

**“The Union of Magicked Assistants”:** A study of power and  
subjectivity in China Miéville’s *Kraken*, *Embassytown* and *The City*  
*and the City*

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Tutkielma keskittyy kolmeen China Miévilin romaaniin *The City and the City*, *Kraken* ja *Embassytown*. Tutkielma tarkastelee marxistista tutkimusta fantasia- ja tieteiskirjallisuuden osalta. Tutkimus tarkastelee tutkimuksen historiaa ja syitä siihen, miksi fantasiakirjallisuutta on kritisoitu marxistisesta perspektiivistä ja minkälaisia aukkoja marxistinen kirjallisuuden tutkimus tämän vuoksi sisältää. Tarkoituksena on selvittää, miten fantasiakirjallisuutta voidaan tutkia marxistisesta näkökulmasta ja osoittaa, että teorian aukot tulisi tässä suhteessa ottaa huomioon. Analyysissä tarkastellaan vallan ilmenemistä teoksissa, sekä subjektiivisuuden ilmenemistä ja sen vaikutuksia teosten ideologioissa. Subjektiivisuus liittyy ideologiaan sillä tavoin, että yksilön identiteetti rakentuu ideologian kautta ja päinvastoin. Yksilöiden tarkastelulle on siis perusteet, kun tutkitaan vallan ilmenemistä romaanien yhteiskunnissa.

Teoriat, joita tutkielmassa käytetään, perustuvat etenkin Darko Suvinin ajatuksiin fantasia- ja tieteiskirjallisuuden eroista ja syistä tieteiskirjallisuuden suosiolle marxistisessa tutkimusperinteessä. Lisäksi tutkimuksessa otetaan huomioon Fredric Jamesonin ajatukset kirjallisuuden poliittisesta ominaisuudesta, sekä China Miévilin kritiikki marxistista tutkimusperinnettä kohtaan fantasiakirjallisuuden kohdalla. Tarkoituksena on kartoittaa näiden ja muiden teoreetikkojen ajatuksia aiheesta ja selvittää, millä perusteella fantasiakirjallisuutta voisi tutkia samasta tutkimusperinteestä siinä missä tieteiskirjallisuuttakin.

Tutkielma jakautuu osiin siten, että teoriaa käsitellään laajemmin ensin, jonka jälkeen teoksia analysoidaan kahdessa kappaleessa. Tutkielman loppupäätelmä on se, että marxistista kirjallisuudentutkimusta tulisi päivittää kahdestakin näkökannasta. Ensinnäkin fantasiakirjallisuus on eittämättä hyvä väline poliittisen keskustelun ylläpitäjänä kirjallisuudessa ja toiseksi fantasiakirjallisuuteen kohdistuva kritiikki keskittyy liiaksi seikkoihin, jotka eivät ole välttämättä oleellisia, saati modernissa fantasiakirjallisuudessa yleisiä ilmiöitä. Tällaisia seikkoja ovat muun muassa maagisten elementtien korostaminen todellisuudesta vieraannuttavina ja eskapistisia piirteitä jotka luovat pakokeinon maailmasta yhteiskunnallisen kritiikin tuottamisen sijaan.

Avainsanat: marxismi, fantasia, valta, subjektiivisuus

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## 1. Introduction

Science fiction as a literary genre has been widely used as a platform for studying literature from a Marxist point of view (Freedman 2002, 261). William J. Burling states in his article “Marxism” that the connection is longstanding and complex (2009, 236). Burling quotes Darko Suvin, who has defined the genre as “a literary genre whose necessary and sufficient conditions are the presence and interaction of estrangement and cognition, and whose main formal device is an imaginative framework alternative [i.e., the novum] to the author’s empirical environment” (2009, 238). Fantasy literature, on the other hand, has been widely regarded by Marxists as an ahistorical genre that is unable to make a real connection with reality that could comment or criticise it (Freedman 2002, 261 – 262). As well as being seen as escapist, fantasy is also criticised by Marxist critics for enhancing and idolising pre-industrial idylls, notably J.R.R Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings*-trilogy, where the setting is very idyllic and class distinctions are clear and not challenged (Bould 2002, 58). However, the definition of fantasy is in need of updating and redefining, as new literary subgenres appear to exist between science fiction and fantasy. An example of this is New Weird, which is the literary genre as which that the author China Miéville’s novels are most commonly defined (Routledge 2009, 180).

