

Minding the Class Gap:

Doppelgänger Cityscapes in Neil Gaiman's *Neverwhere*

Sınıf Uçurumuna Dikkat Etmek:

Neil Gaiman'ın *Neverwhere* Adlı Eserinde Doppelgänger Şehir Manzaraları

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ABSTRACT

Freud's article on the uncanny also includes the concept of the double. According to Freud, this concept points to the duality in the construction of the ego in the primary narcissism period, when the child acquires the understanding of moral control. This duality results from the splitting of the ego and creates an area where unwanted material is pushed into the subconscious. However, this repressed area carries traces of the ego because it was once part of it. Similarly, in Neil Gaiman's *Neverwhere* (1996), London Above and London Below, as a divided city, represent the ego and the repressed space that emerges as a result of the split of the ego. London Above represents a politicized morality in which a fixed class structure is accepted, for example, the Upsiders not seeing the Downsiders, or Jessica's urge to appear in art galleries with Richard. As a representation of self, London Above embraces positive materials, while London Below functions as "the other" or "evil twin" because this space, accessed through doors or sewers, is dark, damp, and smelly. London Below also contains the repressed and unwanted social dynamics of London Above. However, since the doppelgänger is a division of a whole, the suppression of the undesirable underclass is also mimicked in London Below, thus resulting in a recurring matrix of social hierarchy in both cityscapes. In this context, this study aims to analyse the doppelgänger motif in relation to the class-based basin of London.

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*"World is crazier and more of it than we think,
Incorrigibly plural."*

Louise MacNeice

Introduction

Neil Gaiman is credited with being a prolific writer in the genres of poetry, drama, short story, comics, and prose. Praised as an author who appeals to people of all ages, Gaiman's *Neverwhere* (1996) is a fantasy novel written for adults, which is originally conceived as a companion piece to the 1996 BBC television series of the same name. His works can be regarded as controversial in terms of genre, as stated on his personal website: "Gaiman's books are genre works that refuse to remain true to their genres."¹ Fluctuating between genres and various fictitious worlds, Gaiman

¹ https://www.neilgaiman.com/About_Neil/Biography

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declares: “Most of my books –*American Gods*, *Anansi Boys*, or *Neverwhere*– are at least recognizable as being sort of part of this world even if it’s a rather delirious version of this world, or heightened version of this world, or a world in which metaphors are roaming freely” (qtd. in Campbell, 2014, p. 14). As Gaiman makes clear from his statement, *Neverwhere* is not an ordinary book, yet it offers the reader other worlds that they are not familiar with. It exemplifies his ability to blend genres and create complex, multi-layered narratives. What distinguishes this novel from his other works is that it presents discrete spatial and social realities that invite the reader to question the modern way of living.

Neverwhere follows the journey of Richard Oliver Mayhew, an ordinary middle-class Londoner whose life is upended when he helps an injured girl named Door. This act of kindness leads him to become invisible in his familiar world of London Above, and he is dragged into the hidden world of London Below, a labyrinthine underworld populated by those who have fallen through the cracks of society. As Richard navigates this new realm, he encounters a host of eccentric and often dangerous characters, each of whom plays a role in his quest. However, this quest is not just a physical journey but a psychological one, as Richard is forced to confront his own identity, societal values, and the stark class-based contrasts between London Above and London Below. His quest has garnered critical reception also in scholarly area. To Jódar, the purpose of Richard’s quest is “to fulfil the whole cycle, thus bringing about the restoration of unity to his society/community” (2005, p. 170). Benczik declares that “this voyage, conforming to the quest formula, ultimately leads to personal transformation, resolutions and the savings of the city itself” (2017, p. 165). In a similar vein, Meteling proposes that this adventure reminding that of a medieval romance, separated into multiple tasks, is not meant to be “a physical one but is addressed at his character” (2017, p. 69). The transformation in the character and the milieu is built up on Richard’s quest which reveals a narrative of a misfit in an urban fantasy. Different from those, this study aims to explore his quest from a psychoanalytical perspective because the identical structure of London Above and London Below paves the way for “good” and “evil” twin, namely doppelgänger, based on Freud’s thoughts. By applying Freud’s concept of the doppelgänger, the novel can be interpreted as a critique of social hierarchies and the ways in which they shape individual identity. As Richard oscillates between the two realms, his quest becomes not just a search for physical safety, but for spiritual and psychological wholeness, a journey towards the “Heimlich,” which offers a new perspective to the previous studies.

