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The City & The City by China Miéville in the context of the genre "New Weird"

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Prohlášení

Prohlašuji, že jsem diplomovou práci vypracovala samostatně a předepsaným způsobem v ní uvedla všechnu použitou literaturu.

V Olomouci dne 25. dubna 2016   Eliška Fialová

Acknowledgements

Contents

Introduction

In this thesis I focus on fantasy writer China Miéville and his novel *The City & The City* (2009). I provide enough literary context for this writer to be able to connect him through time with the literary tradition of New Weird and present his views on various aspects of fantasy writing.

Miéville's works are often characterized as New Weird and it is the main aim of this thesis to introduce and analyse this genre which has crystalized in the anthology of Jeff and Ann VanderMeer but has been more or less present since 1990s. This genre is examined in connection with the novel *The City & The City*. Its New Weird features are analysed but the thesis also shows the departure of the novel from some of the New Weird characteristics which are to be found for example in the representative New Weird novel *Perdido Street Station* (2000) by China Miéville.

The first chapter of this thesis deals with establishing the literary context of China Miéville's oeuvre and thus trying to describe the various developments the fantasy literature has undergone and the different paths authors take to continue, disrupt or renew the tradition of fantasy literature which is far too often associated mostly with the famous fantasy writer J.R.R. Tolkien.

Most importantly, the survey of the fantasy development will allow me to discuss in the second chapter the characteristics of different generations of the weird fiction and subsequently introduce the persona of H.P. Lovecraft and his concept of the weird tale.

The third chapter deals with the modern weird and contains the detailed analysis of the novel *The City & The City*. The analysis focuses on the generic features of the novel and on various aspects of its urban setting. Moreover, the impact of the environment in which the inhabitants of *The City & The City* live is analysed in terms of Michael Foucault's theory of disciplinary power.

China Miéville was, and perhaps still is, seen as a leading personage of the New Weird movement with his novel *Perdido Street Station*. *The City & The City* published nine years later is also a New Weird novel but this thesis understands New Weird as a movement with a possible short life span and being in a flux bringing new idiosyncratic writing choices all the time. Therefore the analysis in chapter three is also a search for the changes that has or has not happened and then emerged in *The City & The City*.

Literary context for fantasy writer China Miéville

The popularity of fantasy narratives and their widening audience of viewers or readers is visible in the success of various television series such as the *Game of Thrones* by HBO (2011) based on the books by George R. R. Martin or The Harry Potter series by J. K. Rowling (1997-2007) followed by commercially successful movie adaptations to name just few examples of some of the most prominent cases. The television companies seem to realize the craving for the fantastic among their customers as is proved by the continuing trend of projecting their favourite characters from paper to screen. There is the most recent MTV adaptation of *The Shannara Chronicles* (aired 5.1.2016) based on the series of novels written by Terry Brooks and starting in 1977 with *The Sword of Shannara*. Also, there are *The Magicians* (aired 16.12.2015), series by SyFy based on the Lev Grossman's trilogy (*The Magicians*, 2009, *The Magician King*, 2011, *The Magician's Land*, 2014) or miniseries named *Alice* from 2009 by SyFy revisiting the world of mad hatters with the main character of Alice and others.

The quality or originality of the different products can be questioned, the series by Lev Grossman for example is a mix that closely follows the scenario of Harry Potter school adventures and the surprise, then acknowledgment and then saving of a newly discovered world. However, the fact that the demand for the genre of fantasy is present proves the point made by Daniel Baker in his essay "Why We Need Dragons: The Progressive Potential of Fantasy" where he says that its "increasing presence in the marketplace, together with the genre's potential for progressive socio-political representation, indicates the genre's aesthetic power."[1]

The part about progressive socio-political representation becomes problematic when it is applied to types of fantasy productions which lack the ability to create a world which would not be simply a utopian and nostalgic secondary world. To use the past and its interaction with present not in an escapist form but rather realize the full potential of the fantasy genre which can make use of the then and now for the benefit of the reader is another feature of the fantasy which is termed progressive by Baker.[2] Fantasy has the potential to bring Middle Ages into the heart of 21st century London and this "creative anachronism" and its effect "transforms the present."[3] This wording of the potential of fantasy genre is not unordinary,

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[1] Daniel Baker, "Why We Need Dragons: The Progressive Potential of Fantasy," *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*, vol. 23, no. 3 (2012): 437.
[2] Baker, 438-440.
[3] Brian Attebery, "The Politics (If Any) of Fantasy," *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*, vol. 4, no. 1 (1991): 16.

also China Miéville writes in his "Editorial Introduction" in *Historical Materialism* that "we need fantasy to think the world, and to change it."[4]

The discussion about the escapist fantasy literature has been present in the genre since its existence was acknowledged and to arrive at better understanding whose works has been thus labelled and why, the following chapters present an overview of the evolution of fantasy. By approaching the history of the genre diachronically the chapter one as a whole will also provide enough literary context to the works of China Miéville, namely his novel *The City & The City*.

The distinction between Fantasy and fantastic should be also made. Throughout this thesis the terms Fantasy and fantastic are used in the same way as Eric S. Rabkin explains them in his book *The Fantastic in Literature* (1977). Fantastic are the structural properties of the text, the text can be of any genre and type but the genre which is most commonly associated with it, and usually applies fantastic the most, is the genre of Fantasy. For Rabkin the fantastic is the way an author can do exactly what Miéville writes in his "Editorial Introduction," to change the world and he/she does so by the diametric reversal of the ground rules of the narrative. Ground rules are to be understood as a certain inner set of rules within a piece of art. The fantastic can be signalled in various ways but "one of the key distinguishing marks of the fantastic is that the perspectives enforced by the ground rules of the narrative world must be diametrically contradicted."[5] This reversal of the rules and its functions and qualities becomes important in the following discussion of many works by Fantasy writers from different generations.

Before going further it feels appropriate to include a short discussion on the topic of classification of fantasy when dealing with this genre. The prominent names in this field are John Clute, Brian Attebery, Kathryn Hume and also Tzvetan Todorov with J.R.R. Tolkien and Farah Mendlesohn.

John Clute's *Encyclopedia of Fantasy* (1997) brought to the theory of fantasy, among other things, the terms wrongness, thinning, recognition, and healing. These are terms Clute uses to describe "grammar" of fantasy. Wrongness is a moment in fantasy when the characters realize that the fantasy world is negatively changing and it may signal the potential victory of the antagonist. The process of change called Thinning describes departure of the magic or goodness from the fantasy world, as an example Clute mentions the Elves' leaving of Middle Earth. Recognition applies to moments when the characters discover their role in the story and

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[4] China Miéville, "Editorial Introduction," *Historical Materialism* 10, no. 4 (2002): 48.
[5] Eric S. Rabkin, *The Fantastic in Literature*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 8.

realize their true purpose, their path. One such example is the second half of Michael Ende's *Neverending Story* (1979) when the main protagonist finds out he has to bath in the Water of Life. Healing is a term to describe the return or reaching of the desired state of the fantasy land.

Tzvetan Todorov, a Bulgarian-French essayist and historian, wrote *Introduction à la littérature fantastique* (1970) translated by Richard Howard in 1973 as *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre.* Todorov classifies the fantasy narratives into two groups The Marvellous and The Uncanny, these are further divided into pure and fantastic subcategories.[6]

More recent valuable asset to the classification of fantasy is Farah Mendelsohn's *Rhetorics of Fantasy* (2008). In her book she differentiates between four modes of fantasy: the portal-quest, the immersive, the intrusive, and the liminal.[7] She examines, in a way similar to Brian Attebery in *The Fantasy Tradition in American Literature* (1980), whose influence she acknowledges, how the text acquires its fantastic quality and the relationship of readers to the fantastic. Though the book is clearly trying to establish categories, Mendlesohn stresses that these "are observations, not diktats, and they are powerful only to the degree that they remain arguable."[8] The last chapter proves her intention not to be prescriptive or establish a fixed set of rules because in it she examines the texts which are somewhere in between the four categories.

The classic portal fantasy is *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (1950) by C.S. Lewis. The fantastic world enters through a portal and the movement of people there and back again is possible but the magic cannot travel through the portal. However, Mendlesohn argues that the portal fantasies are not always about two different sealed worlds it is also about transition from mundane life where the fantastic is distant to the world filled with it. She gives as an example the hobbits in *Lord of the Rings*, Mendlesohn says that even though *Lord of the Rings* is known as a full secondary world, there is a portal from Shire into the rest of Middle Earth.[9]

The intrusion type of fantasy is in some ways similar to portal fantasy but with the intrusion type the characters are never familiarized with the fantastic, the reader is introduced to the fantastic by the protagonist and the aim is usually to get rid of the supernatural element.

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[6] For detailed analysis of Todorov's approach see Perkins' article "Finding Todorov in Russian Literary Criticism: The Struggle to Define the Fantastic" (2008) or Aichele's "Literary Fantasy and Postmodern Theology" (1991).

[7] Farah Mendlesohn, *Rhetorics of Fantasy* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2008), 18-26, e-pub.

[8] Mendlesohn, *Rhetorics of Fantasy*, 16, e-pub.

[9] Mendlesohn, *Rhetorics of Fantasy*, 30, e-pub.

The fantastic breaks into the familiar environment, it is an intrusion, as in a book by Neil Gaiman *Wolves in the Walls* (2003) when a family has to leave their house because wolves came out of the walls, but in the end the family takes their house back, the intrusion is gone.

The next type, the immersive fantasy, can be represented by Miéville's *Perdido Street Station* (2000) or M. John Harrison's *The Pastel City* (1971). Here, characters do not enter the fantasy world, they are part of it and presence of the fantastic cannot be questioned as a part of the story. The characters of immersive fantasy take the fantastic elements as part of their daily existence and the plot might be the least fantastic element in this type of fantasy.

The last category is very rare and it is the fuzziest one. A portal can appear there but characters choose not to enter it, as in the short story "The Door in the Wall" (1906) by H.G. Wells. Moreover, the reader is unnerved by the presence of fantastic and feels that something is odd but the characters show no signs of shock. This is well exemplified in *The Serial Garden* (2008) by John Aiken, where the Armitage children have a pet unicorn in a garden.

The discussion of the fantastic, as defined earlier, could possibly start with such early works as Sir Gawain and the Green Knight or Beowulf. In a verse translation by Keith Harrison Sir Gawain's journey is no less fantastic than that of Frodo, the crucial hobbit from *Lord of the Rings* as Gawain too battles with dragons, wolves and giants.

However, the following outline starts the investigation of the origins of the characteristic traits, the structural properties of the fantasy genre as they appeared in the 18th and 19th century. The distinction between the fantastic and fantasy is important when discussing the origins of the genre fantasy as such. China Miéville in his interview with Stephen Shapiro discourages from dealing with development of the fantasy narratives and not distinguishing between the fantastic and the fantasy as a "genre of modernity" and he considers a notion that fantasy comes from fairy-tale rather odd.[10] Though Miéville does not specify exactly when the forming of the genre takes place, he links it with the Gothic literature. Therefore according to his interpretation the late 18th and early 19th century was when the fantasy emerged as a genre. The earlier examples of texts are, in Miéville's view, works which use the fantastic but are not fantasies in the strict generic sense. His understanding of the topic coincides with the one of José Monleón in his book *A Spectre is Haunting Europe: A Sociohistoric Approach to the Fantastic* (1990) but other critics are

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[10] China Miéville, Stephen Shapiro, "Gothic Politics, A discussion with China Miéville," *Gothic Studies* 10, no. 1 (2008): 62.

willing to see the beginnings of fantasy as a genre also in the fairy-tales which is a point of view adopted in the following chapters.[11]

Already in the early 18th century some of the important concepts of fantasy narratives were discussed and they are still valuable for modern fantasy writers today. These are mainly the concept of fancy, imagination and allegory. These concepts were developed by Joseph Addison in his articles in magazine *The Spectator* reviewing Dryden, or S.T. Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria* (1817). As the concept of allegory is the most relevant to the analysed book *The City & The City* and author China Miéville, the following discussion focuses on it.

An influential Romantic poet, William Blake, in his work "A Vision of the Last Judgement" separates allegory from the imagination. "A Vision of the Last Judgement" is, despite its many religious overtones, part of the literary tradition. According to Blake if a work of the fantastic is read as allegory, it is inferior and dependant on the depths of author's memory and thus creating a kind of narrative of reality only in the fantastic disguise.[12]

Fantasy writers like George MacDonald or C.S. Lewis but also China Miéville often had to read about their works that they are allegories for various political or social conflicts. Though the politics may be part of the texts, the authors rebel against the reading of their works as allegories. Their main source of inspiration is imagination and seeing in their works only the reality and dismissing the fantastic is, in China Miéville's view, what allegory does.[13] Therefore, it seems understandable why Miéville and others avoid allegory as main interpretation of their works.

However, Miéville seems to work with the narrow definition of allegory where "the action of the narrative 'stands for' something not explicitly stated" and it might be suggested that the allegory called symbolic does not have to dismiss the fantastic altogether, because in it "a character or material thing is not merely a transparent vehicle for an idea, but rather has a recognizable identity or narrative autonomy apart from the message it conveys."[14]

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[11] See for example Fredric Jameson *Archaeologies of the Future* (2005); Edward James, Farah Mendlesohn, eds. *The Cambridge Companion to Fantasy Literature* (2012).

[12] William Blake, "A Vision of the Last Judgement," in *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, Erdman, V. David (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 552.

[13] Shapiro, Miéville, "Gothic Politics," 62.

[14] Encyclopædia Britannica Online, s. v. "allegory," *Allegory, Art and literature*, accessed April 19, 2016, http://www.britannica.com/art/allegory-art-and-literature.

Victorian fantasy

There are two main literary traditions which helped to establish the ground for the fantasy as we know it today. The first one is the tradition of children fantasies in the 19th century and the other one is the Gothic tradition. However, there are other authors whose works cannot be easily put into one of these categories but their role in the forming of the fantastic genre is also acknowledged where appropriate.

It is also important to point out that though many works might present themselves, or were classified, as children fantasies it does not imply their mediocrity. This view is presented in Stephen Prickett's book *Victorian Fantasy* as follows: "If it is also true that many of the fantasies of the Victorian period were children's books that is not because they were simplistic, but because children, until they are educated out of it, are interested in everything."[15]

Therefore many fantasies were disguised as children's books during the Victorian era but the boundaries between Victorian children's literature and fantasy narratives which are enjoyed by adults as well is very often quite thin. The fantastic elements provide adult readers with new perspectives on various life experiences. This potential of fantasy, allowing readers to see world differently and offer new perspectives, is also discussed in *The Fantastic in Literature* by Eric Rabkin.

Many of the children's fantasies in the early Victorian period have traceable German influence and it was mainly thanks to the popularity of E.T.A. Hoffmann and English translation of Brothers Grimm in 1827. The same year Thomas Carlyle also published his collection of German authors interested in fairy and folk tales such as Ludwig Tieck, Johann A. Musäus, and the collection is called *German Romance*. These Germanic elements and interest in folk and fairy tales made its way into English fantastic fiction as well.
One of the British authors who was influenced by the German folklore was George MacDonald. His novel *Phantastes* first published in 1858 had a considerable influence on C. S. Lewis, a famous fantasy writer of the 20th century whose series about the land of Narnia started with *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (1950).

George MacDonald with his novels anticipated the type of fantasy that Farah Mendlesohn identifies as portal-quest fantasy and inspired many by his other stories as "The Light Princess" (1864), "The Golden Key" (1867), "The Princess and the Goblin" (1872).

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[15] Stephen Prickett, *Victorian Fantasy* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2005), 3.

George MacDonald was a friend of Charles Dodgson who is better known as Lewis Carroll, the author of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking Glass* (1871). Lewis Carroll, a scientist and a photographer, created in the *Through the Looking Glass* a world with rules of chess, there are chess communities that analyse the Alice's chess game in terms of specific chess moves, and the *Alice's Adventures* are full of rules of croquet. Jan Susina in his article "Playing Around in Lewis Carroll's Alice Books" describes Carroll as "one of the more playful authors of children's literature."[16]

Farah Mendlesohn' another type of fantasy is immersive fantasy where "the world must act as if it is impervious to external influence."[17] An author who is credited for creating such stories first is William Morris thanks to his novels as *The Story of the Glittering Plain* (1891), *The Well at the World's End* (1896).[18] His worlds are pseudo medieval and in some stories there is considerable Gothic influence, for example "Lindenberg Pool" (1856). Though works by William Morris were immersive fantasies according to Mendlesohn, the same cannot be said about his earlier works such as *The House of the Wolfings* and *The Roots of the Mountains* (both 1889). These are works where by looking back on the medieval Germanic tribes, which have been in Europe, they try to "project an ideal of community for the future" but are not set in the imaginary secondary world and the magic present in the stories is part of the invented historical past.[19]

If George MacDonald had a considerable influence on C.S. Lewis then the same could be said about Morris and J.R.R. Tolkien. Morris worked on translations of Icelandic sagas between 1868 and 1870, and this initiated his writing of the story "The Story of Sigurd the Volsung and the Fall of the Nibelungs" (1877). Both this story and his works *The House of the Wolfings* and *The Roots of the Mountains* are mentioned in Tolkien's letters regarding his own creations of fantasy worlds.[20]

Tolkien's works have been subjected to scrupulous searching for the author's influences and though the critics managed to assemble a wide range of authors, Tolkien's main influence is still the linguistic one, Old English, Old Norse or Old Icelandic. Morris is also "principally known as a writer who shared Tolkien's love of things medieval."[21] Tolkien,

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[16] Jan Susina, "Playing Around in Lewis Carroll's Alice Books," *American Journal of Play* 2, no. 4 (2010): 419.
[17] Mendlesohn, *Rhetorics of Fantasy*, 91, e-pub.
[18] Gary K. Wolfe, in *The Cambridge Companion to Fantasy Literature*, Edward James, Farah Mendlesohn, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 16.
[19] Stuart D. Lee, ed., *A Companion to J.R.R. Tolkien* (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2014), 307.
[20] Lee, *A Companion to J.R.R. Tolkien*, 304.
[21] Lee, *A Companion to J.R.R. Tolkien*, 304.

in his letter to his American Publishers Houghton Mifflin, makes his point about his works being of linguistic interest first very clear: "The invention of languages is the foundation."[22]

An author who stands somewhere in between science fiction and fantasy is David Lindsay. His book *A Voyage to Arcturus* (1920) is about a man, Maskull, who journeys to a different planet system named Arcturus. He travels through a land full of incredible creatures and his own body changes as well, he acquires extra set of eyes or a tentacle which serves him as a translation device and he is able to communicate with Joiwind, one of the creatures he meets. The transformation of Maskull is described rather dryly and his emotional response to the frightening alternations of his body is limited to the acknowledgment that he is in a new world and that the organ might serve some purpose. One of the alternations is described as follows: "From the region of his heart, a tentacle had budded. It was as long as his arm, but thin, like whipcord, and soft and flexible. As soon as he thoroughly realised the significance of these new organs, his heart began to pump. Whatever might, or might not, be their use, they proved one thing that he was in a new world."[23] These bodily violations are also an important motif in China Miéville's *Perdido Street Station* whose character descriptions demand of the readers a very vivid imagination and raise many questions as to how these characters came to terms with their bodies.