Miéville is a London-based politically active author known for his novels that he himself defines as New Weird literature, which is a genre mixing magic or other fantastical elements with science fiction or realistic features (Vandermeer 2008, xvi–xvii). Miéville’s work is very fruitful for research as he is not only a part of a new wave of literature but also an active part in the discussion of the field of fantasy and fantastical literature. He is a theorist and a known Marxist political thinker. When it comes to New Weird or the issue of fantasy in the Marxist literary research, the prominent problem lies in the development of the literary genre and its continuous dismissal of Marxist literary theory. The kind of new fantasy needs to be included in Marxist literary discussion, because the disregard of the literary genre of fantasy is outdated. Mainly the problem lies in the idea that

fantastical literature may not be able to reflect reality in a successful manner in order to comment on real issues, but is frozen in its escapist nature, relying on magical elements. Marxist literary theory has stayed in the past unable to adapt to the next waves of literature. Similarly, in 1950s and 1960s Marxist literary theory strongly criticised modernist literature for similar reasons, as they do now fantasy. Georg Lukács wrote in 1957 an article called *The Ideology of Modernism* where he argued that where realist literature represented the objective reality of the writer's environment, modernist literature described human beings as solitary characters unable to form meaningful relationships with others, thus failing in the expression of reality (1996, 145–147). Moreover, Lukács argued that modernism would lead to the destruction of traditional literature (1996, 162). Arguably similar accusations have been aimed at fantasy literature, whereas science fiction is preferred from a Marxist point of view. Fantasy, like modernism before it, is seen as a threat to realist description of world, whereas science fiction is more accurate in its realism, as its possibilities in science can be seen as future possibilities in the real world, as not-yet-possibilities. Fantasy worlds, on the other hand, with their magical features are considered as never-possible (Miéville 2002, 44–45). However, it could be argued that the mere notion that not-yet-possible science would make science fiction more realist than fantasy, whose magic is never possible in the real world, is not strong enough to maintain the Marxist preference to science fiction. Miéville states that not all science fiction is real in its science. In his article “Afterword: Cognition as ideology” he notes that because several frequently used features of science fiction have been argued as impossible in science, “scientific ‘possibility’ cannot be the grounds of ‘cognition’ for the post-Suvianian definition to hold” (2009, 234).

In this thesis three of Miéville's fiction novels will be discussed: *Embassytown*, *Kraken* and *The City and the City*. The three novels are individual pieces, but are chosen for the research, as together they represent New Weird as a literary genre rather well. They have similarities, but differences as well. Thus by analysing all three books it will be possible to efficiently discuss their part in the Marxist literary discussion, because they create a wider platform for the research as they

are rather different pieces on the same genre from the same author. The analysis focuses on the element of power and its expressions in the novels. Looking at these novels from a Marxist point of view it is discussed whether they create dialogical debate about issues in reality and hence can prove useful for Marxist theory.

## 1.1 Objectives

There are four objectives of the study. Firstly, the aim for this research is to study China Miéville's novels to see how they engage with and critique contemporary Marxist debates about fantasy writing. Not only are Miéville's books resourceful material for this research question, but the author himself is an active participant in the discussion in literary criticism as well. The following objectives derive from the main research question.

The second objective is to define and study the depiction of power in the novels. The manifestations of power will be researched and analysed in the thesis. Power is a huge element in Marxist analysis and is one of the elements that allow fictive literature to be compared with the power formations and systems in the world of today. The power systems will be divided into main systems and subsystems, and these systems will be carefully analysed. What will be studied is how power is created, who holds it, and through what tools or occurrences it manifests.

