

ATILIM UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
ENGLISH CULTURE AND LITERATURE MASTER'S PROGRAMME

**UNCONSCIOUS AND UNCANNY IN NEIL GAIMAN'S *NEVERWHERE* AND
*CORALINE***

Master's Thesis

Bariř SEMERCİOĐLU

Ankara-2023

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Thesis Advisor

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Ankara-2023

ACCEPTANCE AND APPROVAL

This is to certify that this thesis titled “Unconscious and Uncanny in Neil Gaiman’s *Neverwhere* and *Coraline*” and prepared by Barış SEMERCİOĞLU meets with the committee’s approval unanimously as Master’s Thesis in the field of English Culture and Literature following the successful defense conducted on 09/01/2023.

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ETHICAL STATEMENT

I accept and acknowledge that I have prepared this thesis study, prepared in line with the Thesis Writing Guidelines of Atılım University Graduate School of Social Sciences;

- within the framework of academic and ethical rules;
- presented the information, documents, evaluations, and results in a way that meets the rules of scientific ethics and morality,
- I have referenced each work from which I have benefited while preparing my thesis, and that
- I hereby present a unique study.

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09/01/2023

Bariş SEMERCİOĞLU

ÖZ

SEMERCİOĞLU, Barış. Neil Gaiman'ın *Yokyer* ve *Coraline* Romanlarında Bilinçdışı ve Tekinsizlik. Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Ankara, 2023.

Bu tezin amacı, Neil Gaiman'ın kentsel fantazi romanı *Yokyer* adlı eseri ve gençlik kitabı *Coraline*'ndeki tekinsizlik ve bilinçaltı elementlerinin temsil edilme biçimlerini inceleyerek, bu temsillerin Sigmund Freud'un teorileri ve diğer Tekinsizlik teorileriyle ne kadar bağdaştığını incelemektir. Her iki romanda da, ana karakterler, kendilerini gerçekliklerinin çarpıtılmış bir versiyonu olan, ve aslında kendi bilinçaltılarının derinliklerini simgeleyen, yansıma bir dünyaya götüren birer yolculuğa çıkarlar. Karakterler korkularının üstesinden gelmeyi ve bastırılmış duygularını kontrol etmeyi, şeytani ikizler, kötücül anne figürleri veya altüst edilmiş alanlar gibi tekinsizlik tezahürleri aracılığıyla öğrenirler. Richard'ın yeraltı şehri, Aşağı Londra'daki sınamaları, ve Coraline'in Diğer Ev'deki mücadeleleri aslında bilinçaltı düşüncelerini bilinçlerine dahil etme çabalarını temsil etmektedir. Bu yüzden bu tez, tekinsizlik temsillerinin karakterlerin değişimlerine, kişiliklerinin gelişimine ve kimlik krizlerinin çözümüne ne kadar katkıda bulunduğu odaklanmaktadır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Gaiman, Tekinsizlik, Freud, Psikanaliz, Fantazy

ABSTRACT

SEMERCİOĞLU, Barış. Unconscious and Uncanny in Neil Gaiman's *Neverwhere* and *Coraline*. Master's Thesis, Ankara, 2023.

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the representations of the uncanny and unconscious in Neil Gaiman's urban fantasy novel *Neverwhere* and young adult portal fantasy novella *Coraline* in an attempt to observe how exactly these representations correlate with the teachings of Sigmund Freud and other theories of the uncanny. In both novels, the protagonists embark on a journey that take them to another mirror realm; a distorted version of their reality, which is actually the depths of their unconscious. The protagonists learn to overcome and manage their fears and repressed feelings by their encounters with the manifestations of the uncanny through doppelgangers, evil surrogate mothers or inverted spaces. Richard's trials in the under city, London Below, and Coraline's challenges in the Other Home, both represent their struggles to adapt their unconscious thoughts into their conscious. Thus, this thesis focuses on how the representations of the uncanny contribute to the transformation of the characters, their personality development and the resolution of their identity crises.

Keywords: Gaiman, Uncanny, Freud, Psychoanalysis, Fantasy

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INTRODUCTION

The aim of this thesis is to examine and investigate the representations of Freudian uncanny, doubles and doppelgängers and Freudian unconscious through the urban fantasy novel *Neverwhere* and young adult novella *Coraline* by Neil Gaiman and find out how these representations correlate with the theories of Sigmund Freud and more modern versions of the uncanny theory. The concept of the uncanny has been a recurring focus on countless fantasy and horror fiction stories and novels. The authors have employed the uncanny and its reverberations such as the doppelgängers, mirror worlds or stolen identities to represent the internal struggles of the protagonists and other dilemmas. Similarly, the psychoanalysts have used literary texts and their characters as case studies to further investigate their theories. A common theme in Gaiman's prominent works is the complex juxtaposition between familiar reality and a dark reflection in which the protagonists often find themselves. These contrasting realities are most commonly based on the protagonists' search for identity and their hidden, repressed thoughts, insecurities and desires of their unconscious. The manifestations of these repressed thoughts come in the form of uncanny elements, providing an opportunity for the protagonists to face their fears and "feel at home within their identities" (Tatar 172). Similarly, Nicholas Royle, in his book *The Uncanny*, says that the unnerving feelings that the uncanny arouses can indeed set the ground for personal reformation, leading to the discovery of "the foreign body within oneself" (7), which at this point, makes it possible for the individual to let the uncanny feeling show them how to uncover foreignness within themselves (Kristeva 170). Therefore, the journeys taken by the protagonists in the studied novels can be seen as both physical and symbolic, spiritual journeys into themselves, more specifically, into their unconscious, in order to detect and overcome the foreignness in themselves. As the great American fantasy writer Ursula K. Le Guin says "Most of the great works of fantasy are about that journey; and fantasy is the medium best suited to a description of that journey, its perils and rewards" (78). Therefore, the main concern of this thesis is to show the significant contribution of uncanny elements to the protagonists' identity crises, their maturation and development in fantasy narratives.

The first chapter of the thesis will present the theoretical framework which will be used to analyse the numerous uncanny elements and their purposes in the novels.

The predecessor of Freud, Ernst Jentsch's version of the Uncanny will be explained first, as his essay "On the Psychology of the Uncanny" was the first to explore the reasons and essence of the phenomenon. In his essay, Jentsch relates the uncanny feeling to "intellectual uncertainty". The second section of this chapter dwells on Freud's ideas on the unconscious, the formation of human psyche and some key terms such as defence mechanisms, infantile complexes, Oedipus complex and Oedipal mother. It is essential to become familiar with Freud's views on the unconscious to understand his ideas on the uncanny. Freud's more elaborate take on the uncanny will be dealt with in the third part of this chapter. His essay "The Uncanny", which provides a more comprehensive list of reasons and definitions of the phenomenon, has been the foundation of numerous works that followed it. Freud's essay will be referred to explain the uncanny effects in both novels, which are, according to some critics, almost rewritings of the essay "The Uncanny", with their several allusions to the text. Definitions of doubles, doppelgängers, castration complex, animism and anthropomorphism, omnipotence of thought and other uncanny elements will provide a better understanding of their functions in the novels. The fourth section briefly deals with contemporary versions of the uncanny theory. Foucault's "heterotopia" theory, which is used to describe uncanny spaces, which are places of "otherness", will be useful when describing the eerie uncanniness of London Below in *Neverwhere*. Similarly, Julia Kristeva's theory of "abject" will be used to analyse the representation of a monstrous female body in *Coraline*, and Coraline's symbolic murdering of her Other Mother in order to gain her freedom. Finally, Homi Bhabha's theory of "unhomeliness" will be employed to analyse Richard's feelings of dislocation and its effect on his journeys.

The second chapter of the thesis is the first analysis chapter, dealing with Neil Gaiman's debut novel *Neverwhere* (1996). The urban fantasy novel, which is another portal fantasy, tells the story of Richard Mayhew, who is an ordinary Londoner with a typical office job and a dull, average life. After helping a homeless person, he comes across on the street, Richard finds himself slowly erased from existence in his city. People stop acknowledging him and do not recognize him anymore. He is, therefore, forced to find the strange girl he helped to get answers. His journey takes him to another London beneath the one he knows; London Below. The undercity is an inverted, twisted mirror image of London Above. The two co-existing but non-

interacting parts of the city resemble a body with two different identities, as Rata says in Gaiman's novels, the fictional realm serves as a character, instead of just a setting (112). This makes more sense when the animosity of the settings towards the protagonists is considered. In both books, the setting of the "other world" becomes a symbolic "mapping of the self", a place that enables the characters to become more conscious of themselves and resolve self and identity-related problems (Çetiner 130). In this regard, the split cities will be analysed in light of Freud's structure of human psyche. It will be argued that the undercity is an allegory of the unconscious as its contents are composed of the city's repressed past. It will be argued that the split image of two cities represent the conscious and the unconscious, the ego and the id. Therefore, Richard's journey to London Below stands as a representation of his descend into his unconscious in search of an identity and the formation of the superego as well. The protagonist encounters many uncanny elements in his journey, which he has to defeat in order to overcome his repressed fears and desires. Each manifestation of the uncanny will be analysed in regard to Freud's and other theorists' views and their role in the protagonist's search for identity will be explained.

The third chapter focuses on Neil Gaiman's second children's book *Coraline* (2002). As another portal fantasy of the author, the novel deals with the tale of a teenage girl who is immensely bored with her lonely life and is constantly deprived of attention by her negligent parents, finds a door in their new house opening to another version of her home. The story is deemed as a "gothic version of *Alice*" (Buckley 59). Similar to Richard, Coraline passes the threshold into an uncanny space; a mirrored world that includes idealized versions of her life: A loving family, much better food, interesting neighbours and talking animals. Soon, though, she realizes that this alluring atmosphere is a facade, conducted by an impostor, the Other Mother. As a doppelgänger, the Other Mother is central to the story, representing the repressed fears and desires of Coraline and also embodying many elements of the uncanny Freud mentions in his essay. It is through her confrontation with the Other Mother that Coraline encounters the uncanny reminders of her problems. The castrating figure, the pre-Oedipal mother will be dealt with in detail, as she represents an ambivalent nature; the loving, caring and nurturing mother figure, and the over possessive, destructive mother who devours her children's souls and leaves them as a lifeless husk. Similar to *Neverwhere*, *Coraline* also exhibits a possible parallelism between the Other Home

and Coraline's real home as different parts of Coraline's psyche. Moreover, Coraline's evident search of an identity further strengthens this similarity. As the Other Home includes everything she secretly desires or fears, it will be argued that this unfamiliar home is a representation of Coraline's unconscious, her id, while her real home is her conscious, her ego. Her identity formation through the journey allows her to develop a super ego, which means she finally finds an identity. The trials she has to take will be studied in light of the uncanny theories mentioned in the theoretical framework to better understand how the encounter with the uncanny contributes to Coraline's identity formation.

The concluding part of the thesis will present the results of the study. Briefly reintroducing the characters, the reformative effects of the uncanny and their contribution to the characters' identity problems will be touched upon again. Moreover, the main points of the analysis chapters will be covered and how the author's knowledge of the psychoanalytical approach and the novels' intertextuality contributes the overall effect of the two novels will be dealt with.

CHAPTER 1: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

1.1. Jentsch's Uncanny

Although it is mostly known as a Freudian concept, the uncanny was first identified and studied by Ernst Jentsch in his 1906 essay "On the Psychology of the Uncanny". In his essay, the German psychiatrist explores the reasons behind the emergence of the feeling of the uncanny.

The first remark he makes about the concept is that the word "*Unheimlich* (uncanny)" itself hints something unhomely and strange in German language and that it suggests "a lack of orientation is bound up with the impression of the uncanniness of a thing or incident" (Jentsch 2). Afterwards, Jentsch makes it clear that he will not attempt to explore the nature of the uncanny as he believes the impact the uncanny produces is subjective and changes from person to person, making it challenging to pinpoint its source and an uncanny occurrence might not always have the same effect on someone every time so it makes it quite complex to give a thorough explanation of the phenomenon (Jentsch 2). Therefore, rather than defining the uncanny, Jentsch proposes that one should "investigate how the affective excitement of the uncanny arises in psychological terms, how the psychical conditions must be constituted so that the 'uncanny' sensation emerges" (Jentsch 3).

He continues to argue that one of the main reasons for the arise of the feeling of uncanny is that most people usually trust the traditional, the usual and the hereditary while they approach the new and unusual with doubt and restlessness and even enmity. The brain's reluctance to establish a connection with something that is not previously familiar to the self, causes this unpleasant feeling. Therefore, the more a person strives to make "an intellectual mastery of a new thing" (4), the more likely is the occurrence of the uncanny.

That is to say, we do not experience confusion or disorientation when something is familiar and well-known, like the sun rising in the morning. If something is self-evident, and has been familiar for a long time, however extraordinary it is, it will always be identified as normal as it has been an ordinary part of our lives for a long time (5). Jentsch adds that this familiarity can be challenged as well when a familiar incident is regarded in a different and new angle.

Jentsch continues to give a comprehensive list of physical ambiguities that can cause the sensation of uncanniness. The most recurrent and powerful of these ambiguities he suggests is the intellectual uncertainty about an object, he describes it as “doubt as to whether an apparently living being really is animate and, conversely, doubt as to whether a lifeless object may not in fact be animate” (8). To exemplify, he talks about a tree trunk which later reveals itself to be a giant snake. This revealing of a seemingly lifeless object’s sudden energy, whether this energy is psychical or mechanical, creates a feeling of doubt as to the nature of the perceived movement, and with this doubt “the obscurity of its cause, a feeling of terror persists in the person concerned” (8). Consequently, the person is lead to feel uncanniness.

He then adds, conversely, the same kind of effect can arise when an object appears to be alive but is actually an inanimate object or a machine. Jentsch gives an example of a wild man witnessing a train locomotive or a steamboat for the first time may in fact experience such great trepidation because of the likeness of the noises coming from the machine can remind him of human sounds (8). However, the moment the confusion is overcome by the observer, and the true nature of the object is exposed, the feeling of fear disappears. Therefore, it can be said that the feeling of uncanniness exists until the ambiguity is resolved.

Jentsch says that this “unpleasant impression” arises very commonly in places with “collections of wax figures, panopticons and panoramas” (9). It is not easy to tell apart a real life size wax figure and a human being in the obscurity of semi-dark places. Even after successfully recognizing the nature of the wax doll, one can continue to have the feeling of uneasiness as the observer can have semi-conscious secondary doubts when he looks again and perceives more details about the figure, which remind him of his initial weird feeling. He adds that a smaller toy with seemingly human functions like a toy opening its eyes and closing again would not give the same effect as a life-size doll that can do the same. Moreover, he suggests that the particular effect will also be more powerfully reproduced the finer the mechanism and the more accurately the formal replica is made from nature (10).

Therefore, through the rest of the essay, Jentsch proceeds to explore how this effect of uncanniness is produced in literature. Referring to what he said earlier about the importance of the ‘true nature of an object’, Jentsch claims that storytellers often make use of this uncertainty in their works deliberately raise questions in the reader's

mind regarding a character or object's genuine nature, thus the reader is not given the chance to understand the matter immediately and left in ambiguity as the feeling would not last if the truth was exposed right away. To explain this, Jentsch gives a detailed list of the uncanny effects and their reasons in E.T.A. Hoffman's short story "the Sandman". He says that the repetitional application of this "psychological artifice" makes Hoffman's stories successful in creating such vivid sense of uncanniness in his readers.

The character Olympia is introduced here as the first uncanny element in the story. Olympia is first presented as a normal human being but later it is discovered that she is a life-size automaton, and similar to the psychological effect created by wax dolls, as explained by Jentsch, this character is one of the sources of the uncanniness in the story as the reader is confused about its true nature. As Jentsch believes that when one decides to interpret a lifeless object as a component of an organic entity, especially in anthropomorphic aspects, in a poetic or fantastic fashion, the impact of the uncanny can be effortlessly created (12). In addition to this, epileptic seizures can also be interpreted by the observer's mind as an uncanny sight, as it can trigger some unpleasantness because of the mechanical movements of the human body, giving the impression that the person might in fact be an automaton.

Another uncanny aspect of the story according to Jentsch is that seeing a dead body, a skull or a skeleton might set off the feeling of fear because "thoughts of a latent animate state always lie so close to these things" (15) that is, the anxiety that comes from seeing one of these inanimate things can be caused by our belief that they might still in fact be animate. Again, it is clear that if the author does not provide the reader with enough evidence whether a character is alive or dead, he/she can create the sense of uncanny in the reader since the reader will be facing an uncertain situation.

In conclusion, it can be seen that Jentsch's ideas of the uncanny mostly focus on the importance of intellectual uncertainty to create the feeling of uncanny. Having explored the background of the theory of uncanny, we can now analyse Freud's more elaborate reflections on the phenomenon.

1.2. Freud's Unconscious and Freudian Key Terms

In order to understand Freud's ideas on the uncanny, it is essential to first remember his views on the unconscious. As it is known, Freud was the first psychoanalyst to bring forth the theory of unconscious and his topography of the mind. His views shed new light on the perception of the human mind and lead to new studies in the field. Fundamentally, Freud likened the image of the human mind to the shape of an iceberg with three layers; the conscious, the pre-conscious and the unconscious. Freud associates these three layers with the three parts of the mind that influence human behaviour that he had previously explained as ego, super ego and the id. The conscious mind, according to Freud, hosts the ego and is the part of the mind that is the rational self. As it is responsible for making decisions based on the reality principle, it is conscious of reality and it chooses what to do based on what is thought to be the proper thing to do in a positive way. As Freud says that it is simple to understand that the ego is the aspect of the id that has been directly altered by the outside environment (Freud 37). This influence allows it to be the link between the other two parts of the mind, the id and the superego, that is it usually mediates both needs of the id and the superego in a realistic way and finds a compromise. The superego, which is mostly an unconscious part of the mind, is usually associated with morality. In other words, it acts like a moral compass for the ego as it represents "the internalized ideals and provides standards for judgement" (Freud 38). This moral principle decides what is right and wrong or what is socially acceptable. It is there not only to prevent the direct impulses of the id like sex and destructiveness but also to seek to motivate the ego towards achieving reasonable and moral ideals. It has two sub levels; the conscience and the ego-ideal. The latter is the way one imagines their ideal selves, the former acts like a failsafe when the ego is unable to stop the id from getting its immediate gratification, the conscience induces guilty sentiments intended to harm the ego.

The id is associated with the pleasure principle, which wants instant reward and pleasure. It consists of all the primitive and instinctive traits that humans have. The id is essentially linked to all of the impulses that exist inside the human psyche, including Eros and Thanatos. The first one is the life drive that deals with pleasure, survival and sex, and the libido, the second is the death drive which deals with death and aggression. The id constantly demands things to satisfy the instincts as it is located in the unconscious part of the psyche. When the demands are fulfilled it causes feelings

of pleasure, conversely, when the demands are muted or censored, it causes feelings of pain. As it operates outside of the limits of reality and reason, it follows what Freud calls “the pleasure principle”. In an analogy, Freud compares the id to a horse and the rider of the said horse to its ego:

It[ego] is like a man on horseback, who has to hold in check the superior strength of the horse[id]; with this difference, that the rider tries to do so with his own strength while the ego uses borrowed forces. The analogy may be carried a little further. Often a rider, if he is not to be parted from his horse, is obliged to guide it where it wants to go; so in the same way the ego is in the habit of transforming the id's will into action as if it were its own. (Freud, 19).

Therefore, the role of the ego is that of a mediator that cannot really stop the id but direct it towards the right direction, and doing it without hurting the id. It does this in a realistic and reasonable way called “secondary process thinking”.

As previously mentioned, Freud divided consciousness into three parts; the conscious, pre-conscious and the unconscious. The conscious mind deals with the mental processes that one is aware of; all the information, thoughts, wishes and memories. The preconscious is situated between the conscious and the unconscious, which operates like a room where thoughts are stored until they are successful at catching the attention of the conscious (Freud 306), meaning that some information is usually not immediately available to the conscious mind but can easily be retrieved and made available. This is usually called “available memory”. It allows us to remember important information such as phone numbers or birthday dates at will. However, this part only stores the neutral or pleasurable memories or information, the unpleasant or traumatic information and emotions are stored away deeper, repressed in the unconscious. The unconscious is like a storage which holds the processes unknown to the conscious mind, however, still affecting the behaviours, feelings and decisions of the self.