What sets this work further apart from writers such as Tolkien or Lewis according to Rachel Falconer, Professor of Modern English Literature at the University of Lausanne, is its treatment of the presented lands not as a desirable place, a golden age dream worlds but rather hellish places.[24]

Another fantasy writer who precedes Tolkien and Lewis, and the boom of genre fantasy which followed, is Edward Plunkett, known as Lord Dunsany. His works include plays as well as novels. He also contributed to the Irish literature canon by his work *The Curse of the Wise Woman* (1933) and began involved with the Irish Renaissance movement through his play *The Glittering Gate* which was performed at Abbey Theatre in April 1909. His earlier plays are *King Argimenes and the Unknown Warrior* (1911) or *The Gods of the Mountain* (1911). But he is primarily seen as fantastic writer, and is also often considered one of the early writers of the weird fiction.

Lord Dunsany started his writing career with novels from which the most widely known is arguably *The Gods of Pegana* (1904). Followed by *A Dreamer's Tales* (1910), *The*

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[22] Humphrey Carpenter, Christopher Tolkien, eds., *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1981), 232-4.
[23] David Lindsay, *A Voyage to Arcturus* (New York: Ballantine, 1973), 44-45.
[24] Rachel Falconer, in Lee, *A Companion to J.R.R. Tolkien*, 313.

Book of Wonder (1912), *Tales of Three Hemispheres* (1919) and others. The *Gods of Pegana* present a creation of world never heard before, with Gods and mythic creatures of author's pure imagination. Moreover, Dunsany does not stop with the creation of the world, he also envisions its end announced by a bird called Mosah.

When the conception of the fantastic in *The Gods of Pegana* is compared with another work by Dunsany *The King Efland's Daughter* (1924) a significant change can be seen. Though the fantastic is very much present in the novel, there are two countries and only one possesses magic, Elfland. The other country Erl and its parliament are aware of these magical powers and they would like to have them as well. The central conflict is about a hero Alveric who wants to be reunited with his lover, Lirazel and he travels many years through the lands in order to find her, Alveric is from Erl and Lirazel is from Elfland.

S.T. Joshi, an American literary critic, argues that Dunsany in his later works turns slightly away from the fantastic and that it could be attributed to his extensive travels through Middle East or Africa where he sees wonders in real world and this discourages him in making up imaginary worlds. Also, S.T. Joshi says about *The King Efland's Daughter* that its fantastic, namely the magic of the kingdom of Elfland, is not always given priority or seen as superior.[25]

Authors of the Victorian fantasy were, as has been said in the beginning, influenced by German folklorist but also folk and fairy stories in general, this could be said also about the end of the 19th century and the fantastic works of W.B. Yeats or Andrew Lang whose series of coloured fairy books is widely known and read. In his first book in the colourful series *The Blue Fairy Book* (1889) he collected some fairy tales from Brothers Grimm, Madame d'Aulnoy and other sources.

Throughout the chapter the relations between some of the works and authors were made and the way they influenced each other's works but the overview is so far missing an important fraction of the literary history of genre fantasy. The following chapter presents this missing piece, the Gothic, supernatural or horror influence, where authors like Horace Walpole, Anne Radcliffe or Charles Maturin are introduced.

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[25] S. T. Joshi, *Lord Dunsany: Master of the Anglo-Irish Imagination* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1995), 6.

Gothic romances

The adjective Gothic premodifies many different nouns apart from literature. Architecture, metal, clothes and make-up are all associated with it. The word itself means "of the Goths," "pertaining to the Goths or their language," the Goths were Germanic people originally from Scandinavia who invaded Roman Empire in 410. [26] Centuries later the adjective Gothic was used by architects of Renaissance to mean Germanic, Teutonic scornfully describing the new architectural style which appeared in northern Europe around 12th century and flourished until 16th century. The Renaissance architects felt that describing an architectural style Gothic was presupposing its barbarism and with classicism taking over in the architecture the Gothic style acquired pejorative, dark and barbaric connotations.

Romantics of the late 18th and 19th century recovered the Gothic aesthetics and looked rather nostalgically on the medieval times not with scorn but with awe. The novel which initiated the vogue of Gothic fiction in late 18th century is usually agreed to be the Horace Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* (1764). Other works belonging to the Gothic vogue are Anne Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), Matthew Gregory Lewis' *The Monk* (1796) and later work by Charles Robert Maturin *Melmoth, the Wanderer* (1820). Adam Roberts provides detailed investigation of these works and their characteristics in his essay "Gothic and horror fiction" which is included in *The Cambridge Companion to Fantasy Literature*.

The short novel by Walpole which in words of later famous horror/weird writer H.P. Lovecraft is "thoroughly unconvincing and mediocre in itself" influenced whole generations of writers and Gothic school of writing emerged in its wake, which Lovecraft admits despite the above quoted description.[27] When discussing Gothic literature Lovecraft presents its authors and their works as the early horror writings and forerunners of weird fiction writings. Though he specifies that they are not yet the true weird, it is clear from his treatment of the topic that their literary influence is not unimportant for the development of the weird fiction.

The tale of *Castle of Otranto* contains motifs which then became typical of the whole Gothic genre. The mysterious locations and time displacements, the motif of power which is often linked with sexual desire and pleasure and also what Gothic literature gave its readers was the experience of the sublime instead of previously preferred beauty.[28]

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[26] Douglas Harper, "Gothic," Online Etymology Dictionary, accessed March 12, 2016, http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?allowed_in_frame=0&search=Gothic

[27] H. P. Lovecraft, ed. E. F. Bleiler, *Supernatural Horror in Literature* (New York: Dover Publications, 1973), 7.

[28] The discussion of the Gothic motifs is here inspired by an article from Professor John Bowen from the University of York. See John Bowen, "Gothic motifs," *Discovering Literature: Romantics and Victorians*, British Library, accessed March 3, 2016, http://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/gothic-motifs

Castle of Otranto is located in southern Italy, where other Gothic stories take place as well, though central Europe, as in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), is not excluded. These locations are seen as distant, detached from the familiar life, abounding with old superstitions and legends. However, in opposition to the vast wilderness there are also closed spaces - prisons, vaults, dungeons, buildings, which represent the constraint and powerlessness of the protagonists. Isabella finds herself in the basements of the castle of Otranto, Jonathan Harker from *Dracula* is trapped in the castle of this beast.

As for time displacements, Gothic finds intriguing the clash between the very old, long gone and the present. More importantly, the clash between the two periods. The most obvious evidence of past disrupting and changing the present in Gothic tales is a ghost. Thus in *Castle of Otranto* the ghost of Alonso in form of a statue sending down a helmet stops the wedding and in other part of the novel, a portrait comes alive. The machinery and tricks of Gothic tales might be discarded as unoriginal, ghost stories and other horror stories have been around for a long time, but the tales contain an element of uncanniness for which *Castle of Otranto* largely owes its success.

Sigmund Freud in his essay "The Uncanny" from 1919 starts his investigation of the term 'uncanny' by examining its origin from German word Heimlich which can be understood in two different ways:

I. *Heimlich,* adj.: I. Also *heimelich, heinielig,* belonging to the house, not strange, familiar, tame, intimate, comfortable, homely, etc.
II. Concealed, kept from sight, so that others do not get to know about it, withheld from others, cf. Geheim [secret]; so also Heimlichkeit for Geheimnis [secret]. To do something heimlich, i.e. behind someone's back; heimlich meetings and appointments.[29]

The Gothic literature, as has been said, makes use of the contradiction of past and present, creating sense of unease because something which has been once *familiar* and even *intimate*, such as a member of family, becomes unhomely, *concealed* or *secret*, for example in a form of a ghost. The definition of the term Heimlich from which word uncanny arises is twofold but not contradictory. A familiar object, person can suddenly cease to be familiar and becomes concealed, detached and this eerie change is accompanied by the feeling of the uncanny and the process can be reversed as well. In the novel *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886) by Robert Luis Stevenson the idea of doubles, doppelgangers is central to the narrative and provides countless instances for the feeling of uncanny as someone known, in

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[29] Sigmund Freud, "The Uncanny," in *Sigmund Freud, Art and Literature*, Albert Dickson ed. (London: Penguin Classics, 1988), 339-347.

Stevenson's narrative Dr. Jekyll, can contain another personality, darker and *withheld from others* - the persona of Mr. Hyde.

The concept of the familiar and of the unknown touches also on the topic of the sublime, a term which came into the discussions of aesthetics of beauty in the 19th century. It meant a change in the perception of what is beautiful. This change of thinking is best seen in an important essay of the Romantic era by Edmund Burke named "Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful."

There Burke explains that not only things which are subdued to human will and liking are beautiful but the wild and untamed has also something to offer even though it might cause you pain and it terrifies you. The concept of beauty is then altered and what evokes harmony and order is seen as beautiful but it is put in contrast to the sublime. Burke applies this aesthetic distinction even on animals and an example can be made easily on many domesticated and wild animals. While a dog breed Jack Russel Terrier can be beautiful, it is in stark contrast to its predecessor, a wolf, which in its natural habitat and hungry can be sublime but not necessarily beautiful.[30]

Another motif in Gothic literature, motif of power, is explored in Gothic tales in terms of its unequal distribution. The famously powerless heroine such as Emily from Anne Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) is threatened by the all-powerful villain. The power or its absence is often linked with exploration of sexual desires and taboos. That the borderline between pornography and literary expression of sexual perversion or voyeurism is thin can be seen in the Gothic novel by Matthew Lewis *Monk* (1796).
These Gothic traits can be found in many mainstream Victorian novels. Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847) is a novel about family life and marriage but the character of Heathcliff and his relationship with Catherine Earnshaw gives the novel Gothic feeling of terrorized passion. Heathcliff is a foundling who ultimately destroys the Earnshaw family and when Catherine dies, he is haunted by her presence. Also Charles Dickens creates occasional Gothic pieces such as a short story "The Signalman", first published in 1866 in a collection *Mugby Junction*. However, also in his better known works Gothic influence of the period is traceable. Miss Havisham from *Great Expectations* (1861) is a spinster wearing her old wedding dress since she was left at the altar by her fiancé. She lives in a decaying mansion, the Satis house. Though it has been said that many Gothic tales take place in distant,

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[30] Edmund Burke, *The Works of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke* (1756; London: John C. Nimmo, 1887), 9-66.

mysterious locations it is not obligatory and feelings of terror can be produced by a house just down the road at the edge of town like the Satis House.

In the succession of texts which followed *Castle of Otranto* in the Gothic vogue in 1780s and 90s two authors are prominent, Clara Reeve and Ann Radcliffe. Clara Reeve wrote *The Champion of Virtue: A Gothic Story* but it was renamed *The Old English Baron* and published in 1777. It is a true offspring of *Otranto*, with its ghost machinery and plot about a rightful heir of a castle helped to his heritage by a ghost of his father. At the same time, however, Reeve tries to improve what she sees as the main downfall of the Walpole's novel that is its mixing of tone, of the light-hearted and terrifying sequences.[31]

Another feature which defines some of the gothic tales is the rationalisation of the mysteries happening in the tale. This is an important feature of Radcliffe's works and H.P. Lovecraft links Radcliffe with Charles Brocken Brown through this characteristic. Ch. B. Brown is an American author, whose works like *Wieland* (1798), *Ormond* (1799) and others, belong to the American gothic tradition and Lovecraft compares him with Radcliffe and comments on their writing styles as follows: "Like her, he injured his creations by natural explanations; but also like her, he had an uncanny atmospheric power which gives his horrors a frightful vitality as long as they remain unexplained."[32] Radcliffe's attempts to present Emily's terrors as either coincidence, scheming of Montoni or simply tricks of her terrified mind seem to coincide with the approach to fantastic writing which has been mentioned previously as not 100% fantastic because the fantastic elements are still perceived as dreams or allusions. *Mysteries of Udolpho* is thus on the same spot on the scale as the novel *Phantastes* by G. MacDonald because the terrors and the supernatural hauntings are rationalized for the reader.

Matthew Gregory Lewis, by contrast, does not rationalize even the appearance of Satan himself in his novel *The Monk* (1796). Having mentioned this work already in connection with one of the main Gothic motifs, the sexual desires and passions, its most characteristic trait has been acknowledged. Ambrosio, a Spanish monk, is seduced by Matilda who entered the convent in disguise and from that moment on the monk is under her witchcraft influence.

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[31] Adam Robert, "Gothic and Horror literature," in Edward James, Farah Mendlesohn eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Fantasy Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 27.
[32] Lovecraft, Bleiler, *Supernatural Horror in Literature*, 9.

During the early years of 19ᵗʰ century the Gothic romances seem to be drained of the rigor and newness they possessed in the 1780s.[33] A novel which is put in the same Gothic horror tradition as *Udolpho* but brought a fresh rigour to the genre is *Melmoth, the Wanderer* (1820) by Charles Robert Maturin. The book was admired by many artists, among them Charles Baudelaire and Honoré Balzac, Lovecraft saw the novel as a mature Gothic piece of writing for its style and powerful scenes of terror over person's destiny.[34]

Gothic fiction brought into the fantastic literature many different motifs as has been outlined and among them should be included also the monsters which were created by the authors such as Mary Shelley, Bram Stoker or George W.M. Reynolds. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1817), with its creation of an artificial man monster who learns how to speak and write inspired many filmmakers and dramatists as well as other writers of fiction. Bram Stoker created a vampire classic in his *Dracula* (1897), and George W.M. Reynolds terrifies his readers by his shapeshifter beast in *Wagner the Wehr-Wolf* (1847).

Tolkien and the EFP and China Miéville

This outline of the fantastic literature has come so far to the generation of writers who might be kept in libraries by fantasy authors such as J.R.R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis who have been also mentioned and there has been a short visit to the Gothic realm of writing.
This chapter presents a short view on the writers who emerged in the wake of the success of Tolkien and some authors that might be today slightly overshadowed by the still continuing influence of Tolkienian fantasy to be taken as a basis for defining the genre.

The work of J.R.R. Tolkien itself, his invention of languages, his papers on numerous medieval texts and his notion of the fairy tales will not be dealt with in detail here more than it has already been commented on. Rather, the focus of this subchapter is the overall effect his life-work had on the fantasy genre in the following decades and the way he influenced other writers and what effect the EFP (extruded fantasy product) has had on the contemporary writers such as China Miéville.

The first reaction to fantasy father figure like Tolkien is to follow his footsteps, sometimes too obviously with not much personal invention. These creations are what can be labelled as EFP. In the year 1977 Stephen Donaldson published the first installment of his

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[33] This observation has been made by Adam Roberts in his essay "Gothic and horror fiction" (2012) and it coincides with Lovecraft's opinion on the Gothic writing of the period which he presented decades earlier in his paper *Supernatural Horror in Literature* (1973).
[34] Lovecraft, Bleiler, *Supernatural Horror in Literature*, 10-12.

series *The Chronicles of Thomas Covenant, Lord Foul's Bane.* The series continue with nine more books but the fantasy world in the early installments very much resembled Middle-earth. The same is true for *The Sword of Shannara* by Terry Brooks also published in 1977. *The Shannara* series gradually find their own path in the next trilogies and tetralogy but the first steps taken with *The Sword of Shannara* were simply tracking down of the father Tolkien.

There were authors who aimed their criticism at the copycats of medieval settings of Tolkien's secondary world such as Diana Wynne Jones with her *Tough Guide to Fantasyland* (1996). The witty Discworld novels of Terry Pratchett starting with *The Colour of Magic* (1983) and *The Light Fantastic* (1986) change the stock characters of the EFP into parodies and far-fetched versions of themselves. Wizard here is not wise, noble and brave, Rincewind can hardly do one spell that he does remember and his bravery, if there is any, is very often more of a mistake than choice.

Though sometimes ridiculing the boom of the post-Tolkien genre, fantasy proves the influence the publishing of LOTR[35] had on the literature world. The Ballantine publisher, who published the first official paperbacks in 1965, realized the genre's potential and began re-printing the fantasy of Mervyn Peake, E.R. Eddison and older classic by William Morris or Lord Dunsany.[36] The fantasy genre developed not only by means of the different novels but also through board games and role playing games – RPG.

The influential science fiction writer H.G. Wells is credited for developing the amateur versions of the military RPG played by soldiers to predict enemy's moves and practice tactics. With the success of Tolkien's LOTR came a version of RPG which was not predicated on the historical battles of our world but on Middle-Earth's creatures and medieval settings. Gary Gygax from Tactical Studies Rules published first fantasy RPG called *Dungeons and Dragons* in 1974 and later in 1982 eager fans could enjoy even more specialized MERP – *Middle-Earth Role Playing Game*, a creation of Iron Crown Enterprises.[37] The adaptations of Tolkien's trilogy by the director Peter Jackson changed the RPGs and also the video games. The original illustrations were replaced by the images from the films.

The second reaction to the Tolkien figure is a revolt and finding of new fantasy territories. Though there are smaller revolts where while being innovative the authors still

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[35] LOTR is used here as an acronym for *Lord of the Rings*, a trilogy by J.R.R. Tolkien (*The Fellowship of the Ring* (1954), *The Two Towers* (1954), *The Return of the King* (1955).
[36] James, Mendlesohn, *The Cambridge Companion to Fantasy Literature*, 72-3.
[37] See more in Michael Drout, *J.R.R. Tolkien Encyclopedia: Scholarship and Critical Assessment* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2007), 228-30.

admit some amount of influence Tolkien exercises over their creative process. Among them Alan Garner, author of *The Weirdstone of Brisingamen* (1960), *The Moon of Gomrath* (1963) and Susan Cooper with her series *The Dark is Rising* or her novel *The Grey King* (1975).[38] Ursula Le Guin is an American author whose *Earthsea* novels (*A Wizard of Earthsea*, 1968; *The Tombs of Atuan*, 1971; *The Farthest Shore*, 1972 etc.) are reminders of what fantasy can be apart from what we already know from Middle-earth. Tolkien as a scholar of the European medieval weaves these traditions into his Middle-earth social order and customs but Le Guin, though she too has dragons and wizards, leans more to the Eastern traditions and her books also bring forth the issue of gender and race. Wizard Ged in *A Wizard of Earthsea* is a black boy and her *The Tombs of Atuan* hint at the gender imbalance in traditional fantasy and Le Guin continues her involvement with the theme in *Tehanu* (1990).[39]

Other works which cannot be defined in the simple EFP model of the good forces against bad are E.R. Eddison's *Worm Ouroboros* or *The Iron Dragon's Daughter* (1993) by Michael Swanwick. Swanwick's novel is an original take on the fantasy worlds where he combines industrial world and dragons, elves and a changeling girl as a main protagonist. He admits the influence of LOTR as his first encounter with fantasy but he aimed at a fantasy which would "comment fruitfully on the world we have" and enable him to "utilize the kind of environments I [Swanwick] knew and had grown up with: factories, and garbage dumps, and malls and stripper bars, and to invest them with a kind of faerie glamor."[40]

This approach which tries to bring the faerie world closer to the 20th century reader either by setting or social order which is more recognizable by the modern readers might be understood as an attempt to avoid the consolatory nature, the escapist tendencies, of the EFP. China Miéville is known for his objections against the escapist tendencies in fantasy literature and he sees consolation and escape as "an aesthetic which eases the relationship of the reader to reality, which smooths over contradictions."[41] The ending of LOTR is tragic but in Miéville's terms this does not mean that there is no easily accessed consolation throughout he books, as it does not depend solely on the happy or sad ending.