Freudian Uncanny and the Concept of Doppelgänger

In his essay entitled “The Uncanny” (1919), Sigmund Freud lays the groundwork for psychoanalytical readings of works discussing the unusual and unsettling feeling of eeriness that can develop from familiar and everyday experiences. In this aspect, rooted in Freudian “uncanny” as a part, doppelgänger causes discomfort because it threatens the distinctive qualities of the self. To do so, it primarily uses a double or a look-alike image. Therefore, existing separately but complementing each other, “the double pursues the subject as his second self and makes him feel as himself and the other at the same time” (Živković, 2000, p. 122). The doppelgänger image, in this respect, can be regarded as the presentation of the self and the other, pursuing either contrasting or similar traits. In this context, Freud stresses corporeal parallelism and incorporeal connection of these characters by concentrating on their appearance and metaphysical alliance achieved through telepathy (1981, p. 234). By doing so, other than visual similarity, it is accentuated that they have a spiritual bond with one another sharing knowledge, feelings, and experience. Throughout this telepathic connection, the double exceeds physical likeness and carries a more metaphorical meaning. At this point, it is also essential to establish a link to uncanny. Freud’s exploration of the uncanny concentrates upon the idea that the feeling of uncanniness arises when something familiar becomes unfamiliar, or when something hidden or

repressed in the unconscious mind resurfaces. In the case of *doppelgänger*, the evil twin plays the role of the repressed, and the encounter with this double unveils once suppressed desires that now challenge self-identity. Therefore, the appearance of the *doppelgänger* can be seen as a manifestation of these repressed elements, returning to consciousness in an unsettling manner. For the same reason, Freud calls this predicament as “harbinger of death” (1981, p. 235) that erodes the line between life and death.

The return of the repressed, which menaces the self, can also be viewed through the lenses of ego, superego, and id. To consider “primarily narcissism” first, it refers to the earliest period when a child is unable to differentiate himself from the external world because his basic needs are fulfilled by a caregiver with whom he associates himself as one. It hinders the infant from growing a distinct self and awareness, resulting in the infant’s identification with the caregiver. Considering this duplication, Freud relates primary narcissism to the double: The concept of the “double” initially serves as a safeguard to protect the ego against annihilation, hence becoming a defence mechanism against the fear of death. It is conceivable that the notion of an “immortal soul” originally stemmed from the idea of a “double” associated with the physical body (Freud, 1981, p. 235). Grounding on Otto Rank’s opinions, Freud argues that the infant’s lack of self-consciousness creates a tension of extinction, namely the fear of death, which is avoided by the formation of multiple identical materials of the self, aiming to gain immortality. Storing splittable and identical selves ensures the persistence of infant’s consciousness. This stage navigates the double in the opposite direction because when the stage is overcome “the ‘double’ reverses its aspect” (Freud, 1981, p. 235). This inversion in the developmental process thereafter generates “a special agency” which can take a stand against the ego (Freud, 1981, p. 235). However, the self-centred desire directed to multiple surfaces falls short of making content in the relationship with the world, which steers into the development of the ego functioning as a mediator between the internal desires and the external world. Nevertheless, the double after the completion of the construction of the ego does not fully disappear but integrates into the id through the superego’s repressive power pushing undesired materials of the ego into this primitive territory. The duplicity within oneself, represented by the double and the urges originating from the id, undergoes a division caused by the influence of the superego. This division creates a conflict within the self, where the double symbolizes the opposite of the ego and serves as a means to purge the urges emanating from the id. The motif of *doppelgänger*, in this sense, reflects the suppression of desires. As a result, the one that cooperates with and yields to the orders of the ego is regarded as “good,” whereas the repressed one is represented as “evil” as an outcome of being forced into this rudimentary terrain. The evil is not only marginalized at the psychoanalytic level, yet its sociological projection is also categorized as “the other” considering from an ideological perspective because of the tendency to demonize the marginal: “Any social structure tends to exclude as “evil” anything radically different from itself or which threatens it with destruction, and this naming of difference as evil, is a significant ideological gesture” (Živković, 2000, p. 124). The stark ideological polarization brings about otherization in its wake. Even though the resurfaced desires reveal similarity with the unrepressed ones, because *doppelgänger* figure shares similar character traits as recurrence (Freud, 1981, p. 234), the ideological otherization forms and reforms the evil in accordance with the societal changes to attain the eventual aim to “exclude.” The evil as a site of exclusion “refer[s] to a kind of feeling” to “describe an existential feeling of unhomeliness” (Windsor, 2019 p. 54). The duality of good and evil is, therefore, associated with “Heimlich” and “Unheimlich.” Because the good collaborates with the ego mechanism, it fuels the feeling of homeliness which is related to human existence or “dasein”² in Heidegger’s words. Krell points out that “Our being in the world, the world that is our

² According to Stapleton, “Heidegger uses the word “Dasein” to refer to what customarily might be called the self or “I”; or, as he more cautiously puts it, to “this entity which each of us is himself” (qtd. in Heidegger, 1970,

only home, is marked by the uncanny discovery that we are not at home in the world” (1992, p. 44). In other words, while the good side of the doppelgänger is linked with being-in-the-world or being-at-home, the opposite side, not only psychoanalytically but also ideologically, is associated with being-not-at-home. The reason lurking behind this idea addresses to the negation of the repressed one. It directly posits the unwanted materials as inferior due to their correspondence with the id. However, the evil does not “construct an excluded zone in the topography of the ego” but rather, its “negation facilitates relations between the different regions of the ego’s topography” (Vardoulakis, 2006, p. 102). The evil seemingly occupies a disadvantageous zone, but due to its bond with the good, it remains a menace to manifest the negations that the good also had when they were united.