Freud resembles the unconscious mind to that of the basement of a house in which all the unwanted, the unsightly and damaged furniture is locked away. It incorporates everything that can haunt a person; from childhood traumas to fears and desires that are unacceptable to societal norms, painful and shameful memories to repressed and hidden memories, our primitive impulses like sex and aggression, and all the other disturbing and threatening material that needs to be left out of awareness is hidden in this deepest part of the iceberg.

Freud says that to avoid knowing and facing the contents of this repository of repressed materials, the mind developed a series of defence mechanisms. Freud says that the ego unconsciously sets some defence mechanisms in motion to make sure that one keeps a self-image that is deemed acceptable by the society. Some of these defence mechanisms include repression, denial, displacement, regression, identification, sublimation and rationalization. Repression is the process that is most relevant to the unconscious and also the formation of the feeling of uncanniness. It is the process that enables one to systematically hide their traumatic experiences, undesirable ideas, sexual inclinations and urges into one's unconscious. Unlike repression, sublimation is usually considered as a defence mechanism with positive results. It is another psychological process of transforming one's repressed and unwanted behaviours into something productive. An artist, a sculptor or a writer turning his or her sexual desires or traumatic experiences into their work as an expression of these unwanted behaviours. He says that the ability to influence and redirect sexual impulses in this way makes it possible to use them for cultural endeavours of all kinds, to which they actually make the most significant contributions (Freud, 222). He also adds that if one's desires and wishes are not sublimated they will eventually be repressed and stored in the unconscious. Freud also asserts that there are some ways that can show unconscious material's influence on human behaviour such as slips of tongue, jokes and dreams. He believes a slip of the tongue is never accidental but an indication of a hidden urge. Similarly, he suggests that dreams are the best place to investigate the unconscious as when we sleep the unconscious is unburdened from the control of the defence mechanisms, therefore, analysing dreams is one of the best ways to uncover the processes going on in the unconscious.

Freud, when talking about a dream of his patient, even concludes that dreams are symbolic fulfilments of desires that, because they have been repressed, cannot be realized. Klages says that in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud argues that dreams are symbolic fulfilments of desires that have been suppressed and are thus unable to be realized. These desires frequently manifest in dreams, but in bizarre ways that frequently conceal or obfuscate the underlying (forbidden) wish that lies beneath the dream because they are not even permitted to be articulated directly in awareness (38). Therefore, through dream analysis, the unconscious material can be released to the conscious level.

The repressed materials do not always tend to stay where they are stored, instead, they often try “to push their way into consciousness” (Freud 44) in the form of dreams or external attempts to reawaken them, which triggers a resistance, that is, the mind, in an attempt to keep them repressed, eliminates the undesirable material, not allowing them to the consciousness, as Freud explains, this is another form of defence mechanism:

There is a force in the mind which exercises the functions of a censorship, and which excludes from consciousness and from any influence upon action all tendencies which displease it. Such tendencies are described as ‘repressed’. They remain unconscious; and if one attempts to bring them into the patient's consciousness one provokes a ‘resistance’ (Freud 4405).

In many instances, they are successful in exerting their influence “by circuitous paths, and the indirect or substitutive gratification of repressed impulses is what constitutes neurotic symptoms” (Sofroniou 533).

As Freud connects the feeling of uncanniness with repressed infantile complexes, the child’s psychological development also becomes significant in dealing with the reasons of the uncanny. In this regard, the psychosexual development and its stages, especially the oedipal stage gains importance. When the baby is born, all its actions are led by the “pleasure principle”, which Freud says, encourages one to enjoy life, while its counterpart “the reality principle” motivates the individual to disregard the pleasure and perform what they are required to do, such as work or study. For a new born baby, whose sole purpose in life is to feel comfortable, the pleasure principle is what it bases its entire existence on, as it carries out all of its basic acts like eating, sleeping, and defecating so as to enjoy itself. As the baby is seeking pleasure, it can direct its sexual or instinctual drives to any object or person, Freud calls these drives “polymorphously perverse”. Since the polymorphously perverse infant has not yet discovered the reality principle, it does not sense the need to resist these urges. The new-born experiences pleasure by using its mouth, such as suckling the mother or objects, during this period of sexual development. Its activities are guided by its "id." According to Freud, the mother and infant have an incestuous connection since the baby enjoys its interactions with the mother. The anal stage, which correlates with the baby's toilet-training, is the second stage of sexual development. The phallic stage is the final stage of psychosexual development, when the infant examines the genital organs and develops an interest in the genitalia of the other sex. Up until that point, the child believes that everyone has a single genital organ. The child initially suspects

there is a problem when he learns that his mother doesn't have a penis like he does. He believes his father punished his mother by cutting her penis. And this concept gives him the fear that his father would also castrate him in retaliation for his desire to succeed his father and reunite with his mother. The dread of being punished by having one's genitalia cut is referred to by Freud as the "castration complex," while the desire to be with the parent of the other sex is known as the "Oedipus complex". The child is able to go through the Oedipus complex with the aid of the castration complex. The child learns to suppress his inappropriate sexual feelings for his mother as a result of feeling his father's dominance over him. The child is experiencing the presence of the "superego" for the first time at this point. For the girl child, the process is different since she associates her lack of a penis with inferiority and feels angry at the mother for leaving her so unprepared. At this point, her desire for the mother changes to the father. She tries to act like the mother since she understands the father has power and wants the mother, adopting suitable subservient behaviour and deferring the fulfilment of her desire until later. According to Freud, this stage is critical, as it can lead to homosexual desires if the process is not complete and the child will not build a healthy relationship with the opposite sex. Freud also emphasizes that the Oedipus Complex is essential in forming the superego and thus creating a healthy psyche for the child. It leads the child to learn how to suppress his unacceptable desires and thus enabling him to create his unconscious. These elements are evident in Coraline's story as she tries to navigate through her own unconscious, trying to form an identity. Moreover, the Other Mother as a castrating figure and Coraline's fear of castration are all related to this aspect of psychoanalysis.

1.3. Freud's Uncanny

Sigmund Freud was one of the foremost neurologists and psychologists of his day. His idea of the uncanny still has relevance for literature studies in addition to psychology and many other related fields, today. His seminal essay "The Uncanny", which was written in response to Jentsch's "On the Psychology of the Uncanny", has since been a work that paved the way for the other studies on the uncanny.

Freud begins his study with an acknowledgement of his predecessor Jentsch's study on the phenomenon and kindly adds that he does not totally agree with his findings and that "the intellectual uncertainty" could not be a satisfying and only

explanation to the reasons behind the feeling of uncanny. He defines the uncanny as “that class of the terrifying which leads back to something long known to us, once very familiar” (Freud 2). Referring to Jentsch’s idea that uncanny is most often caused by something unfamiliar and the failure at adapting to it could create the feeling of uncanniness, Freud argues that one should not always consider the unknown as uncanny and not all the things that evoke fear might cause the feeling of uncanny. He believes the uncanny “is in reality nothing new or foreign, but something familiar and old—established in the mind that has been estranged only by the process of repression” (Freud 13).

Following his predecessor’s suggestion that the word “unheimlich” hints something strange and unhomely in German language, Freud starts his essay by exploring the meaning of the word “uncanny” in several different languages. He observes that in most languages “unheimlich” means “strange, uneasy, gruesome, foreign and unhomely”, whereas in some languages the concept does not even have a specific word for the uncanny. He, then, focuses on the German meanings of the word for uncanny, “heimlich” and lists these meanings. The first definition that he finds is that “belonging to the house, not strange, familiar, tame, intimate, comfortable, homely” (2). Surprisingly, though, as he continues to list the meanings of the same word, another meaning emerges that says “Concealed, kept from sight, so that others do not get to know about it, withheld from others” (3). When he checks the opposite word’s definition he comes across something strange. “Unheimlich”, he discovers, means “uneasy, eerie, bloodcurdling” and also “the name for everything that ought to have remained ... hidden and secret and has become visible” (3). Apparently, the German word for homely and familiar has a second meaning for its complete opposite “unheimlich” which means something that has to be kept a secret. Therefore, it becomes clear that in order for something to be “unheimlich”, the state of “heimlich” is like a precondition to exist; “Unheimlich is in some way or other a sub-species of Heimlich” (4). As a result, the discovery proves Freud’s point that uncanny cannot be only something unfamiliar and new that is a challenge to our mind to adapt, it also has to include something familiar and old.

He quotes Schelling’s words to clarify the situation, saying “everything is uncanny that ought to have remained hidden and secret, and yet comes to light” (4). According to Freud, the unheimlich is what was once heimlich, homelike, familiar;

“the prefix ‘un’ is the token of repression” (15). That is to say, an uncanny experience is usually a familiar sensation that has been felt before, however, as a result of efforts to repress it, it has become alienated to the self and it unexpectedly resurfaces at a different time in life.

In the second part of his essay, Freud mentions his dissatisfaction with Jentsch’s ideas concerning why E.T.A. Hoffman’s “The Sandman” was uncanny, and provides his own explanations of the causes as to the uncanniness in the story. He starts by reminding Jentsch’s ideas on the story that “in telling a story, one of the most successful devices for easily creating the uncanny effects is to leave the reader in uncertainty whether a particular figure in the story is a human being or an automaton” (4) and says he believes it is an astute observation about the doll in the story Olympia, however, he quickly adds with emphasis that the doll is not and cannot be the only nor the most important uncanny aspect of this story.

He argues that a much more obvious element of the uncanny could be found in the theme of Sandman, who plucks out children’s eyes if they are late to go to bed. This focus on the eyes, Freud suggests, is caused by the fear of castration. He believes the fear of losing one’s eyes or sight comes from childhood and is carried to adulthood; “A study of dreams, phantasies and myths has taught us that a morbid anxiety connected with the eyes and with going blind is often enough a substitute for the dread of castration” (7). The protagonist, Nathaniel’s constant fear of losing his eyes is closely related to this fear of castration. Freud says:

Things like these and many more seem arbitrary and meaningless in the story so long as we deny all connection between fears about the eye and castration; but they become intelligible as soon as we replace the Sand-Man by the dreaded father at whose hands castration is awaited (8).

The Sand Man is described in the story as “a wicked man who comes when children won’t go to bed, and throws handfuls of sand in their eyes so that they jump out of their heads all bleeding” (Hoffman 2). Nathaniel has been raised with the constant terrorizing of this bewildering image of the Sand Man because his mother repeatedly uses it to scare children who do not go to sleep. Although he is later informed about the fictitious nature of the Sand Man, Nathaniel is still wounded by the image of it, as his nurse provides him with further details concerning the mysterious Sand Man. Moreover, in the story, as a child Nathaniel is convinced that Coppelius the lawyer, who frequently visits them, is Sand Man himself. One night, as he eavesdrops

on his father and Coppelius, he overhears Coppelius call out “Here with your eyes!” (3) “and -he- betrays himself by screaming aloud; Coppelius seizes him and is about to drop grains of red-hot coal out of the fire into his eyes, so as to cast them out on the hearth. His father begs him off and saves his eyes” (Freud 6). This childhood trauma re-emerges when he meets the Italian optician called Giuseppe Coppola, who created the doll Olympia’s eyes. Ironically, he is also responsible for the loss of Olympia’s eyes as he rips them off during a fight with Professor Spalanzani. To further expand the castration complex, Freud also talks about Oedipus’s self-punishment, blinding himself. One of the central uncanny elements in Neil Gaiman’s *Coraline*, which will be analysed in detail in Chapter three, is the image of a doppelgänger, “the other mother,” a monster in disguise, pretending to be Coraline’s mother, trying to castrate Coraline and take her eyes out and replace them with buttons, in an effort to make her stay with her forever.

After giving a short summary of the story, Freud proclaims that the main element of feeling of uncanny is directly linked to the figure of Sandman and the loss of one’s eyes, so, “Jentsch’s point of an intellectual uncertainty has nothing to do with this effect” (7). Therefore, according to Freud, Jentsch’s idea of “uncertainty regarding Olympia is animate or inanimate” is quite irrelevant in terms of the uncanny as there is a more evident illustration of uncanniness present. Freud explains this by saying that it is true that at the beginning the writer creates this uncertainty on purpose, but later

this uncertainty disappears in the course of Hoffmann’s story, and we perceive that he means to make us, too, look through the fell Coppola’s glasses—perhaps, indeed, that he himself once gazed through such an instrument. For the conclusion of the story makes it quite clear that Coppola the optician really is the lawyer Coppelius and thus also the Sand-Man (7).

There are other forms of uncanny present in the story that are closely linked to castration complex. These are “dismembered limbs, a severed head, a hand cut off at the wrist, feet which dance by themselves.” The dismembered organs are closely related to death and castration-complex. Dismembering of any limb, especially if they move after they are cut off, cause the feeling of uncanny. It has its roots in castration-complex (14). In addition to these, Freud describes “being buried alive” as “the most uncanny thing of all” (14). He explains that this idea of being buried alive while only appearing to be dead must be horrifying, but

psychoanalysis has taught us that this terrifying phantasy is only a transformation of another phantasy which had originally nothing terrifying

about it at all, but was filled with a certain lustful pleasure—the phantasy, I mean, of intra-uterine existence (15).

What he means is the desire to return to the womb and he believes that this phantasy was later turned into the anxiety of being buried alive and appearing to be dead by accident. As can be seen, there seems to be a close link between the uncanny fear of being buried alive and “Thanatos”, the death drive. In another essay of Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), he argues that every person has an instinct called the death drive which is the source of all our violent and aggressive liabilities and which makes us want to die, to return to the motionless, lifeless state. Freud claims that this subtle instinct is motivated by the desire to the womb of the mother. The womb and the grave are both confined places where we reside in an inorganic state, thus there is a connection between these two things as in both places and states; people are not conscious before they are born and after they are dead. The death drive can be seen in our everyday life; we can give the example of “the call of the void”. As another example, in literature, we can think of Hamlet and his tendencies related to death. Moreover, Freud mentions, ghosts are also capable of evoking the uncanny because they defy the limits of life and death. What is once dead is alive and once again the familiar becomes unfamiliar.

Freud believes that the way someone views death and dead bodies can also create the effect of uncanniness. He claims that death is the ultimate uncanny. It is ever-unfamiliar, something we can never grasp since the beginning of our contemplation. According to Freud, inadequate scientific understanding of death and the outmoded notion that the deceased turns against his survivor and desires to abduct him in order to spend his new existence with him (13) give people the feeling of uncanny. As a result, the main reason, Freud suggests, is the fear that the deceased will haunt the living. He believes that “the primitive fear of death is still so strong within us and always ready to come to the surface at any opportunity” (14). Even though the educated people do not think that the deceased might manifest as spectres or phantoms to them, they maintain a sense of the uncanny because of their repressed fear of dying.

Apart from the castration complex, Freud emphasizes that another main theme that evokes the uncanny in Hoffman’s story is none other than the theme of “doubles and doppelgängers”. The story is filled with several examples of doubles and duplicity. The mysterious figure of Sandman is unidentified throughout the story and also the

character Coppelius seems to be at the centre of all the ambiguity. “Coppelius's uncanniness appears to be caused specifically by the ambiguity around his identification. The sandman, Coppelius the lawyer, and Coppola the optician are three personalities he appears to simultaneously take on in the narrative” (Svenaeus 239). Similarly, Nathaniel's father and Coppelius the lawyer could also be seen as doubles of each other. They are opposite sides of the same character associated with different poles, one with the good the other with the bad. This aspect of Freud's theory, the doubles and doppelgängers, will be extensively investigated in the analysis chapters for Neil Gaiman's *Neverwhere* and *Coraline*, as both novels follow the story of their protagonists' journey to the unconscious through mirrored cities/homes that at first glance look identical to the ones they came from but are later shown to be totally contrasting to their originals. Richard Mayhew of *Neverwhere* finds himself in another London, below the one he's living in. This new space is a distorted reflection of London Above as it contains all the unwanted, “repressed”, things from London Above. Similarly, the neglected child Coraline, finds herself in another home inside her real home, where everything she wanted is present but in a twisted way. Her “other mother” seems to want only to spend more time with her, who is later revealed to be the Beldam who wants to trick her into staying here forever and replace her eyes with buttons. The Beldam is an embodiment of the literary doppelgänger with her identical looks to Coraline's real mother and her trickster qualities.

According to Freud, the doubles in literature can be encountered in many forms, from characters sharing

mental processes from the one person to the other, so that the one possesses knowledge, feeling and experience in common with the other, identifies himself with another person, so that his self becomes confounded, or the foreign self is substituted for his own—in other words, by doubling, dividing and interchanging the self. And finally the constant recurrence of similar situations, a same face, or character-trait, or twist of fortune, or a same crime, or even a same name recurring throughout several consecutive generations (9).

Freud quotes another Austrian psychoanalyst, Otto Rank, and uses his ideas to explain the phenomenon of doubles. He says that this motif in literature is associated with “mirrors, with shadows, guardian spirits, with the belief in the soul and the fear of death” (9). He believes that the double is at first an insurance against death. He says “the double was originally an insurance against destruction to the ego, an ‘energetic denial of the power of death,’ as Rank says; and probably the ‘immortal’ soul was the

first 'double' of the body" (9). To illustrate, when you create your double, you also create your ego; thus, you become immune to death. For example, parents naming their children after their names, by doing so, they create their "double" and gain endurance against time and death. "This invention of doubling serves as a preservation against extinction" (9). What Freud means is that, through one's life, a person fragments himself and develops two distinct selves, one created according to the society's expectations, the other is shaped by the self's inner desires and repressed characteristics. Freud suggests that the reason behind the duplicity has its origin in the return of the repressed infantile material. The child's narcissism stage, when the child has endless self-love for himself or herself, Freud claims, is the primary source of creating a double, and the child creates multiple selves. The creation of these multiple selves serve as a defence mechanism for the self, as it enables him to balance his inner desires and the society's expectations of him so that he can move on with his life. However, later when these multiple selves are encountered, it evokes the feeling of uncanny in the self because it feels like returning to an archaic state. Freud explains this by saying that

Such ideas, however, have sprung from the soil of unbounded self-love, from the primary narcissism which holds sway in the mind of the child as in that of primitive man; and when this stage has been left behind the double takes on a different aspect. From having been an assurance of immortality, he becomes the ghastly harbinger of death (10).

What is meant here is that there is a chance that the created self can replace the real identity if it is dominant enough and thus destroy it, therefore causing a crisis of identity. Moreover, Freud adds that, when this phase is surmounted, the double reverses its effect. What was once familiar and an assurance of immortality, could become quite the opposite. After the narcissist phase, "the 'double', says Freud, takes the form of a special agency that stands over against the rest of the ego, observing, criticizing, and exerting a censorship upon it taken as object: our 'conscience' (Ahumada 60)". A similar division of the self can evidently be seen in the story Sandman, with the dual representation of the father image with Nathaniel's father and Coppelius, who "represent two opposites into which the father-imago is split by the ambivalence of the child's feeling" (8); the latter threatening to castrate him by blinding him, the former, the loving father, steps in to protect his son. Quite similarly, this dual image of the father resurfaces later in Nathaniel's student life, when he meets Professor Spalanzani and Coppola the optician. Once again, one of them represents the

loving father, the other is clearly associated with the lawyer Coppelius. At this point, another parallel can be drawn when Olympia the doll is added to the equation. Since Olympia is a joint creation of Professor Spalanzani and Coppola the optician, it is possible to see another recurrence of the split father image. After seeing Olympia, Nathaniel falls in love with her desperately, only to find out later that she is an automaton. One day, Coppola and the Professor get into a fight resulting in the ripping of the doll's eyes. Nathaniel sees the optician take the doll without eyes, and Professor Spalanzani takes the bloody eyes from the ground and throws them on Nathaniel saying that Coppola stole them from him. As a result, Nathaniel's repressed memories of the Sandman violently come back and consequently, he identifies Coppola with Sandman.