Miéville, though admitting that wanting comfort is not wrong itself, does not hand it in his novels on a silver platter, in order to receive it the reader "might have to engage in a slightly unexpected way with the text, and that encourages kind of engaged and critical

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[38] Lee, *A Companion to J.R.R. Tolkien*, 337-40.
[39] Lee, *A Companion to J.R.R. Tolkien*, 341-42.
[40] Nick Gevers, "The Literary Alchemist, An Interview with Michael Swanwick," *Infinity Plus*, accessed: February 23, 2016, http://www.infinityplus.co.uk/nonfiction/intms.htm
[41] Joan Gordon, China Miéville, "Reveling in Genre: An Interview with China Miéville," *Science Fiction Studies* 30, no. 3 (2003): 372-373.

reading."[42] There are several tactics Miéville uses to avoid the consolatory fantasy tendencies. His endings are "emotional" or "thematic" rather than narrative and his societies are not always "internally coherent, consistent, bounded, and essentially safe."[43]

Therefore, through belonging to a certain social group, for example elves or khepri (Miéville's race from *Perdido*) the character should not exhibit only the typical traits of the group, there are deeper divisions in society. Dwarves do not have to be always grumpy and less wise than elves, who in turn do not have to be always handsome and good warriors. China Miéville is known for his negative comments on the work of Tolkien and his epigones which earned him some harsh criticisms.[44]

However, he is not alone in his refusal to accept the Tolkien's version of the fantasy narrative as the only and unquestionable role model. The critical response in the 1950s and 60s, the years when the popularity of the trilogy culminated, is divided in two warring camps, and there is no middle ground. Either the criticism sees *Lord of the Rings* as a masterpiece or it is hostile towards the trilogy. Commentators with the opinion similar to Miéville's are for example Alfred Duggan, who published his review in *The Times Literary Supplement* (1954) or Edwin Muir who presented in his reviews arguments which have been then repeated on many occasions, the reviews appeared in the years 1954 and 1955 in *The Observer*. His reproaches are about the immaturity of the heroes which concerns also sexual immaturity and their one-dimensionality. Catherine Stimpson in her essay published 1969 by Columbia University continues in the same vein.[45]

The counter arguments to these and other criticisms on Tolkien's works are to be found for example in Clark and Timmons's *J.R.R Tolkien and His Literary Resonances* (2000) or in "Tolkien and the Critics: A Critique" written by Patrick Curry as a part of *Root and Branch: Approaches Towards Understanding Tolkien* (2005) and also later work by Tom Shippey *J. R. R. Tolkien: Author of the Century* (2000).

However, it is important to note that Miéville's criticism of Tolkien is not a simple refusal of his works as juvenile junk not worthy of serious criticism, which is a standpoint of Jenny Turner in her essay with ironic title "Reasons for liking Tolkien" (2001). Miéville, in his article "Five Reasons Tolkien Rocks" expresses his acknowledgment that some criticism of Tolkien is simply based on some form of "Oedipal Resentment" but at the

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[42] Gordon, Miéville, "Reveling in Genre," 372-373.
[43] Gordon, Miéville, "Reveling in Genre," 372-373.
[44] David Bratman, in Lee, *A Companion to J.R.R. Tolkien*, 325.
[45] Catherine Stimpson, "J.R.R. Tolkien," *Columbia Essays on Modern Writes* 41, October (1969).

same time he reflects on the refusal of some "Tolkienistas" to see any flaws in the work by their master.

In Miéville's view the reasons why Tolkien deserves praise is firstly his treatment and incorporation of Norse mythology in his works instead of the Greco-Roman myths. Secondly, the inescapable tragic melancholy of the Middle Earth which Miéville sees as missing from the works of Tolkien's admirers that followed. Moreover, the rejection of allegory as a way of reading and creating fantasy narratives is, as has been pointed out earlier, close to Miéville's own opinion on the issue. For Miéville, the author who "refuses the notion that a work of fiction is, in some reductive way, primarily, solely, or really 'about' something else, narrowly and precisely" is worthy of the name fantasy fiction.[46] A concept closely connected with Tolkien's refusal of allegory is subcreation. He elaborates on this in his essay "On Fairy Stories" and Miéville rightly points out that with Tolkien's subcreation a shift in conception of the secondary world building happened. Furthermore, Miéville also notices that so far there has not been another systematic study of this most common fantastic technique of secondary world building and concludes that Tolkien should be praised both for theorising the process and keeping it alive in his works.

The fifth reason why Tolkien "rocks" according to Miéville is because he can create "a badass" monster. What Miéville especially appreciates is the underwater monster with many tentacles but unknown appearance and origin which the fellowship encounters before entering Moria. Miéville calls it "The Watcher in the Water" and highlights that what makes it extraordinary is exactly the lack of description and the uncertainty, in short it is weird and that is another reason for Miéville not to disregard Tolkien completely.

Miéville is characteristically associated with the fiction of the Weird and he also likes to describe his works in that way.[47] The outline presented so far prepared the ground for the following discussion of the weird fiction associated with H.P. Lovecraft, Mervyn Peake and other writers and consequently also its offspring, though not a straightforward continuation, the New Weird.

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[46] China Miéville, "There and Back Again: Five Reasons Tolkien Rocks," *Shelfari blog*, accessed: March 11, 2016, http://blog.shelfari.com/my_weblog/2009/06/there-and-back-again-five-reasons-tolkien-rocks-guest-blogger-china-mieville.html

[47] Gordon, Miéville, "Reveling in Genre," 374.

Weird fiction

In the article "The New Weird" in the *Locus* magazine from the year 2003 China Miéville asks the crucial question - if we are speaking about New Weird what was the Old Weird tradition from which New Weird developed or sees its roots in? To answer the question he names H.P. Lovecraft and Clark Ashton Smith as the most evident figures but at the same time stresses that there are many others.[48] Lovecraft and Smith were influential contributors to the pulp magazine *Weird Tales* but the weird tale did not originate with the magazine and its creators and contributors, the earlier weird fiction was written by some authors already mentioned such as Lord Dunsany or Arthur Machen.

The following chapters present the main characteristic features of the weird fiction and after that both the earlier generation and the generation connected with *Weird Tales* are examined. A special emphasis is put on the figure of H. P. Lovecraft. The authors who associate themselves with the weird fiction are in debt to Lovecraft for evolving his theory of this kind of writing and his works are also seen as one of the important stimuli for the aesthetics of the New Weird.

Characteristics of weird fiction

The weird fiction concerns itself with a feeling and a certain atmosphere. The reader's reaction to the stories is as important, if not more, as the writer's intentions. If the writer cannot transfer the weirdness into the mind of the reader than it is not true weird fiction. After finishing the story the readers should ask themselves: "What was this about?" Even though the plot/s might be clear the story is underlined with an enigma, with another narrative layer which escapes common knowledge about our world and is less clear and understandable. The weird atmosphere or feeling is difficult to pin down, it consists of many different aspects and because the weird fiction is not limited geographically or culturally the possibilities of any kind of definition are rather extensive. Each writer understands and writes its weird fiction differently. Therefore the following characterization of the weird fiction stands for some kind of a mainstream, the most central characteristics of the genre.

Some of the most prominent theorists and writers in the field developed a working definition of the weird fiction, these are Howard P. Lovecraft, M. John Harrison or Ann and Jeff VanderMeer, Thomas Ligotti and China Miéville. These authors are not alone in their efforts but this text is using some of their expertise as a basis for the following discussion. A

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[48] Gordon, Miéville, "Revelling in Genre," 373.

fuller account of the development and theoretic definition of weird fiction is provided for example by *The Weird Tale* (1990) or *The Evolution of the Weird Tale* (2004) by Sunand T. Joshi, a literary critic and expert on Lovecraft and other authors of weird fiction.

H.P. Lovecraft in his "Supernatural Horror in Literature" offers a definition which sets the weird tale apart from the classic Gothic or horror stories and specifies the effect it should produce in the reader.

The true weird tale has something more than secret murder, bloody bones, or a sheeted form clanking chains according to rule. A certain atmosphere of breathless and unexplainable dread of outer, unknown forces must be present; and there must be a hint, expressed with a seriousness and portentousness becoming its subject, of that most terrible conception of the human brain – a malign and particular suspension or defeat of those fixed laws of Nature which are our only safeguard against the assaults of chaos and the dæmons of unplumbed space.[49]

In the first line of the quote Lovecraft refers to the long tradition of literature where fear and macabre are the driving forces. The Weird tale, according to Lovecraft, differs from the traditional ghost story or Gothic tale. Further on, Lovecraft specifies the atmosphere of the weird tale which should, in his words, evoke the fear of the unknown while the science and laws of our world are no longer valid and without them there is chaos and terror.

One of the crucial terms in the definition by Lovecraft is the unknown, Lovecraft repeats it when presenting his way of recognizing the true weird tale further on in his essay. The test is based on the atmosphere and feelings the tale evokes in the reader and the quality of the tale is, according to Lovecraft, judged by how thoroughly it transfers this atmosphere. It should excite "a profound sense of dread, and of contact with unknown spheres and powers; a subtle attitude of awed listening, as if for the beating of black wings or the scratching of outside shapes and entities on the known universe's utmost rim."[50]

The definition is useful but slightly vague nevertheless. The powers and spheres might be of any origin and type, powers the characters possess, powers of some ruling class, of governments and more. The words entities and shapes are as unspecific as referents for a being or thing can be. However, this vagueness gives weird fiction its edge and glamour. In the pure weird tales the typical creatures of supernatural horror such as werewolves, zombies or vampires are abandoned and authors offer a wide variety of entities from the unknown, concealed universe.

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[49] Howard P. Lovecraft, "Supernatural Horror in Literature," in *At the Mountains of Madness: The Definitive Edition* (New York: The Modern Library, 2005), 146, e-pub.
[50] Lovecraft, "Supernatural Horror in Literature," 147, e-pub.

Jeff VanderMeer in his introduction to *The Weird: A Compendium of Strange and Dark Stories* says of the monsters in the weird fiction that they are not always treated as monstrous.[51] This is well portrayed in Miéville's *Perdido Street Station* (2000) where the word xenians is used as a hypernym for all the different creatures in the city of New Crobuzon, vodyanoi, cactae or khepri. It would not be fitting to describe them as monsters, they do not think of themselves in that way and though there are interracial frictions and unrest and ghettos are formed, the relations, good or bad, are not based on the premise of the character's monstrousness or the lack of it.

Monsters are vital part of the weird fiction and China Miéville argued this in numerous interviews and articles, such as in the introduction to *At the Mountains of Madness* (2005) and "M.R. James and the Quantum Vampire" (2008) or "On Monsters: Or, Nine or More (Monstrous) Not Cannies" (2012). During the golden age of the weird, which is estimated by S. T. Joshi as 1880-1940, the teratology of the genre is making a clear argument of renouncing the previous folkloric and mythological sources. By examining monsters of weird fiction it becomes clear how the genre differs from the previous fantastic.

Miéville stresses the shapelessness of the creatures and the unknown, the uncertainty surrounding them and by doing so, he elaborates on the Lovecraft's version of the weird. With vampires, for example, there is something the readers can understand, they have some previous mythology to rely on, but with weird monsters they are not sure of anything. Even the narrators are very often unable to describe the creatures which are right before their eyes. Lovecraft's narrator says that he has no words and no language can describe it when facing the Old Ones in "Call of Cthulhu" (1928) or "Dunwich Horror" (1929). Also William Hope Hodgson in "The Hog" (1947) expresses the same inability to adequately describe the Outer Monstrosities and asks his readers whether he is making himself clear.

Miéville describes the change in the fantastic and shift to the weird culture and as "the spread of the tentacle" which in his words is "a limb-type with no Gothic or traditional precedents (in 'Western' aesthetics)." Its appearance on the fantastic scene evolves "from a situation of near total absence in Euro-American teratoculture up to the nineteenth century, to one of being the default monstrous appendage of today."[52] The defining moment for this weird monsters' evolution is publication of Lovecraft's "Call of Cthulhu" in *Weird Tales* in 1928.

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[51] Jeff VanderMeer, Ann VanderMeer, "The Weird: An Introduction," *Weird Fiction Review*, accessed April 25, 2016, http://weirdfictionreview.com/2012/05/the-weird-an-introduction/
[52] China Miéville, "M.R. James and the Quantum Vampire Weird; Hauntological: Versus and/or and and/or or?" *Collapse* 4 (2008): 105.

The great precursors of the weird tentacle monsters of Lovecraft is, in Miéville's view, Hodgson's giant octopus-like monster in "The Boats of the Glen Carrig" published 1907. However, French authors Victor Hugo and Jules Verne also created monsters worthy of the title pre-weird. Victor Hugo, namely his *The Toilers of the Sea* (1866), holds a special place for Miéville because Hugo's descriptions of the underwater horrors are very close to "haute Weird."

What Hugo's octopus lacks is the amorality of the truly haute weird. The weird monsters are predators, they are not bad or good, they exist. It follows from the previous discussion that if the monster is unknown there should be no premise on which we could judge its morality. Miéville specifies that weird monsters, such as Lovecraft's Old Ones, are "unprecedented," their appearance and attacks are "unexplained" and "unexplainable."[53] The central position of monsters in the weird fiction is ensured by what they represent. The classic horror scare is not their aim, even though they are shocking and scary. They portray the "unrepresentable and unknowable, the evasive of meaning."[54]

The Weird therefore differs significantly from the hauntological, which is a tool of both the ghost story and many of the Gothic stories. Ghosts, very often seen as ancestral spirits, are something familiar, already known though it is transformed. Their appearance is usually moralistic in nature, they come to seek justice or teach virtue.[55] Two authors made valuable contribution to the relationship between the hauntological and the weird, these are Sheridan Le Fanu and Montague Rhodes James.

Le Fanu's "Green Tea" (1869), where the ghost is an animal spirit of a monkey, is according to Miéville a step toward the blurring of the weird and the ghostly, or simply "Weird inflected – 'New Ghostly'."[56] The step further is the fact that the terrors which haunt the victims are no longer human and the shapes are becoming less recognizable. However, it should be noted that animal spirits are not a new concept introduced by Le Fanu or around his time period. As John Clute writes in his *Encyclopedia of Fantasy* (1996) "animal spirits are common in folklore and particularly in tribal mythology."[57]

Therefore, Miéville's assertion of animal spirits as "avatars of the monstrous" is valid only when accompanied with the rest of the steps. These are the appearance of ghosts in a "stark and amoral universe" where the reasoning about revenge as motivation of the ghostly

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[53] Miéville, "M.R. James and the Quantum Vampire Weird," 105.
[54] China Miéville, "On Monsters: Or, Nine or More (Monstrous) Not Cannies," *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts* 23, no. 3 (2012): 381.
[55] Miéville, "On Monsters," 116-7.
[56] Miéville, "On Monsters," 118.
[57] John Clute, John Grant eds., *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy* (London: Orbit Books, 1999), 402-3.

appearance makes no sense. Moreover, there are "protoplasmic formlessness" of the ghosts and their existence based on "the autotelos of the monster" meaning that they simply exist, as mentioned earlier.

M. R. James invested his ghosts with even more weird qualities. Miéville again elaborates on the weird fiction master, Lovecraft and argues that James represents a significant crossover of the ghostly and the weird. Lovecraft describes James' creation of the ghosts that he "departed considerably from the conventional Gothic tradition; for where the older stock ghosts were pale and stately, and apprehended chiefly through the sense of sight, the average James ghost is lean, dwarfish, and hairy -- a sluggish, hellish night --abomination midway betwixt beast and man -- and usually touched before it is seen."[58]

The materialism of James' ghosts is what makes them different from the ones in the 18th century, it is what Miéville describes as "horror of matter."[59] This is another reminder of the protoplasmic formlessness mentioned earlier as one of the steps towards the weird. Ghosts usually take form of their deceased bodies, in order to become visible they draw energy from ectoplasm which is their own spirit substance or from others in their surroundings.[60] These new weird ghosts do not take on the shapes of their earlier spirit, they are not formed by their ectoplasm which is the same substance as protoplasm used by Miéville with the difference that ectoplasmic cells are believed to surround ghosts. Therefore, when not drawing on their ectoplasmic substance they are examples of the protoplasmic formlessness. These weird ghost creatures are for example in James' stories "The Diary of Mr Poynter", "The Treasure of Abbot Thomas" and most importantly "Count Magnus" where the weird, a tentacle monster, is a servant of the ghostly, a human ghost. This relationship characterizes another step further for the weird fiction. This is a period before the tentacle monster was freed and given free reign, this independence started around 1970s.[61]

M. R. James' work contains also one more characteristic of the weird fiction, the unimportance of plot. That does not mean that there is no plot, the motions of the plot are present but James' "narrative arcs are utterly predictable" and he is aware of it, writes Miéville.[62] The plot is subordinated to the atmosphere of strangeness and its purpose to convince us about the existence of the Weird, at least while reading. This downgrading of the storyline coincides with Mendlesohn's view of the status of the plot in the immersive

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[58] Lovecraft, "Supernatural Horror in Literature," 217.
[59] Miéville, "M.R. James and the Quantum Vampire Weird," 123.
[60] Clute, Grant, *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy,* 402-3.
[61] Miéville, "M.R. James and the Quantum Vampire Weird," 120-22; 128.
[62] Miéville, "M.R. James and the Quantum Vampire Weird," 121.

fantasies as the element which might be the least fantastic. The immersive fantasies shift the reader's expectations about the story onto "contextual difference rather than the intruding event."[63] This does not necessarily indicate that all weird fiction is written as the immersive type of fantasy, but many novels perceived as the prime Weird are immersive fantasies, such as Mervyn Peake's *Gormenghast series*, Miéville's *Perdido street station*, *Embassytown* or M. J. Harrison's *Viriconium series*. To what degree is the plot central to the narrative in the novel *The City & The City* is analysed further on.

Pre-weird

H. P. Lovecraft proved to be very skilled at describing and mainly identifying the weird feeling in many works of supernatural and horror. Therefore the following discussion relies heavily on Lovecraft's essay "Supernatural Horror in Literature" which is still considered one of the most accomplished works on the topic.

The writers of the weird fiction not related to the pulp magazine *Weird Tales* and not considered a part of the Lovecraftian circle are for example Nathaniel Hawthorne, Oscar Wilde, Edgar Rice Burroughs, Algernon Blackwood, Lord Dunsany, Arthur Machen, William H. Hodgson, Ambrose Bierce and many others. They represent both American and British tradition of supernatural in literature and the weird atmosphere in their works is not a given characteristic, sometimes it is more apparent, sometimes less. They never described themselves as weird writers but looking backwards Lovecraft and others admit how influential these writers were on their own weird writings. The influence does not need to be always profound but it is present, Jeff VanderMeer says that these early supernatural writings "would leave their mark on this [20th and 21st ct.] newer weird, but not a boot print."[64] Nathaniel Hawthorne personifies, for Lovecraft, the best New England's early weird material with his stories about the dark Puritan age, the fates of the sinners, family curses and schemes of witches and the devil. His works such as *House of the Seven Gables*, *The Minister's Black Veil* or unfinished *Ethan Grand* are good examples of the early weird. However, supernatural horror in Hawthorne's texts is never the main intention, he is above all interested in moral allegory and Puritan past of the American nation.[65]

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[63] Mendlesohn, *Rhetorics of Fantasy*, 22, e-pub.
[64] J. VanderMeer, A. VanderMeer, "The Weird."
[65] This critical reading of Hawthorne's works prevails and can be found for example in Michael J. Colacurcio, *The Province of Piety: Moral History in Hawthorne's Early Tales* (1984) or Michael Davitt Bell, *Hawthorne and the Historical Romance of New England* (1971). Also, it corresponds with Lovecraft's view on the matter as expressed in "Supernatural Horror in Literature."

This occasional appearance of weird is also common for works of Oscar Wilde, less known Matthew Phipps Shiel or Clemence Housman and others. As it is with Hawthorne, also with these authors their use of the weird is, though brilliant as it might be, rather random. For detailed analysis of how these less known works apply the weird aesthetics in their writing see Lovecraft's "Supernatural Horror in Literature" or S. T. Joshi's *The Evolution of Weird Tale*. Ambrose Bierce is a writer whose majority of horror tales take place within the laws of nature and not defying them as in the case of weird tales. The tales where the supernatural has the upper hand are collected mainly in the volumes *Can Such Things Be?* (1892) and *In the midst of Life* (1893).

