriented culture, as discussed in section about feministic issues.

Charlotte Brontë's novel *Jane Eyre* takes place in the English countryside in the 1800s, in the peak of the Empire's colonizing era, which reflects that almost every character in the book links with the enrichment or frustration retrieved from the colonies. Jane's entanglement with those characters makes her at least a supporter of the Empire's behavior, maybe even a part of the exploitation. Jane, a typical British citizen of the 19th century, has the opinions and views of a prominent figure. While this may be true that Jane Eyre is, due to her race and nationality, a prominent figure in the 19th-century world, Jane is also a poor orphan, which condemns her to the lower class. Jane's education and her career as a governess hold her in between classes. As a governess, she interacts with lower-class servants and simultaneously high-class aristocrats. This novel does not directly break any limits in the class hierarchy. Jane stays in a lower class until she miraculously inherits her uncle's wealth. It points out that money is the key to gaining social respect and a higher degree in the class hierarchy.

Noemí is a Mexican citizen, a member of the colonized. She carries the trauma and fear of the previous Mexican generations gained through the colonial experience. This reality joined with the time-place of the 1950s, creates the postcolonial atmosphere of the book. The European Empire controlling Mexico was predominantly Spanish Empire, but there were influences of the British Empire too, as we can see in the Mexican Gothic. In the 1950s, the influence of the Empire weakened in Mexico, but it still existed. As Garcia-Moreno mentions in an interview: "Spain was the first European nation that exploited Mexico, but obviously it wasn't the only one. [. . .] Colonialism is not something that ends and everyone says let's go home." (Webmaster Sujatamassey.com, 2020) This fact can also be manifested in the portrait of wealth in Noemí's family. They are a newly enriched family in Mexico, as we read in Mexican Gothic's first chapter: "Noemí's father had never been poor, but he had turned a small chemical dye business into a fortune." (Moreno-Garcia, 2021, p.10) Wealthy Mexican families are appropriating high-class European manners, cultural traditions, or dressing styles. They willingly lose their Mexican characteristics because the sensation of

looking like a European symbolizes their wealth. The absurdity is that not all Europeans living in colonies were that rich, as we can see in *Mexican Gothic*. Noemís cousin Catalina was wedded to an English man, so their family thought she married a good and mainly a rich man. The reality was quite the opposite. This appropriation of European habits confirms one of the claims of Postcolonial theory, the statement that the influence of the colonizing empires consists, even after the decolonization of the colonies, in the people's attitude towards the life standards. The influence of the empires is consistent. The new generation in Mexico, which Noemí is part of, is the generation of change that applies mainly to the educational and feministic question. However, also it raises the postcolonial question, which we will discuss more widely in the following chapters.

The apparent difference regarding the postcolonial aspects in the discussed books is the view from which we accessed the challenging topic. In *Jane Eyre*, our protagonist is a colonizer; in *Mexican Gothic*, she is from the colonized nation. A less noticeable aspect is that those stories are from different epochs and venues. The *Jane Eyre* characters live in a time of flourishing of the Empire's colonial power. Their exposure to the consequences of their colonial exploitation is insignificant because many do not live in the countries that earn them money. In the case of *Jane Eyre*, she has not even visited any colonized country, which makes her a passive exploiter. Compared to the *Mexican Gothic*, the characters are living in the presence of their exploiting outcomes, acknowledging them and even being proud of them. They are active exploiters.

The difference connected with the postcolonial theory, but not a part of it, is the class of both protagonists, *Jane Eyre* being somewhere in the middle of the hierarchy classes and Noemí being a new high-class member.

III. HOWARD DOYLE AS MR. ROCHESTER

This chapter will discuss how we could relate Moreno-Garcia's book villains, Howard and Virgil Doyle, to Mr. Rochester from the *Jane Eyre* novel. When discussing Doyles, we mainly examine Howard Doyle, the family patriarch. However, considering how he influences all the people in the house, adding Virgil Doyle to the list of Villains felt appropriate because of how Howard's philosophy manifests in Virgil's character. Mr. Rochester is a typical romantic hero, mysterious, stubborn, possessive, and simultaneously one of the book's main villains. At the end of the story, when he loses sight, he evolves into a redeemed man, and finally, Jane Eyre is willing to marry him. On the other hand, Doyles are irredeemable villains, psychotic selfish fanatics incapable of empathy.