Freud resembles this reversal of the double to fallen angels that take on a demonic aspect after their downfall. He mentions that this is what brings out the uncanny feeling; "the circumstance of the double being a creation dating back to a very early mental stage, long since left behind, and one, no doubt, in which it wore a more friendly aspect" (10). In parallel with the definition of "heimlich" and "unheimlich" Freud makes at the beginning of the essay, "the prefix -un is the token of repression", this was the analogy Freud mentioned to represent the familiar element in the uncanny. At this point another parallel can be drawn to the uncanny quality of the double;

the doppelgänger is archetypally unheimlich: a prime figure of the uncanny precisely in that it is an original resident in the Heim and embodying a constitutive, domestic split in subjectivity. If it occupies only the closeted space of repression, it is none the less perhaps more properly at home than the host subject (Webber 8).

In short, it is the familiarity of the double that makes it uncanny for us.

Literary representations of the doppelgängers or the double can serve various purposes such as portraying the "other" side of a character, their desires or repressed feelings, their darker or lighter sides, idealized or feared aspects of the same thing, re-emergence of past traumas or secrets. This effect is achieved through some duplicity in the story; evil or secret twins, mirrors and reflections, ghosts and spirits, clones, automatons that look identical to the character, different people with similar pasts or the same name, or the same character's different versions through its timeline. In literature, the feeling of uncanny most often and prominently arises when a character encounters this 'other self', whether it is in the form of a reflection, a ghost or a twin. When all these forms and their nature is considered, one can deduce that these doubles

must have a specific visual representation to create such an effect. These doubles in literature, therefore, usually have an evident similarity to a character, sometimes they are even identical physically or sometimes they have this resemblance in terms of some personality features, or the situation they are in. The duplicity in literature is often portrayed as a result of a repression caused by the society or as a traumatic incident's psychological effect. This form of representation in a story, undoubtedly, adds depth and complexity to the plot, while also strengthening the portrayal of the characters' inner turmoils. From *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* to *The Fall of the House of Usher*, there are a myriad of instances of the use of double in literature, especially gothic literature, all of which make use of the doppelgänger effect with precision.

Another element that causes the feeling of uncanny is listed as animistic conceptions by Freud. These are animism, which gives the feeling of uncanny when an inanimate object is given the attributes of a spirit or life, anthropomorphism, which is a more specific type of animism that means what is not human is given the attributes of a human, a good example of which would be dolls, and automatism, which is usually a thing that is perceived as human is actually quite like a mechanical being. Deliriums, trance-like states, epileptic seizures and manifestations of insanity all cause a subject to act and move like a robot, therefore create an uncanny effect in the observer. It is also very likely to create the uncanny when the opposite is present; an automaton behaving and moving like a human. What is perceived as human is actually a robot or automata. Humanoid robots can be a good example for this.

Strange coincidences and unintentional repetitions, according to Freud, are also uncanny instances. Repetitions of an item, a situation, an individual, or a number, accidentally finding yourself in the same location after strolling about an area; assertions that an event was 'meant to be'; and unusual coincidences are all examples of situations that might make someone feel uncanny. Freud illustrates this as

if we come across the number 62 several times in a single day, or if we begin to notice that everything which has a number— addresses, hotel-rooms, compartments in railway-trains— always has the same one, or one which at least contains the same figures. We do feel this to be 'uncanny', and unless a man is utterly hardened and proof against the lure of superstition he will be tempted to ascribe a secret meaning to this obstinate recurrence of a number, taking it, perhaps, as an indication of the span of life allotted to him (11).

He believes that these feelings result from "a *repetition-compulsion* in the unconscious mind" (11). This kind of uncanny experience, according to Freud, is

related to the infantile psychology and the “compulsion to repeat”, which is closely related with the traumas from childhood and the unconscious. The event that keeps happening is thought to be the outcome of the repression process. According to this principle, a person keeps regressing and repeating a traumatic experience in his/her life over and over again. This principle can even override the pleasure-principle (Freud 11). Thus, the uncanny effect of the repetition and duplicity can make us remember our traumatic experience from the past, resulting with a feeling of terror.

Freud also mentions “the omnipotence of thought, dread of the evil eye, animism, and fulfilment of irrational wishes and silence, darkness and solitude” (17) as other elements of the uncanny. In this setting, he claims that his research into the uncanny reveals the ancient, animistic perspective of the cosmos, which was marked by the narcissistic overestimation of individual psychological processes and the notion that the world was populated with the souls of human beings (12). He also adds:

we---or our primitive forefathers---once believed that these possibilities were realities, and were convinced that they actually happened. Nowadays we no longer believe in them, we have surmounted these modes of thought; but we do not feel quite sure of our new beliefs, and the old ones still exist within us ready to seize upon any confirmation. As soon as something actually happens in our lives which seem to confirm the old, discarded beliefs we get a feeling of the uncanny (17).

In short, Freud means the supernatural belief of coincidences has their root in our primitive mind, which Freud calls “surmounted beliefs.” During ancient times, when primitive humans believed that there were spirits, demons and other creatures, people narcissistically thought that just by wanting something too much, they can force the spirits to have them grant their wishes or beliefs. Freud gives the example of the “evil eye”. People actually fear that they might cause harm to someone just by being envious of them. But why do we feel uncanny when our wishes are immediately granted, or strange coincidences, like walking up to a person whom you have thought that you haven’t heard of him/her? Because in our unconscious mind we know that the omnipotence of thoughts is something archaic and non-existent today. So, when an event that confirms our primitive beliefs, “animistic mental activity”. happens in real life, we feel uncanny. Freud does not go into detail concerning “silence, darkness and solitude”, other than saying that these are mainly used to increase the tension in the story, and create a pressure on the characters in literature and they can also create the uncanny effect in real life as well.

Freud argues that people who can rid themselves of these animistic and primitive thoughts are less likely to experience such uncanny feelings. He then adds that silence darkness and solitude “are actually elements in the production of that infantile morbid anxiety from which the majority of human beings have never become quite free” (20).

Other than the elements that are mentioned above, language can in itself be an uncanny element. It is the device which creates the ambiguity of the word uncanny. It is sometimes quite difficult for people to express themselves or understand others in a conversation This ambiguity creates the uncanny effect in a person. What is more, every word can be encircled in quotation marks, which makes it unusual because it implies something different. In the same manner, with the duplicity element; repetition of a word, can somewhat change the word’s meaning to its opposite.

Lastly, according to Freud, genitalia and the ambiguity of sexuality can create the uncanny effect. Some male patients, as Freud puts it, describe woman genitalia as an uncanny element. “This unheimlich place, however, is the entrance to the former heim [home] of all human beings, to the place where everyone dwelt once upon a time and in the beginning” (15). “Love is home-sickness”. Thus, once again, “unhemlich is what was once heimisch”, homelike, familiar. By adding the prefix “un-,” male patients try to repress this uncanniness.

Moreover, if there is an ambiguity about sexual identity, people commonly experience uncanny. The uncanniness is elicited if a person who they mistakenly believe to be a woman turns out to be a male, or vice versa. The Ballad of the Sad Café by Carson McCullers is one literary illustration of this. Genetically a woman, Amelia, one of the protagonists, deviates from the norms of femininity set by society. She is portrayed in the novel as an unattractive lady who has a "strange" look and is a masculine figure. Situations like these that challenge the conventional gender norms can induce uncanny in the reader.

In conclusion, Freud’s views on the uncanny can be summarized to two main sources, first is the repressed infantile complexes in our unconscious, which deal with the castration complex, the fear of doubles, and the second is the remanifestation of old, surmounted beliefs, such as ghosts, spirits and omnipotence of thought. When the primitive thoughts are confirmed, it is usually inevitable for one to experience the

uncanny. Similarly, the return of the repressed from our unconscious complexes could trigger the uncanny if encountered physically. When the repressed physically returns, something that was once familiar but currently unfamiliar, may cause one to regress to one of their past traumas, consequently evoking the feeling of uncanny.

1.4. Other Uncanny Theories

1.4.1. Michel Foucault's "Heterotopia" Theory

The idea of heterotopia was first introduced by Michel Foucault in 1966 in his preface to *The Order of Things*. The term defines sites that challenge established connections, rule-based structures, and classification by simple criteria. They also "reflect a curious slippage between the familiar and the unfamiliar, a property expressed by Sigmund Freud's notion of the uncanny" (Manning 1). Foucault describes heterotopias as "counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted" (Foucault 3). The idea of a heterotopia is that a place can have multiple meanings in different layers, which are not quite consistent regarding time and space. Foucault says "heterotopias are those singular spaces to be found in some given social spaces whose functions are different or even the opposite of others" (16). These sights seem familiar, "as they are subsumed within a society's conventional ordering system that links them to other sites" (Manning 1), however, they are also uncanny "in that they simultaneously contradict the premises by which these relationships are sustained" (1). In regard to its features as an uncanny, counter sight, the undercity in *Neverwhere*, London Below, can be considered to be a heterotopia with its binary opposition to London Above and its multi-layered otherness.

1.4.2 Julia Kristeva's "Abjection" Theory

Another modern theory of the uncanny is Julia Kristeva's "abject", which she first introduced in her 1980 book *Powers of Horror*. She states that the abject has only one quality of the object- that of being opposed to *I*. This leads one to the conclusion that the subject and the abject are contrasted. In order to defend against or perhaps redeem oneself from the undesirable abject, one expels the abject, but it is not so easily

expelled, as she defines it as “[A] massive and sudden emergence of uncanniness, which, familiar as it might have been in an opaque and forgotten life, now harries me as radically separate, loathsome” (2). She emphasizes that this “loathsome” uncanniness is caused by its former familiarity, which leads one to question its origin but it is not so easily traced, as the abject defies borders with its fluidity, it changes meaning. “Not me. Not that. But not nothing, either. A “something” that I do not recognize as a thing” (2). Thus, the abject is something that drags one “toward the place where meaning collapses”. Thus, the abject simultaneously stands both the danger that meaning is disintegrating and for our response to such a breakdown: a return to our "primal repression". The abject relates to "what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules" (4). With the integration of *real* in our lives, there comes the abject as well. She specifically links the individual's denial of death's relentless physicality to such a response. As a result, Kristeva is very cautious to distinguish between awareness of death, corpses and the significance of death. "The corpse, seen without God and outside of science, is the utmost of abjection. It is death infecting life. Abject." (4). Abjection, according to Kristeva, teaches one a border of separation between animal and human during the psychosexual development phase. She emphasizes that in the process to achieve individuality, there is a time when the child separates himself from the ties of the mother with the abject. The child redefines who he is in terms of his own body, rejecting the mother's body as abject. She says that "for man and for woman the loss of the mother is a biological and psychic necessity, the first step on the way to autonomy. Matricide is our vital necessity” (Stone 118), meaning the child should kill his mother in order to gain independence. This association of the female body with the abject and the symbolic killing of the mother to gain an identity of one's own is evident in Coraline's story. The Other Mother, as a monstrous figure, becomes an example of abjectified mother, and Coraline's renouncement of her serves as a step to achieve her own self.

1.4.3 Homi Bhabha's Theory of "Unhomeliness"

In his 1992 essay, “The World and the Home”, post-colonial critic Bhabha describes his perspective on the uncanny as "unhomely" because it "captures something of the estranging sense of the relocation of the home and the world in an unhallowed place" (141). The term "unhomely" does not always imply the absence of

a home, nor can it be used in either a private or public context without discomfort. It alludes to the idea that there is a sense of uncertainty regarding where the house and the world begin, and that this sensation of confusion and bewilderment is caused by these hazy boundaries between the two. The blurring of the boundaries between the world and the home can cause them to blend into one another, causing disorientation. Bhabha argues that the unhomely makes a different world apparent and discernible. With the unhomely, another world becomes visible and he relates this unhomeliness to "the uncanny literary and social effects of enforced social accommodation, historical migrations and cultural relocations" (141). In this in-between space, one sees the reflection of the world in their homes or vice versa. He argues that in this "post-colonial space" the familiar and the unfamiliar exist side by side, which makes it an uncanny experience. This feeling of being at home and not home in a place of otherness is dealt with in Richard's condition in *Neverwhere* while he wanders in the undercity, London Below, which is a reflection of his real home.

CHAPTER 2: UNCONSCIOUS AND UNCANNY IN *NEVERWHERE*

In this chapter, Neil Gaiman's novel, *Neverwhere* (1996) will be analyzed in two different viewpoints; first, its Freudian aspects, focusing on the psychoanalytical connotations of the novel and its use of the Uncanny. After a concise synopsis of the story, the first and most predominant uncanny aspect of the novel, the divided city, will be investigated as a separate character and a representation of Freud's model of the human psyche. The second part will include a thorough study of all the uncanny features of the novel with their effect on the protagonist. The aim of this chapter is to study how London Below, the counter city stands as a representation of the city's unconscious and holds the repressed memories, thoughts or unpleasant things down, while London Above represents the conscious of the city. Moreover, the duality that comes with the two inverted spaces, the binary opposing cities, creates the sense of uncanny. This chapter will also argue that the use of uncanny in literature, and especially this novel, contributes to the psychological development of its main character, Richard Mayhew, who faces not only his own repressed experiences but also the city's unconscious horrors and attains a renewed self by facing and overcoming these trials.

Neil Gaiman's debut novel, *Neverwhere* was originally written as a television series for the BBC in 1996. Apparently he was not satisfied with the end result or rather, as he explains, felt that the story deserved more to be told, he decided to transform it into a novel. While the series did not receive the expected amount of attention, the novel was an international success. *Neverwhere* tells the story of Richard Mayhew, a Scottish white collar businessman who moved to London. Just before moving to London, in his hometown, he is warned by a fortune teller about doors, telling him to watch out for doors (Gaiman 3). As a protagonist, Richard does not look like a heroic type at first. He is an unassuming, young man "with a good heart and an ordinary life". He has a normal life, a typical, beautiful young girl friend, and socially accepted status. Nevertheless, all these change in one act of kindness. One night, as Richard and his fiancée Jessica are walking on their way to a business dinner with Jessica's boss, they stumble upon a wounded young woman lying on the street. Unable to ignore the helpless girl's need, Richard decides to help, to which, Jessica opposes adamantly, saying "If you pay them any attention, Richard, They'll walk all over you. They all have homes, really (24)", even threatening to end the engagement if he

persists in this chivalric gesture. From this point on, Richard's life is utterly changed. It becomes a defining moment in the course of what is to come next. Richard takes the injured girl home; whose name is strangely "Door". He soon learns that she is chased by two hitmen called Mr. Croup and Mr. Vandemar. Moreover, she is apparently not exactly from London as he knows it. Instead, she comes from another, alternate London which is below the world Richard knows. London Below is a mirrored image of its counterpart above, however, it is, in many aspects, a twisted, inverted, unpleasant version of London. It includes and embraces everything the city above deems undesirable and unideal. In a way, London Below is like "the bowels of the city" that incorporates the discarded aspects of London Above, may it be the homeless, the murderers, the socially excluded or even the memories of the events that historically shames the city are all stored down here. Door, as Richard learns, comes from an important family from London Below, who were all murdered and she was the sole survivor, trying to find and expose the ones responsible for this crime. She, like all her family did, has the power to open doors where there are no entrances, enabling her to travel to any place. Because of the fact that Richard decided to help her, the city above and all its inhabitants quite uncannily start to erase him from reality. He soon loses his job because he was replaced by someone else, his fiancée does not recognize him, even his apartment is rented to somebody else while he was still living in it. Richard, eventually, wanders down into London Below in search of answers and a means to revert this situation to get back to his normal life. In this city of "the lost and forgotten" he first encounters "the rat speakers", a group of people who worship rats and are able to communicate with them. They lead him to The Floating Market, which sounds to Richard like a normal market place with people selling their products, but he, to his amazement and shock, finds out that this is not an ordinary market. Here the sellers offer "Fresh dreams!" and "nice memories" and even corpses. Richard meets Door and Marquis de Carabas, a friend of Door's, in the market square where they hire a body guard, called The Hunter. They tell Richard that there is no way back to his old life above, but he is welcome to join their party and that they could maybe on the way think of a solution for his problem. In hopes of getting guidance in their quest the party travels to the house of Angel Islington, about whom a journal entry of Door's father mentions. Islington, who was originally the protector of Atlantis, and then banished here to be the protector of London Below as a punishment for the destruction of Atlantis, asks them to retrieve a special, magical key for him, which he

says will hopefully help Door get answers about her family. The key is protected by some monks called Black Friars. In the monks dwelling, Door, Richard and Hunter are informed that each character has to prevail a trial in order to claim the magical key. Hunter takes a test of strength, Door a test of intellect, and Richard a test of character. The trial Richard takes changes him many aspects. After retrieving the key, they travel back to the market to meet Marquis but somehow they cannot find him. Instead they meet Hammersmith, a black smith, who forges them a copy of the key. Richard hires Lamia, a “velvet”, a vampire-like creature, to lead them back to Islington’s place. Meanwhile, Marquis who was on his own quest to find answers to Door’s questions was trapped and murdered by Croup and Vandemar. His body is discovered and revived by Old Bailey. He reunites with the party just on time to save them from Lamia who turns against them. Hunter betrays them and lets Croup and Vandemar kidnap Door, revealing that she was always a traitor to Door and her family’s cause and she did it all in order to get a magical spear, with which she would kill the Beast of London. In the labyrinth, they face this great beast that bests the great Hunter, but is slain by none other than Richard. Marquis and Richard move quickly to confront Islington. To their horror, Islington confesses that he was the one who orchestrated Door’s family’s murder and everything that followed. Apparently, he wishes to open a portal into heaven, where he wants to go back and get revenge from other angels for his banishment into the underworld. Being denied help by Door’s father, who possessed the same ability to open doors like his daughter, Islington murdered all of them, and ever since tried to manipulate Door into helping him. In a state of complete contrast to his “angelic” nature, Islington tries to justify his actions by saying “They all deserved it!”. Seeing her friends captured and tortured, Door has no other choice but to agree to help Islington. She opens the door but she secretly uses the forged, copied key. The door that she opens is not to heaven but somewhere as far away as she can imagine, an alternate reality, maybe hell. The villainous Islington, Mr. Croup and Mr. Vendemar are all siphoned into this vortex into nothingness. Door uses the real key that the Black Friars gave Richard to open another portal and send Richard back to his own reality into his life in London Above. Upon returning home, Richard realizes everything went back to normal, even better, because of the change in his personality that came with the journey and its trials. However, he soon realizes that this life is not really cut out for him. Everything he yearned to come back did not appeal to him anymore. When

he almost loses all hope of going back, Marquis appears and takes him back to London Below.

Neverwhere is an urban fantasy novel that follows the story of Richard Mayhew, who after helping a desperate young woman, is banished into the depths of the mirrored undercity, London Below, and thus begins his journey. “In Neil Gaiman’s novels, time and space are of an utmost importance, mostly due to the fact that the alternate world or realm functions as a character, rather than just a setting” (Rata 112). Having a vital role in the story, not only as a setting but also as a dynamic being, the representation of two Londons requires special attention. The two cities are shown in intricate and accurate detail as living, evolving, sentient organisms that may affect one another and the inhabitants as well. As Barthes says, “The city is a discourse and this discourse is truly a language: the city speaks to its inhabitants, we speak our city, the city where we are, simply by living in it, by wandering through it, by looking at it” (Barthes 415). Therefore, the city, as a body, has an identity. However, in the case of Londons represented in the novel, much like a gothic character with a divided body and a fragmented identity, the two cities in *Neverwhere* are described as two halves of one being that coexist but separate from each other (Round 26). This duality, in the representation of two divided Londons, undoubtedly, creates the most striking uncanny element in the narrative.

The formation of the city in the novel, a subterranean London beneath the one above, strikes an almost identical resemblance to Freud’s model of human mind. Freud likened the human mind to the image of an iceberg, half submerged in water. The part on the surface represented the conscious, whereas the sunken parts formed the preconscious and the deeper, darker unconscious. In this respect, London Above, with its normal people living their normal and pleasant lives, becomes an allegory for the conscious mind of the city. The unconscious mind, on the other hand, is represented by the Undercity, London Below.