Bierce's short story "An occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" has received a lot of critical attention. According to Peter Stoicheff, a Canadian academic from University of Saskatchewan, this is due to its "satire, irony, manipulation of the reader, the exposure of human self-deception, a surprise ending, and a stylistic compression and tautness," but the tale could be associated with the tradition of the weird because it leaves "a residual and "uncanny" [Stoicheff's emphasis] sense of revelation hovering just beyond one's grasp."[66] The essay by Stoicheff with its focus on the uncanny, which is an important characteristic of the weird, is a more recent remainder of the reason why Lovecraft included Bierce into the American weird tradition in "Supernatural Horror in Literature."

In weird fiction it is crucial that the unreal, dreamlike is taken seriously. In the definition of the weird tale cited earlier it is said that the suspension of natural laws and science is "expressed with a seriousness and portentousness." The previous discussion about allegory, and Miéville's attitude towards it, now becomes one of the reasons why he thinks of himself as a weird writer. When allegory is the main aim, the unreal is only a pretense through which the writer points to something else.

William H. Hodgson's serious treatment of unreality makes him a weird writer comparable with Algernon Blackwood, who is, in Lovecraft's opinion, master of the weird. Hodgson's weird writings are *The House on the Borderland* (1908), *The Ghost Pirates* (1909) or *The Night Land* (1912).

The Night Land is, in Miéville's opinion, an example of a weird work which represents the coming crisis of World War I. When the war broke out and Hodgson was writing from the

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[66] Peter Stoicheff, "Something uncanny: The dream structure in Ambrose Bierce's 'An occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge'," *Studies In Short Fiction* 30, no. 3 (1993): 349.

front he referred to *The Night Land* as being real, only a few miles from the apparently normal world.[67]

Three authors are considered by Lovecraft the masters of the weird tale, Arthur Machen, Lord Dunsany and Algernon Blackwood. Lovecraft describes their work as the height of the literature of fear and of a very high artistic quality. Though their work has been described in connection with the evolution of fantasy in the first chapter the following section gives the point of view of the weird. In relation to the works by these authors Lovecraft describes the tendencies of the weird tale where he speaks again about the tale being consistent in the manner it presents its supernatural elements and the importance of visualization of the unreality:

"Serious weird stories are either made realistically intense by dose consistency and perfect fidelity to Nature except in the one supernatural direction which the author allows himself, or else cast altogether in the realm of phantasy, with atmosphere cunningly adapted to the visualisation of a delicately exotic world of unreality beyond space and time, in which almost anything may happen if it but happen in true accord with certain types of imagination and illusion normal to the sensitive human brain."[68]

Machen, Blackwood and Lord Dunsany, according to Lovecraft, are in their treatment of unreality and supernatural incomparable with the Gothic tales of the previous century and the citation above describes how different they are. As so many critics before and after Lovecraft stress, it is clear from Lovecraft's essay that this is only the dominant tendency and there are exceptions.

Machen often figures in various interviews with contemporary weird writers as the first initiation to the world of weird fiction. Thomas Ligotti, author of *Songs of a Dead Dreamer* (1986) and *My Work Here Is Not Yet Done* (2002), in an interview with the portal weirdfictionreview.com says that even though he did not really understood Machen's "The Great God Pan" he was fascinated when he first read it and also had a feeling that there "was a real whiff of evil behind the events of the narrative."[69] After reading other works by Machen such as *The Three Imposters* or "The White People" Ligotti moved on to Lovecraft which seems as a natural progression since Lovecraft was influenced by Machen.[70]

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[67] Miéville, "M.R. James and the Quantum Vampire Weird," 111.
[68] Lovecraft, "Supernatural Horror in Literature," 205.
[69] Thomas Ligotti, Jeff VanderMeer, "Exclusive Interview: Thomas Ligotti on Weird Fiction," *Weird Fiction Review*, accessed March 21, 2016, http://weirdfictionreview.com/2011/11/exclusive-interview-thomas-ligotti-on-weird-fiction/
[70] Sunand T. Joshi, *A Dreamer and a Visionary, H.P. Lovecraft in His Time* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2001), 169.

The writing of Machen is described by James Machin, contributor for the weird fiction forum, as revealing a certain dark secrets and compared to Blackwood's style which is, though also containing the dark unknown, mainly decentralizing the human aspect. In Machin's own words the difference between these two writers is that "Machen's drawing back of the veil on the adumbral numinous are not entirely absent [from Blackwood's writing], but the focus is on the annihilation of the ego; the loss of personality; engulfment."[71] One of the most anthologized weird tales are "The Willows" (1907) and "The Wendigo" (1910) by Algernon Blackwood. The story "The Willows" is also present in the newest anthology by Jeff and Anne VanderMeer called *The Weird: A Compendium of Strange and Dark Stories* (2012) which proves the continuous influence of this author.

Miéville also stresses the importance of Blackwood as a writer whose horror differs greatly from that of his predecessors, as Lovecraft does.[72] The most notable example of both the engulfment and the evolution of the horror is in the story "The Willows" where two travellers camp on a small island on a flooded river in Hungary. The horror in this story is what Lovecraft calls the cosmic fear, it is undefinable. The camper describes his feelings as "no ordinary ghostly fear. It was infinitely greater, stranger, and seemed to arise from some dim ancestral sense of terror more profoundly disturbing than anything I had known or dreamed of."[73] On other places the characters express their isolation from the rest of the world, their feeling of loneliness and describing their experience as unearthly, all put together Blackwood is "unquestioned master of weird atmosphere."[74]

Lord Dunsany's work also contains the natural forces and both their beauty and terror as in the case of "The Willows." Apart from being a prominent fantasy writer of inventive imagination, Dunsany was also an author who reflected the urbanization and the process of mechanization among the urban middle class in the beginning of the 20th century. However, at the same time the city is for Dunsany a place of beauty, in his works his heroes are desperate to reach the ideal city. William F. Touponce, professor of English at Indiana University, writes about Dunsany's works that they are full of "quests for beauty" and that the city is "one of the primary imaginary embodiments of beauty in Dunsany."[75] Though beauty might be the

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[71] James Machin, "WFR's 101 Weird Writers #19 — Algernon Blackwood," *Weird Fiction Review*, accessed March 21, 2016, http://weirdfictionreview.com/2013/01/wfrs-101-weird-writers-19-algernon-blackwood/
[72] Miéville, "M.R. James and the Quantum Vampire Weird," 113.
[73] Algernon Blackwood, *The Willows*, Reprint of 1907 edition, Project Gutenberg, accessed March 21, 2016, http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/11438/pg11438.html
[74] Lovecraft, "Supernatural Horror in Literature," 212, e-pub.
[75] William F. Touponce, *Lord Dunsany, H.P. Lovecraft, and Ray Bradbury, Spectral Journeys* (Plymouth: Scarecrow Press, 2013), 1.

"keynote" in Dunsany's work the author never forgets to "hint slyly and adroitly of monstrous things and incredible dooms."[76]

Lovecraft expressed his admiration of Dunsany's work in his "Lord Dunsany and His Work" (1922) and his fervent admiration of this author led to his acknowledgment by other literary critics. The detailed studies of Dunsany's life and work can be found for example in Darrell Schweitzer's *Pathways to Elfland: The Writings of Lord Dunsany* (1989) or Mark Amory's *Biography of Lord Dunsany* (1972).

Dunsany introduces in *The Book of Wonder* the City of Never, and more various hidden terrors, such as Gibbelins guarding a treasure in a tower or Gnoles inhabiting the forests. In *The Laughter of the Gods* there is a cursed city somewhere at the edge of a jungle. The urban setting is an important characteristic in the New Weird aesthetics. Miéville proves this with his novels set in the city of New Crobuzon – *Perdido Street Station* (2000), *The Scar* (2002), *Iron Council* (2004). His other novels also provide surprising urban locale, both *Embassytown* (2011) and *The City & The City* (2009) enrich the reader's perspective on the life in an urban metropolis. In *The City & The City* there are two cities coexisting in one geographical area and in *Embassytown* the inhabitants of the city feel threatened because they are only a small part of a larger, alien urban conclave. Miéville calls himself a city person and reflects that living in a city has a profound influence on your life. Though not fully accepting the idea that he creates his cities knowingly as characters, there is no doubt that they have intrusive powers and manifest their influence on their inhabitants.[77]

Weird Tales generation

Jacob Clark Henneberger introduced on the market of pulp magazines in 1920s his two creations *Real Detective Tales* and *Weird Tales*. At that time genre specific magazines were gaining ground and there was no magazine of weird fiction, though there were some devoted to the supernatural and macabre such as *The Black Cat* or *Thrill Book*.

The first issue of *Weird Tales* was available in March 1923 and its appearance announced the revolution in the supernatural story. The cover illustration portrayed a lady in danger, a male hero with a knife and a gun and most importantly a giant squid. What makes this combination special as a pulp cover is the tentacle monster. Here, the rise of the tentacle begins and starts to form in the "confluence of supernatural tales, fantasy adventure, and

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[76] Lovecraft, "Supernatural Horror in Literature," 215, e-pub.
[77] China Miéville, Lars Schmeink, "On the Look-Out for a New Urban Uncanny, An Interview with China Miéville," *Extrapolation* 55, no. 1 (2014): 25-6, 30.

cosmic horror as part of a unique and tightly knit community of editors, readers, illustrators, and writers."[78]

The notable contributors to this unique magazine were Seabury Quinn, Robert E. Howard, Robert Bloch, Clark Ashton Smith or Fritz Leiber. The persona of Lovecraft is inevitably connected with *Weird Tales* and he is dealt with in detail in a separate chapter. The impulse for the weird was not limited to the American readers and writers, in other parts of the world roughly at the same time authors like Belgian Jean Ray, wrote "The Shadowy Street" and Hagiwara Sakutoro created the multicolored "The Town of Cats" and Polish writer Bruno Schulz reinvented his childhood in stories like "Sanatorium at the Sign of the Hourglass" and Franz Kafka wrote the story of a weird ritual "In the Penal Colony." The approach to weird fiction was also formed by literary traditions such as Surrealism, Symbolism, Decadent literature or the New Wave of the 1960s. Alfred Kubin in particular represents the surrealist/decadent tendency and his influence can be seen in works of Schulz, Kafka and in modern weird texts by M. John Harrison and Michal Cisco and consequently China Miéville.[79]

Weird Tales' community of editors and their correspondence with writers for this magazine represent a crucial part in the formulation of the weird tale. After Jacob C. Henneberger and the editor Edwin Baird the magazine was run by Farnsworth Wright. In a letter to Clark A. Smith Wright specifies what type of tale the magazine wishes to promote.

Weird Tales wants stories of invention, science and surgery, particularly those that forecast the marvellous science of the future; tales of the bizarre and unusual; occult and mystic tales, and tales of the supernatural, preferably with a logical explanation; tales of the monstrosities of superstitious legend: werewolves, vampires, ghosts, familiars, witches, and devil-worship; tales of spirit return; good humorous and romantic tales with a weird slant; tales of thrills and mystery; and a few tales of horror, but nothing sickening or disgusting. Lengths up to 30,000 words. Weird Tales uses no sex stories and no detective stories.[80]

There are several problems with guidelines of weird like these. Firstly, the logical explanation of the supernatural and mystic does not correspond with what both VanderMeer and Miéville consider one of the tell-tale signs of weird fiction – the inexplicable, the nameless horror.[81]

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[78] Justin Everett, Jeffrey H. Schanks eds., *The Unique Legacy of Weird Tales, The Evolution of Modern Fantasy and Horror*, (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015): ix-x.
[79] J. VanderMeer, A. VanderMeer, "The Weird."
[80] Farnsworth Wright, in Everett, Schanks, *The Unique Legacy of Weird Tales*, 57.
[81] This argument has been made by VanderMeer and Miéville on several occasions. For Jeff VanderMeer the most recent contribution is the introduction to *The Weird: A Compendium of Strange and Dark Stories* quoted in

Secondly, as Thomas Ligotti points out some of the tales written to the liking of the magazine's editors are too prescriptive, predictable in plot and conventional, Ligotti also speaks about Lovecraft and he thinks of his stories for *Weird Tales* that they are of lower quality.[82] However, the guidelines were changed throughout the time and some tales originally refused were later accepted as documented by S. T. Joshi in *A Dreamer and a Visionary, H.P. Lovecraft in His Time* or in *The Unique Legacy of Weird Tales* edited by J. Everett and J. H. Shanks.

However, what is crucial about the weird fiction of both this generation and the following one is the inherent mixing of generic modes which is a tendency visible in the above quoted text. Miéville's answer to those looking for an unambiguous generic label for his books is that he writes weird fiction which is located at "the intersection of sf, fantasy, and horror" and that is why "Lovecraft's monsters do magic, but they're time traveling aliens with über-science, who do horrific things."[83]
H. P. Lovecraft and Clark A. Smith are very often mentioned as mentors for the New Weird generation.The prose of Clark A. Smith is described as being of "overwhelming stylistic virtuosity" and having an "abundance of visual detail and figurative language," as well as being "rhythmical and ornate."[84] Similar characteristics are also ascribed to Lovecraft's prose and Miéville admits that he aims in his works for this kind of lush style. Moreover, he says that this "pulp aesthetic of language is something very tenuous which all too easily simply becomes shit, but is fascinating where it works."[85] These are words of an author who is unashamed of his literary influences even though they contain pulp magazine tales. This tendency has been noted by several journalists and some scholars, one of the sources is the interview for Science Fiction Studies, volume 30, 2003.

The fact that weird fiction is at the crossroads of several genres, evolved from pulp and was influenced, among other –isms, by surrealism is not contradictory for Miéville. Even though pulp was excluded from serious modernist debate for being the reading for masses Miéville sees the finest weird literature "as the intersection of the traditions of Surrealism with those of pulp."[86]

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other places in this text. Miéville makes the same assertion for example in "M.R. James and the Quantum Vampire Weird; Hauntological: Versus and/or and and/or or?" also quoted elsewhere.
[82] Ligotti, VanderMeer, "Exclusive Interview."
[83] Miéville, Gordon, "Reveling in Genre," 358-9.
[84] John Kipling Hitz in *The Freedom of Fantastic Things Selected Criticism on Clark Ashton Smith*, Scott Connors ed. (New York: Hippocampus Press, 2006), 168.
[85] Miéville, Gordon, "Reveling in Genre," 358.
[86] Miéville, Gordon, "Reveling in Genre," 357; also in "Gothic Politics, A discussion with China Miéville," *Gothic Studies*, vol. 10, no. 1 (2008): 67.

Jonas Prida, professor of English at the College of St. Joseph in Vermont, links various *Weird Tales* contributors to the scientific, religious and political developments of the early 20th century. The dialogue with our world is important also for the New Weird as specified by Miéville in his New Weird "manifesto."[87] The advancement of science was a significant impulse for the pulp writers and they deal with it in their own weird way. "The Metal Giants" by Edmond Hamilton contain the predicament that the technology can replicate itself and "Red Ether" also explore the uneasy relationship with science.

The shocking innovative theory of Darwinism had an impact on writer's treatment of humanity and Seabury Quinn approaches this topic in her story "The Horror at the Links" (1925). H. Warner Munn's tale "The City of Spiders" elaborates on the evolution of humans and it explains the fear of spiders as being the archetypal fear of masters because in his version of Darwinism, humans were slaves to spiders in the beginnings of time. Closely related to Darwinist decentralization of humans as the God's creations is the loss of religion.

The weird tales such as "Mephistopheles and Company Ltd." by Seabury Quinn or "The Skeleton under the Lamp" by Bassett Morgan deal with cultism, scepticism towards traditional religion and black magic and rituals. The latter two is either source of power and blackmail (Quinn's tale) or truly weird, unexplained unreality (Morgan's tale).[88] By not adhering to the typical tales of the pulps of its time and by being in dialogue with the modern world of 20th century the *Weird Tales* magazine was a unique establishment of writers and editors.

H. P. Lovecraft – Cthulhu Mythos

It has been said earlier in the characteristics of the weird fiction that the plot is often the least important element in the weird text. This applies to Lovecraft's fiction as well, for him the aim is the atmosphere of the weird. Therefore, one of the most common assumptions that the genre writers focus on the plot and neglect other subtleties of characterization or themes is contradicted. Miéville alters the discussion and says that it not a question of ability but of choice and priorities, Lovecraft's works are not about "carefully structured plot so much as of ineluctable unfolding: it is a literature of the inevitability of weird." The power of Lovecraft's works relies on "the exposition of a monstrous cosmic history, of hateful cults, of

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[87] China Miéville, "Long Live the New Weird," *The Third Alternative* 35, summer (2003): 3.
[88] Jonas Prida in Everett, Schanks, *The Unique Legacy of Weird Tales*, 20-6.

the misbehavior of matter and geometry" and these are "stronger for being gradually, seemingly randomly, uncovered."[89]

Lovecraft himself writes about his style in the "Notes on Writing Weird Fiction" that the inspiration to write the weird stories is to achieve "the satisfaction of visualising more clearly and detailedly and stably the vague, elusive, fragmentary impressions of wonder, beauty, and adventurous expectancy which are conveyed to me by certain sights (scenic, architectural, atmospheric, etc.)."[90]

The visionary aspect of the weird is repeated on several occasions not only by Lovecraft but also by modern weird writers such as Jeff VanderMeer or Miéville. The limited possibility of our sight provides the writers with many possibilities how to remind readers that there is a lot what we do not know and is hidden to us, and this uncertainty creates the sense of unease which they aim for. Jeff VanderMeer says that in the texts of weird writers there is "the impulse to entertain combined with the impulse to remind readers of the strangeness of the world and the limits of our understanding of it."[91] In the novel The City & The City the impression of wonder is achieved by the architectural sights mentioned by Lovecraft and the sight in general is a crucial motif in the Miéville's text providing the sense of unease.

The most prolific critic of Lovecraft's work and life is S. T. Joshi, his volume *Four Decades of Criticism* published in 1980 was the first single work which collected the critical essays by Lovecraft and contextualised them. Joshi continued to define the field with his other publications such as *H.P. Lovecraft: The Decline of the West* (1990), *I Am Providence: The Life and Times of H. P. Lovecraft* (2010) or *The Rise and Fall of Cthulhu Mythos* (2008).

Lovecraft's short story "The Call of Cthulhu" published in *Weird Tales* in 1928 is the first significant contribution to the Cthulhu Mythos. The term Cthulhu Mythos was not coined by Lovecraft himself but by August Derleth after Lovecraft's death. The tale contains many of the elements which later appear in following works by Lovecraft but also other writers because Lovecraft was continually encouraging other writers to add to this anti-mythology.[92]

The mythos is anti-mythology because it is not assuring humans of their rightful existence on earth or the blissful state after death, this relationship between Gods and humans is what Lovecraft is "seeking to subvert with his pseudomythology."[93]

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[89] China Miéville in *At the Mountains of Madness: The Definitive Edition* (New York: The Modern Library, 2005), 13, e-pub.

[90] Howard P. Lovecraft, "Notes on Writing Weird Fiction" *Amateur Correspondent* 2, no. 1 (1937), 7.

[91] J. VanderMeer, A. VanderMeer, "The Weird."

[92] Philip Smith, "Re-visioning Romantic-Era Gothicism: An Introduction to Key Works and Themes in the Study of H.P. Lovecraft," *Literature Compass* 8, no.11 (2011): 837.

[93] Joshi, *A Dreamer and* a *Visionary*, 246.