Mr. Rochester and Doyles are misogynists in some of their beliefs. Mr. Rochester is a hidden misogynist. It is not so apparent in his expressions because there were still more strict rules for behaving in society in Victorian-age England. However, we still find some of his utterances inappropriate and sexist: "You examine me, Miss Eyre," said he: "do you think me handsome?" (Brontë, 1993, p.123) Through this talk, he puts Jane into an uncomfortable situation where she cannot avoid awkwardness. By consenting, she initiates a flirting conversation, and by dissent, she insults him. Mr. Rochester enjoys making her discomfiting. His provocation continues, and when he wants Jane Eyre to talk to him about anything she wants, she is so frustrated that she keeps silent. To that, Mr. Rochester reacts: "You are dumb, Miss Eyre." insulting her. Because she did not react in the way he wanted her to, because she did not participate in his silly communication game, he had to harm her ego.

With Howard Doyle forefront, Doyles speak throughout the Mexican Gothic misogynistic to Noemí: "Did you ever hear about Dr. Galton's beauty map? He went around the British Isles compiling a record of the women he saw. He catalogued them as attractive, indifferent, or repellent. London ranked as the highest for beauty, Aberdeen the lowest. It might seem like a funny exercise, but of course it had its logic." (Moreno-Garcia, 2021, p.81) Besides misogynist talk, we observe racism on the part of English colonialists: "And what a pretty face you have. Dark skin, dark eyes. Such a novelty." Dark meat, she thought. Nothing but meat, she was the equivalent of a cut of beef inspected by the butcher and wrapped up in waxed paper. An exotic little something to stir the loins and make the mouth water." (Moreno-Garcia, 2021, p.242) Howard Doyle undisguisedly manifests his mindset toward women as inferior servants living to serve his purposes and as objects that exist to pleasure and gladden him.

The link between those characters portrays the postcolonialism concepts in both books. Both characters, Mr. Rochester and Howard Doyle, prosper from the colonial exploitation of the lands under the rule of the Empire. They both acknowledge the Empire's negative impacts on the colonies because they both live there or have visited them. Even worse, they tolerate it and gain wealth from it.

Mr. Rochester gained his fortune by marrying his first wife, Bertha Mason (discussed in Chapter 3), a daughter of a merchant and a plantation owner who settled in Jamaica to enrich himself. (McLeod, 2000, p. 173-174)

The Doyles are a European family whose patriarch moved to Mexico to acquire wealth and power. Running a silver mine was the first, more obvious way of enriching himself. His employees, the silver miners, were treated with no respect. In an argument with Noemí, we can see how Howard describes his subjects: "Noemí said. "[. . .] I wouldn't want to end up in a pit, like those poor miners." "We didn't dump them in a pit. They're all buried in the cemetery. And they needed to die. You must make the soil fertile." "With human bodies. Mulch, isn't that right?" "They would have died anyway. It was an assortment of underfed peasants, riddled with lice."" (Moreno-Garcia, 2021, p.242). He talks about them with no regard, affirming that the term mulch used by Noemí best describes his opinion towards Mexican miners working for him.

The second way of enriching himself and the main reason for arriving in Mexico was a symbiosis with magic cave mushrooms. He came to Mexico to heal himself. In a delirious Noemí's dream, Silvia Moreno-Garcia clarifies his arrival reason: "Doyle was dying and in his desperation he'd found his way here, seeking a remedy for those who were beyond remedies. Instead of a peregrination to a holy site, he'd come to this wretched cave." (Moreno-Garcia, 2021, p.210) He found natives who used this magic mushroom to recover injuries and maintain health, but he saw in those mushrooms much more. He deduced that it could give him immortality. He married a woman from the native clan to gain the trust of the natives so he could earn access to their secrets. When he knew enough about the power of the cave mushrooms, he murdered the natives' priest, which gave him ruling power against the natives. The Noemí's dream depicted that "He was a single man and there were three dozen of them, but he'd killed the priest and now he held sway over them. He was holy. They were forced to remain on their knees as he set their bundles of cloth, their possessions, on fire. The cave filled with smoke." (Moreno-Garcia, 2021, p.212), and via those actions, he murdered them without remorse. He used the natives, exploited their natural resources, their wealth, and then slaughtered them in cold blood.

Howard Doyle then took his cousins, Agnes and Alice Doyle, to Mexico and married Agnes initially because he wanted to continue in the British solid genealogy. After Agnes died, he married her sister Alice and had two children with her, Virgil and Ruth Doyle. Through incest and human sacrifices, he reached to connect their bloodline with the mushrooms. Being infected by the fungus relates them all to Howard's control. He used Agnese's corp as a primary host mind: "The fungus would erupt up, from her body, up through the soil, weaving itself into the walls, extending itself into the foundations of the building. And the gloom needed a mind. It needed her. The gloom was alive. It was alive in more than one way; at its rotten core there was the corpse of a woman, her limbs twisted, her hair brittle against the skull. And the corpse stretched its jaws open, screaming inside the earth, and from her dried lips emerged the pale mushroom." (Moreno-Garcia, 2021, p.223), via which he created a neural network that connected the consciousness of the people infected by the mushroom. In a conversation with Francis, Noemí learns that "Fungi can enter into symbiotic relationships with host plants. Mycorrhiza. Well, it turns out that it can also have a symbiotic relationship with humans. The mycorrhiza in this house creates the gloom." "You have access to ancestral memories because of a fungus." (Moreno-Garcia, 2021, p.216) This fact gives Howard the power to preserve his memories and ideologies, influence minds, and even control the whole human being if the infection grows strong. We observe this unbelievable dark power in the servants' behaviors, who no longer exist as individuals, and merely complete housework tasks. After understanding that there is no way out, Florence, Howard's niece, surrenders entirely to the power of Howard's twisted Empire.