At the beginning of the novel, as the protagonist and his normal life is introduced, an image of a “proper” London is portrayed by the usual business meetings, museums, fancy restaurants and the famous sights. Richard is a young, typical white-collar worker in London in the 1990s with a monotonous job in an office. It can be seen from the earlier descriptions that is one of the many residents of London, who do not search more of a meaning in life other than continuing their average lives

in this great, amazing city. Richard is a modest, simple man, who is neither ambitious nor strong in character. In the prologue to the novel, in his farewell party before he leaves for London, Richard is described as anxious to leave. As his friends enthusiastically celebrate his departure in the pub, Richard ponders alone: “he remembered only the feeling that he was about to leave somewhere small and rational—a place that made sense—for somewhere huge and old that didn’t” (Gaiman 4). To confirm his fears, when he first arrives, he finds London “odd and incomprehensible” (9). He slowly adapts and learns to “navigate” the city, gets a job and a girlfriend. His fiancée, Jessica, in contrast with Richard, is an ambitious young woman who is “beautiful and often quite funny” and is “certainly going somewhere” (Gaiman 12). The successful fiancée spends her time going shopping, visiting museums, art galleries, expensive restaurants. Although he thinks of himself as someone “who does not go to art galleries”, Jessica continuously drags Richard with her, which of course, tells a lot about their relationship. As a stronger or even rather dominant character, Jessica intimidates Richard. She sets rigorous rules in all parts of her life and she expects Richard to follow them as well. She sees in Richard “an enormous potential, which, harnessed by the right woman, would have made him the perfect matrimonial accessory” (12). Therefore, she gives him self-help books with titles like “A Hundred and Twenty-Five Habits of Successful Men”, which suggests that she thinks of Richard as something to be shaped according to her own desires. With all her rules, high standards, ambitions and fondness of the luxurious, Jessica stands as a representation of a materialistic world view, societal values of the nineties, valuing nothing but money and success. Richard is not even allowed to call her “Jess”, an affectionate way to show his love for her. Instead, she specifically warns him to use her full name. This imbalance in their relationship shows Richard’s position as “Jessica’s boyfriend”, not a real self. Jessica dominates their free time with activities that she chooses and she likes, whereas Richard clearly attends these events only to please her. Jessica, who even has rules set out for their bedroom, is evidently suppressing Richard’s real feelings and identity. However, in some instances, Richard unconsciously reacts to this suppression. The dinner with Jessica’s boss, Mr. Stockton, is a good example for this. Although Jessica notifies him several weeks earlier, and one post-it note is stuck in front of him on his desk, and another on his fridge at home, Richard “forgets” about the dinner. The only thing that hints at Richard’s own identity at the beginning of the novel is the trolls on his desk. “He had found a troll on the

sidewalk outside the office, and, in a vain attempt at injecting a little personality into his working world, he had placed it on his computer monitor” (13). Even his colleague Gary indicates his surprise regarding Jessica and the trolls: “I’m surprised she still lets you play with these” (13).

Moreover, “Jessica’s fascination with power and money, speaks volumes about societal values of the nineties” (Rata 92). As a representative of this society’s “conscious”, Jessica tries to live her life as an ideal habitant of London, and she has the power and audacity to attempt to change anyone who does not fit the description of the ideal. This becomes evident one night when they stumble upon a young, wounded woman lying on the ground. To his surprise, Jessica completely ignores the figure on the pavement and even “steps over the crumbled form” not even slowing down or interrupting her flow of thoughts. Richard, however, insists that they should help. Jessica’s apparent indifference to the state of the injured girl shows her attitude towards a representative of the unideal; a homeless person, who can be a threat to the ideals of her world. Richard’s ability to actually “see” the homeless girl on the street and his decision to help her will eventually initiate his descend into the underworld. Moreover, this act of kindness shows that Richard is not like the others in London Above, one of the “possessed” people, who are members of the materialistic culture. Later, it is revealed that the inhabitants of the above cannot see the people of London Below, or more accurately, they ignore them and do not acknowledge their existence. That is why, Jessica immediately and uncaringly says “If you pay them any attention, Richard, they’ll walk all over you. They all have homes, really. Once she’s slept it off, I’m sure she’ll be fine” (Gaiman 24). And when Richard does not succumb to her wishes and continues to help the girl, she threatens him by saying “You put that young person down and come back here this minute. Or this engagement is at an end as of now. I’m warning you” (26). It is after this defining moment that Richard chooses to be “unideal”, and therefore, as she said she would, Richard is slowly erased from the conscious part of the city’s psyche, London Above, because of this one act of kindness.

From this point on, Richard’s fading out of existence begins. People, even his friends, start to ignore him, or rather, do not register his presence. Jessica, as she said she would, breaks of their engagement by a voice message. He finds out that his job is given to someone else without his knowledge and what is more even his flat is rented to another tenant while he is still living there. He recalls a repeated nightmare from his

youth in which he was just not there. No matter what he tried, he was never even noticed (59). It appears, as someone who contacted a person, a non-ideal, from London Below, he is no longer wanted in the upper city. He is slowly but acutely forced out of the conscious mind of the city. Freud explains this exclusion of unwanted, undesired thoughts and feelings in his essay “A Note on The Unconscious in Psychoanalysis” as the storing away of unpleasant or traumatic information and emotions deeper, repressed in the unconscious (Freud 119). Acting as the city’s conscious side, London Above pushes Richard deep into its unconscious, London Below, since he is no longer a good representative of the values of the city, a non-ideal. In a way, Richard dies in the upper world, as he is erased from its consciousness. Therefore, Richard’s journey into his and the city’s unconscious begins. After his time in London Below, it becomes clear that everything he thought he knew about reality and himself starts to crumble. His personality above, he realizes, was nothing more than a persona, a mask he used to wear, something that was forced upon him. In the dark corridors of the underworld, he realizes that the upper world’s values dictated him to embrace a false personality, which made him docile and inactive. However, as he wanders in London Below, from adventure to adventure, he finds his true identity.

As Richard is exiled to the underworld, it can be seen from the very first descriptions of London Below that it is everything London Above is not and does not want to be. It is a twisted version, a counter world, which is inhabited by monsters, angels, murderers, saints, fantastical hybrids, shadow and darkness; a place where the lost and forgotten are stored away. The description of the underworld is almost identical to that of Freud’s definition of the unconscious as “the attic of a house in which all the unwanted, the unsightly and damaged furniture are locked away” (Freud 121). This unhomely environment, which inhabits numerous unwanted memories, traumas and forgotten things from both the protagonist’s and the city’s past, becomes the grounds where Richard has to navigate through to complete his search for identity. Züleyha Çetiner Öktem defines London Below’s primary function as:

London Below initially functions as a protagonistic space that Richard wants desperately to escape from. Once Richard is fully immersed in London Below, however, the various spaces and places he finds himself in become intimidating and menacing, causing Richard to feel entrapped (135 – 136).

The place where Richard finds himself trapped, this uncanny fantasy world, is a representation of both his and the city’s unconscious. Remembering Freud’s structure

of the human psyche, it can be said that Richard's descend into the depths of London Below can be a symbolic descend into his own unconscious, going deeper into the bottom of the iceberg, the id.

The Id, according to Freud, is the part of the psyche which develops first and contains one's instinctual drives. "It is the only part of the psyche that is present at birth and it is the source of our bodily needs, wants, desires, and impulses" (Siegfried 1). It is made up of purely unconscious materials and it wants all its desires fulfilled (1). In this regard, it is easy to draw a parallel between London Below and the id, both of which are filled with unconscious material, whether they are the city's repressed historical traumas or Richard's insecurities and repressed fears. Similar to the id's "ancientness" compared to the ego and the superego, London Below is described as a primitive land with medieval rules and rituals; with baronies fiefdoms. Richard's description of The Floating Market is explanatory about the primitive aspect of the underworld: "It was pure madness—of that there was no doubt at all. It was loud, and brash, and insane, and it was, in many ways, quite wonderful" (109). People in the underground do not trade with currencies but rather with exchanges, favours and many more outdated forms of business. Richard observes these ritualistic and traditional behaviours in London Below:

There was something deeply tribal about the people, Richard decided. He tried to pick out distinct groups: there were the ones who looked like they had escaped from a historical re-enactment society; the ones who reminded him of hippies; the albino people in gray clothes and dark glasses; the polished, dangerous ones in smart suits and black gloves (111).

Despite this primitiveness, the society below seem to be following a strict set of rules to attain order in their world, which suggests a loyalty to tradition and cooperation, a contrasting element to the world above. Another point that reinforces the idea that London Below is actually ancient is explained when Door and her company arrive at the Labyrinth: "The labyrinth is one of the oldest places in London Below," says Carabas, "Before King Lud founded the village on the Thames marshes, there was a labyrinth here" (307). It seems that it was "a place of pure madness. It was built of lost fragments of London Above" (308). Therefore, the agedness of London Below, as a representation of the unconscious, bear a resemblance to the id, which is the first part of the psyche to develop and "ancient" compared to the ego and the superego. This is further supported with the "timelessness" of London Below, as it includes many moments from history frozen in "time bubbles", as Door explains: "There are little

pockets of old time in London, where things and places stay the same, like bubbles in amber,” she explained. “There’s a lot of time in London, and it has to go somewhere—it doesn’t all get used up at once” (229).

Freud also mentions that the id contributes to the emergence of the Ego throughout the process of identity development. “The desires of the Id give rise to the Ego, which is generally the component of the psyche that ensures that the impulses of the Id are expressed in a way that is acceptable to the real world” (Siegfried 1). In accordance with this, Richard’s journey in search of an identity could only happen by navigating through the unconscious, London Below. As Freud explains, the superego “criticizes and prohibits one’s drives, fantasies, feelings, and actions” by working in contrast to the Id because it wants to act in a manner that is socially acceptable (Siegfried 2). As the opposition of London Above and Below represent the animosity between the ego and the id, Richard’s struggle in between them, represents his efforts to create a superego to restrain the id and find balance between them. In a way, the underworld gives him a chance to create his real identity by fulfilling the trials and overcoming the challenges it presents to him. Thus, when he finally achieves this, after killing the Beast of London and gaining the title of “warrior”, the Earl grants him “the freedom of the Underside” (347), which allows him to walk both Londons freely.

Another interesting point to mention is the function of The Tube in *Neverwhere*. The Underground system in *Neverwhere* is a place accessible to both the residents of London Above and London Below. However, entry to both Londons is regulated. As the conscious city systematically eliminates the unwanted via repression, the undesirable elements are first excluded, then banished into the depths of this great vault of ideas, memories and even historical events. Likewise, it also prevents people from London Below to ascend into London Above. It acts like a limbo, a space between these two separate yet connected realms; much like the structure of the conscious and unconscious mind, this purgatory like space stretches between them; some stations closer to the preconscious, some are located in the deepest part of the unconscious. Serving as a connection between these two places, the tube makes this “connection is permanent; it is never completely severed as the two cities co-exist in the same space and in the same time” (Rata 98). As a result of this, “access to them is intermittent and privileged, a function always of someone leaving and intruding into the mundane world” (Mendlesohn 151). This can be seen when a resident of London Below tries to

take a train to the upper city, as Richard remarks: “You know, when I tried to get on a Tube train a couple of days ago, it wouldn’t let me” (Gaiman 138). The Tube serves as a barbed wire, protecting the conscious mind of the city, by segregating the conscious and unconscious, the possessed and the dispossessed, above and below. It can be said that the Tube functions like a defence mechanism that Freud calls “censorship”. In short, he explains it as a reaction to any provocation of bringing up an unwanted, displeasing unconscious material into consciousness. Even though both residents can take some trains at the same time, people from above still cannot see or hear the residents of the underworld. Moreover, the tube system, as a gateway to the conscious, does not let everyone from London Below to reach London Above. It stands guard, filtering the unwanted, protecting the consciousness from the repressed unconscious materials. As a stranded resident who yearns to go back to his life in “real London”, Richard haplessly attempts to gain entry but every time he is denied. He has no other choice but to look for an answer in the depths of this city that is not home.

The city’s duplicity is, beyond any doubt, the most prominent uncanny aspect of the setting. In this great reservoir of forgotten and lost, unwanted and undesired things, although many things have similar names, they are inverted and somehow do not correspond to what they do in London Above. “Earl’s Court becomes literally a medieval court in a train car; Angel and Islington become Angel Islington, the ‘fallen angel’ imprisoned in the ‘Hell’ of London Below. Knightsbridge becomes Night’s Bridge, a place where ‘nightmares’ dwell and take a toll for crossing” (Rata 101). Richard’s confusion can be understood in this “unreal mirror of London” (Gaiman 127), seeing all these familiar yet completely different names scattered all around him as a cacophony of everything he remembered and missed as home, Richard struggles to differentiate between what is real and what is not. What he remembers as home sharply turns into something “unhomely”.

In this regard, it can be said that London Below acts on another level of uncanniness, a heterotopia. Heterotopias, as the name implies, are places that contrast with other places. If the world is thought of as a network of connected locations, the heterotopia is the place that doesn't quite fit in and might, as a result, become a place for defiance, for breaking the dominant spatial structure. Foucault explains heterotopias in “Of Other Spaces” as places that

have the curious property of being in relation with all the other sites, but in such a way as to suspect, neutralize, or invert the set of relations that they happen to designate, mirror, or reflect. These spaces, as it were, which are linked with all the others, which however contradict all the other sites (24).

Therefore, the regularity and monotony of normal space are disturbed by heterotopias. As he continues to interact with this new world, Richard finds himself reduced to his naked self, not able to leave nor feel at home. “As a child, Richard had had nightmares in which he wasn’t there, in which, no matter how much noise he made, no matter what he did, nobody ever noticed him at all. He began to feel like that now” (Gaiman 59). Richard cannot find the strength to fit into this new, strange and dystopic world, as it is neither home nor something else, it is something in between. As an individual who have experienced both worlds, Richard now feels displaced. However, as Julia Kula says in her article “When the improbable and the uncanny appear and collide with the familiar and the known, it results in lying bare the truths that are not visible to urbanites submerged in their monotonous and predictable everyday lives” (Kula 3). In other words, since he possesses knowledge about the Above world, with this new London, he is now able to discern not only the truth of his own world, but also the truths about himself. Moreover, Christine M. Boyer suggests that “heterotopias, as spacial constructs or figures of thought, are differentiations inserted into the city or discourse that appear out of place, abnormal or illusory. They contest the normal order of things” (Boyer 58). London Below itself challenges the established order of things. The rats are given utmost respect, damaged and trashy items are for sale and on demand, and “minding the gap” is crucial since this is another thing that turns literal in London Below, as there is a real monster living in the gap. Another point that reinforces the idea of London Below as a heterotopia is the way Foucault describes the entry procedure to these places; “one can only enter with a certain permission and after having performed a certain number of gestures” (Foucault 21). This is exactly how Richard gains entry to the underworld, with the permission of the Ratspeakers, and then the crossing of Night’s Bridge can be interpreted as the ritualistic “gesture” that was needed to be performed in order to gain entry to the Floating Market.

London Below, as previously mentioned, in addition to the repressed and unwanted people and beings, also contains “time bubbles”, chronotopes, which are another form of heterotopias, that present all the traumas throughout the city’s history, the historical scandals, crises and many other shameful moments that the city Above

deems undesirable. As Door explains to Richard, “There are little pockets of old time in London, where things and places stay the same, like bubbles in amber,” she explained. “There’s a lot of time in London, and it has to go somewhere—it doesn’t all get used up at once” (Gaiman 229). Similar to the expulsion of the non-ideal people, the places and even time periods, certain events are repressed into the unconscious, where they continue their existence, dormant but not dead. As Rata suggests;

Time and space are warped in London Below. It functions as a repository, of historical events and traumata, because the city is a palimpsest of its history, and it is haunted by the memory of the cataclysm and the premonition of its return. This can be exemplified by the following example encountered in London Below, pea-soupers, London Particulars (Rata 98).

Thick yellow river fogs, mixed with coal-smoke and whatever rubbish was going into the air for the last five centuries” (229); or “there had been Sewer Folk before the Great Stink, of course, living in the Elizabethan sewers, or the Restoration sewers, or the Regency sewers” (267). Along with Victorian Era related problems, there are references to much older time periods; camps of Roman soldiers, bunkbeds of WW II soldiers, even some mythological references find place in the underworld “Giants built that gate, thought Richard, half-remembered tales of long-dead kings of mythical London churning in his head, tales of King Bran and of the giants Gog and Magog” (306). “This chronotope is enabled through the strategy of collapsing, where the two different spaces coexist, and are squeezed in the same diegetic space. In this case the two coexisting spaces are the two representations of London. These two representations are based on binary oppositions” (Rata 105). Dirk Vanderbeke compares this opposition in urban fantasy to its function as a mirror to man-made horrors of late capitalism: “If *Alice in Wonderland* was the innocent, but also mendacious dream of a Victorian garden without industrialization, poverty and filth, urban fantasy in some of its elements presents us with the nightmare of late capitalism, a world made of our own waste” (150). The dystopic elements in London Below are, as it seems, not so foreign to the world we live in.

As can be seen from the story, this physical and spiritual journey that hurls Richard into the abyss of his own and the city’s unconscious, the dystopic, distorted London Below becomes the place where Richard faces his biggest fears and overcomes them. The uncanny elements in the novel, along with the setting of above explained unhomely London Below, all contribute to the transformation of Richard. As Tatar and Royle suggest, in narratives following a gothic structured storyline, with a counter

world – a dark representation of the original – that mirrors the real but signifies the fantastic or the symbolic, the uncanny elements can serve “agents of revelation” (Tatar 172). Moreover, these revelations, manifestations of “the foreign body within oneself” (Royle 7), can help the protagonists identify and vanquish their fears, the original repressed content, that is the root of these uncanny feelings, and therefore learn “ways of beginning to think in less dogmatic terms about the nature of the world, ourselves and a politics of the future” (2). Richard’s story is filled with these agents of the uncanny. Through them, he slowly detects the foreign and overcomes it, and gains a better understanding of himself.

Freud’s linguistic approach to the concept of the uncanny reveals to him that the word *heimlich* means “homely, comfortable and familiar” (Freud 3), conversely, it also means “concealed, kept from sight, withheld from others” and “everything that ought to have remained hidden and secret” (3) This ambivalence makes it clear that for something to be uncanny it has to be familiar as well; “unheimlich is in some way or other a sub-species of heimlich” (4). Similarly, Richard’s first encounter with the feeling of uncanny, unironically, begins at *home*.

Soon after he brings the wounded woman, Lady Door, to his home, Richard is visited by two strange men, Mr. Croup and Mr. Vandemar. Later in the story it is revealed that these are the ruthless assassins that the real villain, Angel Islington, hires to track down and kill Lady Door and her family. Unaware of the danger they pose, Richard swings the door open and finds himself face to face with these two men of many uncanny traits standing in front of him. Apparently, they introduce themselves as Door’s brothers who are looking for her, explaining that she ran away from home and her mother desperately misses her. The ruse they use, of course, works on the unassuming and good hearted Richard. However, as he listens to them, he realizes they both look a bit odd. “A fox and a wolf, thought Richard, involuntarily” (Gaiman 33) and “They did not look like brothers. They did not look like anything Richard had seen before” (34). The two men, with their weird clothes that look like “they were made two hundred years ago”, their bizarre, out-dated accents and their unhealthy, suspicious appearances, form a collage of several uncanny traits all together in front of Richard. At some point, one of them starts to sniff the air like “a wolf on the prowl” (35) and dives inside, looking for Door. Gifted with the ability to open doors where there are not, of course, they cannot find Door, and eventually leave. Once they leave,

Richard locks the door “and, for the first time since he had lived there, he attached the security chain” (37).

Richard, who just the night before was happy that he left the door unlocked, is now scared, for the first time in his secure, safe and familiar home. Apparently, the house ceases to serve as a place of safety and protection after the encounter with the deadly assassins. Door’s presence creates a conflict in the purpose of the home. Suddenly, for Richard, the meaning of home is reversed from a place of safety into a place of danger and insecurity, all because he admitted Door into his home. As Freud suggests, “the unheimlich is what was once heimisch, homelike, familiar; the prefix ‘un’ is the token of repression” (15). That is, Door becomes the prefix “un” for Richard’s “home”. As a member of the underworld, Door is a representative of what should not be allowed into the conscious mind of the city, something unfamiliar, something that should stay repressed, a secret. Her very existence in Richard’s home triggers his erasure from London Above; starting with the loss of sense of security in his own home. Later, it can be seen that the whole city where he loved to live transforms into a giant unhomely place as people stop acknowledging his existence. He is therefore banished into the underworld, an even more unhomely place, London Below. Richard’s dislocation from London Above, in a sense, makes a new world visible and discernible for him, as Bhabha mentions in his essay “The World and the Home”. With Door’s visit, his home becomes a place of unhomeliness, somewhere that does not give the sense of security or comfort any more. After she is gone, the damage is still done. Richard is “unhomed”, a specific kind of uncanniness which illustrates displacement and disorientation, resulting when the borders of “home and world” and “the private and the public” are disrupted. This newly presented world, London Below, is a liminal space, an in-between and transitional space. Bhabha suggests that these new spaces can open up “the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy” (Bhabha 38), that is, these liminal spaces can be the grounds where new identities can be formed, which is what really happens to Richard in his journey to the world below.