With this theoretical framework in mind, Neil Gaiman’s work epitomizes the motif of doppelgänger by illustrating a parallel existence of cityscapes divided as London Above and London Below. The former depicts the familiar, everyday world inhabited by regular Londoners, while the latter is a mysterious and fantastical realm hidden from the eyes of the Upper Londoners. The former thrives on its existence of “homely” feeling by providing an abundant world to its residents in which materialistic activities are highly valued because they serve for self-recognition and are, therefore, “good.” However, the latter, a realm of negation or a site of exclusion, offers fewer materialistic chances since it is a mirror image of the self that houses all the repressed contents. Along with the othering of the repressed through the undesired debris at the psychoanalytical level, ideology is also at play in terms of precarious lives resulting from class segregation. This enables the doppelgänger in the novel to be read in relation to the materialistic ideals of each cityscape. From this vantage point, the division of London into two binaries corresponds to evolving and prevalent ideological and materialistic concepts. On the one hand, the doppelgänger cityscapes share similar characteristics in nature, on the other, they operate independently and ideologically. Hence, presenting worlds that are not mere xerox, Gaiman’s novel becomes an up-to-date critique of societal issues, encouraging to explore what is hidden beneath the surface.

London Above as the Self

While Gaiman offers different versions of this world in all his works, *Neverwhere* presents London divided into two realms, London Above and London Below. While the former presents a closer representation of London’s contemporary way of life, the latter depicts a place still ruled by feudal order. Inspired by a medieval narrative setting, it provides an ambience where the laws of everyday life are subverted through the inclusion of fantasy elements. Although they seem quite different from each other at first glance, the most significant notion that makes them halves of a whole is the striking portrayal of class distinction. Therefore, the novel weaves similarities between cityscapes that are intertwined in the context of class division, despite their differences as separate units located in different periods. This narrative arc of similarities and differences adds a layer that needs to be unravelled to explore the societal dynamics through spatial intricacy.

First of all, the story is told from the lens of a third-person narrator whose perspective is heavily shaped by the focus on experiences of Richard who is originally a man from Scotland and remembers his hometown as a place “small and sensible” (Gaiman, 2013, p. 4). Before leaving his small town of Scotland for London, Richard comes across an elderly woman who assumes he is a homeless man depending on his appearance: “he had a rumpled, just woken-up look” (Gaiman, 2013, p. 2). Giving details about his origins and mentioning his unkempt appearance are important as he is depicted as homeless seeking for a homely place. Although Scotland is not “Heimlich” enough, it shapes his thoughts about London when he first came to the city. His initial prejudice

p. 27). [...] “Dasein” means the self *as* the there (*Da*) of being (*Sein*), the place where an understanding of being erupts into being” (2010, p. 44).

about the city is that it is predominantly grey and black (Gaiman, 2013, p. 9). Because of his otherness and disconnection with the city, London does not sound rational at first, and consequently, he allows bias to guide his mind. However, after spending three years, he discovers the true diversity and vibrancy of London: He “was surprised to find London filled with colour. It was a city of red brick and white stone, red buses and large black taxis (which were often, to Richard’s initial puzzlement gold, or green, or maroon) bright red post boxes, and green grassy parks and cemeteries” (Gaiman, 2013, p. 9). As he is used to the ways of the city, he shifts his perspective and feels more homely. He notices that the city offers more, and it almost seems like a colourful and harmonious masterpiece with unique features. London is also depicted as a living or breathing entity, not merely a space but a reflection of Richard’s emotions.