Moreover, S. T. Joshi also points out that the Mythos is not equivalent for Lovecraft's philosophy, "it is rather it is a series of plot devices meant to facilitate the expression of this philosophy."[94]

The philosophy behind Lovecraft's works is that of a cosmicism and it is closely related to the loss of the central position of humans in the world, the endurance of humans as a race is doubted and again the binary division of good and evil is scrutinized as it was showed in the discussion about the monsters of the weird. Lovecraft comments on this in his letter to editor F. Wright:

Now all my tales are based on the fundamental premise that common human laws and interests and emotions have no validity or significance in the vast cosmos-at-large. To me there is nothing but puerility in a tale in which the human form—and the local human passions and conditions and standards—are depicted as native to other worlds or other universes. To achieve the essence of real externality, whether of time or space or dimension, one must forget that such things as organic life, good and evil, love and hate, and all such local attributes of a negligible and temporary race called mankind, have any existence at all.[95]

The horror of Lovecraft is that of the utter indifference of cosmos to men. Philip Smith, from Loughborough University, elaborates on the cosmic indifference which in his words "produces a terrible enlightenment and madness in his [Lovecraft's] characters."[96] The enlightenment of the characters consists of admitting the dreadful dreariness of the world and our limited powers and knowledge. Most common horror strategy is that of intrusion, Lovecraft, on the contrary uses the technique of enlightenment or in Miéville's terms "realization."[97] Miéville describes Lovecraftian cosmic sentiments as operating on the circumstances that "the world has always been implacably bleak; the horror lies in our acknowledging that fact."[98]

For understandable outline of the Cthulhu Mythos and its deities it is worthwhile to have a look at the Call of Cthulhu rulebook for RPG (role playing game). In a chapter about expectations and the game's rules the author introduces the Call of Cthulhu by setting it apart from other RPG's and the main point of difference is the indestructibility of its monsters and the risk of sanity when venturing into the vast cosmos of knowledge. The players are advised not to risk direct combat. The short game introduction fittingly summarizes Lovecraft's philosophy and works.

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[94] Joshi, *A Dreamer and* a *Visionary*, 245.
[95] H. P. Lovecraft in Joshi*, A Dreamer and a* Visionary, 244.
[96] Smith, "Re-visioning Romantic-Era Gothicism," 835.
[97] Miéville in *At the Mountains of Madness*," 14, e-pub.
[98] Miéville in *At the Mountains of Madness*," 14, e-pub

Call of Cthulhu differs in feel and motivation from other roleplaying games. In many such games, player-characters can directly confront and attempt to destroy obstacles and opponents. This strategy typically leads to disaster in Cthulhu scenarios. The majority of other-world monstrosities are so terrible and often so invulnerable that choosing open combat almost guarantees a gruesome end for an investigator. Even the merest glimpse of some of the more macabre horrors can send one into screaming insanity. What can a player do, then?[99]

The final questions is accurate not only for RPG players but also for Lovecraft's characters, what can they do when facing the Old Ones, Azathoth, Yog-Sothoth, Nyarlathotep and others? The Lovecraftian protagonists are not bold warriors facing the threats with blazing guns, the best remedy it seems is to look away and run as the characters of Dyer and Danforth in the story "At the Mountains of Madness" (1936).

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[99] Sandy Petersen, Lynn Willis, *Call of Cthulhu, Horror Roleplaying in the Worlds of H. P. Lovecraft* (Oakland: Chaosium, 1999), 26.

Modern Weird

H. P. Lovecraft died in 1937, even though the additions to his Cthulhu Mythos continued, his death marked the end of an era together with the World War II. The 1940s and 50s are in science fiction the prolific magazine era in the words of Brian Attebery.[100] As described earlier, magazines such as *Weird Tales* played an important role in forming new trends and genres. The magazines *Playboy* and *Amazing Stories* continued this tradition and by 1950s the science fiction magazines were featuring the most quality authors like Philip K. Dick, Fritz Lieber or Aldous Huxley.

The 40s and 50s also saw the publishing of the Gormenghast series by Mervyn Peake, an illustrator and a writer. The Gormenghast series or Titus books, as they are also sometimes called, consist of *Titus Groan* (1946), *Gormenghast* (1950) and *Titus Alone* (1959). Peake's works are anomalous creations avoiding straightforward interpretation. His style is rich and he does not fit into any of the neat categories critics and readers established. He writes as if he was drawing, the reader is overwhelmed by the descriptive force and the books can even create "a sense of enclosure approaching to claustrophobia."[101] An author who investigates the sense of stuckness, both physical and psychological, is Alice Mills. She published her book *Stuckness in the Fiction of Mervyn Peake* in 2005. Another important critic of Peake's work is Peter Winnington who identifies isolation and separateness as one of the recurring patterns in Peake's fiction. These qualities make Mervyn Peake a candidate for the core person of influence of the rebellious tradition of the British New Wave in the 1960s.

The New Wave was the first impetus leading to the New Weird movement slowly gaining ground in the 1990s. Another crucial step toward the New Weird happened in the 1980s. Both of these phenomena are briefly dealt with in the following chapters and the New Weird itself and its theoretical basis is introduced.

New Weird discussion

The British New Wave is a term adapted from French *nouvelle vague* used in cinema and a label which Christopher Priest used to describe works of science fiction being published in the magazine *New Worlds* in the 1960s. It signified prose which was "disruptive,

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[100] Brian Attebery, "The magazine era: 1926–1960" in *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 32.
[101] Sofia Samatar, "Umbrageous Legacy: Mervyn Peake's Portrait Gallery," *Weird Fiction Review*, accessed March 31, 2016, http://weirdfictionreview.com/2012/10/weirdfictionreview-coms-101-weird-writers-12-mervyn-peake/.

existentially fraught and formally daring," as well as stylistically excessive and overthrowing the rule of the science fiction self-declared super heroes.[102] The first author to account for this kind of prose is J. G. Ballard but also Frank Herbert's Dune series has the touch of the New Wave rebelliousness.

The authors of New Wave often wrote something in between fantasy and science fiction and the writing career of J. G. Ballard is a proof of this. As Miéville puts it he "he remains in the tradition, as well as outside of it."[103] Ballard, by being part of New Wave, is also often considered to be one of the weird writers.

The New Wave fiction was in contrast to the science fiction of the previous decade in the sense that the works were less concerned with the triumph of the science achieved by the efforts of a virtuous hero and they dealt more with existential uncertainty, and world where nothing and no one is to be trusted entirely, even science. The science of the science fiction in the previous decade was often less about scientific rigor and more about scientific pretense. The reader was not supposed to ask questions, the explanation of how a device works and why was supplied, clearly and scientifically, by the protagonist.

Miéville comments on this and says that it "evacuates science substantively of its actual rational content so that it becomes predicated on charisma and authority."[104] The authority and charisma are the powers of the super heroes mentioned earlier and for Miéville proper science fiction should do more than fill reader's heads with scientific gibberish and consider it proper cognitive estrangement. The New Wave tries to undermine this tradition of authoritarian and yet seemingly scientifically objective, rigorous and triumphant writing. The New Wave mixed high and low art, taking inspiration both from decadent and surrealist writers but also films or myths. The works of New Wave authors were collected in anthologies such as *England Swings SF* (1968) edited by Judith Merril or *Dangerous Visions* (1967) by Harlan Ellison. Its most prominent authors are Michael Moorcock, Brian W. Aldiss, Samuel R. Delany and M. John Harrison. The Viriconium series by Harrison in particular had a significant impact on Miéville's style of writing as he suggested in several interviews.[105]

The second stimulus for the aesthetics of the New Weird came in the 1980s and is exemplified by the *Books of Blood* (1984-5) by Clive Barker. Barker continues the tradition of

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[102] Damien Broderick, "New Wave and backwash: 1960–1980," in *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*, Edward James, Farah Mendlesohn eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 50.
[103] China Miéville, Jonathan Derbyshire, "The Books Interview, China Miéville," *New Statesman*, accessed 31 April, 2016, http://www.newstatesman.com/culture/culture/2012/05/china-mi%C3%A9ville-weird-fiction-melville-and-j-g-ballard.
[104] Shapiro, Miéville, "Gothic Politics," 63.
[105] See for example Joan Gordon, China Miéville, "Reveling in Genre: An Interview with China Miéville" *Science Fiction Studies*, vol. 30, no. 3, (2003).

visionary horror where the master of horror tale, Lovecraft, left it. However, Barker's tales reveal the full scale horror, the fearful hesitation of Lovecraft when he describes the monsters is gone. Barker's monsters are excepted as they are. Therefore there is a shift in the perception of the horror, the aim is transgressive horror and the grotesque and not the very existence of the monster as it was before.[106]

One more author is associated with the body horror of 1980s. For Roger Lockhurst the exemplary texts "about human/alien hybridization" are written by Octavia Butler.[107] Lockhurst says about her work which includes Xenogenesis series (*Dawn* 1987, *Adulthood Rites* 1988, *Imago* 1989) or *Mind of My Mind* (1977) that the oeuvre of her work lies in refusal of "empty assertions about difference, or a simplistic evaluation of the hybrid from abjected monster to transgressive saint" and that her works "convey the sense of lived contradiction."[108]

Darja Malcom-Clarke writes about her reading experience of *Perdido Street Station* by Miéville and says that New Weird in general, and therefore *Perdido* as well "had the sense of unease that is found in Horror, but that unease wasn't resolved in a moment of terror. Instead, that grotesquery was part of the secondary worlds' aesthetic as a whole."[109] We are given the character of Lin in the novel as it is, a human beetle-like being. But it is not the first encounter, the surprise of realizing her bodily transmutation which is the most shocking, as the story continues the grotesquery only gathers pace. And as Malcolm-Clarke argues the focus on the bodily transformations of the characters produces confusion and unsettles the readers because they are not sure what to think about these monsters which are not monstrous.

Even further on, Malcolm-Clarke makes a connection between the cities of the New Weird and the "physically weird, aesthetically grotesque characters" inhabiting them.[110] This relationship enables the author, namely Miéville, explore various power and social structures. In *The City & The City* there are no bodily transformations, in a sense of extra arms, legs or different anatomy altogether. This lack of monsters and its effects are investigated in one of the following chapters.

The moment when the authors of New Weird realized that there are more works of the same, or similar, leanings is the year 2000. The year of the publication of Miéville's *Perdido Street Station* marks the coming of "the first commercially acceptable version of the New

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[106] Jeff VanderMeer, Ann VanderMeer eds., *The New Weird* (San Francisco: Tachyon Publications, 2008), x.
[107] Roger Lockhurst, *Science Fiction*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005), 214.
[108] Lockhurst, *Science Fiction*, 219.
[109] Darja Malcom-Clarke in J. VanderMeer, *The New Weird*, 338.
[110] Darja Malcom-Clarke in J. VanderMeer, *The New Weird*, 340.

Weird."[111] Though the writers like Jeffrey Thomas, Michael Cisco or Thomas Ligotti has been writing what could be termed New Weird since the 1990s, Miéville managed to attract wider audience through his right combination of pulp and classic story-telling and spiced it accordingly with surrealist imagery and bodily transformations.

The New Weird is a movement or moment in a literary history that has been taken up by critics and publishers and used as a generic label. Any form of definition is only partially correct because as any movement it evolves and moves its focus. Some writers associated with it has already started writing something else, or altered their weirdness.

Nevertheless, the following citation is a working definition of New Weird presented in the anthology by Jeff and Ann VanderMeer, it sums up the most common characteristics of New Weird writing.

New Weird is a type of urban, secondary-world fiction that subverts the romanticized ideas about place found in traditional fantasy, largely by choosing realistic, complex real-world models as the jumping off point for creation of settings that may combine elements of both science fiction and fantasy. New Weird has a visceral, in-the-moment quality that often uses elements of surreal or transgressive horror for its tone, style, and effects — in combination with the stimulus of influence from New Wave writers or their proxies (including also such forebears as Mervyn Peake and the French/English Decadents). New Weird fictions are acutely aware of the modern world, even if in disguise, but not always overtly political. As part of this awareness of the modern world, New Weird relies for its visionary power on a "surrender to the weird" that isn't, for example, hermetically sealed in a haunted house on the moors or in a cave in Antarctica. The "surrender" (or "belief") of the writer can take many forms, some of them even involving the use of postmodern techniques that do not undermine the surface reality of the text.[112]

The term New Weird was created by M. John Harrison out of mischievousness as it becomes apparent in the discussion on the message board of the magazine *Third Alternative* that followed when he asks: "The New Weird. Who does it? What is it? Is it even anything? Is it even New?"[113] The whole discussion is available on Kathryn Cramer's website.

The discussion revolves around the issue of whether the New Weird exists and if it does who writes it and how. The contributors usually agree that it is a significant change from the traditional genre of fantasy and as the predecessors of the possible movement usually name Mervyn Peake and M. John Harrison. Also, the mixing of genres is mentioned very often and the political awareness of the novels as well as their acknowledgement and

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[111] VanderMeer, *The New Weird*, xi.
[112] VanderMeer, *The New Weird*, xvi.
[113] M. John Harrison in J. VanderMeer, *The New Weird*, 317.

inspiration in the traditional 'high' literature such as Melville or Dickens rather than J.R.R Tolkien or C.S. Lewis.

One point of discussion remains unresolved and that is the question whether it is appropriate and useful to name or label such movements, moments in literature development. It seems that the view of M. John Harrison might be the one to go with as he is convinced that the need to name is associated with power and when it is not done by the writers who are in the centre of the writing then somebody else is going to do it and that the resulting name, label or definition of writing might not be at all what the writers feel like they are doing. This view corresponds with the opinion of K. J. Bishop expressed in her essay "Whose Words You Wear" included in the anthology *The New Weird* edited by VanderMeer.
Though it is important to note that Harrison identifies as one of the important features of the New Weird writing the elusiveness when it comes to trying to label the writings.

Miéville's article "Long Live the New Weird" from 2003 is considered the leading text describing the notions of New Weird, it sums up its influences (Lovecraft, Peake, C. A. Smith among others), praises its generic slippage and ignorance of literary boundaries and its attempts to rebel against the clichés of the fantastic. Also, Miéville makes an interesting point about New Weird being "messy" and he says that it "feels real, not like a fairy story," because for Miéville New Weird is literature which "knows the world."[114]

Therefore, and it is also mentioned in the article, the real life politics and metaphors are inevitable part of the weird fiction but the New Weird is not "metaphoric fiction that marshals the Weird to make finger-wagging points" because it is based on "surrender to the weird."[115] The New Weird is engaged fiction, and investigates morality which is a taken as a problem not a solution or a given characteristic, the political metaphors might be present but the weird is not a way of propagating these ideas, the weird is the main aim.

This notion of morality is apparent in the ending of Miéville's *Perdido Street Station* and Isaac's decision regarding his promise to return the gift of flight to Yagharek which he does not keep at the end (848-53). But the morality or immorality of his decision is not straightforward, Miéville stresses that he did not want to make a moralistic ending, for detailed discussion see for example "Reveling in Genre: An Interview with China Miéville" in *Science Fiction Studies* (2003).

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[114] Miéville, "Long Live the New Weird," 3.
[115] Miéville, "Long Live the New Weird," 3.

Features of New Weird in *The City & The City*.

The novel *The City & The City* might not be weird enough for some reviewers or readers, as Miéville himself acknowledges and it has attracted much less criticism than the Bas Lag novels – *Perdido Street Station* (2000), *The Scar* (2002), *Iron Council* (2004).[116] Its associations with the New Weird aesthetics are less traceable and the change in the writing style, the plot of the novel and its rather 'common' human characters represent a significant alternation to the New Weird as it is represented by the hallmark *Perdido Street Station*. The following analysis of the novel *The City & The City* proves the point being made during the discussion on the message board of *Third Alternative* – the New Weird is being written and has certain characteristics but at the same time it does not follow any doctrine or manifesto and there is a significant room for improvement and ideas. It is evolving and taking on new inspirations.

However, some elements mentioned in the above quoted definition of New Weird by VandeMeers are visible in the novel. The urban secondary world is clearly represented by the cities from the title of the novel - Besźel and Ul Qoma. They exist in the same geographical space but they are seen as separate with invisible but strongly felt borders. Miéville's novel subverts the romanticized idea about traditional fantasy setting by using realistic cities and their political (borders) and economic establishment as a starting point for the fantastic establishment of Besźel and Ul Qoma. The theme of borders also corresponds with the New Weird characteristic of being aware of modern world, though that does not mean it is necessarily political.

The surrender to the weird is also a crucial characteristic of *The City & The City*, the cities are in contact with the rest of the world but they do not have specific location. Besźel is located non-specific part of Eastern Europe and is described as poorer of the two cities. Ul Qoma is more similar to some Eastern city and is more affluent because of foreign investors. The following analysis investigates what has happened to the New Weird in the novel *The City & The City*. It stands on the basis of what has been said about the weird fiction, both old and new, and its tendencies and subsequently gives an account of several most notable features of the novel which make it a valuable asset to the weird fiction. In the first subchapter the urban qualities and the significance of borders in *The City & The City* are explored. In the second subchapter Michel Foucault's theory of self-regulation is taken into consideration in

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[116] China Miéville, "PW Talks with China Miéville, Investigating the Strange," *Publishers Weekly,* April 20, (2009): 36.

relation to *The City & The City*. In the third subchapter the loss of monsters and its effects are explored. The rest of this chapter deals with the generic qualities of *The City & The City*. The plot of the novel is seemingly simple, a dead body of a young woman is found and inspector Tyador Borlú works the case, however, from what looked like a simple homicide turns out to be more complicated issue involving both cities and even outside players. Inspector Borlú is forced to investigate across the border and is involved in machinations of Doctor Bowden and Minister Buric.

The structuring of the book is on one level a police procedural but soon the reader is aware of aspects of the cities and behaviour of the characters that do not correspond to what they would call ordinary. The hints at the uncanny border and establishment of the cities are delicate for the first few chapters but they draw more attention than the murder itself. When Borlú observes the streets of his city at the end of the first chapter he refers to trash on the streets and says that it "might be anywhere."[117] This is the very first weird mention in the novel. A few lines further, the reader starts to wonder where Borlú really is and if he is in his right state of mind, this is his inner monologue as he watches an elderly woman walking down the street:

In my glance I took in her clothes, her way of walking, of holding herself, and looking. With a hard start, I realised that she was not on GunterStrász at all, and that I should not have seen her. Immediately and flustered I looked away, and she did the same, with the same speed. I raised my head, towards an aircraft on its final descent. When after some seconds I looked back up, unnoticing the woman stepping heavily away, I looked carefully instead of at her in her foreign street at the facades of the nearby and local GunterStrász, that depressed zone.[118]

What he notices about the woman are important aspects of recognizing the 'foreigners.' His sudden revelation that he has done something he should not have is incomprehensible for the readers so far and it is therefore more intriguing than the introductory murder. Further on, the uses of the words foreign street in contrast to local and nearby are also confusing. The reader's expectations about the urban setting of the novel are slowly changing. How can a street be foreign and local at the same time? Is the woman there or is she only the product of Borlú's imagination? These are the questions readers ask, not who murdered Mahalia or are there going to be more murders?

The detective work is in the novel rather an accompanying feature, though it drives the main character. To find the murderer of the victim, Mahalia Geary, is Borlú's motivation

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[117] China Miéville, *The City & The City*, (London: Pan Macmillan, 2009), 14.

[118] Miéville, *The City & The City*, 14.

throughout the whole narration but it is what is revealed in the progress of the investigation and not the investigation itself that creates the uncanny atmosphere of the book.