This theme of home, homelessness and homesickness is further referenced throughout the novel as Richard continues his subterranean journey. As he descends further down, Richard feels another form of uncanniness since he is a stranger in a strange yet familiar world. All the names, places and even events seem familiar but

come with a twisted and inverted quality attached to it. After Door leaves and he realizes that his contact with her made him almost invisible in the upper world, he decides to go find her in the underworld. London Below, however, does not grant entry to everyone; Richard has to convince The Rat Speakers, a group of people who worship rats and can communicate with them. One of them, Anesthesia, a little girl, agrees to guide him through the undercity and lead him to the Floating Market, where he has a chance to find Lady Door. During their journey as they briefly ascend to London Above, Richard confides in her and explains how everything changed for him overnight: “Yesterday, it was like I didn’t exist anymore, to anybody up here” to which Anesthesia answers “That’s ‘cos you don’t” (Gaiman 86). Combined with the pleasure of seeing the stars and the city lights once again, and the hard realization of the truth that he is no longer welcome in his own world, Richard’s homesickness intensifies. After he unites with Door and Marquis de Carabas in the Floating Market, there, he witnesses some violence and he remembers how the world above was “a world of safety and of sanity” (122) “and, for a moment, the homesickness engulfed him like a fever”. Door and her party embark on a quest to find an Angel named Islington. As they walk the endless dark tunnels, Richard feels overwhelmed by homesickness as he writes his mental diary entry: “I want to go home. Then he mentally underlined the last sentence three times, rewrote it in huge letters in red ink, and circled it before putting a number of exclamation marks next to it in his mental margin” (136). Ultimately, Richard becomes one of the residents of the underworld, one without a home and desperately wants to go back, or he thinks he does and voices this whenever he is asked. “I want my life back. And my apartment. And my job” (202) he says when Angel Islington asks him what he wants. Similarly, when The Hunter asks him the same question through the middle of their journey, Richard tells her that he is making an effort to return to his former life and the real London (227). Richard’s feeling of unhomeliness is again caused by his inability to feel belonging to neither the upper city nor here.

As suggested above, the novel includes many familiar sights in an inverted and changed sense. This includes names that do not signify what they normally do, places that do not have the same function in their counterpart London Above, and even culturally or historically known aspects of the city are presented with a twist. In this regard, it can be said that the novel’s intricate intertextuality serves as another form of

uncanniness. To begin with, in *Neverwhere*, numerous cultural allusions, usually referred to as "cultural codes," make London recognizable. These cultural norms rely on a common body of information as Barthes calls them "an oddly joined miniature version of encyclopaedic knowledge" (185). However, these codes are not offered in a straightforward manner in the novel. Instead, they are in the form of onomastic allusions. Even the name of the novel is ambiguous and has many connotations. "It points to an alternative reality of never and nowhere" (Rata 106). First connotation it brings to mind is, of course, Neverland, which creates a certain level of contrast with the dark and uncanny side of *Neverwhere*. Moreover, when considered separately, the words "never" and "where" suggest a displacement not only in place but also in time, which can be seen in the descriptions of London Below and its "time bubbles". The name of the protagonist is also an allusion to two important figures in London's history:

On the one hand, Mayhew is the name of the Victorian urban sociologist Henry Mayhew, who was the first to explore London's underground of poor and homeless in his study *London Labour and the London Poor*. On the other hand, Richard or Dick, as Richard introduces himself, functions as an allusion to Sir Richard - Dick Whittington, four times Lord Mayor of London (Rata 106).

The allusion to the first person to explore London's poor and homeless further emphasize the theme of home and homelessness in the novel. Moreover, the allusion to Richard's namesake Sir Dick Whittington can be read as another foreshadowing as Richard the protagonist gains the right to travel both Londons freely at the end of the novel, being the vanquisher of the Beast and the master of the Labyrinth. The name of Marquis de Carabas, one of the main characters, and also the trusted guide and protector of Door and her group, is another intertextual element in the story. In his own reflection, Carabas admits that he is a man of fabrication:

The marquis de Carabas was not a good man, and he knew himself well enough to be perfectly certain that he was not a brave man. He had long since decided that the world, Above or Below, was a place that wished to be deceived, and, to this end, he had named himself from a lie in a fairy tale, and created himself—his clothes, his manner, his carriage—as a grand joke (Gaiman 238 – 239).

The allusion to *Puss in Boots* further reinforces the novel's intertextual references to fairy tales, along with the image of a protagonist lead to another realm with the help of an animal, and also the role of a guide is again attributed to a man named after a cat, a reminder of the Cheshire cat in *Alice* and the cat in *Coraline*. Another allusion could be the name of the character Old Bailey, who is one of the oldest and most respected

surviving members of London Below. Old Bailey is the name of a criminal court in England and Wales. In the novel, Bailey is a trusted source of knowledge since he is older than London, and thus, serves as the wise old man of the story. He even resurrects de Carabas when he is killed by Croup and Vandemar. One final intertextual element to mention would be the two epigraphs at the beginning of the novel. The first one is an excerpt from G. K. Chesterton's novel *The Napoleon of Nothing Hill* (1904). The novel tells the story of an alternate London in the future where capitalism and bureaucracy are at their heights and an incapable man is chosen as the head of state. The novel, obviously, criticizes it's the society in London at the beginning of the century. The second epigraph is from a traditional English folk song, a lament called "Lyke-Wake Dirge", which is sung to mourn and pray after a dead person. The song describes the journey of a soul from earth to purgatory and the dangers it faces along the way. The song "can be interpreted as a pointer to Richard's 'death' in London Above and his subsequent 'rebirth' in London Below, as the Warrior, after slaying the Great Beast of London" (Rata 90). It can also be interpreted as the real source of Richard's unhomeliness in London Below. As the song indicates, the challenges Richard has to face in the underworld can be interpreted as the dangers of the purgatory, emphasizing the in-between quality of this uncanny place; a limbo, neither home nor unhome.

The station names of The Tube also serve as cultural codes of the city. Starting with Richard's farewell party and his gift of an umbrella with London Tube map on it, the story repeatedly shows these familiar places to both Richard and the reader. The underground stations in London Above are used in order to make London recognizable in the narrative, a virtual map of London is constructed using the place names in a methodical manner. The underground stations in London Below, however, are designed to add to the uncanny effect by further disorienting both the reader and Richard, as they do not correspond with the ones above. As a foreigner in a foreign land, all Richard can rely on is a map of the London Underground. In its primary function, a map is aimed to give a sense of direction and when he first arrives in London, Richard depends heavily on the map: "...he had found London huge, odd, fundamentally incomprehensible, with only the Tube map, that elegant multi-coloured topographical display of underground railway lines and stations, giving it any semblance of order" (Gaiman 9). However, after his descend into London Below, this

changes dramatically. The station names become gradually more literal: The fancy Knightsbridge, one of London's most luxurious neighbourhoods, becomes Night's Bridge, where darkness stands guard and decides who to let pass, Shepherd's Bush becomes a real home to homicidal shepherds, an elderly royal is actually residing at Earl's Court station, which is very literally an Earl's court, a group of black priests who guard a key of great importance live in the Black Friars station. Finally, there is a real angel called Islington at the Angel and Islington station. Gaiman employs these "puns" to create a more unfamiliar environment for Richard and to add to his alienation. On several occasions, Richard exclaims "There are no shepherds in Shepherd's Bush" (137), or "I still don't believe that there are flocks of angels wandering about down here", "Earl's Court Station isn't on the Central Line" (137). The clash of reality versus illusion is happening all around him, worsening his internal struggles to grip on a shred of meaning. Angel Islington's duplicity further reinforces the sense of ambiguity and ambivalence that is present throughout the novel. In their search for the Angel's underground citadel, the company keeps mentioning the name "Angel Islington", to which Richard keeps objecting as "There are no such things as angels" (137). However, as they finally meet the angel, Richard changes his mind: "Richard did not believe in angels, he never had. He was damned if he was going to start now. Still, it was much easier not to believe in something when it was not actually looking directly at you and saying your name" (197). After a while, Carabas mentions his doubts regarding the angel's motives, to which Richard, clinging on to the beliefs he brought from his own world, keeps saying that angels are in essence good and cannot be evil:

"I still don't understand," said Richard. "Islington. I actually met him. It. Him. He's an angel. I mean, a real angel."

The marquis smiled, without humor. "When angels go bad, Richard, they go worse than anyone. Remember, Lucifer used to be an angel." (306).

After they learn the truth about the angel, that it was the one who let the continent of Atlantis sink and was sent here in exile as a punishment for its actions, Richard's beliefs change. The Angel's ambivalence is another element that disorients Richard. As Carabas asks the angel why he let the whole city sink, the angel's beauty instantly changes, revealing the evil inside:

It was as if the lid had been pulled off something dark and writhing: a place of derangement and fury and utter viciousness; and, in a time of scary things, it was the most frightening thing Richard had seen. The angel's serene beauty

cracked; its eyes flashed; and it screamed at them, crazy-scary and uncontrolled, utterly certain in its righteousness, “They deserved it” (325).

The angels, as Carabas warns prior to this meeting, do indeed go bad and do so worse than others. In its moment of triumph, the angel reveals to the company that it was actually the one who ordered the execution of Door’s family in hopes to get Door open the door to heaven for the angel. In this sense, the angel turning evil, reminds Freud’s remarks about the double; “The ‘double’ has become a vision of terror, just as after the fall of their religion the gods took on daemonic shapes” (10). Ironically, the angel turns out to be not so angelic, but rather indifferent to all the suffering around it causes.

Another element of the uncanny is castration. Freud says castration complex includes but not limited to “dismembered limbs, a severed head, a hand cut off at the wrist” which are “capable of independent activity”. These images, he suggests, produce the uncanny effect through an association with the infantile fears and desires, that were repressed but come alive once a visual trigger is present. *Neverwhere* is littered with images of castration with “a severed child’s hand”, “Gargoyle statues with missing limbs or wings”, the casual image of “corpses” being sold at the Floating Market and, of course, the notorious Mr. Croup and Mr. Vandemar’s enthusiasm towards “dismembering limbs”, as can be seen in the final scene where they torture Door and her group by teasing them with knives. As Freud suggests, all these death related images and the way someone views death and dead bodies can also create the effect of uncanniness, since death is the ultimate uncanny. Richard has to wander through, on many occasions, countless dead bodies, broken rib cages, and carriages filled with corpses. Therefore, he is constantly reminded of this “primitive fear of death”, as Freud calls it, the repressed fear of dying. In his study of the short story *The Sandman*, Freud suggests that one’s loss of eyes, or the ability to see, can also signify castration: “a morbid anxiety connected with the eyes and with going blind is often enough a substitute for the dread of castration” (Freud 7). *Neverwhere* has two scenes where Richard experiences such a loss of vision both of which are significant in terms of the protagonist’s personal transformation.

After he gains entry to the underworld, Richard is accompanied by a young Rat Speaker, Anasthesia, who agrees to take him to the Floating Market. Along the way, Anasthesia explains to him that the market is “not set in space or time, but rather functions according to its own set of rules” (Rata 100). Its access is regulated, it cannot

be found nor entered unless one knows where and when it is going to be held. Only way to find this information, however, is to find somebody who knows it. The way to the market, that night, passes through a place- another heterotopical place- called Night's Bridge. The bridge is a place where all the nightmares come alive and haunt whoever passes, and to crown it all, it takes a heavy toll as well. As he walks in utter darkness, Richard tries to describe it:

Richard began to understand darkness: darkness as something solid and real, so much more than a simple absence of light. He felt it touch his skin, questing, moving, exploring: gliding through his mind. It slipped into his lungs, behind his eyes, into his mouth (Gaiman 102).

Darkness consumes everything until it is the only feeling that remains. In the final moments of the darkness, the woman accompanying Richard and Anasthesia says “now is the time to be afraid of the dark.’ Richard knew that something was about to creep over his face. He closed his eyes: it made no difference to what he saw or felt” (102). The intense, primordial power of darkness intensifies as it shows him visions of his death; Richard gets “blinded by the night” (102), which is clearly an allusion to *Sandman*. The price for the passage is revealed after the crossing is over; darkness claims Anasthesia. Richard’s loss of sight in this scene can be interpreted both as a physical blindness and a symbolic, prophetic omen, as the darkness shows him his worst nightmares, in which he mostly dies.

Another scene where Richard experiences the uncanny feeling of loss of sight happens in his trial to get the magic key. For this quest, he is expected to pass “a test of character”, in which he has to differentiate between sanity and insanity. He faces his doubles and one of them insists him to see the reality. “Concentrate! shouted the man with Richard’s face. ‘Look at this place, try to see the people, try to see the truth. . . you’re already the closest to reality that you’ve been in a week” (246). Despite all the motivation and insistence of his doppelgänger, Richard is unable to see, as if he is “robbed of his eyes.” However, moments later, he suddenly and painfully sees the truth of it, how he turned into a homeless person, and acts on the verges of insanity. The function of castration here becomes critical as it is the trigger that leads him to the truth. As Royle says about the function of darkness and blindness, “Blindness becomes an especially powerful kind of seeing the things that ought to remain secret and hidden” (108) and helps the characters reach the truth.

The scene with the doubles brings forth another dominant uncanny element, the *doppelgängers*. In order to retrieve a magical key from The Black Friars, Door, Hunter and Richard have to prevail three ordeals which are as deadly as anything else in this strange world. The test demands him to overcome the conjured up images of himself, his old friends and even his fiancée by differentiating between what is real or not. It is no small task for someone who questions reality of his surroundings every minute of his existence in London Below, moreover, it is revealed by one of the friars that nobody has ever passed this test yet. Richard finds himself in an empty and dark underground station where he feels “odd: detached, and depressed, and horribly, strangely saddened” (244). A little girl and her mother look at him with disdain, as if he is something to be gazed upon with disgust. Richard wonders what he has to do and whether he is dreaming, when someone sits beside him. His old officemate Gary greets him, and in contrast to Richard, he is cleanly dressed and shaved. After a while, the double’s face changes and transforms into Richard’s, and later changes shape again and takes the shape of his fiancée Jessica. All of whom, desperately and assertively urge him to “see the truth” of his condition; that he has turned into a homeless man and has been living on the streets or underground stations and showing signs of insanity. “Look, whispered his double. See” (246) Then, Richard does indeed see something, his own reflection on the window:

He looked crazy; he had a week’s growth of beard; food was crusted around his mouth; one eye had recently been blackened, and a boil, an angry red carbuncle, was coming up on the side of his nose; he was filthy, covered in a black, encrusted dirt which filled his pores and lived under his fingernails; his eyes were red and bleary, his hair was matted and snarled. He was a crazy homeless person, standing on a platform of a busy Underground station, in the heart of the rush hour (246).

Acting like his real friends and family, the doubles, in the end, try to convince him to end his suffering by taking his own life. Even the posters advertising credit cards or holidays on the walls suddenly change into messages such as “End it all”, “Put yourself out of your misery”, “Be a Man. Do yourself in”, or “Have a fatal accident today”. In the end, Richard remembers Anasthesia with the fragment of her necklace in his pocket, assuring himself of her reality and thus confirming that he is not insane. Richard chooses to live, and therefore, passes the test. According to Freud, the creation of the doubles occurs at the narcissism stage of childhood, when the child creates double selves in order to cope with society’s expectations, and this, for a time, serves as “an insurance against destruction to the ego, an energetic denial of the power of

death”, however, when this mirrored self is encountered later in life, it causes the feeling of uncanny; “when the primary narcissism stage has been surmounted, ‘the double’ reverses its aspect. From having been an assurance of immortality, it becomes the uncanny harbinger of death” (Freud 10). The *doppelgängers* Richard faces do not fall short from this description, as their function in the story is to eliminate him before he retrieves the key, which is actually the key to reality, and prevent his ascend to the conscious part of the city. The Ordeal of the Key represents Richard’s own version of “the return of the repressed”. The traumatic experience of facing his own doubles is, undoubtedly, a confrontation of his bottled up feelings that he has kept for a long time since his journey began. The manifestations of the *doppelgängers* do not say anything new, instead, confirm what he has been suspecting of; are any of these real, or is he really losing his mind? The *doppelgängers* become the “harbinger of death” not only because they are trying to make him commit suicide, but more importantly, as Freud suggests, they were, at some point, familiar faces, who now become a reminder of Richard’s mortality. According to Andrew Webber, the *doppelgänger*, has some characteristic qualities in literature. Richard’s doubles incorporate some of these said qualities. First of all, weber suggests that a double is “a figure of visual compulsion” (Webber 3). In this regard, Richard’s shapeshifting doubles uncanny ability to “mold” their faces at will create a perfect example of “visual compulsion”: “Maybe this will help,” said Gary. He raised his hands to his face, pushed at it, molded, shaped. His face oozed like warm Silly Putty” (Gaiman 245). Moreover, the doubles can, apparently, conjure up images of Richard in a pathetic condition to convince him that what he has been experiencing for the last few weeks was nothing but delirious visions of a homeless person. “You’re sitting on Blackfriars Station at rush hour,” said the other Richard, casually. “You’re talking to yourself. And you know what they say about people who talk to themselves” (245). Webber also mentions the *doppelgänger*’s ability to “operate divisively on language” (3). Richard’s doubles, indeed, put all their might into their manipulative language as they lack any physical materiality. The *doppelgänger* “echoes, reiterates, distorts, parodies, dictates, impedes, and dumbfounds the subjective faculty of free speech” (3) to persuade Richard that he is insane and push him step by step into suicide. Another defining quality of a *doppelgänger* is that it “is an inveterate performer of identity” (3). Richard’s doubles assume his colleague’s, his fiancée’s and his own identities in a fluid manner, each assumed identity is aimed at pushing Richard closer to insanity. Their performances

almost succeed with their combined effort of manipulative language and visual compulsion. This can be seen when Richard is on the verge of madness, as he hears himself laugh like a crazy person, the advertisements on the station walls change into motivational posters of suicide. Lastly, Webber adds that the double “introduces voyeurism and innuendo into the subject’s pursuit of a visual and discursive sense of self” (4). Richard’s doubles pityingly mention his trolls on his desk at work, hinting that everything he thinks he did here is a product of his imagination: “More imaginary ‘friends? We all used to laugh at you round the office for those trolls. Remember them? On your desk.” (Gaiman 249). Richard’s already damaged sense of self bends under the weight of this attack on his identity. When the impostor Gary throws Richard’s trolls at him mockingly, Richard struggles to cling to them:

Richard tried to catch it; he reached out his hands, but it fell through them as if they were not there. He went down onto his hands and knees on the empty platform, fumbling for the troll. It seemed to him, then, as if it were the only fragment he had of his real life: that if he could only get the troll back, perhaps he could get everything back (249).

As representations of his repressed feelings, the *doppelgängers*’ manifestation show how the repressed can return and haunt an individual. However, by facing them, Richard overcomes this trauma and acquires a better sense of himself and his surroundings.