Thirdly, the issue of subjectivity will be studied. What is the role of an individual in the novels and does heroism have any role in the relationship between subject and power, are some of the questions that will be studied. What is interesting is how individual characters in the novels submit to or resist power systems. If the characters submit to authorities, how is this submission achieved, and if they choose to resist them, how the resistance is formed and what are the consequences? Whether these power plays open up a discussion with reality is the main agenda.

Finally, it is an objective of this study to situate New Weird in the Marxist literary discussion efficiently. As stated previously, it is important to redefine literary discussion when it comes to

Marxist literary theory and its preference for science fiction as the main genre. The purpose is to refine the idea of the close connection between science fiction and fantasy, and find features that support the theory that the preference for science fiction and objection to fantasy is unjustified. These features are found from the three novels by China Miéville. The power structure in the novels will be studied from a Marxist point of view and an analysis of the texts is expected to prove that weird fiction, New Weird, or fantasy, have a place in Marxist literary criticism as well as science fiction.

## 1.2 Theoretical background

The research has two main theorists as the theoretical background, Fredric Jameson and Darko Suvin. Fredric Jameson has been an active part of the discussion of Marxist literary theory for decades, and has also contributed to the ongoing debate on the role of fantasy literature in Marxist theory. His main ideas of the Marxist preference of science fiction to fantasy are discussed, including cognitive estrangement effect and the incapability of fantasy of creating a world that would mirror the real world effectively (1980, 8). Darko Suvin has notably changed the research of science fiction from a Marxist viewpoint dramatically in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Burling 2009, 238). However, his views of fantasy literature as not interesting from a Marxist perspective will be examined and challenged in this research. The aim is to further develop his ideas to include fantasy in the Marxist literary discussion. In addition to Jameson and Suvin, and other literary critics, Miéville himself will also be considered. Miéville has been an active participant in the conversation about fantasy literature from a Marxist point of view. He has been an active commentator on the distinction between science fiction and fantasy and whether there truly is one today. He has published in the journal *Historical Materialism* and several other publications. In addition to the key theorists, there are other active figures in the Marxist literary discussion, whose ideas are taken into consideration. Carl Freedman is one of these theorists that have a well-established place in this discussion. Freedman has argued that modern fantasy may have a place in Marxist literary criticism (2002, 262).

The results of this research will be applicable with regard to future Marxist literary criticism on fantasy and New Weird literature and will expand the field beyond the narrow focus on science fiction as the genre more suitable for Marxist research than fantasy. Hopefully the status of fantasy literature will be researched further in future and the conversation will be able to move past concerns over knights and dragons, and, even where there are medieval creatures of magic and imagination, focus on the ways that these texts can still engage with and comment on modern reality. The purpose of this study is not to justify all fantasy literature to Marxist literary criticism, but to prove the rough divide between the two genres to be unfair in most cases of modern fantasy literature and its subgenres. Admittedly not all fantasy will be able to fit with Marxist ideas, but assuredly neither does all science fiction. The pedestal that science fiction has been standing on for decades has to be lowered to realistic measures and fantasy and New Weird literature must be considered as equals to science fiction. Miéville himself speculates on the subject in his afterword to *Red Planets* (2009, 231–245). While keeping the respect for the integrity of science fiction, he suggests that it might not be time to suggest that fantasy and science fiction are the same, but it may be time to move beyond the highlighted role of science fiction as the genre for Marxism. He states that the specifics of fantasy, however unstable, need also to be examined and taken into account and “to continue the project of theorising a conjoined SF and fantasy, in other words, SF, with its tendency to hegemonise the conversation, might have to be temporarily excluded” (2009, 245).

### 1.3 Novels

The main material for this thesis are the three novels from Miéville: *The City and the City* (2009), *Kraken* (2010), and *Embassytown* (2011)<sup>1</sup>. *Kraken* and *Embassytown* are best described as New Weird, a genre that has features of both traditional science fiction and fantasy. *The City and the City*,

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<sup>1</sup> These are the dates of the first publication. Later in the thesis the novels are referred to with dates of the editions that are used in this research.

however, is more interesting when it comes to its genre. It still carries strong features from the fantasy literature and science fiction, but it is also very easily defined as crime fiction. The three novels are individual works that carry plenty of similar features. The language in the books is rich and the landscape is often carefully described.