One of the prominent motives in Mexican Gothic is the mushroom. The mushrooms symbolize the pervasive influencing power of the oppressor through the ubiquitous existence of those mushrooms throughout the whole manor. The entire house is overgrown with them, and their energy radiates from all the walls. Noemí has many visions in her dreams: "That night she dreamed that a golden flower sprouted from the walls in her room, only it wasn't...she didn't think it a flower. It had tendrils, yet it wasn't a vine, and next to the not-flower rose a hundred other tiny golden forms. Mushrooms, she thought, finally recognizing the bulbous shapes, and as she walked toward the wall, intrigued and attracted by the glow" (Moreno-Garcia, 2021, p.60), and even in those visions, we can observe that the mushrooms are omnipresent, that they grow all over, and that their spores scatter into the air all around, polluting everything: "she brushed her hands against these forms. The golden bulbs seemed to turn into smoke, bursting, rising, falling like dust upon the floor. Her hands were coated in this dust. She attempted to clean it off, wiping her hands on her nightgown, but the gold

dust clung to her palms, it went under her nails. Golden dust swirled around her, and it lit up the room, bathing it in a soft yellow light. When she looked above, she saw the dust glittering like miniature stars against the ceiling, and below, on the rug, was another golden swirl of stars. She brushed her foot forward, disturbing the dust on the rug, and it bounced up into the air again, then fell." (Moreno-Garcia, 2021, p.60-61) Sometimes her dreams depicted the house as an entity created from flesh: "The walls around them were glowing, a dim phosphorescence that nevertheless guided their steps, and the carpet underneath their feet was squishy. She noticed, too, markings on the walls—walls that were made of flesh. Traceries of fuzzy mold, as if the house were an overripe fruit. The heart kept beating faster. The heart pumped blood and groaned and shivered, and it beat so loudly Noemí thought she'd go deaf." (Moreno-Garcia, 2021, p.121-122), it was a harbinger of a terrifying reality wrapped in the mystery of the Doyle household.

Mushrooms influencing human consciousness have been a popular motive recently. We can observe it, for example, in an action-adventure post-apocalyptic survival horror game created at studio Naughty Dog with the leading creator Neil Druckman, lately transformed also into an HBO series written by the mentioned game creator Neil Druckman and Craig Mazin, *The Last of Us*. In this story, the fungus *cordyceps* infects human bodies and transforms them into zombies. Those mushrooms are fictional, but the motivation comes from an actual tropical mushroom, *Ophiocordyceps unilateralis*, that infects ants' motor functions to the point where the fungus manipulates the ant to leave the nest to find a more suitable environment for the mushroom. When the ant locates a place with the proper humidity, it stays there until it dies. The fungus feeds on the ant's internal body organs to grow, and after a few days, it thrusts its fruiting body throughout the dead ant's head and initiates to emit spores that infect other ants. (Lu, 2023) The mushrooms' manipulation of the ants is similar to the transformation of the zombies in the fiction *The Last of Us* and the influence of people in the Doyle manor in *Mexican Gothic*. However, we can observe a minor difference. Scientists have discovered that *Ophiocordyceps unilateralis* affects ants' motoric functions but does not infect their brains. It directly manipulates the muscles. In both fungal horrors, *The Last of Us* and *Mexican Gothic*, the fungus influences the brain and manipulates the whole body through that.

Mentioning the sci-fi type of literature, fungus horrors, featuring *Mexican Gothic* and *The Last of Us*, and many more like *Sorrowland* by Rivers Solomon, *The Girl with All the Gifts* by M.R.Carey, or *The Beauty* by Aliya Whiteley, also the book *Funghi*, which is a collection of unconventional fantasy horror stories featuring fungus, a collection containing

authors like L. Barron, J. Bullington, N. Mamatas, W.H. Pugmire, A.K. Schwader, S. Strantzias, M. Tanzer, L. Tidhar, J. VanderMeer, edited by the author of *Mexican Gothic*, Silvia Moreno-Garcia, along with Orrin Grey, rises the topic of supernatural horror.