One other uncanny aspect in the novel is what Freud calls “omnipotence of thought”. This source of uncanny is caused by “fulfilment of irrational wishes and coincidences”, namely our primitive beliefs or “animistic mental activity” (Freud 17). At the beginning of the novel, Richard seems unable to fit in to the hectic atmosphere of the working class life. His boss demands a lot at the same time, and moreover, his authoritative girlfriend rules his actions and decisions in life. The fiancée, Jessica, calls Richard to remind him about a dinner with her boss. Apparently, although there is a post-it-note in front of Richard on his desk, and another one at home on the fridge, and they have been there for quite a while, Richard “forgets” the dinner. This can be seen as an unconsciously repressed thought, as he clearly does not enjoy these kind of activities as much as his fiancée. Eventually, by choosing to help Door on the way to the restaurant, Richard does not attend the prearranged dinner. It could be said that his unconscious desire to get away from all this meaningless acts of city life, in the end, leads him as far away as possible; to the depths of the underground. Moreover, the Prologue to the novel contains numerous foreshadowings, which can be interpreted as

“omnipotence of thought”. Weinstock says that although first-time readers will not be able to understand it, Neil Gaiman neatly summarizes the plot's central conflicts in the book's first five pages (2). As Richard's friends are hosting a goodbye party for him in a Scottish pub before he leaves for London the next day, an old lady in front of the pub mistakes him to be a homeless person. “Ow long you been on the streets, then?” she says “I'm not homeless,” (Gaiman 2) explains Richard. Apparently, she used to be a homeless person in London, and this is precisely how she can recognize Richard, even though he has not even been to London yet. “I been homeless, so I know what it's like, that's why I thought you was” she adds, confirming the rules of the dual Londons that the denizens of the upper world and the underworld are not able to recognize each other's existence, only someone who has been an outsider of the society, someone ignored and sneered upon, could sense another person's alienation. Her uncanny foreshadowings do not end here, she takes Richard's hand and tells his fortune that he has “a long way to go” “London,” Richard tells her. “Not just London . . . ” the old woman says “Not any London I know” (3) and she adds “I'd watch out for doors if I were you”. The old woman's visions about a different London and doors, Richard's gift of an umbrella with the London Underground map on it, his friend's remarks about Richard's look -“You look like a drowned rat”, all serve as eerie indicators of what awaits Richard. Along with these, Richard's recurrent dream of The Beast adds up to the overall effect of omnipotence of thought. As Freud says, these elements of omnipotence of thought signify “thoughts that express or are derived from a repressed wish” (Freud 59), which is aligned with his thought that dreams are also manifestations of repressed materials in the unconscious. Therefore, these wishes, visions, strange coincidences, which come to realize, increase the effect of the feeling of uncanniness. Bizarrely enough, one by one, all the mentioned elements become significant determiners in shaping Richard's journey and his fate.

London Below's contents are, as previously mentioned, not only comprised of people posing a threat to the reality, the conscious of the city's psyche, like Richard, but also repressed thoughts, memories, events of historical importance and even parts of buildings, so it is no surprise to find out that *The Beast of London*, the foe Richard has to vanquish in the end, is indeed the embodiment of all the repressed matters accumulated into one being. As the final step of their quest, Richard and his company have to reach Angel Islington's prison, however, in order to do so, they have to pass

through a place called the Labyrinth, which is described as “a place of pure madness” which “was built of lost fragments of London Above: alleys and roads and corridors and sewers that had fallen through the cracks over the millennia, and entered the world of the lost and the forgotten” (308). Apart from the countless maddening threats and dangers of this place, the real challenge is, undoubtedly, the legendary monstrous Beast that guards it. Old Bailey, one of the residents of London Below who lived there for centuries, states that the Beast was only a piglet when it first came down there, which later grew into something enormous and never stopped growing as it constantly fed with the sewers: “it fed on the sewage, and it grew, and it grew. And it got meaner, and nastier” (168). As previously mentioned, the city has been continuously repressing whatever it deems unsightly, unwanted and unideal, in the same way that Freud suggested. With an endless supply of repressed feelings, the Beast becomes a representation of all of the primordial and horrific violence that London Above has suppressed. But after being suppressed, it no longer terrorizes London Above but instead poses a menace to those who live in London Below. Having been haunted for a long time in his nightmares, both in his childhood and in his time in London Below, Richard does not really comprehend what it really means until he confronts the Beast. Even though he is inevitably destroyed in these recurrent dreams, upon facing the Beast, Richard does not give in to fear and charges into his last trial.

In the end, Richard is victorious and he is no longer the same man that started the quest. He is deeply changed and transformed into a better version of himself. By facing his repressed feelings, along with the cumulative repressed material of the city, Richard is able to identify and see beyond “the otherness” inside himself and his world. He is not the “unassuming young man with a good heart” anymore; he has gained confidence and nothing seems to scare him now. After he kills the Beast and tastes its blood with the Hunter’s suggestion, Richard finds a hidden power inside him that allows him to run through the labyrinth uninterrupted, as if the other horrors stayed away from him.

Whatever the reason, he ran straight and true through the labyrinth, which no longer held any mysteries for him. He felt that he knew every twist, every path, every alley and lane and runnel of it. He ran, stumbling and falling, and still running, exhausted, through the labyrinth, his blood pounding in his temples. A rhyme coursed through his head, as he ran, pounding and echoing to the rhythm of his feet. It was something he had heard as a child: This aye night, this aye night; Every night and all; Fire and fleet and candlelight; And Christ receive thy soul (320).

The song is a traditional English lamentation which tells the soul's journey through the purgatory, which becomes symbolically Richard's journey through London Below. Richard's selfless act of helping an injured homeless girl that lead him down to London Below creates a dissonance inside his psyche at first; he keeps questioning his illogical choice at the beginning. However, after his trials and especially killing the Beast, his selflessness can be seen as something he no longer questions. As Islington tortures Richard and Marquis in hopes to make Door open the portal to heaven, Richard shouts: "Don't do it. Don't set it free. We don't matter" (329). In the end, with the help of "the key to all reality" that Richard won during the trial, he is first granted the freedom to move between two realms freely by the earl and then sent to London Above. He soon finds everything is different now. Jessica is clearly regretful about breaking off their engagement, not even able to remember a sensible reason as to why she did it, Gary is more friendly towards him than ever, in fact everybody in the office seems happy being in the presence of Richard. At first, these changes feel like Richard is finally where he wants to be, however, soon Richard realizes that this cannot be all there is to life. "I thought I wanted this, I thought I wanted a nice, normal life. I mean, maybe I am crazy. I mean, maybe. But if this is all there is, then I don't want to be sane" (371). Clearly, the idea of a "normal life in the suburbs" does not have the same appeal to the person that Richard transformed into. His refusal to fit in to this society that he thought he belonged to indicates that he never actually, fully felt home in the upper world "in which a society chasing after success and money may recognise its own limitations and triviality". Therefore, Richard's final decision to return underground is "a deliberate act of rejection of the 1990s capitalist values" (Korte 50). In numerous occasions through the story, he mentions how desperately he wishes to go back home, however, the idea of home changes as he changes in his quest. In the end, Richard refuses and resists the capitalist values of the upper world and Marquis comes and leads him back home, to London Below.

CHAPTER 3: UNCONSCIOUS AND UNCANNY IN *CORALINE*

Neil Gaiman's second children's book *Coraline* was written in 2002. The novella follows the story of Coraline Jones, who is around nine years old and has just moved to a new house. Her parents both work from home and are constantly occupied with their jobs, failing to provide enough attention to the young protagonist who defines herself as an explorer. Feeling left alone, she decides to do what she does best, go on exploring. As she visits each eccentric neighbour in this old Gothic house which is divided into several flats, she discovers a small, locked door which opens to nothing but a brick wall. Fascinated by the strangeness of a door to nowhere, she revisits it one night. The door, to her amazement, leads her to another realm, which, uncannily, looks and feels almost identical to her own home. Soon she meets the residents of this "other home," her other parents, the Other Mother and the Other Father, who look like her real parents but with buttons for eyes. Coraline enjoys finally being in the company of caring and interesting people and in an immensely interesting home, which is, in every way she can imagine, appealing and attractive. However, she soon changes her ideas of the newly found other parents, when they propose to replace her eyes with huge black buttons in order to make her stay there forever, as a "big happy family". Coraline promptly refuses and returns to her home, where she discovers her real parents are missing. Although she is used to being left alone, after a while Coraline decides to go back to the Other Home and look for her parents. Along the way, a black cat accompanies her, and to her surprise, it can talk as long as they are in the other world. The cat reveals to her that the Beldam, the Other Mother, has abducted her real parents and imprisoned them in the Other Home. It becomes obvious to Coraline that, although the Other Mother preaches of unending love, she has other, more sinister goals. Her true nature while stays unclear, the cat claims that "her kind of thing looks for something to love or something to eat" (76), hinting at the malevolence of the Beldam. The Other Mother's plan for Coraline is apparently not the first nor the last she has done it. Along her adventure and trials in order to save her real parents, Coraline meets several ghost children from different eras, who were all lured into the same place with promises of love and attention, and devoured by the Beldam. Gathering her courage, Coraline stands up to the evil mother, challenging her to a game and in this final trial, she defeats her with her intellect and resourcefulness. Having saved her real parents and the ghost children's souls from the clutches of the Beldam, Coraline returns home

changed and transformed. Her battle against the Other Mother makes her realize what is important in life, and thus achieving her true self.

Coraline is one of Gaiman's most prominent portal fantasy books, which include a threshold that leads to another, mirror world. Within this short novella, Gaiman embodies almost all elements of a Gothic children's horror story, with doubles, doppelgängers, animate dolls, ghosts and an evil-witch like creature who looks exactly like the mother of the protagonist. Along with the theme of "finding magic or the unworldly in unexpectedly everyday locales" (Cardin 379), the novella explores much more than a children's story. Coraline's journey to the Other Home and her confrontation with her Other Mother leads her into facing many fears that she did not even know existed. Her search for identity, which is clear from the very beginning of the story, takes her into a place infested with uncanny horrors. Through accepting and overcoming them, she rises victorious and healed. Similar to Richard's journey to London Below in *Neverwhere*, Coraline's shorter but not less momentous journey to the Other Home represents a trip to her own unconscious. Therefore, it is possible to read the setting and the limited number of characters as representations of different segments of Coraline's psyche. Consequently, this chapter aims to analyse how these parts of her psyche are represented in the Other Home, her real world and the portal she crosses the threshold into this twisted mirror world by analysing the uncanny elements she faces in her path.

As a child, Coraline is not easily identified with childish characteristics. She proudly introduces herself as an "explorer", which suggests being independent and self-sufficient, while still craving for her parents' attention and love. These conflicting qualities make it clear that Coraline is still in the process of forming an identity. Her isolation, caused by her parents' tendency to put their work first, and her easily bored nature make her constantly look for interesting things to keep herself occupied. Being the only child around, this creates a problem for Coraline, hence, she "bothers" her parents. "What should I do?" she asks them often or "I'm bored", and is told to "Go pester the neighbours" or "Go away" her father tells her "cheerfully" (Gaiman 21). They pay less attention to Coraline as she cries out for more. Her real parents continuously – maybe unwillingly, but still – ignore her. Although they are not unloving parents, their negligence makes them almost "absent", and this makes Coraline's life in her new surroundings increasingly lonely. Other occasions which

connote with a loving family are also missing in Coraline's family such as food. She does not like neither her mother's cooking, which is always "something out of packets or frozen" and "very dry, and it never tasted of anything" (35), nor her father's, who always tries *a recipe*. Therefore, she usually eats alone. Coraline's miscommunication is not limited to her parents but with other adults as well. All her new neighbours mispronounce her name as "Caroline", even though she reminds them each time; "I asked you not to call me Caroline. It's Coraline" (4). Adults seem to ignore and even misunderstand her, she often finds herself wondering "why so few of the adults she had met made any sense" (24). As a means to cope, she explores, precisely where she was warned not to explore. The well in the garden of the house is the first place she is warned against;

There was also a well. On the first day Coraline's family moved in, Miss Spink and Miss Forcible made a point of telling Coraline how dangerous the well was, and they warned her to be sure she kept away from it. So Coraline set off to explore for it so that she knew where it was, to keep away from it properly (5).

In addition to the well, the door in the drawing room, the portal to the Other Home, is a place Coraline is, once again, advised not to go through. Still, she goes exploring in full awareness that it is wrong: "She knew she was doing something wrong" (32). Although it would not be fair to call Coraline naughty, these little acts of rebellion are telling about her character. Another incident about her rebellious nature is apparent when her mother takes her out shopping. Her mother refuses her choice of clothes, ignoring her wishes. "But Mum, *everybody* at school's got gray blouses and everything. *Nobody's* got green gloves. I could be the only one" (29). It is obvious that Coraline wants to be different and special and she is still in the process of forming her identity. As Rudd says

It is of note here that Coraline begs her mother to buy some Day-Glo green gloves, to make her stand out, to be special. Coraline's final sentence overtly expresses her wish that the personal pronoun, 'I,' truly signified uniqueness, so that she could be 'the only one,' perhaps especially in her mother's eyes (10).

The emphasis on "I" indicates that Coraline "needs to assert her identity" (Buckley 71), which is also amplified by the theme of names. As already mentioned, Coraline's insistence on correcting people's mispronunciation is evidence for her frustration of being neglected. This stress on names is seen in other scenes as well. Her encounter with the Cat, for instance, shows how names and identities are connected in Coraline's eyes. When it is asked about its name, the Cat says "Cats don't have names,

you people have names. That's because you don't know who you are. We know who we are, so we don't need names" (Gaiman 45). The Cat implies that for humans, identity is linked to their names. Another scene that underlines what names signify is with the Other Miss Forcible when she performs *Romeo & Juliet*: "What's in a name?... that which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet" (52), implying that names do not matter and hence undermining the importance of being an individual. One final example where Coraline hints her struggles to find her identity is before her confrontation with the Other Mother, where she wakes up and cannot remember who she is:

For a moment she felt utterly dislocated. She did not know where she was; she was not entirely sure *who* she was. It is astonishing just how much of what we are can be tied to the beds we wake up in in the morning, and it is astonishing how fragile that can be (81).

Consequently, her wish to be special in her parents' eyes and to be her own person are the biggest driving forces in her character. It is, therefore, considerably understandable that she tries to compensate for the lacking attention through exploration of forbidden places.

As a result, Coraline walks the dark pathway to another realm, the Other Home, following a rat, exactly like *Alice* follows a rabbit and Richard falls through the cracks. She finds herself in a place almost identical to her own home but still different. The first encounter with the uncanny can be evidently seen in Coraline's description of the mirror like house:

It opened on to a dark hallway. The bricks had gone, as if they'd never been there. There was a cold, musty smell coming through the open doorway: it smelled like something very old and very slow. . . Coraline walked down the corridor uneasily. There was something very familiar about it. The carpet beneath her feet was the same carpet they had in her flat. The wallpaper was the same wallpaper they had. The picture hanging in the hall was the same that they had hanging in their hallway at home. She knew where she was: she was in her own home. She hadn't left. She shook her head, confused (33).

Her confusion then leads to the very definition of the uncanny as she tries to figure out what is exactly different: "She almost had it when somebody called 'Coraline?'" (34). As Freud suggests in his essay, the uncanny is not something that is new to us, but something familiar with a splash of something unknown. When one tries to define what exactly is uncanny, it usually eludes detection and that is what makes it uncanny. As Cixous says "Uncanny is a question of a concept whose entire denotation is a connotation" (528). Therefore, the uncanny consists of a series of relational signifiers

that never lead to the thing being signified. The fundamental cause of its dread is its incomprehensibility. As Coraline enters the Other Home, crossing the threshold, following a rat, exactly like *Alice* following a rabbit down the rabbit hole, the initial descriptions of the portal induce the feeling of uncanny right at the beginning; “the narrative seeks to connote a sense of uncanniness, paraphrasing Freud quite obviously. It is ‘dark’, ‘cold’; something lurks in the shadows” (Buckley 68). The novel’s parallelism with Freud’s essay “The Uncanny” does not end here. Numerous allusions to the text itself makes the novel almost a rewriting of Freud’s ideas in a dark, gothic version of *Alice in Wonderland*. This becomes more evidently seen when Coraline gets lost in the eerie mist of the Other Home: “And then it took shape in the mist: a dark house, which loomed at them out of the formless whiteness. ‘But that’s— ‘said Coraline. ‘The house you just left.’ ‘But how can you walk away from something and still come back to it?’” (87). Clearly a reworking of Freud’s depiction of an uncanny trip: “caught in a mist perhaps, one has lost one’s way . . . every attempt to find the marked or familiar path may bring one back again and again to one and the same spot” (Freud 11). The theme of loss of eyes, blindness and even blinding are recurrent in the course of the story. Along with the Other Mother’s obsession with replacing her subjects’ eyes with buttons, and therefore enslaving them, and the intertextual “mist”, a repeating mention of a “a thick white fog” (17) lowering over the house at the very beginning of the novella seems foreshadowing. Moreover, Miss Forcible cautions Coraline “You’d have to be an explorer to find your way around in this fog” (18), and the mirror images The Other Mother uses to torment Coraline always start with a fog, hinting that there is a cloud over her judgement. Lastly, as Coraline wanders around the Other Home, looking for both the ghost children’s souls and her abducted family’s whereabouts, she comes across the disfigured body of her Other Father, who was apparently punished by her Other Mother for letting out her secret plan. The moment “the thing” attacks her with the command of her Other Mother, Coraline reaches out hopelessly and plucks out his remaining button eye, aiming to slow it down so she can escape (133).

Upon arriving at the Other Home, Coraline is welcomed by the host of the house, the Other Mother. Cautious but definitely intrigued, Coraline begins to get familiar with the unfamiliar woman. Although the real mother is never physically described in the book, judging by Coraline’s initial response to the Other Mother, it is

understood that the Other Mother resembles her substantially. She looks oddly similar, but is taller, thinner and has white skin and her eyes are “big black buttons” (Gaiman 34). Soon, it is also revealed that this is not the only distinctive and fiendish quality that the Other Mother has; Coraline describes her other grotesque and uncanny physical attributes as “her fingers were too long, and they never stopped moving, and her dark-red fingernails were curved and sharp” (34). All combined, these monstrous characteristics should be enough to deter a child at first sight, however, Coraline is deeply interested as she wanders into the Other Home. Before long, Coraline meets her Other Father, who, as can be predicted, looks exactly like her real father with the exception of black button eyes. They explain to her that they have been waiting for her, to love her unconditionally. “It wasn’t the same here without you. But we knew you’d arrive one day, and then we could be a proper family” (35). The Other Mother’s word choice implies that she thinks Coraline’s real family is not a “proper” one. Coraline is, understandably, interested, as the Other Mother is an embodiment of exactly the ideal image of a loving, nurturing and kind mother that she has always wanted. To this image of a loving, caring and ideal mother, the Other Mother also adds the oldest representation of motherly love; food. As she invites Coraline to lunch, Coraline is visibly impressed. As mentioned before, she has never been happy with both her parents’ cooking skills, however, the Other Mother’s instant preparation of a “huge, golden-brown roasted chicken, fried potatoes, tiny green peas” that Coraline says “was the best chicken that she had ever eaten” (35), is clearly an indicator that this is a loving and “proper” family lunch in Coraline’s eyes. In the eyes of a child, food is associated with motherly love as well as pleasure. Nevertheless, Coraline later realizes that, similar to the fairy tale witches, like the candy house in *Hansel and Gretel* or the apple in *Snow White*, the Other Mother is apparently using food as bait to keep Coraline trapped in this world. However, after her first impression of the Other Mother, which is obviously a good one since she decides to stay for longer and explore this strange house, Coraline realizes that maternal love and food are not the only appeal here. Indeed, the Other Mother, apparently, created and filled the house with everything Coraline could ask for.

The Other Home is, it seems, designed to allure Coraline into staying there by making it as interesting for her as possible. First of all, in addition to the loving and caring meal scene, the attitudes of the other parents show the much lacking attention

and love in Coraline's life. "We only want what's best for you" (54) they say, and add "And then we'll all be together as one big happy family, for ever and always" (54). Moreover, unlike her real parents, they let her go out and explore to her heart's desire, they even encourage her to do it. What is more, they let her play with "rats from upstairs", and listen to her intently when she comes back from her explorations. Her room also presents this same deviation from her real room:

There were all sorts of remarkable things in there she'd never seen before: windup angels that fluttered around the bedroom like startled sparrows; books with pictures that writhed and crawled and shimmered; little dinosaur skulls that chattered their teeth as she passed. A whole toy box filled with wonderful toys (36).