*Embassytown* is set on the planet Arieka. “The space” is one of the main landscapes in the novel. There are two elements of space: the everyday and below that, the immer, the sea of space and time. The main character Avice lives in a city called Embassytown, where the humans, called the Terre, live. The Terre live side by side with a different species. They call them Hosts, as they let them live inside their city, protected by “biorigged” air, a living artificial construct, since the air in the planet is poisonous for the humans.

The Hosts, a species called the Ariekei, think and see the world through their language. The language of the Ariekei is called the Language, because it is more than a means of communication. The Ariekei cannot lie, or produce abstract thinking. They need humans to perform similes in order for them to exist in the language: the Ariekei cannot think nor speak about something that does not exist, therefore new things need to be enacted in order for them to exist in the language. The language is spoken with two mouths at the same time, so that one human would never be able to produce a single word in the language, even if they knew the words. The Terre have Ambassadors, the only ones that can communicate with the Ariekei. The ambassadors are made, not usually born, with electronical links to aid them in their sameness, so that they can speak simultaneously.

The book depicts a society with the human population living in the planet Arieka on the sufferance of another species. Politics between the two species is intriguing and creates tensions. The people respect their Ambassadors to a great extent, and they seem to be the main power holders. There is also a group called the Staff that appears to be the handlers of the dirty work, the Ambassadors being the political front. There are severe tensions between the Terre and the Ariekei societies, especially when things begin to unravel. The new ambassador, two men that do not look

alike like the rest of the ambassadors, speaks and the Ariekei turn into addicts. The language that the new Ambassador produces has narcotic effects and becomes a language drug.

*Kraken* takes place in our world, in London. The main character Billy Harrow is a curator in the Natural History museum. The museum has a specimen of a giant squid, preserved and kept so that visitors can go and see it under supervision of a curator. However, when Billy takes a group of people to see the giant squid, it has disappeared. The novel depicts a pre-apocalyptic London and a race to finding the stolen squid God. This novel has more magical elements than perhaps the other two. What makes it noteworthy in this research is its setting, which is the London that we know today. The novel combines familiar elements with unfamiliar aspects, such as a living tattoo on a man's back and a man existing as a bottle of ink, transferring his thoughts as writings on paper. The magical elements are not there only as fantastical supernatural elements without a purpose, they are there to create a different level of commentary on real issues. *Kraken* has authorities and rebellions and therefore is excellent material for this particular research.

*The City and the City* is interesting in its mixing of genres. It is a crime novel, but with New Weird features. A body is found, and inspector Tyador Borlú begins a murder investigation. He lives in a city called Beszel, which overlaps with another city, Ul Qoma. The political aspect in the book is the tension between the two cities, as it is illegal to acknowledge or even see the other. The cities are not just side by side but intertwined, so that part of a street can be from another city. The two cities represent two power systems regulated by their chosen governments, but the main power comes from the Breach. The Breach is the unseen, but acknowledged power system that ensures the separation between the two cities. Anyone intentionally looking into the other city and waving, for example, to a citizen in another city, will be taken by the Breach.

Borlú, a citizen of Beszel, does not take long to realise that the murder has taken place in Ul Qoma. Thus begins the politically dangerous investigation that exposes the power systems bare. Borlú represents the uncorrupted part of power. Both cities have corrupted power systems that exist to keep

the cities apart from each other. The most interesting power system, however, is the Breach, as it wields power that is impossible to see. Its existence is debated, but still feared.

What is clear is that these three fiction novels create a diverse material for this study. The aspects of these novels are analysed from a Marxist viewpoint to establish a foundation of successful literary research from these genres. The novels will be analysed to see what kind of power constructions there are and if these constructions include a main system with the power and subsystems that either have power or work to gain it in different ways. The power will be studied to find the possible issues that the constructions may cause. In addition, specific tools of power will be searched to see how power is used. Another issue that will be researched is the idea of subject and ideology in the novels. How the individuals are described, what their role in the societies of the novels is and what kind of power they possess or pursue.