The substantial figure in the supernatural horror genre is undoubtedly Howard Philips Lovecraft. He was a novelist greatly inspired by Edgar Alan Poe. He started his carrier during the first world war when people saw absolute horror in real life and needed something different to fear in horror literature. It gave rise to a new genre of literature, making H.P. Lovecraft the pioneer of sci-fi horror or weird fiction. His stories emphasize the anxiety of the unknown and powerlessness and connect with many kinds of science. Lovecraft created a mythology called Cthulhu that unites a significant part of his works. The greatest god from Cthulhu mythology is Azathoth. One of his portrayal figures in the story, *The Haunter of the Dark*, in the book *The Call of Cthulhu and Other Weird Stories*, describes Azathoth as the base of the existence: "He thought of the ancient legends of Ultimate Chaos, at whose centre sprawls the blind idiot god Azathoth, Lord of All Things, encircled by his flopping horde of mindless and amorphous dancers, and lulled by the thin monotonous piping of a daemonic flute held in nameless paws." (Lovecraft & Joshi, 1999, p.354) This ubiquitous existence is reminiscent of the ubiquitous fungus in Doyle's house. Almost invisible, but affecting everything, putting everything and everyone under its power.

Howard Philips Lovecraft is also the author of the essay *Supernatural Horror in Literature*, where he defines the development of gothic novels and horror fiction, mentions the most successful pieces, and describes what a supernatural horror book should incorporate: "it included the tyrannical and malevolent nobleman as villain" (Lovecraft, 1927, p.20), which is a precise portrayal of the Doyles, "saintly, longpersecuted, and generally insipid heroine who undergoes the major terrors and serves as a point of view and focus for the reader's sympathies" (Lovecraft, 1927, p.20), which defines Catalina from *Mexican Gothic*, "the valorous and immaculate hero, always of high birth but often in humble disguise" (Lovecraft, 1927, p.20), we can attribute this description to Francis, who does indeed hold these characteristics, but the main heroine of *Mexican Gothic* is Noemí Taboada, whose character reflects the contemporary conception of the female heroine, who strongly displays her femininity, intelligence, and independence.

Lovecraft's essay about Gothic literature also highlights the background of the Gothic stories. In the limelight, there is the ominous mansion or "the Gothic castle, with its awesome antiquity, vast distances and ramblings, deserted or ruined wings, damp corridors, unwholesome hidden catacombs, and galaxy of ghosts and appalling legends, as a nucleus

of suspense and daemoniac fright." (Lovecraft, 1927, p.20) The Doyles manor is a typical house in a Gothic scenario. When she arrived, Noemí expressed her thoughts, indicating some of the characteristics mentioned by Lovecraft: "The house, so quiet, with its curtains drawn, was like a dress lined with lead. Everything was heavy, even the air, and a musty scent lingered along the hallways. It felt almost as if it were a temple, a church, where one must speak in low voices and genuflect, and she supposed the servants had acclimatized to this environment and therefore tiptoed along the staircase, unwilling nuns who had made vows of silence." (Moreno-Garcia, 2021, p.110)

Lovecraft states that there is "infinite array of stage properties which includes strange lights, damp trap-doors, extinguished lamps, mouldy hidden manuscripts, creaking hinges, shaking arras, and the like." (1927, p.20) In Mexican Gothic, we find those reappearing paraphernalia and experience its abiding power of creating a chilling atmosphere. Everything was behind the time: "There was an ancient bathtub there, a bathroom cabinet, and traces of mold on the ceiling. Many tiles around the tub were cracked, [. . .] She tested the light switch on the wall, but the light fixture in the bathroom did not work. In her room, Noemí could not locate a single lamp with a light bulb, though there was one electrical outlet. She supposed Florence had not been joking about relying on candles and oil lamps." (Moreno-Garcia, 2021, p.31) sight of mold was everywhere: "She had been looking at the black marks on the wall, the mold in the corner of her room" (Moreno-Garcia, 2021, p.219) accompanied by the mysterious light underlining the atmosphere: "The lights that were working seemed spectral and awfully dim, flickering in and out of life," (Moreno-Garcia, 2021, p.270)

Lovecraft remarks that: "All this paraphernalia reappears with amusing sameness, yet sometimes with tremendous effect, throughout the history of the Gothic novel; and is by no means extinct even today, though subtler technique now forces it to assume a less naive and obvious form." (1927, p.20) When analyzing Mexican Gothic, we observe that Lovecraft's theory about gothic literature is accurate. Most of the characteristics mentioned in the essay also resemble the Jane Eyre story. However, we also see an influence of romantic literature, for example, as mentioned before, the remediation of Mr. Rochester, changing the villain into the story's hero.