As a result, it is not surprising to see Coraline, a child who is yearning for all the ingredients of "one big family", is intrigued and motivated. Her reactions to each presented aspect of this different version of her home is evidently pointing to this fact. "It smelled wonderful" (34) she remarks when she is invited to eat with the other parents. When she is offered to visit and play with the rats she "was quite looking forward to it" (36) and for her "this was turning out to be a very interesting day after all" (36). After seeing the room that the Other Mother prepared for her, Coraline thinks "This is more like it" (37). Unaware of the fact that this perfect image of a happy family is nothing but a gilded cage for her, Coraline is almost caught in the trap like a fly in the spider's net. However, considering her needs and wants, this place looks as an idealized version of her real home, with ideal parents. Therefore, it is clear that this Other Home is actually a representation of Coraline's unconscious mind, containing her secret wishes, desires, and soon to be revealed, her fears.

The Other Mother presents her a choice which would be the only condition to attain her "unconditional" love; stitching black buttons in place of Coraline's eyes. "We want you to stay. And it's just a little thing" (Gaiman 54), The Other Mother says and adds, "It won't hurt, we only want what's best for you" (54). The initial shock of the monstrous offer shakes Coraline down and reminds her to finally leave. She also reminds herself that when grownups say something will not hurt it almost always does (54). The image of removing one's eyes and replacing them with buttons, of course, relates to Freud's Castration Complex, which has a significantly dominant theme in the course of Coraline's story. Similar to Richard's castration in the Night's Bridge, losing one's eyes and sight, both symbolically and physically, reflects deeper anxieties of the protagonists' selves. The Other Mother is later revealed to have done this several

times before. As Coraline stumbles upon the ghosts of other children who were lured here the same way Coraline was, it becomes clear that The Other Mother, not unlike a fairy tale witch, systematically tricks children with promises of love and confines them in her domain, feeding off of their love until nothing is left of their souls. “She stole our hearts, and she stole our souls, and she took our lives away, and she left us here, and she forgot about us in the dark” (100). Similar to Freud’s description of Nathaniel’s fear of castration in *The Sandman*, “plucking out eyes” in the course of the story becomes synonymous with loss of one’s identity. Rudd says “Coraline’s button replacements have the related association of giving up one’s soul, the eyes being its windows” (7). As the ghost children later exclaim in horror that they do not even remember who or even what gender they were, as they say:

She will take your life and all you are and all you care’st for, and she will leave you with nothing but mist and fog. She’ll take your joy. And one day you’ll awake and your heart and your soul will have gone. A husk you’ll be, a wisp you’ll be, and a thing no more than a dream on waking, or a memory of something forgotten (Gaiman 101).

Apparently, staying in this realm means turning into a “hollow husk”, a puppet, a means to sustain The Other Mother. The idea that eyes and souls and consequently the identity are tied together is further emphasized by Samuel Weber:

The uncanny is thus bound up with a crisis of perception and of phenomenality, but concomitantly with a mortal danger to the subject, to the ‘integrity’ of its body and thus to its very identity... The uncanny is thus bound up with the subjective emotions, and upon a reflective scale it can even be situated with some precision: it is not simply a form of anxiety, but is located between dread, terror and panic on the one side, and uneasiness and anticipation on the other (1131 - 32).

Therefore, the threat of losing one’s sight or eyes can directly be interpreted as an attack to one’s very self.

The Other Mother’s castration attempt has another, deeper meaning in relation to its uncanniness. It is understood that once the offer is accepted by the child, The Other Mother does not allow them to complete their growth process, forcing them to stay in a pre-Oedipal stage, where the child is always dependent on the mother. Coraline’s struggles with her own family’s neglect and her constant demands for attention give new meaning to the castrating mother figure. Accepting the Other Mother’s offer implies being tied to her in a mother-child dyad, always craving for immediate attention and care, being forever dependent to the maternal figure and, hence, not having a separate identity. As a matter of fact, this situation, in a way,

realizes Coraline's need for an all-devouring love and a place where all of her wishes may be fulfilled. However, it also renders the ultimate aim of her journey; being her own person. As Rudd argues;

...in this scenario the child tried to come to terms with itself as a separate, albeit lonely being, Coraline is being offered the opposite: the prospect of being sutured to the mother forever, of being "buried alive." In short, the other mother offers to replace Coraline's eye with her own I: an eye for an I (7).

What is meant here is that, for Coraline, accepting the button eyes means regression to an earlier stage of development, when the child is envious of their mother or their father's role in the family and wants to replace them. When the complex dissolves, the child begins to form his or her superego, therefore, his or her identity. The complex usually begins to dissolve because of a fear of castration or rather because of an acceptance of a castration that had already occurred and a dread of losing love. In Coraline's case, the anxiety is definitely caused by a fear of loss of love of her real parents. This becomes more evident when the Other Mother, in an attempt to make Coraline stay in her fantasy world, abducts and imprisons Coraline's real parents. To trick her into believing that they abandoned her, she shows Coraline fabricated images of her real parents living a much happier life without Coraline:

"How nice it is, not to have Coraline anymore", said her mother with a happy smile. "Now we can do all the things we always wanted to do, like go abroad, but were prevented from doing by having a little daughter." She hoped that what she had just seen was not real, but she was not as certain as she sounded. There was a tiny doubt inside her, like a maggot in an apple core (Gaiman 73).

This "tiny doubt" reinforces the idea that Coraline, understandably, fears losing her parents' love, and it is this very fear that is abused by the Other Mother. The Other Mother's pre-Oedipal maternal figure is further emphasized with her over-possessive rhetoric of love. Her love soon turns into hunger for affection, as the cat proposes "she wants something to love or something to eat" (76). Vivienne Muller explains why this pre-Oedipal figure is tempting for Coraline:

Freud identified the pre-Oedipal mother as central to the baby's sense of an unbounded self, continuous with the mother and thus with the pleasure principle and the satisfying of physical and emotional appetites. The other mother is initially this type of person on whom Coraline has projected her desire for the fulfilment of her latent and repressed wishes (3).

The Other Mother, with her image of an "all providing and nurturing mother", with her exceptional cooking skills, her never-ending love and understanding for Coraline's

needs, is a perfect example of pre-Oedipal mother. Coraline, however, soon realizes that the Other Mother's love is destructive in nature, as she reflects:

It was true: the other mother loved her. But she loved Coraline as a miser loves money, or a dragon loves its gold. In the other mother's button eyes, Coraline knew that she was a possession, nothing more. A tolerated pet, whose behaviour was no longer amusing (126).

It soon becomes clear that in order for Coraline to resolve her Oedipus complex, she must reject the pre-Oedipal mother figure's proposition to regress into an infantile state.

Considering the fact that this journey that Coraline takes, not unlike Richard's journey, can signify a journey into her unconscious, it is clear that the Other Mother's promise of never-ending love, the other parents' care and their attitudes towards her, the Other Home with all the enticing and interesting features of it, all represent Coraline's repressed thoughts; her secret desires and fears. To this respect, the Other Home becomes a representation of Coraline's Id, which, according to Freud, is the part of the psyche that contains one's instinctual drives. "It is the only part of the psyche that is present at birth and it is the source of our bodily needs, wants, desires, and impulses" (Siegfried 1). It is entirely unconscious and it seeks "immediate gratification of all needs, wants, and desires" (1). Freud adds that in the formation of identity, the Id has a role to play as it leads to the formation of the Ego. "The desires of the Id give rise to the Ego, which is generally the component of the psyche that ensures that the impulses of the Id are expressed in a way that is acceptable to the real world" (1). The idea that the Other Home and its contents represent the unconscious is further reinforced when Coraline defines the Other Mother as "something very old" (Gaiman 55) and the ghost children remark that they are all from different eras, and finally the Cat implies that she is an ancient supernatural creature. Freud's theory of the psyche clearly indicates that the Id is the first part of the psyche to develop, in comparison to ego and the super ego, which develop much later, the Id is indeed "ancient". Coraline, as the ego, is trying to negotiate with her repressed materials in her unconscious, however, in order to maintain a balance between the ego and the id, the formation of the super ego is vital. "It is a psychic agency that criticizes and prohibits one's drives, fantasies, feelings, and actions. The Super-Ego works in contradiction to the Id because it strives to act in a manner that is socially appropriate" (Siegfried 2). In light of this information, it is easy to place the cat in the role of the super ego. The Other

Mother is an omnipotent being in her own world, however, there is only one thing she does not like and cannot control, the cat. The other parents both call him “vermin” (Gaiman 153) and the cat, clearly, is not fond of them either. The animosity between these two entities is evidently a representation of the constant clashes between the id and the ego. Similar to the Tube’s function in *Neverwhere*, deciding who to let in London Above (The conscious side of the city), the cat serves as the mediator between the id and the ego. When Coraline first encounters the cat, she hears its voice in her head; “Its voice sounded like the voice at the back of Coraline’s head, the voice she thought words in but a man’s voice, not a girl’s” (43). In some instances, the cat is the only thing standing in the way of the Other Mother and, in a way, controlling the id’s desires. The cat leads Coraline in the process of forming her identity, and states confidently that “he knows who he is”, unlike Coraline who is “spread all over the place” (44), meaning he already has a developed identity. Furthermore, at the beginning of the story, the cat does not have a voice as Coraline was only starting to form her superego, and likewise, at the end, the cat loses his voice again, that is, by the end of her trials, Coraline has already internalized the superego, and there is no more need of a talking cat. The superego formation is complete and the voice Coraline needs to hear is already a part of her psyche now. In the final battle against the Other Mother, it can be seen that Coraline’s internalization of the cat, the superego, allows her to use it to strike and distract her, by throwing the cat at her (157). The final attack is also symbolic in regards to control her id’s desires, Coraline uses her superego against it. Gooding’s remarks about this “fantasy world”, the other home, is “a safe milieu for the playing out of id fantasies” (393) also support this idea.

As the key character to the story, The Other Mother, the fictional doppelgänger at the centre of this twisted, mirror world, appears to be the very embodiment of various aspects of the uncanny, from dreadful doubles to potential dismemberment, plucking out the eyes; the fear of castration. The Other Mother’s initial uncanniness arises from her combination of “temptations a child Coraline’s age would want from a parent and the hauntingly dreadful and unexplainable” (Cardin 379). Although Coraline’s first description of her as a double of her real mother “Only with skin white as paper” and “Only she was taller and thinner” (Gaiman 34) is actually more than enough to identify her as an uncanny double, “Gaiman’s narrative is in fact replete with numerous additional details that confirm the Other Mother’s status as a textbook

example of literary doppelgänger” (Opreanu 2). Starting with her appearance and her obvious power to create and distort images, *The Other Mother* is a perfect example of a literary double, as Andrew Webber says in his comprehensive list of features of doppelgängers in his book *The Doppelgänger: Double Visions in German Literature*: “the Doppelgänger is above all a figure of visual compulsion” (3). *The Other Home*, with all its enticing qualities such as the remarkable moving toys, magic books with “pictures that writhed and crawled and shimmered” (Gaiman 36), and “the kind of clothes she would love to have hanging in her own wardrobe at home” (82), are all obviously manufactured to “appeal to Coraline’s sensory experience of the world” (Lytle 90). Her skills to conjure up the desired and repressed wishes into whole fabricated pocket universes is also signified by the ghost children’s experiences: “I walked through the scullery door, and I found myself back in the parlor. But she was waiting for me. She told me she was my other mamma, but I never saw my true mamma again” (Gaiman 100). It is clear that Coraline is not her sole victim, rather, she has time and again successfully and repeatedly impersonated the “other mamma” of multiple kids, tricking them the same way she does to Coraline, altering their reality by changing the visuality of things. Her mastery in keeping up the appearances is not limited to her own body and the things in this made up universe, the doubling is extended to all the population of this mirror world. Coraline’s neighbours are all duplicated in the Other Home and are, conveniently, under constant control of the Other Mother. When these “ghastly parody of real people” (141) depart from the established script, or fail to play the roles assigned to them, she is more than determined to severely punish them. Webber’s next item on his list is that the doppelgänger “operates divisively on language”, “It echoes, reiterates, distorts, parodies, dictates, impedes, and dumbfounds the subjective faculty of free speech” (3). The primary example of the Other Mother’s manipulation of language can be seen when she tries to convince Coraline of her “unending” and “unconditional” love rhetoric; cliché statements intended to trick the protagonist. Moreover, as she shows fabricated images of Coraline’s parents having so much fun without Coraline, she also distorts their language, trying to cloud her love towards her real parents and she succeeds, “There was a tiny doubt inside her, like a maggot in an apple core” (Gaiman 73). As an extension of herself, the other residents of the Other Home also display a tendency to manipulate Coraline through language. “The crazy old man upstairs” could be a good example for this:

“Come here, little girl. I know what you want, little girl” says, “You’ll go home. You’ll be bored. You’ll be ignored. No one will listen to you, not really listen to you. You’re too clever and too quiet for them to understand. They don’t even get your name right. Stay here with us. We will listen to you and play with you and laugh with you. Your other mother will build whole worlds for you to explore, and tear them down every night when you are done” (141 -142).

The voices of the duplicate characters, as they try to deceive Coraline, somehow always get distorted in a fear inducing manner, they are “rustling, scratchy and dry” (141), “dead, whispery” (143), and “high and whispering and slightly whiney” (13).

The Other Mother’s ultimate power and control over every being in her domain is evident in her ability to transform the environment, objects and even the people in it. As Webber mentions, another feature of the double is that “power-play between ego and alter ego” which manifest itself as “tutelage, surrogacy, and sub alternation” (4). Her ironclad control does not allow any other to interfere, she has to be the only one to exert power. The Other Father’s punishment for revealing too much information can be a good example of her intolerance for insubordination and incompetence in her subjects. “Voyeurism and innuendo” (4) is another characteristic that The Other Mother exhibits in her endeavours to spy on Coraline and her actions, she uses dolls to secretly watch her and, in fact, everyone with button eyes in the Other Home becomes her private surveillance system. There is an explicitly clear implication that the Other Mother can see and hear everything the dolls and the other residents sense. After he accidentally exposes a glimpse of her plan, the Other Mother punishes the Other Father by distorting his body like a misshapen dough and casts him aside. When Coraline finds him, he tries to tell her that he nor anybody else, is actually in control here, other than the Mother:

The thing looked around vacantly with its one eye, as if it had lost her. Finally it saw her, and, as if making a great effort, it opened its mouth once more and said in a wet, urgent voice, “Run, child. Leave this place. She wants me to hurt you, to keep you here forever, so that you can never finish the game and she will win. She is pushing me so hard to hurt you. I cannot fight her” (Gaiman 132).

The doppelgänger also “operates as a figure of displacement. It characteristically appears out of place, in order to displace its host. It is also temporally out of place, appearing at the wrong time” (Webber 4). This aspect of the Other Mother is clear with her abduction of several children and replacing their mothers. The last feature of a literary doppelgänger, according to Webber, is that “The doppelgänger is typically the product of a broken home. It represents dysfunction in the family romance

of structured well-being, exposing the home as the original site of the ‘unheimlich’ (5). In this regard, it can be understood that Coraline’s family issues lead her to repress the “unhomely” feelings, which then resurface in the form of a duplicate world, where she can “play out her id fantasies” (393) as Gooding said. Consequently, causing the Other Mother to target Coraline. Lastly, recalling Freud’s original definition of the doppelgänger; “From having been an assurance of immortality, the doppelgänger becomes the ghastly harbinger of death” (9). According to him, “the double springs from the primary narcissism which dominates the mind of the child” (211), and is connected to an anxiety of death. When this stage is “surmounted” “the ‘double’ reverses its aspect” and instead of giving an “assurance of immortality” it turns into the “uncanny harbinger of death” (211).

As mentioned before, the story alludes to E.T.A Hoffman’s *Sandman* and Freud’s essay “The Uncanny” in several instances; with the mention of fog and other blindness related words, making it a rewriting of the source of definition of the uncanny. Another reference to Freud can be seen when the Other Mother shows Coraline the only condition to stay in the Other Home; two black buttons and a “spool of black cotton” (Gaiman 53). Rudd thinks the cotton brings to mind Freud’s discussion of his grandson, who in his book *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, uses spools of black cotton to comfort himself in the absence of his mother, associating the cotton with the mother figure. For the grandchild, the spool helps him come to terms with being an independent being, while for Coraline, the spool symbolizes the appeal of reuniting with the mother, in Rudd’s words, “Coraline is being offered the opposite: the prospect of being sutured to the mother forever” (7). Additionally, there are references to a number of Shakespeare plays. The retired actresses, Miss Spink and Miss Forcible, perform scenes from *Romeo & Juliet*, “what’s in a name... that which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet” and “I know not how to tell thee who I am,” says Miss Spink to Miss Forcible (52), both indicating that names are not significant in order to become an individual. Another reference to Shakespeare can be seen when Coraline refuses the Other Mother’s offers of games and wants her to let everyone go, the Other Mother says “Sharper than a serpent’s tooth is a daughter’s ingratitude” (90). It is clearly a reference to King Lear’s famous line “How sharper than a serpent’s tooth it is to have a thankless child” which he uses to complain about his daughters’ ungratefulness. Gaiman further adds fairy tale qualities and allusions to

make this a gothic rewriting of famous portal fantasies. This intertextuality brings the novella to another level in terms of its creepiness, as the definition of the uncanny suggests the disturbing feeling is caused by its closeness to the original. These fairy tale qualities are the reason why some critics champion the novella as “a particularly gothicised version of *Alice*” (Buckley 43). Along with the protagonist’s transition into another realm via a threshold, the accompanying animal, the cat, is clearly a reference to Alice’s Cheshire Cat, who functions as a mentor and guide through her journey. Furthermore, the inspiration for *Coraline* comes from Lucy Clifford’s Victorian fairy tale “The New Mother” in which two little girls are punished for misbehaviour when their mother vanishes and a new mother with glass eyes and a wooden tail comes in her place. Lastly, perhaps the most remarkable fairy tale reference can be found in the Other Mother’s witch-like qualities.

The Other Mother’s doppelgänger qualities, although they are the most prominent ones, are not the only aspects of her character that makes her an embodiment of uncanny features. The ghost children call the Other Mother “The Beldam” an archaic name, which means “a witch that seeks to consume” or a “hag, an old woman”. This means she can be much older than her appearance suggests and she has been tricking children by duplicating their parents for a long time. The Beldam’s likeness to the fairy-tale witches and evil stepmothers is apparent and is further emphasized with her skilful utilization of food as a means to lure her victims, her unnatural ability to conjure up images in the mirror, also using the mirror as a prison to incarcerate people and finally not having a reflection in the mirror. The Beldam can also push “through the mirror as if she were walking through nothing more solid than water” (107). These qualities remind many other evil witches from fairy tales. The ghost children’s remarks about her “When we died she kept us, and she fed on us, until now we’ve nothing left of ourselves, only snakeskins and spider husks” (Gaiman 101) and the cat’s statement about the true nature of her “She wants something to love, I think,” “Something that isn’t her. She might want something to eat as well. It’s hard to tell with creatures like that” (76) also confirm the Beldam’s “status as a modern version of the darkest figure in fairy tale lore, the malevolent and manipulative ‘evil witch or substitute mother figure’” (Jones 32). The name “Beldam” also reminds of “Belle Dame” which means beautiful woman. That is to say, the witch Beldam, can also appear as an attractive and alluring young lady to entrap her victims. To this

regard, it reminds of John Keats' ballad "La Belle Dame Sans Merci", in which a man gets ensnared and changed into a ghost after being persuaded by a beautiful, alluring lady with mystical powers:

She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild, and manna dew,
And sure in language strange she said.—
I love thee true. (Keats)

As it can be seen, Keats' poem reminds the exact way the Beldam tricks the children, with the temptations of delicious food and promises of eternal motherly love. Unavoidably, though, the narrator in Keats' poem soon sees "pale kings, and princes" and "pale warriors, death-pale were they all", and their "starv'd lips in the gloam, with horrid warning gaped wide", realizing that he, like many others before him, was tricked, but it is too late now. The "woebegone" and "wretched wight" imagery resonates with the descriptions of the Beldam's wickedness and ruthlessness by the ghost children in the novel:

She will take your life and all you are and all you care'st for, and she will leave you with nothing but mist and fog. She'll take your joy. And one day you'll awake and your heart and your soul will have gone. A husk you'll be, a wisp you'll be, and a thing no more than a dream on waking, or a memory of something forgotten (Gaiman 101).