Eric S. Rabkin in his book *The Fantastic in Literature* examines some of the famous detective fiction stories such as Edgar Allan Poe's "The Purloined Letter" (1845), Arthur Conan Doyle's "The Speckled Band" (1892), and G. K. Chesterton's "The Blue Cross" (1911)" and he comes to a conclusion about the detective tales and their fantastic qualities. His conclusion does not fully corresponds with what happens in *The City & The City* proving the novel's tradition of police procedural to be only half true.

The explanation immediately follows an action that either brings justice or reasserts the morally right; both the explanation and the action are accomplished by the detective, a man of intellect and high seriousness; the detective's success is actually prophesied. Thus, at the end of the tale, the prophecy is fulfilled and order is re-established.[119]

There is an explanation of the murder, readers learn who and how killed Mahalia but the greater mystery of the novel, the geographical overlap of the cities and the strange laws that are keeping them apart remains unsolved. Moreover, there is no restoration of justice or order, the man behind the true machinations is not detained, and he leaves both cities. He also seems unmoved by the jurisdiction of the place he is in. The fantastic quality of the novel is therefore far from being naturalized it is enhanced because the ending leaves more questions than answers.

The success of the detective is also questionable. He might solve the case but in the process he disappears. Borlú becomes a non-existing person at the end of the narration. He is part of the Breach, to be explained later. He cannot be seen by his co-workers, let alone be spoken to. When Bowden threatens to shoot Borlú he says that nobody would recover the body from the breach zone. This illustrates to what degree the border is taken seriously by both sides.[120] All this means that it is highly unlikely that his findings will be passed on. The parents of Mahalia will never be told the results of his investigation. The arrest happened in the breach, no one could look at it even though they saw it.

On the other hand, what makes *The City & The City* a police procedural and a crime fiction is the character of Borlú and the story line about the third city – Orciny and also the writing style.

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[119] Rabkin, *The Fantastic in Literature*, 60-1.
[120] Miéville, *The City & The City*, 356.

Miéville's writing style is rich, full of neologisms, the syntax is often broken and uncomplete, in other places long sentence structures are formed. The typography also helps Miéville to express the atmosphere of the New Crobuzon, he uses capitals for his Weaver monster, italics for character of Yagharek (not when he is in dialogue with other characters). Descriptions of New Crobuzon are filled with colourful adjectives, onomatopoeic verbs and heavily premodified nouns.

In *The City & The City* the style is simpler, more controlled, the prose is more down to earth, sentences shorter. There are fewer neologisms than in the Bas Lag novels, or only *Perdido Street Station* alone. The vocabulary is rather common and everyday.
The difference in the diction is visible from the first paragraphs in the novels as can be seen in the following extracts, the first one is from *Perdido Street Station*, it is a scene which leads to the introduction of the main protagonist Isaac and his girlfriend Lin. The second citation is from *The City & The City*, it is the first chapter describing Borlú arriving at the crime scene.

A window burst open high above the market. A basket flew from it and arced towards the oblivious crowd. It spasmed in mid-air, then spun and continued earthwards at a slower, uneven pace. Dancing precariously as it descended, its wire-mesh caught and skittered on the building's rough hide. It scrabbled at the wall, sending paint and concrete dust plummeting before it.[121]

This is a morning in New Crobuzon, morning in Besźel, in comparison, is described in much simpler fashion. The first person narrator here is Borlú.

The grass was weedy, threaded with paths footwalked between rubbish, rutted by wheel tracks. There were police at various tasks. I wasn't the first detective there – I saw Bardo Naustin and a couple of others – but I was the most senior. I followed the sergeant to where most of my colleagues clustered, between a low derelict tower and a skateboard park ringed by big drum-shaped trash bins. Just beyond it we could hear the docks. A bunch of kids sat on a wall before standing officers. The gulls coiled over the gathering.[122]

Borlú is an intelligent investigator, he is daring and judging by his two girlfriends also charismatic. In general, however, he is lonely and individualistic, a kind of character of the street. Though during the investigation he has help in his Besź police partner Corwi and Illitan partner Dhatt, he is portrayed as the leading and most capable detective. Carl Freedman, in his article "From Genre to Political Economy: Miéville's The City & The City and Uneven

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[121] China Miéville, *Perdido Street Station*, (London: Pan Macmillan, 2000), 9.
[122] Miéville, *The City & The City*, 3.

Development" compares Borlú to one of the most known detectives, Philip Marlowe. [123] The author of this character, Raymond Chandler, is mentioned in the acknowledgments of The *City & The City*. However, it is ultimately not the case he is able to solve but his personality and, as has been said, the aspects of his surroundings he reveals during the investigation which are of more interest for the reader.

As for the third city, Orciny, this is a theory explored by doctor Bowden in his book *Between the City and the City*. In the book, which is illegal during the narration of Miéville's tale, he claims that there is third city which resides in between Besźel and Ul Qoma and has great powers. The Orcinians are able to move and dress in such a way that they are unseen by citizens of both cities. Breach and Orciny are considered either one authority or, more often, they are seen as archenemies in the theory of the third city. This theory is usually considered nonsensical but still it makes Mahalia's schoolmates uneasy as they mention her interest about it to Borlú. [124]

As the investigation unfolds the possibility of the existence of Orciny and its involvement in Mahalia's disappearance and murder seems as a plausible option to the reader. It would implicate that the weird aspect of the novel would increase significantly. Suddenly, the crime, though happening in weird, geographically coexisting cities, would be also committed by supposedly non-existent entity. Mahalia, a young, fearless student who is not afraid of confrontation, could have been disposed of because she learnt about Orciny more than it was acceptable for its inhabitants.

But Miéville does not confirm the reader's expectations of these weirder fantastical murderous schemes. Borlú, by the end of the novel, confronts Buric, the minister, and Bowden and finds out that at first Mahalia believed that she was helping recover artefacts from Orciny but later she saw through the ploy and has to be removed threating to ruin the smuggling process.

Readers as well as Mahalia are disappointed by the mundanity of the motivation which was simple human greed. The smuggling of artefacts from the cities is a prosperous business. Here then is a reason why the weird qualities of the novel are less noticeable - the generic resemblance with the hard-boiled detective fiction, such as that of Raymond Chandler, where people are murdered for money not because they are a threat to some uncanny society.

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[123] Carl Freedman, "From Genre to Political Economy: Miéville's The City & The City and Uneven Development," *CR: The New Centennial Review* 13, no. 2 (2013): 15.
[124] Miéville, *The City & The City*, 183-4.

With *The City & The City* Miéville creates a weird police procedural, it is both outside and in the tradition, exactly as it is with many of the weird texts. Tony Venezia, a research student at Birkbeck University, characterizes the novel also as a "hybrid of police procedural" and further on she describes it as "urban fantasy."[125] The latter characteristic is also explored in this thesis, the urbanity of the cities is analysed in following subchapter.

The City & The City's urban locale and its borders

Though the plot of Miéville's *The City & The City* downplays the weird by proving the non-existence of Orciny, the urbanistic qualities of the novel still remain a source of considerable weird atmosphere.

Urban fantasy can be divided into two kinds, in the first kind the city is place where the fantastic occurs, the Faerie world collides with the urban. In the second one, the fantastic is defined by the urban, the city is *genius loci*, it has its own fantastic rules based on its history and character.[126] Besźel and Ul Qoma belong to the second type. The fantastic does not enter from any outside source or portal, it is present in their ways of coexistence.

Visual artist Anastasia Savinova focuses in her project called Genius Loci on the way we perceive life in the cities and she creates collages, so called Big Houses, which capture the spirits of numerous cities. Savinova searches for the connection between the space and the place and through her photos put into a collage she expresses the genius loci of these cities. She says about the cities that "while architecture and landscape are visual components of the integral image of the place, at the same time, this image is inseparably linked with a mentality and a way of life."[127]

This applies to Besźel and Ul Qoma more than the Ukrainian visual artist could have guessed. The architecture of the cities, its spatial characteristics are defined by what the characters have to see and unsee. Savinova's Big Houses could serve as training sheet for young citizens of Besźel and Ul Qoma who has to be trained to recognize the patterns of the other bordering city and unsee them otherwise they will commit a serious crime. The Big House consisting of the mixed Besź and Illitan buildings would be half empty for each of its

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[125] Tony Venezia, "Weird Fiction: Tony Venezia meets China Miéville," *Dandelion* 1, no. 1 (2010): 3.

[126] Alexander C. Irvine, "Urban Fantasy," in *The Cambridge Companion to Fantasy Literature*, Edward James, Farah Mendlesohn eds. (2012), 200-1.

[127] Anastasia Savinova, in "Genius Loci, Anastasia Savinova," Khalid Saeed, *Arch2o.com*, accessed April 4, 2016, http://www.arch2o.com/genius-loci-anastasia-savinova/

inhabitants who would have to leave out in their mind's eye the Besź/Illitan houses, fences, windows, bikes.

There are three different areas in *The City & The City*, 'total areas', 'alter areas' and 'cross-hatched areas.' The total areas are entirely in one city, the city in which the observer lives. The alter areas are completely in the other city and must be therefore completely ignored. The last area is cross-hatched which means that there is an overlap and the citizens have to unsee each other, avoid the foreign traffic or pedestrians.

Carl Freedman in his previously cited article "From Genre to Political Economy" suggests that *The City & The City* is a less mapped out world compared to Bas-Lag, however *The City & The City* provides not one but three different fantasy worlds, and they are continually changing, depending on the point of view, on who is watching and with what authority.[128]

Miéville's novel presents a fantasy world which is in constant motion, it cannot be properly described and mapped out as New Crobuzon is at the beginning of *Perdido Street Station* but because of it the world might be even more fascinating, it is elusive, indescribable just as the monsters of Lovecraft or William Hope Hodgson.

Miéville is a contemporary writer who creates engaged fiction. *The City & The City* is investigating borders and questions of nationhood by creating a space where the borders of two cities overlap and create a duality of space, and even the possibilities of third spaces. The tri-fold character of the cities is even reflected in the structure of the novel. It has three parts, Besźel, Ul Qoma and Breach.

Miéville says in an interview with Lars Schmeink that he has been interested in the absurdity of borders and questions of nationhood. The multidimensional space in *The City & The City* is his way of commenting on that absurdity.[129] He takes two spaces upholding two different laws and blends them together, changing the perception of borders as impenetrable.

What I was thinking was, that if you think about borders as these kind of absurdities that have literally the power of life and death, then our traditional conception has always been to think of a border of two countries as sort of like skin rubbing up against each other. I was just thinking, what if you had it rather like a membrane, so they bleed through and can get past each other? But they still do the same job, even though they are overlapping.[130]

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[128] Freedman, "From Genre to Political Economy," 14-15.

[129] Absurd is here used in a sense of unreasonable and humorous, not non-existent. Similar concept of borders which produce undesirable effects is to be found in many treaties on intercultural trade by Helliwell e.g. "Measuring the Width of National Borders" (2002), or *How Much Do National Borders Matter?* (1998).

[130] China Miéville, Lars Schmeink, "On the Look-Out for a New Urban Uncanny, An Interview with China Miéville," *Extrapolation* 55, no. 1 (2014): 29.

The initial expectations about some kind of magic or madness of the central narrator, Borlú, disappears and we are confronted with two different city laws with no spatial borders between them. The membrane stays in place as long as the citizens observe the cities' laws.

Characters treat the borders with apprehension, but they have to deal with the practical aspects of the overlapping borders. When Borlú needs to secure the crime scene it becomes "a slight impropriety, as the alley was a common rule-bend in such circumstances."[131] Also, even though you might unsee the foreign cars you still have to avoid them because they are physically there. If there is fire, you see somebody being mugged in the foreign city right on the other side of the street you have to ignore it. Borlú comments on the sanctions for seeing something you should not when he is driving Mahalia's parents to identify the body and he also comments on the brief crimes, visitors, though not only them, commit.

While, or as, sanctions for breach are severe (the two cities depend on that), breach must be beyond reasonable doubt. We all suspect that, while we are long-expert in unseeing it, tourists to the Old Besźel ghetto are surreptitiously noticing Ul Qoma's glass fronted Yal Iran Bridge, which in literal topology abuts it. Look up at the ribbon-streaming balloons of Besźel's Wind-Day parade, they doubtless can't fail (as we can) to notice the raised teardrop towers of Ul Qoma's palace district, next to them though a whole country away. So long as they do not point and coo (which is why except in rare exceptions no foreigners under eighteen are granted entry) everyone concerned can indulge the possibility that there is no breach. […] We all, Breach included, give the benefit of the doubt to visitors when possible.[132]

There are several things in the extract worth commenting on. There are two neologism regarding the seeing – breach and Breach, breach with no capital b means the act of seeing something in the neighbouring country, which is a crime. Breach with the capital b is an all-seeing, all-knowing presence in the novel which punishes the crime of breach.

Moreover, though the unseeing is a law, it is clear from the extract that there is some benevolence for breaching, the short-period crimes. Borlú speaks about breach being beyond reasonable doubt which means that when you look, then realize that you should not have seen the person/building/car you should quickly unsee it.

The thin membrane between the cities, the reaction of people towards it and the consequences it brings, is the central marvel of the novel, and as the master of the weird, H. P. Lovecraft, says it "must be treated very impressively and deliberately—with a careful

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[131] Miéville, *The City & The City*, 31.
[132] Miéville, *The City & The City*, 93-4.

emotional 'build-up'."[133] The emotional build-up of *The City & The City* consists of gradual understanding of the weird laws on which the cities function, but even though the readers later in the novel are familiar with the dual aspect of the cities, every time Borlú sees something he should not and his reactions to breach, a place in between, remind the reader of the incredulous urban fantasy world. The last part of the book does not offer any consolidation, readers might have understood the dual aspect but in the third part, the field of vision is three-fold.

Within the book there are several political fractions which represent the various opinions on the borders between the cities. There are unificationists, nationalists and then there are those who think in terms of a third space, between both of the cities. Unificationists want to diminish the border, nationalists of each city want to envelop the other. The third spaces, places such as Copula Hall, *dissensi* or for example DöplirCaffé represent the potential intermingling of the two worlds, the two cities and its cultures.

Dissensi are the spaces which do not belong to either of the cities and unless they are administratively accepted as crosshatched, they are in neither of the cities. These spaces create the tales about Orciny - the third city which is for the unificationists, and not only them, a fairy tale. The tales about Orciny are compared to Harry Potter and Power Rangers.[134] And their opinion turns out to be right, however there is a space between the two cities in the dissensi zones, in neither of the cities and it is where the avatars of Breach are believed to reside and keep a watch over those who breach and therefore have to be deported (visitors) or have to disappear (citizens of Besźel, Ul Qoma) because once you stop unseeing you cannot go back to only one-way vision.

To stop unseeing is what Bowden managed to do when he tries to escape, he answers Borlú's question about which city is he in by saying that he is in "either."[135] Borlú has a similar dialogue with Ashil and Borlú says that he is in "Neither, I'm in Breach" and Ashil reacts by saying "You're with me here. […] In Breach. No one knows if they're seeing or unseeing you. Don't creep. You're not in neither: you're in both."[136]

When you breach you are no longer citizen of Besźel or Ul Qoma. Ashil, avatar of Breach who helps with the investigation, says to Borlú "none of us were born here. We were all once in one place or the other. All of us breached once."[137] Breach lives in both of the

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[133] Lovecraft, "Notes on Writing Weird Fiction."
[134] Miéville, *The City & The City*, 62.
[135] Miéville, *The City & The City*, 363.
[136] Miéville, *The City & The City*, 304.
[137] Miéville, *The City & The City*, 371.

cities, they move so that no one can see them which means that their clothing style, movements and posture do not display characteristics of either of the cities, it is a mixture of both.

The question where Breach resides remains unsolved, the last words of Borlú, not a detective anymore but an avatar of Breach are on this topic and he says that "we are all philosophers here where I am, and we debate among other things the question of where it is that we live. On that issue I am a liberal. I live in the interstice yes, but I live in both the city and the city."[138] No one knows for sure, even Breach themselves where it is that they are, if they are both or none of the cities, cultures.

A place which does not show signs of any culture is Copula Hall, it is an administrative building through which citizens of both cities can cross the border legally but instead of being a place of mixing of Besź and Illitan culture its corridors are described as "antique and haute, but somehow vague, definitionless" and the paintings on the walls are "well executed but as if without antecedent, bloodlessly general," even further Borlú's feeling of the hall is that it is "not collaborative but empty."[139]

DöplirCaffé represents a miniature version of the two cities. The two establishments function both as two places and one, its status changing with people who came there. Its division is based on religion. Here, however, the cultures seem to be intertwined not separated or annihilated.

One Muslim and one Jewish coffeehouse, rented side by side, each with its own counter and kitchen, halal and kosher, sharing a single name, sign and sprawl of tables, the dividing wall removed. Mixed groups would come, greet the two proprietors, sit together, separating on communitarian lines only long enough to order their permitted food from the relevant side, or ostentatiously from either and both in the case of freethinkers. Whether the DöplirCaffé was one establishment or two depended on who was asking: to a property tax collector it was always one.[140]

DöplirCaffé is a place where the dividing wall was removed, as opposed to Besźel and Ul Qoma. The freethinkers order from both establishments which is the same as choosing to acknowledge both cities, being in breach. A similar place is Ul Qomatown which is a suburb of Ul Qoman culture and architecture located in Besźel. At first sight the place is Ul Qoman, it is a place where young inexperienced Ul Qoman citizens often breach, because the area is heavily crosshatched. The emigrants from Ul Qoma tried to make the place look like their

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[138] Miéville, *The City & The City*, 373.
[139] Miéville, *The City & The City*, 83.
[140] Miéville, *The City & The City*, 26.

home country, it is Besź establishment but with strong Ul Qoman features which makes it confusing for those unaware of the quality of the establishment.[141]

For Peter Cowley and Barbara Hanna from the University of Queensland the third spaces provide possibilities of intercultural reading of the novel. Their reading of *The City & The City* is a search for "border-crossing" and "intercultural agency positioning the individual with respect to the 'foreign'," however, their conclusion is that the third spaces in the novel and in particular the agency of Breach "has a vested interest in keeping cultures apart." [142] Also the choice of Borlú at the end of the novel to "maintain the skin that keeps law in place. Two laws in two places, in fact"[143] is according to Cowley and Hanna a sign of the rejection of interculturality.

Nevertheless, as has been showed above those who are Breach might be seen as the only intercultural agents, they live in *both* of the cities as Ashil pointed out and Borlú also says, as shown in the cited passage, that he lives in *both* cities. Cowley and Hanna describe Bowden as "to come close to the ideal of the intercultural agent" but later discard his interculturality by saying that "in suggesting that he is in either one place or the other, Bowden's discourse is consistent with that of the cities: it does not suggest a double or shared identification."[144]

However, to step outside the cities might be perceived as a step towards the shared identification which is perfected by Breach who are in both places at once. Ashil says about Bowden that he has been "a student of the cities" and that maybe "it took an outsider to really see how citizens mark themselves, so as to walk between it."[145] Bowden is a Canadian scholar and perhaps he managed the first step toward the ignoring of the borders, he walks between them.

Though some of the novel's third spaces, Copula Hall for example, seem to correspond with Cowley and Hanna's reading there are others such as DöplirCaffé and Ul Qomatown which point towards the opposite direction. Also, given Miéville's stand towards the moralistic endings of his novels and his effort no to create "manifestos" it seems that rather than supporting or rejecting interculturality, *The City & The City* comments on the absurdity of the strict borders, dividing cultures and upholding different laws.[146]

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[141] Miéville, *The City & The City*, 65.
[142] Peter Cowley, Barbara Hanna, "Breach of Contact: An Intercultural Reading of China Miéville's The City and The City," *Journal of Multidisciplinary International Studies*, vol. 11, no. 2, (2014): 7.
[143] Miéville, *The City & The City*, 373.
[144] Cowley, Hanna, "Breach of Contact," 10-11.
[145] Miéville, *The City & The City*, 368.
[146] Gordon, Miéville, "Revelling in Genre," 365-6; Miéville, "Long Live the New Weird," 3.