The novel Jane Eyre is even mentioned in connection with the house by Noemí when she first arrives at the High Place, Doyles' mansion: "an old house atop a hill, with mist and moonlight, like an etching out of a Gothic novel. Wuthering Heights and Jane Eyre, those were Catalina's sort of books. Moors and spiderwebs. Castles too, and wicked stepmothers who force princesses to eat poisoned apples, dark fairies cursing maidens and wizards who

turn handsome lords into beasts." (Moreno-Garcia, 2021, p.39-40). How those Catalina's favorite books became her destiny will discuss in Chapter 3.

IV. CATALINA TABOADA AS BERTHA MASON

The similarity between the books *Mexican Gothic* and *Jane Eyre* is not portrayed in just the heroes or the villains but also in the victims' characters. This chapter discusses the connection between the characters of Mr. Rochester's first wife, Bertha Mason, the victim in *Jane Eyre*, into the victim of *Mexican Gothic*, Catalina Doyle, main character Noemí Taboada's cousin, and the wife of Virgil Doyle.

Bertha Mason is a controversial character in English literature. Being a Creole woman, English from her father's side, a plantation owner in the Caribbean, and having a Caribbean genealogy from her mother's side, the opinion on this book character has undergone a significant change. Bertha Mason Rochester is written initially as the villain of the book. She is the obstacle between the love of Jane and Mr. Rochester. However, with the Postcolonial theory revolution, critics made a more attentive analysis of her character and started to picture her more as a victim rather than a miscreant. This revelation gave the author Jean Rhys the impulse to write a book about Bertha's story, *The Wide Sargasso Sea*. The book tells the fictional life story of Rochester's first wife based on the few facts written about Bertha in *Jane Eyre*. As noted before, we only get a little information about Bertha from Charlotte Brontë. Her character never speaks. She is more likely to depict the ambiance than tell her story.

The victim from *Mexican Gothic*, Noemí's cousin Catalina Taboada, is mixed-race like Bertha Mason. Noemí declares that Catalina is part Indian and part French in an unpleasant conversation with Howard Doyle: "You are much darker than your cousin, Miss Taboada," Howard said after he had completed his examination of her. "Pardon me?" she asked, thinking she'd heard him wrong. He pointed at her. "Both your coloration and your hair. They are much darker than Catalina's. I imagine they reflect your Indian heritage rather than the French. You do have some Indian in you, no? Like most of the mestizos here do." "Catalina's mother was from France. My father is from Veracruz and my mother from Oaxaca. We are Mazatec on her side." (Moreno-Garcia, 2021, p.34)

Money played a significant role in the marriages of both couples. Mr. Rochester narrates how he met Bertha to Jane: "I was sent out to Jamaica, to espouse a bride already courted for me. My father said nothing about her money; but he told me Miss Mason was the boast of Spanish Town for her beauty: and this was no lie. I found her a fine woman, [. . .] tall, dark, and majestic. Her family wished to secure me because I was of a good race; and so did she. They showed her to me in parties, splendidly dressed. I seldom saw her alone,

and had very little private conversation with her. She flattered me, and lavishly displayed for my pleasure her charms and accomplishments. All the men in her circle seemed to admire her and envy me. I was dazzled, stimulated: my senses were excited; and being ignorant, raw, and inexperienced, I thought I loved her." (Brontë, 1993, p.282) admits that getting money from marriage had an influence. However, he pictures himself as a victim of a conspiracy, even though he is the one who financially benefits. We notice the superior race tendency in his monologue when he mentions his "good race." Also, Mr. Rochester's affection towards her is more external, based on her look, rather than their psychological attunement.

At the end of his monologue, when Rochester notes how all the men envied him because he made Bertha his bride, which depicts their relationship as hunter and prey, highlighted by the fact that it was arranged marriage provided by his father, who "could not bear the idea of dividing his estate and leaving me a fair portion: all, he resolved, should go to my brother, Rowland. Yet as little could he endure that a son of his should be a poor man. I must be provided for by a wealthy marriage. He sought me a partner betimes. Mr. Mason, a West India planter and merchant, was his old acquaintance. He was certain his possessions were real and vast: he made inquiries. Mr. Mason, he found, had a son and daughter; and he learned from him that he could and would give the latter a fortune of thirty thousand pounds: that sufficed." (Brontë, 1993, p.281-282)