Another dominant uncanny feature in the novel is the effect created by dolls and doll-like features of the residents of the Other Home. The description of the Beldam, with "white skin, thin and tall body and big black buttons for eyes" (34) is a reminder of a doll. However, the similarity ends with the visuality of the character, as a doll is normally an object to be played with. The Beldam, on the other hand, reverses the meaning in the sense that here, she is the one who wants to transform people into doll-like creatures to endlessly love and nurture them. This, of course, again changes meaning, as what she believes to be "one big family, for ever and always" (54), is where she is in utter control of everything, a dominant matriarch, who enslaves people and force her will upon their bodies, actions and even thoughts. This destructive possessiveness is evident in her treatment to other button eyed members of the other world.

As mentioned before, Freud associates wax-figures, automatons and artificial dolls with the potential to create uncanny effect. Anthropomorphism, giving human like attributes to a lifeless object, and vice versa, automatism, a thing that is perceived

as human is actually quite like a mechanical being, can be the real sources of the fear caused by dolls. In short, they are potentially uncanny because toys often evoke a profound doubt about their existential condition. However, in the Other Home, Coraline finds many toys that can move and flutter about, none of which scare her. Freud explains this as since children actively want their dolls to come to life, he claims that this effect cannot be attributed to an infantile dread and must instead originate from a "infantile wish" (9). Recalling an exchange he had with a woman talking about how she, as a child, was always lead to believe that her dolls would one day come to life, Freud says "the child had no fear of its doll coming to life, it may even have desired it" (9). The moving toys in her Other Home do not affect her in an uncanny way, in fact, she finds them "wonderful" (Gaiman 37). However, Coraline's invulnerability to the uncanny of the animate dolls does not extend to the ones imitating to be her Other Mother and Father, who, enthusiastically, want to castrate her. The other residents of the Other Home, as mentioned before, are all under the influence of the adamant control of the Beldam, who uses and abuses them as puppets to exert her power. The familiarity of their faces and names is what makes them uncanny for Coraline, as Freud says the closeness to the original is what creates the feeling of the uncanny as it represents the repressed. Moreover, as Rudd states, the loss of one's eyes is equivalent of losing one's identity, therefore soul. Being surrounded by the Beldam's countless and, in her eyes, disposable and soulless minions, is evidently an uncanny experience. The true extent of the Beldam's power over the bodies of the button eyed residents is shown when Coraline comes across the Other Father's disfigured and tossed aside body:

The thing was pale and swollen like a grub, with thin, sticklike arms and feet. It had almost no features on its face, which had puffed and swollen like risen bread dough. ... Coraline made a noise, a sound of revulsion and horror, and, as if it had heard her and awakened, the thing began to sit up. Coraline stood there, frozen. The thing turned its head until both its black button eyes were pointed straight at her. A mouth opened in the mouthless face, strands of pale stuff sticking to the lips, and a voice that no longer even faintly resembled her father's whispered, 'Coraline' (131).

The disfiguration proves the Beldam's powers of creation and manipulation, as well as her ruthlessness when it comes to insubordination. In another encounter with a disfigured body, Coraline has to grab an object from an unidentifiably disfigured mixture of two bodies. The uncanny sight is described as:

It was some kind of a sac, like a spider's egg case. It twitched in the light beam. Inside the sac was something that looked like a person, but a person with two heads, with twice as many arms and legs as it should have. The creature in the sac seemed horribly unformed and unfinished, as if two plasticine people had been warmed and rolled together, squashed and pressed into one thing (120).

Unsurprisingly, these two encounters are the sole instances when Coraline expresses fear about the doll-like creatures; "She had never been so scared" (120). The "dismembered" and "mutilated" bodies and limbs are, without a doubt, references to Freud's definition of castration. Additionally, the "unformed and unfinished plasticine people" reinforce the idea that the doppelgänger figure is meant to "emphasize the fluidity and malleability of identity in a cyber-world" (Duerre 9). One final example to the uncanny effect of the dolls, automatons and wax figures, is maybe another direct allusion to Freud's essay "The Uncanny"; "The Other Mother stood very still, giving nothing away, lips tightly closed. She might have been a wax statue. Even her hair had stopped moving" (156).

As the narrative goes on, it becomes clear that the Beldam's powers are not as unshakable and omnipotent as it looks at the beginning. It seems, her ability to fabricate and manipulate plasticine people, and already mentioned uncanny ability to create pocket universes personalized for each child she wants to abduct and absorb, are both dependent on the compliance of the abducted. That is, the more they resist and fight the more the structure of the created reality, the Other Mother's reality, disintegrates.

The cat, who has been Coraline's guide and protector during her journey in the Other Home, advises her to challenge the Beldam; "Challenge her. There's no guarantee she'll play fair, but her kind of thing loves games and challenges" (Gaiman 76). Having no other chance, and in an attempt to escape the Other Home and rescue her real parents, Coraline proceeds with this plan. The game Coraline proposes is that if she can find the locations of her real parents and the souls of the ghost children, she will be let go. Should she lose the game, she stakes herself as the Other Mother's reward (110). The Other Mother, who up until this point has maintained her composure, now displays her ferocious desire as Coraline says these words: "her fingers twitched and drummed and she licked her lips with her scarlet tongue" (109). She obviously likes the prospect of winning Coraline's affection "fair and square", once again revealing her true monstrous nature with her greed; a mother who devours her children. Coraline finds one of the missing souls in previously mentioned uncanny

sight; in the middle of a sac-like creature, composed of the misshapen and fused bodies of the Other Miss Spink and the Other Miss Forcible (119). And another one in a dark room with animate toys. As she advances in her quest, the Other Mother reveals her ruthlessness as she tries everything she can to thwart her success; she commands the disfigured body of the Other Father to attack Coraline (132), or she sends miniature sand storms to blind Coraline:

Something stung her face and hands like sand blowing on a beach on a windy day. She covered her eyes and pushed forward. The sand stings got worse, and it got harder and harder to walk, as if she were pushing into the wind on a particularly blustery day. It was a vicious wind, and a cold one.... [the wind] stung her cheeks and face with invisible sand, sharp as needles, sharp as glass (116).

It is clearly, another attempt at castrating Coraline by blinding her. Coraline finds the last soul with the help of the cat, who hunts down and kills a rat running away with it. Eventually, despite all her evil and tricky attempts to prevent and undermine Coraline's success, the Beldam is beaten in her own game. With each little triumph of Coraline, the Beldam gets angrier and thus loses her temper and her form starts to lose integrity:

Her black hair drifted about her head, as if it had a mind and a purpose all of its own. She coughed suddenly in the back of her throat, and then she opened her mouth. The other mother reached up her hand and removed a small, brass front-door key from her tongue (127).

The beautiful and alluring mother figure is now replaced with a menacing figure with hair that drifts "like the tentacles of a creature in the deep ocean" (72). The level of the Beldam's disfiguration reaches its peak when Coraline proudly presents all the souls that she has collected: "The other mother was huge—her head almost brushed the ceiling—and very pale, the color of a spider's belly. Her hair writhed and twined about her head, and her teeth were sharp as knives...." (155). The sudden change in her image reminds Medusa, which is another uncanny element as it is mentioned in the theoretical background chapter, as it is also explained by Rudd:

Freud speaks of images such as the Medusa's head representing the female genitals; that is, the head is a horrifying *vagina dentata*, the writhing snake hair adding to her phallic, fetishistic appearance. Descriptions of the other mother in Gaiman's work are clearly meant to invoke this (Rudd 6).

The disformation in her body is also mirrored in the gradual disintegration of the world she has created. As the Beldam loses more control over Coraline, the world around them begins to shatter and turn into almost two-dimensional cartoons:

Outside, the world had become a formless, swirling mist with no shapes or shadows behind it, while the house itself seemed to have twisted and stretched. It seemed to Coraline that it was crouching, and staring down at her, as if it were not really a house but only the idea of a house (125).

The other mother's interior monstrosity is mirrored in her external look as Coraline gains more control, and the vision progressively disintegrates as a result. When she gathers all three marbles, Coraline realizes that “the other mother could not create. She could only transform, and twist, and change” (147) and at that moment the house changes as well “The house had flattened out even more. It no longer looked like a photograph—more like a drawing, a crude, charcoal scribble of a house drawn on gray paper” (148).

In the final confrontation, Coraline forces herself to think like the Beldam, trying to defeat her enemy by adapting to her skills and weaknesses. When she tricks the Beldam into opening the portal to her own world by manipulating her to believe that she has won, Coraline throws the cat at the Beldam’s face, grabs her parents and runs for the portal. The act of using the cat as a weapon against the evil witch is already mentioned to be a representation of utilizing her newly formed superego against her id. It furthermore shows how much Coraline grows during the journey. After the narrow escape, Coraline finds herself in her real home, this time it does not look boring nor uninteresting to her:

The light that came through the picture window was daylight, real golden late-afternoon daylight, not a white mist light. The sky was a robin’s-egg blue, and Coraline could see trees and, beyond the trees, green hills, which faded on the horizon into purples and greys. The sky had never seemed so sky, the world had never seemed so *world* (162).

The initial elements of her life which drove her into wandering the unknown in hopes of *exploring* with their dullness and uninterestingness, now seem perfectly fine to her:

Coraline stared at the leaves on the trees and at the patterns of light and shadow on the cracked bark of the trunk of the beech tree outside the window. Then she looked down at her lap, at the way that the rich sunlight brushed every hair on the cat’s head, turning each white whisker to gold. Nothing, she thought, had ever been so interesting (162 – 163).

Nevertheless, her newly acquired sense of belonging and achievement is soon shaken once more, when she realizes that a “thing” has passed through the portal during her flight. When she finds out what the thing is her mouth drops open (175), it is the Beldam’s severed right hand, on which she promised she would play fair: “Five-

footed, crimson-nailed, the colour of bone. It was the other mother's right hand" (175). The image of a cut off hand, moving on its own is, without a doubt, one of the most striking uncanny elements in the novel. As Freud mentioned "dismembered limbs" particularly, "a hand cut off at the wrist... especially when ... capable of independent activity" have "something peculiarly uncanny about them" (14). Coraline's maturation is more evidently portrayed in the way she deals with "the castrated and castrating hand" (Rudd 6). She demonstrates another performance of cunningness and once again outwits the Beldam and her hand. Through the end of the story, Coraline feigns to be a normal girl, playing with her dolls and having a tea party (183). "Her movements and language are deliberately artificial as she adopts the 'protective coloration' needed to trick the other mother into believing the ruse" (Buckley 73). The "protective coloring" mentioned here is a reference to a nature show Coraline watches at the beginning of the story, in which she learns how some animals adapt to their surroundings to thwart a predator. With the help of this adopted role, "Coraline successfully tricks the other mother's severed hand into grasping at the key Coraline has laid on the ground. This is a trap, and both key and hand fall into a deep well" (73). It can be seen that the experience with the Other Mother has taught her some new skills as she clearly uses her wits to trick the hand by "deliberately assuming an appearance of a dependent child" (Gooding 399). In a way, she uses the Other Mother's greatest feature against her. Combining this new skill with her real parents' intelligence and bravery, she prevails. "In other words, she affects an innocence she no longer possesses, performing childhood, using it as a masquerade" (Rudd 14). This shows that "in order to enter adulthood the protagonist needs to internalize the disquieting lessons taught by the uncanny together with the idealized elements of the familiar" (Oprenau 5).

In the end, Coraline's exposure to the uncanny, her trials with her deepest and hidden thoughts, the very contents of her unconscious, cause her to realize what she is missing. The land of the uncanny becomes the very grounds where her healing begins. As Maria Tatar suggested, the uncanny can act like "agents of revelation" (173), leading the characters to be at peace with their identities. Coraline starts the journey without a complete identity, feeling still attached to her parents, always asking for attention and love. "She is dependent and emotionally attached to her parents," and the novel stages her progress to independence (Midgely 136). However, after her

encounter with the uncanny double of her real mother, she realizes that the Beldam's constant and pathological need for love is a reminder, or even a warning to her. In order to be whole, and in order to find her place in the world, she realizes, the maternal figure must be put aside. The Other Mother's constant ambivalence, symbolising the nurturing mother and the terrible monstrous feminine at the same time, shows how Coraline sees her real mother in two sides. She realizes she has to make a choice in order to gain dependency on herself not the mother figure. "In order to accomplish this dependency and to move beyond primary narcissism, the pre-Oedipal mother must be demonised and made abject so that the child can become an 'I', an individual functioning self" (Muller 6). In the Beldam's transformation into a "monstrous feminine" figure, the abjectification of the mother starts. Coraline symbolically "murders the mother" and, thus, gains her separation from her. The Kristevan idea of "murdering the mother" can also be seen in the Beldam's remarks about her own mother:

"I swear it," said the other mother. "I swear it on my own mother's grave."

"Does she have a grave?" asked Coraline.

"Oh yes," said the other mother. "I put her in there myself. And when I found her trying to crawl out, I put her back." (111).

The Beldam's confession like statement confirms the necessity of killing the mother. Moreover, Coraline, in a way, answers Kristeva's question "To be deprived of parents - is that where freedom starts?" (21). Her symbolic cutting of the cord and what is more, facing her repressed fears of loss of love, initiate her maturation process. In the end, she "detects the foreignness in herself" and makes peace with it. Moreover, the abject portrayal of woman's body in the slow disfiguration of her body, with her button eyes, Medusa-like writhing hair, teeth like knives and spider-like movements, the Beldam becomes a representation of abjectified mother figure. As Kristeva suggests, in her search for an identity separate from the mother, Coraline sees the mother figure as abject and, thus, gains independence.

CONCLUSION

This thesis' aim was to investigate the healing and reforming effects of the uncanny on the characters who had to face their repressed contents through facing their secret fears and desires, and in doing so overcame their identity crises. Both novels take the protagonists on a journey into another realm which is almost the binary opposite of their home worlds, or into an unfamiliar, distorted version of their homes. With the masterful use of the fantasy genre, Gaiman allows his characters to suffer greatly, and it is through this suffering that they find a light in the darkness and remember who they are. In the introduction to 2005 edition of *Neverwhere*, Gaiman explains why he chose to write such a story as follows "What I wanted to do was to write a book that would do for adults what the books I had loved when younger, books like *Alice in Wonderland*, or the *Narnia* books, or *The Wizard of Oz*, did for me as a kid" (Gaiman ii). The fantasy genre becomes a great tool for Gaiman to convey his ideas, as he adds "the mirror of fantasy can sometimes show us things we have seen so many times that we never see them at all, for the very first time" (Gaiman ii). The author's subtle blending of myth, fairy tales and psychology creates a perfect intertextual sense.

After his exile to the abyss of the unconscious part of city, the protagonist, Richard realizes that all he ever valued in London Above was not indeed his identity. His home, which became unhomely after his encounter with Lady Door, his fiancée, who leaves her at the first sight of an undesirable behaviour of Richard, his colleagues, who forget him in the span of a few days, all indicate that Richard was living a lie. The prospects of an ordinary desk job and an all controlling girlfriend, consuming and buying are indeed the values of the capitalist society and its impositions. His trials in the city below mercilessly remind him his false sense of reality through the manifestations of the uncanny. As Kristeva suggests "one becomes a foreigner in another country because one is already a foreigner from within" (20). In his confrontation with his doppelgängers, who try to persuade him to kill himself, saying that he is insane and none of this is actually real, Richard almost gives in to the temptation of jumping in front of a train. Eventually, Richard remembers what he shared here with other people, who became his home in this unhomely place. Richard's success in defeating his doubles was the first step into his formation of an identity, and thus healing. Likewise, his castration in the Night's Bridge, not being able to see,

becomes a symbol for his inability to see the truth of London Above. Finally, his battle with the Beast of London, a colossal monster that is continuously fed with the repressed memories of the undercity, which Richard have dreamed about since childhood, and his eventual defeat of the Beast, becomes the turning point in his transformation. Richard faces last of his insecurities and becomes a better version of himself. His symbolic death in the upper city, is therefore, opposed with his symbolic rebirth in the under city. One by one, though the trials of the undercity, Richard sheds his insecurities and his fears, in the end emerges as a new man.

The same process can be seen in Coraline's story as well. By crossing a threshold, following a rat, much similar to Alice following a rabbit, or Richard following a rat-speaker, Coraline finds herself in an uncanny location. By placing the Other Home within the boundaries of her real home, Gaiman alludes to the very definition of the uncanny: something that "retains within its structure the familiarity it aims to disrupt" (Oprenau 2). Coraline's expedition to the uncharted territories also connote with Rosemary Jackson's definition of the *unheimlich* "[it] functions to discover, reveal, expose areas normally kept out of sight" (Jackson 65). Coraline soon finds herself face to face with the doppelgänger of her real mother, the Other Mother. In her representation of the possessive, archaic mother figure, Coraline realizes that her constant demands of attention from her real parents were wrong. This awakening leads her further into her journey to form an identity, which she eventually does by renouncing her role as a needy, attention seeking child. The Other Mother's attempt to castrate her, by sewing black buttons in place of her eyes, becomes symbolic in the sense that the Other Mother aims to prevent Coraline's search for identity by blinding her, therefore, leaving her soulless (as eyes are the windows to the soul) and making her regress into a former, infantile stage, the pre-oedipal stage, when the child's dependence to the mother is constant. The doll-like residents and the ghost children, whose souls are long devoured by the Other Mother, all point to the fact that the Other Mother is a monstrous being who loves to be in utmost control. The dolls that become her obedient subjects and spies are another evident uncanny element, representing the automata. With other significant elements of the uncanny, and obvious references to Freud's essay, "The Uncanny", *Coraline* becomes almost like a rewriting of *Alice* in a gothic fashion. The Other Home, the duplicate people in it, and all the interesting contents of it, all become a representation of Coraline's unconscious, her id. In this

regard, Coraline's journey, much like Richard's, becomes a journey into her unconscious with hopes to come to terms with her repressed wishes. Her final challenge with the Other Mother shows how her encounters with the uncanny enabled Coraline to adapt to her surroundings and use her wits to overcome problems. Consequently, Coraline forms her identity and returns home with a new perspective that celebrates the simple yet magnificent aspects of her life.

In conclusion, both books by Gaiman include several features of a classical gothic narrative with a focus on facing the concept of "the other". Both books explicitly show Freud's ideas by presenting two primary sources of the uncanny; infantile complexes and animistic behaviour. Coraline's journey of gaining independence from her parents is caused by her Oedipal complex and the story is actually the dissolution of this complex. Richard's search for identity brings him to a place of otherness, where animistic beliefs and primitive conceptions are everywhere and alive. The protagonists take a journey through familiar but unfamiliar spaces which represent their inner worlds. Richard's journey to the London Below and Coraline's journey to the Other Home can both be considered a symbolic or spiritual journey to the unconscious. Through their journeys, they both encounter many uncanny elements which help them gain self-awareness and an acceptance of the other. When Coraline defeats the Other Mother and returns to her real world renewed and more appreciative of her life. Likewise, when Richard and Door thwart Angel Islington and the murderous Croup and Vandemar, and vanquish the Beast, London Below becomes home again. "Once the token of repression is lifted from an uncanny event, what was formerly unheimlich becomes heimlich: the once hostile world becomes habitable again" (Tatar 182). The contribution of confronting the uncanny can also be seen in the fact that the setting in each novel becomes a "metaphorical mapping of the self where there is room for transformation and change, allowing the characters to gain awareness and work out issues of self and identity" (Çetiner 130). It is this hostile environment that makes the protagonists discover themselves by facing the manifestations of their fears. To make a comparison between Richard and Coraline's transformations, it can be said that Richard's discovery of his true identity takes a lot longer than Coraline's, which is most probably a result of his age. After the trials and challenges of the mirror worlds, the protagonists return home having gained a new perspective on life. However, Richard swiftly regrets his decision to come back, while

Coraline is fully confident in her choice. In the end, when Richard decides to go back to London Below, he realizes his true self belongs in that world. Another point to mention is that, Gaiman's innumerable allusions to Freud's works, fairy tales, myths and history make the novels intertextual marvels. In the end, the protagonists' journeys turn into a confrontation of the repressed and by facing their repressed feelings and thoughts, the protagonists complete their individuation processes and find their true selves. Therefore, the concept of the uncanny is evident and crucial in these novels.



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