## 2. Marxism and fantasy

This chapter will introduce and define the literary genre New Weird. What will also be discussed is the relationship between Marxism and fantasy literature, which is rather complex. There are several issues that have produced tensions between Marxist theory and the fantasy genre which will be analysed here. One of the key issues is the question of fantasy literature's ability to create political debate. Where fantasy is frequently accepted as ideological in the sense that it can present political arguments as natural elements, it is argued that it does not question them (Suvin 1999–2001, 27–28; Baker 2012, 438; Freedman 2002, 43). This notion will be discussed and challenged in the analysis of the novels.

### 2.1 New Weird

Before the theoretical debates around New Weird are discussed, it is important to define the genre and consider why it is significant in relation to Marxist literary criticism. In this thesis, China Miéville is discussed particularly as an author of New Weird. The genre is relatively young and has developed from more mature weird fiction. In *The Routledge Companion to Science Fiction* Miéville defines Weird Fiction to be usually a dark fantastic, fantasy mixed with horror. He also says that Weird Fiction usually includes some non-traditional alien monsters (2009, 510). Jeff Vandermeer defines it very similarly in the book *The New Weird*, where he says that the weird factor in weird fiction is a tool that can be very obvious or very subtle. New Weird developed in the 1960s as a result of the New Wave that saw many authors such as Michael Moorcock and J.G Ballard write novels with a political agenda, which resulted in the development of the literary genre itself. According to Rob Latham in *The Routledge Companion to Science Fiction* New Wave movement in science fiction in the 1960s is the movement when science fiction began to adapt and resemble literature that would be considered more mainstream and shed its pulp heritage (2009, 83). Hellen Merrick states that it was

greatly influenced by Michael Moorcock, who as the editor for the magazine *New Worlds* helped produce the transformation of science fiction by introducing new authors and supported more experimental work of existing authors. New Wave was radical, often explicit in language and had sexual content (2009, 103). In essence, New Wave transformed science fiction writings into a more radical form and less indirect in political discussion. Jeff Vandermeer states that New Wave existed between science fiction and fantasy, blurring the lines of the genres. New Weird evolved from the New Wave and New Horror, Lovecraftian tales of not scary, but grotesque monsters, in the 1990s. In Lovecraft's work the monster or horror can never be fully revealed (2008, ix-x). This idea of monsters concentrates on the fact that horror is something that cannot be explained, because the essence of horror is the fear of unknown. Vandermeer states that "transgressive horror, then, repurposed to focus on the monsters and grotesquery but not the 'scare', forms the beating heart of the New Weird" (2008, x). This, in essence, is what it means when the monsters are not there to jump scare the reader, but are the vessel for interpretation in relation to something else, for example debate on issues in the real world. The monsters in the New Wave literature are a means of expressing political content, issues that occur in the real world. Similarly, in Miéville's work "monstrosities" of different description appear, but instead of representing the scary, horror content they appear as vessel for political debate. One example of this is *Kraken's* (2011) giant squid that is the centre of political agenda of several parties in the story. Instead of being scary, the "monster" creates discussion around political issues that mirror the real world as well.

Importantly, Vandermeer suggests that the starting point of the genre as it is today was China Miéville with his book *Perdido Street Station* which was published in the year 2000. According to Vandermeer *Perdido Street Station* was the first commercially acceptable version of the New Weird and not ironical in its monsters: it fully succumbed to the weird, embraced it and thus made it accessible for the readers in a more concrete manner (2008, xi-xii). He states that New Weird is a genre with urban features and it combines both science fiction and fantasy elements in a realistic,

complex setting that differs from romanticised ideals of traditional fantasy. It combines surreal horror, a feature that separates it from many other subgenres, with New Wave features, such as direct radical politics. New Weird can be political, but is always aware of the modern world (2008, xvi–xvii). The important issue for this research is the political aspect of New Weird, and the fact that it has plenty of fantasy features as well as science fiction features. It is purely neither, which makes it interesting in the modern literary world and for literary research. In addition, in this thesis the notion of New Wave features, such as radical politics and explicit language are important, as Miéville's New Weird combines radical politics with the Lovecraftian idea of monsters, that are not scary, but their effects coming not from being frightening, but from their grotesque symbolism. Where the horror is and what does it tell to the reader, is part of the conversation that the literature has with the real world.