For Catalina Taboada, life has been difficult even before arriving at the Doyle house. Moreno-Garcia wrote about Catalina's misfortunes: "Catalina had been struck by calamity on several occasions. First the death of her father, followed by her mother's remarriage to a stepfather who often had her in tears. Catalina's mother had passed away a couple of years later and the girl had moved into Noemí's household: the stepfather had already left by then. Despite the warm embrace of the Taboadas, these deaths had deeply affected her. Later, as a young woman, there had been her broken engagement, which caused much strife and hurt feelings." (2021, p.18) After all this adversity, she met Virgil Doyle, and as Noemí's father states: "Your cousin married quickly, Noemí, and, one might say, thoughtlessly. Now, I'll be the first to admit Virgil Doyle seemed charming, but who knows if he is reliable." (Moreno-Garcia, 2021, p.14) Noemí agrees: "Catalina's engagement had been almost scandalously short, and they'd had scant chance to speak to the groom. Noemí wasn't even sure how the couple met, only that within a few weeks Catalina was issuing wedding invitations." (Moreno-Garcia, 2021, p.14)

After the ceremony, Catalina's misfortune continued to a significant extent. Catalina

sends the Taboada family a letter expressing her concerns: "...he is trying to poison me. This house is sick with rot, stinks of decay, brims with every single evil and cruel sentiment. I have tried to hold on to my wits, to keep this foulness away but I cannot and I find myself losing track of time and thoughts. Please. Please. They are cruel and unkind and they will not let me go. I bar my door but still they come, they whisper at nights and I am so afraid of these restless dead, these ghosts, fleshless things. The snake eating its tail, the foul ground beneath our feet, the false faces and false tongues, the web upon which the spider walks making the strings vibrate. I am Catalina Catalina Taboada. CATALINA." (Moreno-Garcia, 2021, p.12) She begs them, especially Noemí, to come and save her from the Doyles: "I miss Noemí. I pray I'll see you again. You must come for me, Noemí. You have to save me. I cannot save myself as much as I wish to, I am bound, threads like iron through my mind and my skin and it's there. In the walls. It does not release its hold on me so I must ask you to spring me free, cut it from me, stop them now. For God's sake... Hurry, Catalina". (Moreno-Garcia, 2021, p.13) Based on this letter, everyone thinks Catalina has become insane. Noemí's father suggested sending her back to their house or asylum to assess the situation themselves, but: "I wrote back to Virgil and asked him to explain himself. And why I was so taken aback when he immediately accused me of being a nuisance." (Moreno-Garcia, 2021, p.14), Virgil's reaction appeared odd. Therefore Noemí was sent to El Triunfo to research the situation by herself because, as her father said: "I fear we are the ones capable of ensuring her best interests are served." (Moreno-Garcia, 2021, p.14)

It is a considerable issue for the Doyles whenever Noemí wants to see Catalina in High Place. Doyles' doctor, Dr. Cummins, established her illness as tuberculosis, and the fevers are invoking the hallucinations Catalina is experiencing. Nevertheless, when Noemí starts to experience weird, terrifying dreams and after a few episodes with Catalina's confusing speeches: "Shush. They can hear you," Catalina said and went quiet, her eyes bright as polished stones. "Who can hear me?" Noemí asked slowly, as her cousin's eyes fixed on her, unblinking. Catalina slowly leaned closer to her, whispering in her ear. "It's in the walls," she said. "What is?" Noemí asked, and the question was a reflex, for she found it hard to think what to ask with her cousin's blank eyes upon her, eyes that did not seem to see; it was like staring into a sleepwalker's face. "The walls speak to me. They tell me secrets. Don't listen to them, press your hands against your ears, Noemí. There are ghosts. They're real. You'll see them eventually." (Moreno-Garcia, 2021, p.12); Noemí starts to feel that the things happening to Catalina do not connect to tuberculosis and that they are much more terrifying than she could imagine. Throughout the book, we recognize that the explanation

for Catalina's madness is the constant poisoning by mushrooms, which connects her to the house and causes the hallucinations she describes.

The motive of insanity or madness is common to the victims of both books. Mr. Rochester's view of Bertha changes after arriving with his new wife to England: "I found her nature wholly alien to mine, her tastes obnoxious to me, her cast of mind common, low, narrow, and singularly incapable of being led to anything higher, expanded to anything larger – when I found that I could not pass a single evening, nor even a single hour of the day with her in comfort; that kindly conversation could not be sustained between us, because whatever topic I started, immediately received from her a turn at once coarse and trite, perverse and imbecile." (Brontë, 1993, p.282-283) We must remember how Mr. Rochester talks with Jane while getting to know each other. He thinks of himself as superior next to others, especially women. Bertha's image is gradually described even more strongly as one of madness, which is supposed to be coming from her mother's side of the family: "My bride's mother I had never seen: I understood she was dead. The honeymoon over, I learned my mistake; she was only mad, and shut up in a lunatic asylum. There was a younger brother, too — a complete dumb idiot. The elder one, whom you have seen (and whom I cannot hate, whilst I abhor all his kindred, because he has some grains of affection in his feeble mind, shown in the continued interest he takes in his wretched sister, and also in a dog-like attachment he once bore me), will probably be in the same state one day." (Brontë, 1993, p.282) Mr. Rochester has no empathy for the psychological sickness of his wife or her family, and even that illustrates his indifference to her. We can speculate what the reason for Bertha's insanity is, but even Jane, with her strong personality and courage, has a hard time confronting Edward Rochester. This allows us to contemplate whether Bertha was a victim of psychological terror on his part, which, combined with the feeling of loneliness after moving to a foreign country where, as a mixed-race girl, she indeed did not find it easy to integrate into high society, which caused the escalation of a congenital mental illness.