Although there is a world outside to be lived, Richard seems passive and conforming in such a lively ambience. His small-town experience leads him to have a small social circle which comprises of his fiancée Jessica and his co-worker Gary. Çetiner-Öktem suggests, “London was never really Richard’s city. This was a city where he could only exist as a couple, as a young businessman, and as a colleague, but never as an independent individual” (2019, p. 143). Richard lacks individuality as he is portrayed as dependent on the people around him to be a part of the city. He exists only when he socializes with these people, which reduces his being-in-the-world to social adaptation to the external world. This can be linked to the motif of the double in that it is a split and Richard spiritually looks for the other half for a sense of unity from the time he was in Scotland. His social worldmaking produces a homely effect when he is with other people or, in other words, when he is united. Relatedly, his narrow social circle gives him a sense of security and familiarity, which echoes his previous “small and sensible” spatial experience. Freud notes that “on the one hand “Heimlich” means familiar and aggregable, and on the other, what is concealed and kept out of sight” (1981, p. 224-225). Richard navigates a predictable life finding comfort in the first meaning of the term. However, the homeliness incorporates the hidden as well and Richard foresees it whilst travelling to London. For this reason, “Richard Mayhew went to London feeling like hell” (Gaiman, 2013, p. 5) because this feeling of uneasiness heralds that there is something disturbing beneath the familiar. After he sees the city through different perspectives, he implicates that within this “Heimlich” lies a financial-related hidden when talking about the flaws of the city: “a noisy, dirty, cheerful, troubled city, which fed on tourists, needed them as it despised them” (Gaiman, 2013, p. 9). On the one hand, the city excludes the strangers, but on the other, it financially feeds on them. Richard tends to make such observations because he is one of “the other” who represents the middle-class man in London Above. He lives in a decent flat and exhibits behaviours typical of his class background. However, his fiancée, Jessica Bartram, appears to be a proud upper-middle class member with a penchant for luxury and materialistic pursuits. She enjoys spending weekends in museums or art galleries and indulges in shopping at upscale stores like Harrods or Harvey Nichols. Jessica’s preferences portray her as someone deeply embedded in consumerism and capitalist values. In this regard, Jessica’s materialistic lifestyle perfectly matches with the superficial values of London Above. As she is a resident of this place, she willingly complies with its laws to nourish the sense of homeliness. Revisiting “Heimlich” from Jessica’s lenses, the meaning of familiarity engenders a significant “I,” which “posits itself absolutely” producing an “absolute ego” (Vardoulakis, 2006, p. 102). This absolute mechanism readily admits what fuels and enhances it. Jessica as a functioning element of it depends fully on the familiar ambience of the absolute “I” or the “self” of this cityscape. For this reason, London Above can be seen as representing the conscious mind in the psyche. The cityscape reflects the conscious awareness of individuals, where social norms and conventions govern their behaviour. Therefore, it stands for the self in the motif of *doppelgänger*, even an idealized self where individuals strive to live up to this idealized self-image, presenting themselves as “good” according to societal standards. In this regard, London Above can be considered the good side in the *doppelgänger* duality because it is

characterized by well-maintained streets, iconic landmarks, museums, galleries, and other symbols of culture and civilization. It is a place where individuals from higher social classes reside, enjoying a certain level of comfort and privilege. It is home to affluent neighbourhoods, luxury stores, and elegant establishments, representing a realm of abundance and opportunities for those who are economically better off. This affluence may be considered “good” from a materialistic perspective. Therefore, thinking in Jessica’s shoes, her self functions as a small unit that accords with the larger self of the city. Nevertheless, she is so indulged in the pleasure of familiarity that she is unable to see what underneath is. From her lenses, there is no hidden as far as one takes an active part in the familiar.

Richard, however, struggles to keep up with Jessica’s materialistic pursuits. His lack of interest in galleries and luxury shopping suggests that he does not fully identify himself with the class values she embodies. For Richard, “*anyone* could have confused the National Gallery with the National Portrait Gallery” because both places make no difference to him (Gaiman, 2013, p. 15). Richard is aware of the superficial values of the city and society. He is not besotted with the power of “good” or “absolute ego,” yet he feels discomfort and fails to keep up with Jessica’s lifestyle. His spiritual longing for unity begins with his move from Scotland to London and is intensified by his sense of not belonging in the city. In London, devoid of the feeling of “Heimlich” or homeliness, he sets out a physical search for the other half that will bring him spiritual unity. Therefore, he is not a true Upper Londoner who accepts the ways of the city with eyes wide shut. This is also the answer to question why he is the one who quests between two universes:

“If you’re part of London Below,” said Door to Richard, in a conversational voice, as they walked, side by side, into the next hall, “they normally don’t even notice you exist unless you stop and talk to them. And even then, they forget you pretty quickly.”

“But *I* saw you,” said Richard. It had been bothering him for a while.

“I know,” said Door. “Isn’t that odd?”