There are several examples where Borlú comments on the divisions of the cities with an air of irony. When he is speaking with an unificationist he observes that the fact that this political party has to be more careful about breaching than anyone else is "a political irony" because "those most dedicated to the perforation of the boundary between Besźel and Ul Qoma had to observe it most carefully."[147] Further on, when Borlú takes Corwi, his police partner for lunch to Ul Qomatown he says that it is "a provocation" but "not aimed at her but at the universe in some way."[148]

Then there are the stories about lovers who meet in Copula Hall, then go home and discover that they live next to each other but grosstopically – in the same street, next to each other but in two different countries.[149] The line drawn between them by some higher authority prevents them from being together. But why the line is there, who introduced it or why, is not clear, no one knows. Not even the students of Cleavage.

Cleavage is a term used to describe the time of the parting or merging of the cities. How the twin cities came into being is unclear, Borlú says that maybe "there was one thing back then that later schismed on the ruins, or perhaps our ancestral Besźel had not yet met and stand-offishly entwined with its neighbour. I am not a student of Cleavage, but if I were, I still would not know." [150] The borders are established and characters do not breach this membrane under the threat of disappearance but the reason for this, the origin is not known even by the academics.

The dispute over borders in the novel inescapably produces various allegorical readings of real world territorial issues of divided cities or countries. Most of these readings are based on the premise that the division is unjust and the populations are unfairly racially and culturally segregated which calls for their unification. The various political readings of other Miéville's novels make it difficult no to see *The City & The City* as political allegory of Israel and Palestine, Belfast or Cold War Berlin or any city split by US/Canada border. Many of such political readings of Miéville's novels are for example in the magazine *Extrapolation*, vol. 50, no.2, which is dedicated to Miéville's fiction, among the contributors are Nicholas Birns or Christopher Kendrick and others. Also Miéville's own writings on Marxism encourage the political view on his novels, for example his *Red Planets, Marxism and Science Fiction* (2009) edited together with Mark Bould.

However, Miéville comments on the allegory in *The City & The City* as follows.

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[147] Miéville, *The City & The City*, 63-4.
[148] Miéville, *The City & The City*, 65.
[149] Miéville, *The City & The City*, 160-1.
[150] Miéville, *The City & The City*, 51.

I knew that I didn't want to make it narrowly, allegorically reductive, in any kind of lumpen way. I didn't want to make one city heavy-handedly Eastern and one Western, or one capitalist and one communist, or any kind of nonsense like that. I wanted to make them both feel combined and uneven and real and full-blooded.[151]

The cities are in connection with the rest of the world. There are references to David Beckham (185), google (41), or subway (172), this is not a hermetically sealed world, in this sense it is true New Weird novel. Borlú even watches on his Ul Qoman television "visits to China and Turkey, trade missions to Europe" and reference to Americans and Canada is to be found elsewhere. Corwi and Borlú discuss Borlú's visit to Berlin, when they pick Mahalia's parents from the Besź airport all different destinations are mentioned, Budapest, Skopje, Athens. [152] But there is no specific location mentioned in the novel, it is carefully crafted to be somewhere on the map but undefinably so.

Also, Borlú recalls his student years and quotes one of his professors who thought that putting Besźel and Ul Qoma in the same position as Budapest, Jerusalem and Berlin if even as a topic of a conference called Split cities was not "just a misunderstanding of our status it was *an insult to Besźel* [Miéville's emphasis]" and Borlú says that it is "not wrong, I suppose."[153] Borlú's statement is there, according to Miéville, partly to "disavow," no to "make the book too easy," but also to make "a serious point, which is that, obviously, the analogies will occur but sometimes they will obscure as much as they illuminate."[154]

Though there is room for interpretation and the book could be read as an allegory this text does no explore this possibility because on the basis of above stated arguments it seems as the least plausible option for interpretation. Moreover, as has been said in the previous chapters New Weird is not overtly political, it can contain political metaphors but these are not the aim, the weird is the aim.

Robert Duggan in his article "The geopolitics of inner space…" comes to a similar conclusion when he says that "in the same manner in which Miéville renounces any narrowly allegorical approach to his narrative, pointing instead to its intrinsic value as an imagined

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[151] Geoff Manaugh, China Miéville, "Unsolving the City: An Interview with China Miéville," *Bldgblog*, accessed April 6, 2016, http://bldgblog.blogspot.com.au/2011/03/unsolving-city-interview-with-china.html.
[152] Miéville, *The City & The City*, 171, 234, 88, 90.
[153] Miéville, *The City & The City*, 91.
[154] Manaugh, Miéville, "Unsolving the City."

topos, so too does the literary work tend to insist on both its possibility (for generic reasons) and its impossibility (for political ones)."[155]

The possibility of the text Duggan refers to is based on the surrender to the weird, it challenges readers to think about a space with such qualities as described in *The City & The City* but at the same time the impossibility of keeping such borders, as proved every time the characters breach, remind the readers of the impossibility of such political structuring. Miéville himself says that the system he thought of for this novel is unreal, it is weird, it should not function as a prescription for the real world political issues around borders.[156]

Michael Foucault's discipline in *The City & The City*

The weird is concerned with the emotion of fear, especially a fear of the unknown. In *The City & The City* this fear is a constant companion, the fear of looking at the wrong building or person and fear of being watched. This chapter explores self-discipline and surveillance in terms of Michael Foucault's theory of power and how *The City & The City* might be viewed as a modern Panopticon. Michael Foucault developed his theory of power and knowledge from 1970s onwards in his works such as *Discipline and Punish* (1977) or *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969).

Ashil, the avatar of Breach explains to Borlú that the reaction to breaching must be fear, and immediate reclusion to the proper way of one-way seeing. He says that the road accidents, fires and mistakes in seeing are overlooked by Breach as long as "you race to get out again. If that's your response to the Breach, then maybe you've got a chance.[…] And if it's any longer than a moment, you can't get out again. You'll never unsee again."[157] Foucault describes that traditional exercise of power lies in "what was seen, what was shown and what was manifested and, paradoxically, found the principle of its force in the movement by which it deployed that force. Those on whom it was exercised could remain in the shade; they received light only from that portion of power that was conceded to them, or from the reflection of it that for a moment they carried."[158]

By the reflection of power Foucault means for example public torture, public hangings or more recent parades of armed forces, but this does not apply to the power Breach exercises,

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[155] Robert Duggan, "The geopolitics of inner space in contemporary British fiction," *Textual Practice* 27, no.5 (2013): 917.

[156] Manaugh, Miéville, "Unsolving the City."

[157] Miéville, *The City & The City*, 371.

[158] Michael Foucault, trans. Alan Sheridan, *Discipline and Punish, The Birth of Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1977): 187.

there are no visible signs of them, they remain in the shade, not the citizens over whom the power is exercised. This kind of power is called by Foucault disciplinary power and it is "exercised through its invisibility; at the same time it imposes on those whom it subjects a principle of compulsory visibility."[159]

The principle of compulsory visibility is very much present in *The City & The City*, you have to dress and behave in a certain way, paint your house or a restaurant certain colour. The facades of Ul Qomatown, a Besź restaurant are "in the shade called Besźel Blue, one of the colours illegal in Ul Qoma" and this slight detail has to be recognized otherwise Ul Qoman citizens commit breach.[160]

Even your language must reveal where you belong. When Borlú receives a call from a secret informant he is able to reveal from of his accent that he is calling from the foreign neighbouring city of Ul Qoma and that call therefore, because it was not allowed administratively, is also a crime.[161] When Borlú is in Ul Qoma investigating with Dhatt, he has to wear a visitor's badge otherwise the citizens would unsee him because of his clothes, posture and overall style. He notices people are unseeing him because "of my [Borlú's] clothes and the way I held myself, double-take and see my visitor's mark, see me."[162]

Foucault also explains how the individuals are controlled, it is their visibility that "assures the hold of the power that is exercised over them. It is the fact of being constantly seen, of being able always to be seen, that maintains the disciplined individual in his subjection."[163]

Though it might sound contradictory the unseeing does assure the citizens' visibility. Unseeing consist of a whole range of behavioural aspects, by adhering to one of the ways, either Besź or Ul Qoman, they remain clearly in one of the urban spaces. Foucault says about power relations that in order to understand them what should be investigated are "the forms of resistance and attempts made to dissociate these relations."[164]

There is in particular one character in the novel who breaks from the subjection of Breach and thus become undisciplined individual. It is the author of the illegal novel Between the city and the city, Bowden. When Bowden tries to escape and he walks between the cities as described earlier, nobody dares to notice him, he becomes invisible. By choosing not to adhere to the strict principles of seeing only one city at a time he escapes from both the Besź

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[159] Foucault, *Discipline and* Punish, 187.
[160] Miéville, *The City & The City*, 65.
[161] Miéville, *The City & The City*, 42.
[162] Miéville, *The City & The City*, 172.
[163] Foucault, *Discipline and* Punish, 187.
[164] Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power," *Critical Inquiry* 8, no. 4 (1982): 780.

policzai and Ul Qoman *militsya* who have power only over those who are visible in their corresponding cities.

Dhatt describes the situation around Bowden to Borlú over the phone and he tries to explain why they cannot arrest him, "he's been standing there, just outside the entrance [of Copula Hall], in full view, and then when he saw them [police] moving towards him he started walking…but the way he's moving…the clothes he's wearing…they *can't tell* [Miéville's emphasis] whether he's in Ul Qoma or Besźel."[165] Borlú describes the ability of Bowden to navigate between the different characteristics of both cities and says that he could disappear from Ul Qoma and Besźel altogether by walking out. With a hint of irony Borlú comments "how expert citizen, how consummate urban dweller and observer, to mediate those million unnoticed mannerisms that marked out civic specificity, to refuse either aggregate of behaviours."[166]

Bowden's knowledge of the citizen's behaviour gives him power to disappear and it also shows that this is not simply anti-authority struggle but struggle against "power effects as such" and the main aim is "to attack not so much "such or such" an institution of power, or group, or elite, or class but rather a technique, a form of power."[167] This is the main objective of power struggles as Foucault describes it in the paper "The Subject and Power." The elite, the institution of power is Breach but Bowden does not attack Breach's avatars or those who help to keep the order, policzai or militsya, he is alone, showing everyone a different form of resistance, he denies the effects of Breach's power, he stops unseeing.

As *The City & The City* slowly comes to an end, there is an attempt of unificationist to merge Ul Qoma and Besźel by crashing two buses full of refugees and letting them wander in cities without any training, causing utter panic and forcing Breach to initiate full closure. This is an anti-authority struggle of a political party True Citizens, supported by Buric, the minister from Besźel. Buric says that "we recognize only one authority, you pissing little neither-nor, and that is *Besźel* [Miéville's emphasis]."[168] Also, Croft, regional head of a company CorIntech, Buric's business partner does not obey Breach's orders, but his revolt is again against the authority itself. He says that he is "neither interested in nor scared" of Breach and he tries to intimidate Ashil by making clear that his own country's authority, his government, would react and win if provoked.[169]

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165 Miéville, *The City & The City*, 349.
166 Miéville, *The City & The City*, 354.
167 Foucault, "The Subject and Power," 781.
168 Miéville, *The City & The City*, 339.
169 Miéville, *The City & The City*, 342-3.

In the two cities the knowledge what to see and how to behave is crucial to one's belonging to the city. Jago Morrison, from Brunel University in London, says that the disciplinary power depends on the individuals' willingness to self-regulate themselves.

> Clearly, the threat of penalties like imprisonment remains an important resource for discouraging resistance and 'illegal' behaviour [...]. But far more important is the way the subject is conditioned to regulate him/herself within the defined and learnt codes of 'legal' conduct. Not punishment, but self-policing and surveillance have become the major tools of disciplinary control.[170]

Bowden disassociated himself from the authoritarian power of Breach, he doubts that they are watching him, he says that Borlú might be the only one.[171] He stopped self-policing himself. All the sudden realizations of Borlú of seeing someone/something he should not and then unseeing it are examples of self-policing. Ashil, agent of Breach, explains this principle to Borlú when he says that "it's everyone in Besźel and everyone in Ul Qoma. Every minute, every day. We're only the last ditch: it's everyone in the cities who does most of the work. It works because you don't blink. That's why unseeing and unsensing are so vital. No one can admit it doesn't work."[172] This is the description of the learnt codes of behaviour followed by the Besź and Ul Qoman citizens in their everyday lives. If they contradict the established codes they disappear out of sign, into the gap between the cities.

The manner in which the law of unseeing functions in the cities is the same how power operates in modern society in Foucauldian theory, not by "having armed police expensively stationed on every street corner but, rather, by securing mass assent to the discourse of legality and illegality. Thus, the law institutes itself as a knowledge of right and wrong, correct and incorrect behaviour."[173]

Breach operates on this Foucauldian principles of correct and incorrect behaviour, it is described as having "no embassies, no army, no sights to see."[174] It is, for most of the novel, a big unknown, Borlú says that Mahalia's parents, as visitors, they "would know a little tiny bit (not that we locals knew much more) about Breach.[175] Visitors know little, but locals also do not know much. The citizens of Besźel and Ul Qoma see Breach as "a grim-featured something" and "shapes, figures…," and they grow up hearing "trust to Breach, unsee…"[176] Breach is the invisible authority whose rules are followed in *The City & The City*.

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[170] Jago Morrison, *Contemporary Fiction*, (London: Routledge, 2003), 17.
[171] Miéville, *The City & The City*, 355.
[172] Miéville, *The City & The City*, 370.
[173] Morrison, *Contemporary Fiction*, 17.
[174] Miéville, *The City & The City*, 297.
[175] Miéville, *The City & The City*, 93.
[176] Miéville, *The City & The City*, 79.

Power of Breach is not in the numbers of its avatars or their relentless presence on the streets, their power lies in the knowledge of the inhabitants of Besźel and Ul Qoma that if they stop unseeing by intention the transgression will be noticed and punished. If the citizen breaches for a while, commits a brief crime as Borlú describes it, then they might have a chance of escaping their punishment.

Each child has to study the proper way of unseeing, visitors have to pass examinations for their visas in order to know what is right and wrong way of seeing, also citizens of Besźel and Ul Qoma have to undergo training if they want to travel to the foreign, neighbouring city, so that they inadvertently do not breach into their familiar surroundings.
Borlú describes his childhood saying that "as kids we would unsee Ul Qoma, as our parents and teachers had relentlessly trained us (the ostentation with which we and our Ul Qoman contemporaries used to unnotice each other when we were grosstopically close was impressive)."[177] From the early age, both the social environment of family and school are vital in forming of an individual who is aware and obedient of the given codes of behaviour.

Foucault describes how modern society "fabricates" the individual, the different "forces and bodies" of our social order create the sense of legal/correct and illegal/incorrect behaviour.[178] The above quoted extract shows this process of forces and bodies fabricating the correct behaviour, the family and school environment are both parts of that process.

However, it is not only the social order which represses the individual it is the individual him/herself because we are "neither in the amphitheatre, nor on the stage, but in the panoptic machine, invested by its effects of power, which we bring to ourselves since we are part of its mechanism."[179]

The effects of power of the panoptic machine are best described when considering the architectural layout of the Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon, his design for a prison. It is round, the cells face each other and in the middle there is a guarded watchtower, thanks to this design there are two kinds of surveillance, the prisoners watch each other and the guards see the prisoners. Foucault says about Panopticon that it is "perfect disciplinary institution" and that it is "the diagram of a mechanism of power reduced to its ideal form."[180] This panoptical mechanism of power is present in the novel because both kinds of surveillance mentioned are experienced by characters from *The City & The City*.

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[177] Miéville, *The City & The City*, 86.
[178] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 216-7.
[179] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 217.
[180] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 205.

Corwi and Borlú feel being watched and listened to when they come to a cul-de-sac in their investigation, they sit in Borlú's office and "looked slowly around the room. I do not know what we were looking for but I suspect that she felt, in that moment, as suddenly hunted and watched and listened-to as she looked like she did."[181] Further on, Borlú defines their feelings more specifically by admitting that "Breach watched. None of us knew what it knew."[182] Borlú also explains the invisible presence and surveillance of Breach to Mahalia's parents, he says "Mrs. Geary, Breach are watching us now. *Now* [Miéville's emphasis]."[183] Mahalia's parents are unable to adjust to the system of panoptic machine in the city and the city, Mrs. Geary says about her husband that he is "going crazy. He needs to be looking."[184] He is unable to unsee Ul Qoma, and he also willingly ignores advice given to him by Borlú and his officers about the system of the cities. He is therefore deported, Breach intervenes, quickly and effectively, without anyone seeing them and drugs Mr. Geary into unconscious.

Another moment when the characters feel that they are under constant surveillance is at the headquarters of unificationists, one of the party's members explains that "watching us [unificationists] out there is…you know. Breach," and with the mention of the authority both Borlú and Corwi "were all silent a moment then. We all felt watched."[185]

But the authority of Breach is not the only form of surveillance, people unsee each other with care so much that they are "stepping daintily over fucking couples"[186] in parks, and when someone accidently sees, or even speaks to you, you follow the learnt behaviour and you unsee him/her quickly. They politely avoid foreign traffic both on water and roads, and when going through crowded streets they are, as Borlú, "excusing […] to citizens and local tourists, unseeing others with care."[187]

The ultimate surveillance from the fellow "inmates" is introduced after the *Riot Night*, the attempt of unifs to merge Besźel and Ul Qoma. The party's members were arrested or forced to go deep underground. In Besźel "it became almost bad luck to mention it" and in Ul Qoma they introduced a new campaign called Vigilant Neighbours, "neighbourliness referring both to the people next door (what were they doing?) and to the connected city (see how

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[181] Miéville, *The City & The City*, 150.
[182] Miéville, *The City & The City*, 151.
[183] Miéville, *The City & The City*, 118.
[184] Miéville, *The City & The City*, 118.
[185] Miéville, *The City & The City*, 63.
[186] Miéville, *The City & The City*, 172.
[187] Miéville, *The City & The City*, 16.

important borders are?).[188] Not only Breach is watching, but also your neighbours and friends are vigilant, both in noticing what you are seeing and in unseeing.

The novel *The City & The City* and its focus on sight and visibility as a way of surveillance corresponds with the Foucauldian theory of disciplinary power as shown in this chapter. Also the characters of the novel can be said to be living in a panoptic machine where they are watched and they watch others contributing thus to the self-surveillance and following the learnt codes of behaviour given by the authority which remains in the shades, its effects only felt when an individual breaks the rules. An interesting study of sight as means of resistance to an ideology is Shannon Kuehmichel's "Visual and Linguistic Meaning Unmaking in The City & The City" where Foucault's theory is also applied.[189]

Loss of monsters in *The City & The City*

Jukka Halme, editor and writer from Finland who published the anthology *New Weird?* (2006) containing mainly American and English writers, says about New Weird that it "stands for Change," his notion of New Weird is not of being a real movement which establishes itself and becomes something defined but something in constant flux of ideas and in need of "interaction between the Reader and the Writer as well as bold, new ideas." [190] This view is supported by Jeff VanderMeer as well and adopted in this paper.
The City & The City brings these bold, new ideas by presenting a New Weird novel which is set in seemingly more realistic urban environments and it does not contain a wide range of characters whose bodies has been significantly altered into a form readers might call monstrous. The concepts that replaced the beetle-like or cactus-like characters in *The City & The City* present the central change of the weird in this new weird novel and the new, bold ideas of what New Weird might look like. The concepts in question are the characters' vision of a city altered by a higher authority and their willingness to follow the rules of the panoptic environment.