Jane and Catalina experience imprisonment by their husbands in their house with minimal to no escape opportunities. Both stories escalate with a common motive, a massive fire destroying the horrific house, setting its prisoners free. Catalina reaches a positive destiny running from the captivity of her husband's family. Bertha's fate is not that optimistic. She dies in the fire, but it is a considerable release from her tormented life.

In Mexican Gothic, more than one victim experiences oppression from the Doyle patriarch Howard and his son Virgil. The victims are essentially all people connected to the house and the gloom.

Ruth, Howard's daughter, is one of the victims. She was supposed to be one of Howard's means of power but decided to rebel and try to escape. To escape, she shot Howards twice, but he did not die. He manipulated her into killing her mother, fiance, and herself. Even though her plan failed, she represents a feminine resistance, and she aids Noemí in her visions, multiple times telling her: "Open your eyes." (Moreno-Garcia, 2021, p.189)

The crucial victim in the story is Agnes Doyle, Howard Doyle's cousin and first wife. Howard said: "Agnes passed away shortly after our arrival to this region. [. . .] It was a long time ago. But she has not been forgotten. Her spirit lives on in High Place." (Moreno-Garcia, 2021, p.79-80) Howard implicitly points out the terrible reality of Agnes's fate through this utterance. Agnes was buried alive in a sacrifice ritual, letting the fungus grow throughout her body. Even though she does not have children, Howard puts the word mother on her tombstone because she is a mother of the gloom.

The next character is both a victim and a villain in one person. Florence is Howard's niece, whom he raped to conceive a child for him. The attempt failed, and she was released to find herself a husband. Florence married Richard and hoped that it had saved her. However, Richard, affected by the mushroom, starts losing his mind, and then: "They found him at the bottom of a ravine." (Moreno-Garcia, 2021, p.73) After this incident, Florence gave up and submitted herself to Howard's system. She became a strict and old-fashioned woman who did not like any change or disruption in the house, the environment of the fungus. That is why they did not get along with Noemí, her true opposite character.

We observe the sexist violence and non-existing empathy of Howard Doyle in the life stories of these women. Nevertheless, Howard's immortal empire has many more victims, like Alice, his second wife; Francis, Florence's son; Richard, Florence's husband; or Ruth's love, indigenous miner Benito.

V. CONCLUSION

Silvia Garcia-Moreno is a fantasy, supernatural horror author with a heritage in Mexico, which inspires her to create her books that have themes around Mexican culture. Additionally, her most famous book *Mexican Gothic*, the prominent text analyzed in this thesis, features Mexico. The thesis examined the parallels between the *Mexican Gothic* and Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*, with a focus on the similarities of the portrayal of the characters in *Jane Eyre* into main characters in *Mexican Gothic*.

When writing about the main character Noemí, Moreno-Garcia mentions that her family's experience greatly inspired her. She created an independent, self-reliant woman who will not be insulted and intimidated by a sexist man. This fictional character of Noemí represents the growth of the personality of *Jane Eyre*, who was trying to reach this amount of braveness and independency, but did not achieve it in as high measure as Noemí. Both characters resemble educational lust and a feminist mindset.

The villain characters of *Mexican Gothic's*, especially Howard Doyle, is also emphasized compared to *Jane Eyre's* Mr. Rochester. They correspond in their misogynist behavior, racist remarks, and the colonial position of the exploiters, with Howard Doyle being much more explicit.

The gothic features presented in those books are more excessive in *Mexican Gothic*, with more menacing surroundings, a more terrifying house, and actual ghosts hidden in the gloom, passing through the walls.

The victim's case is different. Bertha Mason from *Jane Eyre* does not get a happy ending. Her fate is more inflated, eerie and gothic compared to Catalina's, who gets salvaged. We must remember that Charlotte Bronte intended not to write Bertha as a victim but as a cruel, frantic villain, hindering the love of Jane and Edward Rochester. The distinction is that Moreno-Garcia intended to describe a victim abused by her husband and his family. Both characters experience a kind of imprisonment in their husbands' homes, with no way to escape, so far away from their old home. The shift in those characters is in the change of perspective on the situation.