“Everything’s odd,” said Richard, with feeling. (Gaiman, 2013, p. 187)

From the novel’s beginning, London Above is depicted as the surface world, representing the visible and socially accepted aspects of society. Richard cannot truly find a place in such a structured environment because he often questions Jessica, who is absorbed extremely by the ways of the city. Being a misfit, it is unsurprising that it is no one but Richard embarks on this journey. From another perspective, the superficiality of the city leads its residents to pretension to be the recognized one. Therefore, it can be seen as the world where people wear social masks, presenting themselves in ways that align with social norms and expectations. They compete with one another to exist financially, so as not to be hidden like Below Londoners who are repressed in the act of forgetting in the unconscious. This can create a facade of goodness and propriety, reinforcing the perception of London Above as the good twin. Even though Richard is well-aware of his social mask, he puts an effort to keep up with Jessica. Nevertheless, he could not help but express his dissatisfaction with the exorbitant price he paid for just an éclair and tea:

it is almost beyond the human capacity for belief to accept how much museum cafeterias will brazenly charge for a slice of cake and a cup of tea. “Here’s your tea and your éclair,” he told her. “It would have cost less to buy one of those Tintoretos.” (Gaiman, 2013, p. 13)

Richard is aware that the city produces individuals who serve to feed the needs of the ego. It becomes an internalized deliberate act to continue wearing mask of a higher class because of “all those strivings of the ego which adverse external circumstances have crushed, and all our suppressed acts of volition which nourish in us the illusion of Free Will” (Freud, 1981, p. 236). The self secretly imposes on the individuals that it is their choice to purchase the higher priced material, and as a result they unwittingly comply with the desire. The illusion of free will helps

prevail the suppression of the unwanted. In this case, the city suppresses have-nots as unwanted class in the matrix of social structure. For this reason, Jessica responds that he exaggerates about the prices because she is illusioned with the desire to maintain a certain image.

Jessica is aware that Richard is not from an upper-class background. Nevertheless, she is in a relationship with him because she sees a powerful potential in him due to his coincidental collection of trolls. In her mind, great men collect something, and his troll collection fits this idea. Concisely speaking, Jessica projects her own values onto Richard. She encourages him to read books like “Dress for Success” and “A Hundred and Twenty-Five Habits of Successful Men,” and to shop from the upper-class men’s department at Harvey Nichols. These suggestions are meant to align him with upper-class codes and signifiers. However, Richard does not belong to this world and does not engage in such behaviours or discourse. It means that he goes through the chaos of the double within himself because he has a middle-class background to repress and an upper middle-class mask to wear. To mitigate the effects of this dilemma, a person, according to Freud, who has common feelings and experiences with the other identifies himself with another person, so that his own self becomes confused, or the alien self replaces his own self (1981, p. 234). As a result, he decides not to identify himself with the Upside that is not the “Heimlich” he looks for. He feels a growing sense of alienation from London Above because the stratified society of London Above dominates his life, pushing him to become a mechanistic part of a system that he does not truly relate to. His pretension to be a part of it is to avoid the resurface of “Unheimlich,” yet the liminality is implied as a menace against life throughout the novel. At the juncture of overcoming the threat, he denies such an existence where he does not have a sense of belonging, and for that reason “in his embrace of the fantastic otherworld, his narrative arc moves inevitably towards an identification with this otherness and a denial of the hierarchy of value which insists on its inferiority” (Tiffin, 2008, p. 35). Obviously, Richard is not someone who can engage well with the predestined role London Above proposes for him. Consequently, the materialistic portrayal of the city contributes to his discordance. The persistence of the good twin encourages the embodiment of the ego that is purified from the repressed, which only promotes adherence to social norms and standards of behaviour. The characters in London Above, like Richard, initially conform to these societal expectations, which adds to the portrayal of the realm as the good conscious world. Therefore, in the psychoanalytical perspective, London Above can be viewed as the good twin because it represents the conscious mind’s attempts to maintain a sense of order, stability, and conformity to social norms. However, the doppelgänger motif challenges this idealized image by bringing forth the repressed, unconscious aspects of society embodied by London Below. The motif, therefore, serves as a powerful tool in exploring the conscious and unconscious dimensions of human existence within the context of finance-based urban landscape depicted in the novel.

London Below as the Other

The good twin in the doppelgänger motif brings along the evil one which is a compilation of repressed or concealed materials in the psyche as “doubling, dividing and interchanging of the self” (Freud, 1981, p. 234). London Above as the good twin or the conscious mind pushes the undesirable aspects into the unconscious. While it represents an idealized version of society, the darker aspects and struggles of life are concealed or marginalized. In this respect, London Below becomes the repressed or the evil twin, and the doppelgänger motif, through its contrast with London Above, brings to light the hidden tensions in the conscious realm. According to Weinstock, “By estranging us from the world we know through the presentation of worlds that function according to different principles, fantasy works possess the capacity to provoke critical reflection on our familiar world—to let us reconceive nature as history and recognize that the way things are is not necessarily how they have to be.” (2022, p. 49). London Above is so similar to the contemporary world order that the reader cannot find any fantasy elements. This familiarity is