Darja Malcolm-Clarke in her essay "Tracking Phantoms" writes that many of the New Weird texts are "set in urban spaces populated by physically weird, aesthetically grotesque characters. These two elements — bodies and cities — play a dominant role in the stories'

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[188] Miéville, *The City & The City*, 367.
[189] See Shannon Kuehmichel, "Thriving in the Gap, Visual and Linguistic Meaning Unmaking in The City & The City," *Extrapolation* 55, no. 3 (2014).
[190] Jukka Halme in J. VanderMeer, *The New Weird,* 355-6.

symbolic or visual vocabulary. In fact, many of the stories themselves establish a connection between bodies and cities."[191]

The City & The City presents a departure from this symbolic and visual vocabulary which is very much true for the hallmark of New Weird *Perdido Street Station*, but also *Iron Council*, see for example Rich Paul Cooper's "Building Worlds: Dialectical Materialism as Method in China Miéville's Bas-Lag," or Sandy Rankin's "AGASH AGASP AGAPE: The Weaver as Immanent Utopian Impulse in China Miéville's Perdido Street Station and Iron Council."

The bodies in *The City & The City* are not the main factor in the relationship of characters with the cities. It is the minds of the characters and their visionary sensibility which are imposed on by the cities' authorities. The relationship is of mind and a city not a body and a city. In *Perdido Street Station* the characters of Remades are examples of the powers the city authority has over the character's bodies. If you break the law, your body will be altered in such a way that it will reflect your crime. In *The City & The City* the city alters not your body but your ability to see. The chapter on Foucauldian disciplinary power and self-surveillance showed that in detail.

Malcolm-Clarke continues her argument stating that "cities seem to stand for the overarching power or social structure, and a reading […] of those structures can be seen in the grotesquerie of the characters' corporeality."[192] The cities, or more accurately its borders, in *The City & The City* do represent the overreaching power structures, powers of Breach.

However, these structures cannot be seen, as Malcolm-Clarke says, in the corporeality of Bowden or Borlú or any other character, it reflects on their behaviour and way of thinking. The powers of the cities are reflected in the fate of inspector Borlú. He tries to avoid breaching until the last moment, even though he is following a suspect involved in Mahalia's murder, he "tracked him without focusing, just legally" but as the killer is moving to a total Besź area it is more difficult for Borlú and he says "I was still not looking at him, but fervently, legally, at Ul Qoma, its lights, graffiti, pedestrians, always at Ul Qoma, […]. He was too far."[193] After a while, Borlú shoots him and is arrested by Breach. By the end of the novel he becomes avatar of Breach, following his mentor, Ashil, "out of Besźel and out of Ul Qoma."[194] The authority of the city enables him to see, he and Ashil "walked the cities, in Breach," Borlú is learning how to "walk between them, first in one, then the other, or in

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[191] Darja Malcolm-Clarke in *The New Weird,* Jeff and Ann VanderMeer eds., (Tachyon Publications, 2008): 340.
[192] Malcolm-Clarke in J. VanderMeer *The New* Weird, 340.
[193] Miéville, *The City & The City*, 284-5.
[194] Miéville, *The City & The City*, 373.

either, but without the ostentation of Bowden's extraordinary motion – a more covert equivocation."[195]

This is the main difference between Bowden and Borlú, seemingly similar characters who at some point in the narrative are given the power to see fully, in other words, to become invisible. Borlú breached but only when forced by the circumstances of his investigation. His first reaction to Breach is that of apprehension, even fear. His "arms trembling" he was "looking around nervily" and even though this all might be assigned to the fact that he killed a man a few moments before, this is contradicted by Borlú saying "my heart was slamming but it was with where I was, not guilt."[196] Bowden took the power, it was not given to him, his walking between the cities shows pride in denying the effects of the authority's power. Even though his motivation to get involved in the smuggling of artefacts and Mahalia's murder might be partially also financial, money is not the main aim for Bowden as it is with Buric and his accomplice Croft, it becomes clear during the final confrontation between Borlú and Bowden. Borlú presents his conclusions and findings about Bowden's motivation and says that "it was *Orciny* [Miéville's emphasis], that was the point for you [Bowden], right?"[197]

It has been established that Orciny does not exist. However, for Bowden, though he must have disassociated himself from his book about Orciny, it is still a possibility and a desirable one. He searches some place in between where he would have powers to live in either of the cities, he wants to know what is really in between.[198]

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[195] Miéville, *The City & The City*, 368.
[196] Miéville, *The City & The City*, 290-2.
[197] Miéville, *The City & The City*, 358.
[198] Miéville, *The City & The City*, 362-3.

Conclusion

The central theme of the novel *The City & The City* is the urban experience, it investigates the influence of a certain environment on its inhabitants and their role in forming the environment as well. The novel resists a straightforward interpretation, its setting is not a specific and existing location. *The City & The City* is a weird detective fiction, the reader needs to surrender to its illogicality and uncertainty as well as its weird contradictions in setting, otherwise the reading experience is nullified, and the conclusion of the novel does not hold much significance.

The urban qualities of Ul Qoma and Besźel prove that *The City & The City* belongs to the tradition of the New Weird and it alters the characteristics of typical fantasy worlds by presenting a world which cannot be outlined in one dimensional map in the beginning of the novel, its fantasy setting is much more complicated than the one in *Perdido Street Station*. This Miéville's novel is three-dimensional and most importantly it is constantly changing. There is a city of Ul Qoma, the city of Besźel and then the spaces in between. The characters have to their disposal three different versions of the urban environment surrounding them.

However because of the social and political restrictions they see and notice, legally, only one of the spaces at a time. However, during the fleeting moments of transgression, breaching, the environment instantly gains new features and even people. This ever changing three-dimensional urban space and the interaction between the spaces or lack of it is the main source of the reader's astonishment and it moves the plot of the novel forward because characters are forced to overcome different obstacles presented by the weird relationship of the cities.

To identify *The City & The City* with the New Weird genre brings to the foreground the aspects of the novel which might be otherwise backgrounded if the novel was read only as a police procedural. The changing border, the characters' fear of the possible existence of Orciny, and more importantly Breach and its powers all these weird features should be questioned and investigated not brushed aside. Their investigation in this paper shows how Miéville creates the weird atmosphere in the book and thus continues the tradition of Lovecraft who saw the weird atmosphere as the main aim of his fiction. *The City &The City* in particular is an example of a proper weird fiction where the unknown, unexplainable forces are present and the characters are left with a sense of dread.

Also, the limitations of the characters' sight remind the readers that there is a lot they (both the characters and the readers) do not understand. Weird writers, Lovecraft included, aim for this sense of unease which is initiated by our limited vision and only partial understanding of the surrounding environment. This limitation is clearly palpable in the novel *The City & The City*.

The real world urban experience is transformed in a weird way by Miéville and the effects of borders are taken into extreme. These effects can be fittingly described in terms of Michel Foucault's theory about disciplinary power and his application of the Panopticon by Jeremy Bentham onto the society as the ideal disciplinary institution. Miéville has created a novel which invites the readers to think about the way they see the cities in which they live, to notice what we see and unsee because we are taught to do so. Characters of Borlú and Bowden are examples of the individuals who, though in different ways, acquired the ability to see fully but the novel as a whole is concerned with citizens who are subjected to a one-way, partial vision of their surroundings.

As a New Weird novel which is aware of the world though it is not overtly political *The City & The City* contributes to the topical discussion about the urban life, its future possibilities and the effects of urban living on citizens. The discussion of borders does not necessarily have to lead to allegorical reading of the novel and link its plot with geographic political issues around the world, as discussed in the analysis, rather the border effect can be metaphorically transferred onto our everyday lives. Borders are created not only between cities and states, there are invisible borders at schools or at various workplaces or only between various city districts. Miéville investigates borders and their effects and what kind of borders readers think about when reading the novel depends solely on them.

Moreover, the Foucauldian theory of disciplinary power showed that the citizens of Besźel and Ul Qoma are subjected to an invisible authority and to their own sense of duty to behave in a certain learned manner. Foucault sees disciplinary power, in the novel identifiable with Breach, as a way to introduce order to any society, schools, prisons or states and cities. The power of Breach might be present not only at the state level but also at the lower levels of authority control, such as the above mentioned schools or city districts.

Though there are no tentacle monsters in *The City & The City* the uncanny feelings, feelings of fear, of something being out of place are successfully transferred onto the reader. The previous analyses have made clear that the urban locale and the cities' borders have profound effect on its inhabitants and both these effects and the places themselves generate the uncanny feeling in the readers. The monstrous uncanny has been replaced in *The City &*

The City by the urban uncanny. The transgressive horror is no longer concerned with the bodies of the characters but with their vision and way of thinking, this is the central new element in Miéville's New Weird novel.

The New Weird literary tradition to which *The City & The City* belongs, as has been established, is put into broader context of the development of the weird tale and it shows how the corporal horror represented by various monsters or at least bodily mutilations as in Barker's *Books of Blood*, influenced the characteristics of New Weird. Moreover, *The City & The City*'s innovation, the lack of monsters, is thus more significant and inventive when supported by the larger weird tale context.

This thesis has shown some of the possible readings of the novel *The City & The City* but there is a significant potential for further development. In the preface of the novel Miéville cites a passage from *The Street of Crocodiles* (1934, 1977) by Bruno Schulz. The Polish surrealist writer is an important intertextual influence on the novel's dreamy settings, double streets and vision that cannot be trusted. The cities of Schulz and Miéville have a lot in common and this relation would be worth of further comparative analysis.

Czech summary

Britský autor China Miéville je považován za vlivnou osobnost literárního hnutí nazývaného New Weird. Spolu s autory jako Ann a Jeff VanderMeer, Thomas Ligoti nebo M. John Harrison se v nejrůznějších periodikách nebo na internetových portálech k tomuto literárnímu fenoménu vyjádřili a postupně se tento fenomén proměnil v žánrové označení děl se specifickými prvky a tématy.

Tato diplomová práce se věnuje literární analýze díla *Město & Město* (2009) od Chiny Miévilla. Tento román byl publikován devět let poté, co se New Weird prosadilo na trhu s fantaskní literaturou jako žánr viditelnější pro širší čtenářskou obec a marketingové účely. Román *Nádraží Perdido* (2000, 2010), který si čtenáři a recenzenti nejvíce spojují s vývojem a především úspěchem New Weird. Stylistické prvky a dikce románu, jeho ústřední téma morální korupce a neschopnosti či nemožnosti správného morálního rozhodnutí jsou důležitými ukazateli žánru New Weird. Román *Město & Město* se v mnohém od *Nádraží Perdido* liší, i přesto je ale v kontextu této práce považován za dílo, které se může řadit k žánru New Weird a analýza románu obsažena v této práci ukazuje výhody, které takové žánrové označení přináší.

Cílem diplomové práce je identifikovat a popsat prvky žánru New Weird v díle *Město & Město*, a také zobrazit autora a dílo samotné v širším literárním kontextu fantaskní literatury se zaměřením na vývoj weird tale. Práce představuje analýzu díla v rámci žánru, se kterým není toto dílo jednoznačně spojované a není považováno za jeho typický příklad, proto je analýza díla nejen identifikací žánrových prvků, ale také hledáním nových způsobů reprezentace a proměny tohoto žánru.

První kapitola se věnuje představení širšího literárního kontextu fantasy literatury. Obsahuje stručný vývoj fantasy literatury, který je sledován od dětské viktoriánské tvorby a dále gotické literatury a fantasy boomu po vydání Tolkienova díla. Tento přehled také poskytuje možnost příležitostně nahlédnout do vztahů daných autorů a Miévilla a jeho děl.

Přehled začíná upřesněním klasifikace fantasy literatury především s použitím klasifikace podle Farah Mendlesohnové a její knihy *Rhetorics of Fantasy* (2008) a také díla od amerického autora John Clutea *The Ecyclopedia of Fantasy* (1997). Dětská literatura období viktoriánské Anglie tvoří důležitou část vývoje fantasy, protože zde se začala formovat představa sekundárního světa, jak odděleného od toho reálného tak nějakým způsobem propojeného. Některá díla Edwarda Plunketta, známého především jako Lord Dunsany, obsahují popisy tělesné proměny a temných, neutěšených krajin, které se podobají

Miévillovým postavám a urbanistickým scénám. Díla autorů jako George MacDonald nebo William Morris měla nezanedbatelný vliv na pozdější autory jako J. R. R. Tolkien nebo C. S. Lewis. Úspěch Tolkienových děl měl na následující tvorbu fantasy světů a postav natolik silný vliv, že autoři jako China Miéville se vědomě snaží distancovat od typických motivů a charakterových znaků obsažených v Tolkienově díle a dílech jeho následovníků.

Gotická literatura přispěla k vývoji fantasy literatury především svou ochotou zkoumat emoce jako strach, horor a teror a také koncept vznešena. Díla autorů jako Robert Louis Stevenson, Mary Shelleyová nebo Anne Radcliffeová vnesla do literatury důležité hororové prvky a postavy, které následující generace přetvořili a přetvářejí doteď. Motiv strašidelného domu, duchové prahnoucí po pomstě a lidé s tajemným, skrytým alter-egem, to jsou prvky, na jejichž základech potom stavěli autoři brakové literatury a také mistr hororu H. P. Lovecraft.

Jakým způsobem se proměnily příšery hororové a sci-fi/fantasy literatury je jedním ze způsobů jak analyzovat postupné směřování autorů k žánru bez jasných žánrových ohraničení. Druhá kapitola tak využívá vývoj literárních příšer jako zdroj pro specifikaci charakteristických rysů weird tale a weird literatury obecně. Tento druh hybridního žánru je představen v několika sekcích, které postupně odhalí jeho proměny a autory. Samostatná podkapitola je věnována H. P. Lovecraftovi, nicméně jeho texty o kvalitách pravé weird tale představují důležitý zdroj informací pro celou práci. Lovecraft považuje za mistry weird tale tři autory, Arthura Machena, Lorda Dunsanyho a Algernona Blackwooda, jejich tvorba je představena ve vztahu k Lovecraftovi a také Miévilleovi. Tito autoři jsou také často jmenováni jako předchůdci žánru New Weird.

Generace, ke které se řadí i Lovecraft, je spojována s pulp časopisem *Weird Tales* vycházejícím v Americe od roku 1923, v době své publikace hrál tento časopis důležitou roli ve formulaci weird literatury. Povídky v něm publikované jsou na rozhraní žánru fantasy a sci-fi a komentují svým specifickým způsobem na dění ve světě, tyto charakteristiky jsou zásadní také pro autory New Weird.

Třetí kapitola obsahuje teoretickou charakteristiku žánru New Weird a detailní analýzu románu *Město & Město* v kontextu tohoto žánru. Antologie *New Weird: Trochu divná fantastika* (2008) od autora Jeff VandeMeer a Ann VanderMeer je zatím nejucelenější publikace o tomto žánru a poskytuje „pracovní" definici New Weird a diskuzi nad samotným významem pojmenování tohoto literárního momentu. Z toho důvodu je jejich definice, spolu s články z časopisu *Third Alternative* od Miévilla, použita jako výchozí bod pro analýzu románu *Město & Město*.

Analýza románu *Město & Město* se soustředí na specifické městské fantaskní prostředí a jeho vliv na obyvatele dvou měst obsažených v názvu, tyto města jsou Besźel a Ul Qoma. Existují ve stejném geografickém prostoru, ale jsou vnímány jako oddělené a samostatně také fungují. Tenká hranice mezi nimi závisí pouze na schopnosti a ochotě obyvatel tuto hranici respektovat ve způsobu jejich vidění. Způsob jakým je tato hranice dodržována a celkově její vliv na život obou měst, je zásadní charakteristikou románu jako žánru New Weird. Miéville zde ukazuje princip hranic v extrémním, nadpřirozeném pojetí, ale zároveň vypráví napínavý detektivní příběh s detektivem Tyadorem Borlú.

Postavy v románu *Město & Město* se nacházejí v prostředí, které vyžaduje jejich neustálé sebe-kontrolování, pokud zapomenou nevidět sousední město, spáchají tak trestný čin a budou potrestáni. Způsob jakým funguje moc a disciplína mezi obyvateli Besźel a Ul Qomy je analyzován s použitím Foucaultovi teorie o fungování moci a trestu ve společnosti publikována v knize *Dohlížet a trestat. Kniha o zrodu vězení* (2000). Prostředí těchto měst je také přirovnáno k modernímu Panoptiku, budově navržené Jeremym Benthanem, kterou Foucault využívá jako metaforu pro disciplinovanou moderní společnost.

V průběhu analýzy je stanoveno několik základních prvků, kterými se román *Město & Město* liší od typických románů žánru New Weird. Přestože je tento román zasazený do zdánlivě všedního městského prostředí, čtenář je zanedlouho konfrontován s nadpřirozeným charakterem soužití Besźel and Ul Qomy. Hranice mezi těmito městy vytváří ne jeden, ani dva ale tři fantaskní světy. Ten svět, který zrovna vidíte, závisí na způsobu, jakým se díváte a na tom kdo se dívá. V tomto ohledu je *Město & Město* ještě propracovanější a stále se proměňující svět než Bas-Lag z románu *Nádraží Perdido*.

Dále je román *Město & Město* románem bez monster s chapadly nebo robotickými částmi těla, v porovnání s postavami z *Nádraží Perdido* jsou postavy detektiva Borlú nebo jeho policejní kolegyně Corwi na první pohled zcela obyčejné. Jejich zvláštnost není jejich tělesný vzhled, ale vztah jaký mají k autoritě obou měst a dodržování neviditelné hranice mezi nimi. Způsob jakým je jejich schopnost vnímat okolí omezena výchovou, zákony a jejich vlastním přesvědčením poskytuje čtenářům dostatek napětí a nadpřirozena.

Práce je snahou porozumět a popsat proměňující se žánr britské literatury New Weird tak jak jej chápe a tvoří britský autor China Miéville, který byl za svou tvorbu již oceněn například cenou Locus za nejlepší fantasy román v roce 2003 a 2005, a hlavně cenou Arthur C. Clarka za román *Město & Město* v roce 2010 a za stejné dílo obdržel ve stejném roce také cenu Hugo Award za nejlepší román.

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Annotation

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New Weird, China Miéville, *The City & The City*, weird, fantasy, Michael Foucault, borders, vision.

Abstract:

In my thesis I present the novel *The City & The City* by contemporary British author China Miéville in relation to the genre New Weird. It is the main aim of this thesis to introduce and analyse this genre in connection with the novel *The City & The City* but also in broader literary context of weird fiction. The thesis also shows the departure of the novel from some of the New Weird characteristics and the ways it brings innovation to the genre, therefore the analysis is also a search for the possible changes that emerged in *The City & The City*.

I agree to the thesis being lent within the library service.

Anotace

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Klíčová slova:

New Weird, China Miéville, *Město & Město*, weird, fantasy, Michael Foucault, hranice, vidění.

Abstrakt:

Tato práce se zabývá románem *Město & Město* současného britského autora China Miéville v kontextu žánru New Weird. Hlavním cílem této práce je představit a analyzovat tento žánr ve vztahu k románu *Město & Město* ale také v širším literárním kontextu weird literatury. Práce se také věnuje odchylkám od daného žánru, ke kterým dochází v románu *Město & Město* a ukazuje tak způsoby jakým román přináší inovaci do tohoto žánru, proto je předkládaná analýza také hledáním možných změn, ke kterým došlo v románu *Město & Město*.

Souhlasím s půjčováním diplomové práce v rámci knihovních služeb.