The Postcolonial theory, a critical approach to the analysis of literature influenced by colonialism, reaches many themes in *Mexican Gothic*, matching or disagreeing with *Jane Eyre*. Significant disagreement is the colonial context of the main characters of the books. Noemí is an indigenous Mexican woman living in a postcolonial time period in the postcolonial state of Mexico. *Jane Eyre* is a young British woman who was automatically

privileged as a member of the British colonizer society, partially enriched by colonialism. The wealth of both Mr. Rochester and the Doyles stems from colonialism. The match pertains to the origin of the books' victims, Bertha and Catalina, who are both members of the colonized and both are targets of racist demeanor.

Moreno-Garcia accomplished writing a homage and a critique of Bronte's novel at once. The author draws inspiration from various facts from the literary classic *Jane Eyre*, covering facts ranging from motifs, such as the fire destroying the ominous house, to the most significant, the characterization of the main character, pays homage to Charlotte Bronte. However, it is also a critique. Moreno-Garcia rewrote and changed the preview on some features that did not correspond with her or the nowadays socially acceptable views. The main change is making her central character a native Mexican. This transformation completely shifted the view of the colonial situation from the colonizers' point of view in *Jane Eyre* to the exploited colonized in *Mexican Gothic*. Even though Moreno-Garcia did not write the book with the assumption that it would be compared to *Jane Eyre*, she did not dismiss their resemblance. Noemi's character even mentions *Jane Eyre* title in the book. The critique's purpose is not to shame and castigate Charlotte Bronte's book. It sends a message that history existed the way it was, and contemporary literature wants to show the other perspectives of the stories we already know.

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SHRNUTÍ

Tato práce se zaměřuje na knihu Silvie Moreno-Garciové *Mexická gotika*. Její fantasy, historický, goticky hororový román z prostředí mexického venkova představuje feministicky orientovanou současnou literaturu. Mnozí čtenáři poukazují na jeho podobnost s románem Charlotte Brontëové *Jana Eyrová*. Cílem této práce je prozkoumat Mexickou Gotiku a s využitím postkoloniální a feministické teorie najít motivy a postavy, které se v obou knihách, *Mexické gotice* a *Janě Eyrové*, spojují. Tato práce poukazuje na paralely převážně u hlavních postav, kladných i záporných hrdinů a obětí.

Silvia Moreno-Garciová vytvořila nezávislou, samostatnou ženu, která se nenechá urážet a zastrašovat sexistickým mužem. Postava Noemí představuje růst osobnosti Jany Eyrové, která ve své době představovala prototyp odvahy a nezávislosti, nicméně Moreno-Garciová tyto vlastnosti vykreslila v osobnosti Noemí v daleko vyšší míře. Obě postavy mají silnou touhu po vzdělání a feministické smýšlení.

Postava záporného hrdiny mexické gotiky, Howarda Doylea, je zvýrazněnou osobností pana Rochesterera z *Jane Eyrové*. Je zde shoda v misogynním chování, rasistických poznámkách a koloniálním postavení vykořisťovatelů, nicméně Howard Doyle je mnohem explicitnější.

Gotické rysy prezentované v těchto knihách jsou v *Mexické Gotice* mnohem výraznější, skrze hroživější prostředí, děsivý dům prostoupený duchy skrytými v šeru.

Osudy obětí obou knih se rozcházejí. Bertha Masonová z *Jany Eyrové*, se nedočká šťastného konce. Osud Cataliny je šťastnější, je zachráněna. Charlotte Brontëová vykresluje Berthu jako zápornou postavu, bránící lásce Jany a Edwarda Rochesterera. Moreno-Garciová považuje Catalinu za oběť, zneužívanou ztrápenou ženu. Obě postavy zažívají věznění v domech svých manželů bez možnosti úniku, daleko od svého starého domova.

Moreno-Garcia dokázala napsat knihu, která je zároveň poctou i kritikou románu Charlotte Brontëové. Autorka se inspirovala různými tématy z literární klasiky Jane Eyrové, například osvobozujícím požárem nebo charakteristikou postav, a tím vzdává hold Charlotte Brontëové.

Moreno-Garcia však kriticky nahlíží na některé rysy, které neodpovídají dnešním společensky přijatelným názorům. Hlavní změnou je, že ústřední postavou je rodilá Mexičanka. Tato proměna posouvá úhel pohledu na koloniální situaci.

Přestože Moreno-Garcia nepsala knihu s předpokladem, že bude srovnávána s Janou Eyrovou, jejich podobnost neodmítla. Postava Noemí v knize dokonce zmiňuje titul *Jane Eyrové*,

Eyrové. Účelem srovnání není knihu Charlotte Brontëové kritizovat. Vysílá poselství, že historie je vždy ovlivněna společenskou situací dané doby. Současná literatura ukazuje jiné perspektivy pohledu na obdobné situace.