broken only after the unfamiliar is presented in the novel. For this reason, the social commentary is drawn after the introduction of London Below where people from lower strata lead miserable lives. Because most of the fantasy events occur in this part of the represented world, a critique of the day-to-day reality is provoked only after the realities of the Downworld are strikingly presented as fraught with dangers and difficulties. For this reason, the repressed determines the borders of the dichotomy in doppelgänger and social criticism in the work. As Freud asserted that the self and the other was once united in the doppelgänger duality (1981, p. 234), it is the overwhelming power of the subjectivity of the evil that threatens the goodness of the values in London Above in this duality. In Vardoulakis' words, "negation becomes a catalyst for drawing a topology of the ego" (2006, p. 101). As the evil frankly reveals what it has as undesired in the opposite realm, then it poses a threat to the admitted and known ways of the Upside. In this context, negation also becomes a crucial instrument to map the structure of the self and to define the contours of hierarchical abyss between opposite groups.

This view can be supported firstly through the visibility problem in the novel. People from London Below are not visible to Above Londoners. The invisibility of the lower class is portrayed both metaphorically and literally. They both do not see them and do not acknowledge their presence. In other words, their being-in-the-world is not recognized by the Upsiders. For instance, when Door, the last member of a noble family from London Below, is injured and lying on the ground bleeding, Jessica neither sees her nor shows any inclination to help someone in urgent need. Instead, she threatens to end her engagement with Richard: "Richard Oliver Mayhew," said Jessica, coldly. "You put that girl down and come back here this minute. Or this engagement is at an end as of now. I'm warning you" (Gaiman, 2013, p. 22). The word "engagement" in this context carries a dual significance. On one level, Richard and Jessica are engaged to be married, signifying their romantic commitment to one another. On another level, the term "engaged" metaphorically represents Richard's connection to London Above, the familiar and ordinary world he inhabits. Jessica serves as a nexus to this world, making it "Heimlich" for Richard. Therefore, breaking their engagement would not only dissolve their romantic bond but also sever Richard's connection to his sense of belonging and homeliness. In the narrative, those who become disengaged from the lifestyle of London Above are rendered invisible, ignored by people like Jessica. This foreshadows that the end of Richard's engagement with Jessica will lead to his own disengagement from the safe, familiar world of London Above, resulting in a loss of homeliness and a descent into invisibility.

Throughout the text, it is evident that people from London Below are not seen by the inhabitants of London Above. This exemplifies how the lower class remains invisible to those in London Above, illustrating the disconnect between the social strata. The invisibility is linked to the oblivion caused by repression in the psyche. Doğan notes that "the uncanny is something intimately familiar but also forgotten because it is repressed into the recesses of the unconscious. It is illogically frightening as it has undergone repression and then returned from that repressed state; the residue of the repressed material, which is familiar but repressed, triggers a remembering process" (2021, p. 129). Although the undesired material is pushed into the repressed zone, the familiarity still leaves vestige that activates a process of remembering. For Jessica, Below Londoners still invades the repressed area, remaining in the state of forgetting; therefore, she cannot see Door. In Freud's words, "The better orientated in his environment a person is, the less readily will he get the impression of something uncanny in regard to the objects and events in it" (1981, p. 221). Because Jessica has a strong sense of belonging to the upper-middle class values, she successfully navigates this dictum. As she "project[s] that material outward as something foreign" (Freud, 1981, p. 236) to herself, she internalizes it and denies her bond with it. As a result, the psychoanalytic process of "Unheimlich" turns into social detachment. However, Richard's dissatisfaction with Jessica's upper-class superficial orbit has made him stand open in the

unconscious mind to escape her capitalist trajectory. From the beginning, Richard is the misfit who cannot comply with the capitalist activeness of London Above, and he is also the one who looks for a “Heimlich” place to be spiritually united. Thus, the remnants of the repressed make him recollect the undesired, which is activated upon seeing Door. As Richard recalls the forgotten, Door and other Below Londoners become visible to him, but in return, he ceases to be visible in his own society in Upper London. In this sense, Richard’s contrasting perception of Door serves as a commentary on the disassociation from the upper-middle class.

Taking care of Door starts Richard’s journey to the Downworld as she is the door to a more “Heimlich” place for Richard. Once a staff member in a prestigious investment analyst company, Richard now finds himself struggling to adapt to the conditions of the Downworld. In London Below, the rats, the true owners of the underground, hold a higher status, and people there show them respect whenever a rat appears (Gaiman, 2013, p. 76). As he realizes that the things he had avoided in the upper world now hold a higher position in hierarchy, he initially clings to his old habits because he cannot quit them all of a sudden. Freud indicates, “it is possible to recognize the dominance in the unconscious mind of a ‘compulsion to repeat’ proceeding from the instinctual impulses” (1981, p. 238). Although he does not fully approve the ways of the Upside, he realizes that it became a part of his instinctual nature to avoid rats. In this case, “Repetition is no longer that material element inherent in a cause, only to come to the fore in the effect” (Vardoulakis, 2006, p. 111). The role of the repetition in causality changes, coming to surface mechanically. Therefore, he questions whether acknowledging the new order requires abandoning old facts and reevaluating the prescribed social norms. In this regard, Anaesthesia’s guidance becomes a tutorial that unravels what kind of conducts he should cultivate at his new home due to being dispossessed, disenfranchised, and outcasted. On this journey, he is shocked upon seeing her speaking rat-language, and wonders if being able to speak rat-language would make him a rat himself because “our self-identity is given by a language that is differentiating our own subject” (Vardoulakis, 2006, p. 113). He constructs an identity that speaks the language of the Upside and undergoes a course of disengagement that oscillates his former subjectivity. However, the repressed also has its own dynamics and self-identity built upon a discrete subjectivity. In Vardoulakis’ words, “If the Doppelgänger’s normal state is the overcoming an undoing the limits, then what we have here is a transgression of transgression, a redoing the limit” (2006, p. 114). Whist establishing regulations, the repressed reconstructs its own boundaries and its zone of transgression. He explores a totally new hierarchical system there, subverting what is familiar in London Above. Rats and other fantasy creatures have higher status than human beings. For example, Anaesthesia can communicate with rats because she “do[es] stuff for them” (Gaiman, 2013, p. 84) When Richard asks if she is a rat because she can speak the language, she responds that she would be lucky if she were one (Gaiman, 2013, p. 84), further highlighting the disparities in social strata and the upside down state of London Below where rats are not hated but respected.

Because he is now visible in London Below, Richard’s Upside status falls even lower in this new cityscape. Marquis de Carabas says: “Young man,” he said, “understand this: there are two Londons. There’s London Above –that’s where you lived– and then there’s London Below –the Underside– inhabited by the people who fell through the cracks in the world. Now you’re one of them” (Gaiman, 2013, p. 126). When de Carabas confronts Richard, asserting that he is one of them, he ensures that Richard fully integrates into the Downworld rather than oscillating between the two worlds. Pekşen suggests, “Being homeless may not always be a choice, but remaining in the gap is” (2017, p. 79) and belonging nowhere means living under more threat and undergoing the configurations of neither conscious nor unconscious mind. As Freud describes the encounter with the double as the resurfacing of repressed elements in an unsettling manner that blurs the distinction between life and death (1981, p. 235), remaining in the gap, as implicated by de Carabas, may cause Richard’s death. This in-between state, being neither here nor there either

physically or locationally signifies the liminality between “Unheimlich” and “Heimlich.” In such a case, the person fails to represent a certain identity and subjectivity. However, it does not necessarily mean that the representation of the self or the other guarantees to shield against every menace on behalf of the member. For example, Anaesthesia is found and adopted by rats, which is her first fall into the crack (Gaiman, 2006, p. 87), and she suddenly disappears on Night’s Bridge, which is her subsequent fall (Gaiman, 2006, p. 104). In a capitalist world where precarity, unaffordability, and underrepresentation are regarded as undesirable labels, falling into continuous chasms comes to mean the resurface of social fears embedded in society. As Živković argues, “the concept of evil, which is usually attached to the double is relative, transforming with shifts in cultural fears and values” (2000, p. 124). Fantasy elements contribute to this notion as well because the Downworld is infested with “hungry vampires, genocidal angels, and deadly pea-soupers” (Elber-Aviram, 2013, p. 4-5). Although the idealized image of London Above swept “poverty, misery, and injustice are meticulously out of sight and mind” (Elber-Aviram, 2013, p. 4), London Below resurfaces the darkest repressed materials that resonate with cultural concerns and its social repercussions. In a similar vein, considering from a class-based perspective, the exclusion due to belonging to the lower class is another one of today’s societal fears. Obviously, the Upside has its own class-related flaws, but it is crucial to say that the same negligence invades the Downworld. For example, while Door is a privileged lady, there is also Sewer Folk who seems to be the lowest in the hierarchy. They do not communicate through speaking but have a sign language and they wear “brown and green clothes, covered in a thick layer of something that might have been mold and might have been a petrochemical ooze, and might, conceivably, have been something much worse. They wore their hair long and matted. They smelled more or less as one would imagine” (Gaiman, 2013, 268). The lower-class as the repressed material draws a critique of social inequalities especially through the silhouette of the Downsiders “living in the cracks” (Gaiman, 2013, p. 96). From this general outlook, however, it turns out that London Below also has its own class hierarchy. Freud argues that while passing through the animistic stage, certain residues and traces persist, manifesting themselves through recurrence (1981, pp. 240-241). These remnants constitute the similarly shared features of the doppelgänger, paving the way for questioning not only the purity of the good, but also the defilement of the evil. The erosion between the boundaries converges two worlds at the same juncture: On a societal basis, it manifests the very human desire to create the echelon of lower and upper, maintaining the status quo. The emulation through psychic traces reveals the social structure of the Downworld as Richard observes, for example, Door’s family is from upper class especially due to their unique ability to open doors and hailing from the House of Arch. They possess their own home and have access to the resources they require. Notably, although the majority of characters in London Below are not depicted as having books or engaging in reading, Door is portrayed reading *Mansfield Park* (Gaiman, 2006, p. 341). The fact that the Arch family possesses a library at their home stands in contrast to the true dispossessed in London Below, who may be without access to education or literacy, as evidenced by the absence of book exchange, for example, at the Floating Market where the focus is on practical necessities for daily life. The act of reading, especially in Door’s case, symbolizes a form of empowerment and politicization, because reading allows individuals to question the societal systems and norms they encounter, leading to a deeper understanding of the world around them. Other than upper class people, there are also people like Marquis de Carabas who survives through bargaining, or Hunter who bodyguards and risks her life to exist. Yet, there are lower ones like Anaesthesia who is the true dispossessed having neither a family nor belongings. Therefore, the hierarchical structure of the Downworld mimics that of Upside. In addition to this, it is also essential to state that during his early days in Lower London, Richard also becomes dispossessed and is under threat of being killed, but being a friend to Lady Door saves him (Gaiman, 2013, p. 77). Door’s being a member of the upper class saves him. Although his existence was not accepted there at first, in later times he rises in status and reaches a respected

position due to the prestigious “warrior” title he earns by killing the Beast of London (Gaiman, 2013, p. 343). No matter how risky and undesirable this realm is, it offers a chance for Richard to realize the potential within him. Therefore, Richard spiritually and locationally unites with the half which gives him the chance to prove his individuality. Therefore, the Downworld also depicts a cityscape where being-in-the-world dysfunctions for the people from lower strata. From this perspective, the doppelgänger sharing the similar character traits resonates with the embedment of social dynamics and power structures, showcasing how even in a world that may seem removed from contemporaneous reality the issues of social inequality remain incurable —as above, so below. As the title of the novel suggests, never and nowhere can one avoid hegemony.

Conclusion

It is an undeniable fact that binary opposites are a part of every aspect of life. While defined by the presence of one another, they also give shape to everyday life through the adopted institutional values. As one of these and one of the literary visions, the class-based structure of London is revealed by Richard’s quest in Gaiman’s work through a psychoanalytical backcloth. The doppelgänger motif discloses the class-based societal interventions with its similarities and differences through the image of “good” and “evil” in the division of London in the work. As Freud indicates, the doppelgänger constitutes differences in appearance and similarities in character features. This notion is handled in two ways in the work: Firstly, London Above is depicted as a colourful and vibrant cityscape, representing the visible and privileged surface, where the upper class wields influence and authority. London Below, however, is presented as dark, damp, and stenchy, embodying the hidden and overlooked underbelly of society, where the underprivileged struggle to survive and find their place. Secondly, the same hierarchical structure prevails London Below as well with the existence of haves and have-nots and the expanding gulf between them. In this regard, the obvious dichotomy between the worlds is knotted together psychoanalytically, London Above as the self and London Below as the other. The former embraces the favourable and socially acceptable materials, while the latter, as the double, becomes “the other” or “the evil twin” due to the presence of undesirable elements. No matter how different they seem from each other due to stark contrasts, they are linked because the repressed materials leave residue that recurs. In this regard, on the surface it seems only London Above that has an identity and subjectivity, but London Below also has a discourse manifested through the echo of class division. Therefore, the repressed elements of the self kept hidden from consciousness continue to influence thoughts and behaviours from the subconscious level. Having its own subjectivity and identity, London Below uncovers the individuality within Richard and becomes the other half he searched before in different locations. For this reason, he prefers the place where offers him the chance to be himself, rather than a place where he accompanies other people’s lives. Therefore, he opts for seeming like “a drowned rat” (Gaiman, 2013, p. 4) for his upcoming life, as he realizes the seemingly good is not good since one should always wear a social mask to compete with others. Although his being-in-the-world is not acknowledged in London Above, his newly gained title of warrior helps him climb the social ladder in the Downworld. Thus, the class-wise power struggle prevailing in both cityscapes dramatically draws a commentary on contemporary labels that today’s people live for the sake of, which is laid bare in the work with the functional instrument of Freudian dictum that unveils social inequalities.

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