The three novels examined in this thesis represent the definition of New Weird given by Vandermeer quite well. Even though the genre is a mixture of science fiction and fantasy features, it can be thought of as a subgenre of both. Fantastical elements that science fiction strongly rejects, are very visible in New Weird, which is a good reason to see New Weird and Miéville's books in the discussion of the political abilities of fantastical literature. New Weird by definition is known to carry political undertones, but similarly carries fantastical elements. If New Weird is to be successfully studied from a Marxist point of view, it is reasonable to suggest that fantastical elements in literature are not reason enough to make this type of literature fail in political, real-world discussion, but merely a tool for such discussion. The genre is challenging the Marxist ideas of fantasy in many ways. For example, the notion that fantasy "may secretly work to ratify the mundane status quo by presenting no alternative to the latter other" (Freedman 2000, 43) is challenged by the genre and at least when it comes to Miéville's novels. The evolving face of fantasy is one of the issues that challenges the definitions of fantasy on which Marxist literary critics base their rejection of fantasy.

## 2.2 Theoretical discussion

Science fiction, according to Adam Roberts, has a long history. Some critics believe that science fiction was born in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus* (1818) or in the works of Jules Verne and H.G. Wells. (*The Routledge Companion to Science Fiction* 2009, 3). Roberts argues that science fiction may have been born even before that, in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century with the ideas of Copernicus the astronomer and the birth of science in essence (2009, 4–11). Roberts argues that science fiction is sensibly separated from fantasy on the grounds of magic. Fantasy, unlike science fiction, is based on magic, whereas science fiction is based on science. Fantasy, according to Roberts “always includes an excess that cannot be reconciled with or explained in the terms of the world as we know it really to be” (2009, 3–4). This is the basis for the conversation that revolves around science fiction and fantasy and whether one is more politically engaged than the other. Science fiction is preferred for the simple reason that its features are explained in the terms of our world, whereas fantasy displays features that cannot be, which is why it must be politically less engaged. Roberts states that “the consensus as to how the world actually works is called ‘science’; and just as ‘fantasy’ exists in some sort of defining relationship with magic, so ‘sf’ exists in some sort of defining relationship with science” (2009, 4). According to Roberts this is true even if science in science fiction sometimes presses the boundaries of believability (2009, 4). From a theoretical point of view Marxism is a good method for analysing fantasy and science fiction for their political engagement. Fredric Jameson notes that Marxist literary theory may be a useful tool in assessing political, social and historical questions in texts. It is not only feminist research in the dominance of patriarchy but also the division of labour between genders, and power between the young and the old that represent some of the archaic structures that may be revealed through Marxist analysis of a text (1986, 99–101). Fantasy has many attributes for in-depth Marxist analysis. As Jameson suggests, magic should be read as a “figure for the enlargement of human powers and their passage to the limit, their actualisation of everything latent and virtual in the stunted human organism of the present” (2002,

278). He even says that where fantasy reminds the reader of the world of alienation and class struggle in a politically radical way, it may have the same or better possibilities for the job compared to any other cultural form.

When it comes to the discussion of the place of New Weird in Marxist literary research, the discussion has been heated. Miéville himself, as an author and an active member in the discussion of the evolution of fantasy, would place fantasy and science fiction in alignment. According to Miéville both science fiction and fantasy share an ability to radically alienate themselves from the actual reality (Baker 2012, 444). The alienation process creates juxtaposition between possible and impossible and thus offers new ways of thinking about the possibilities and impossibilities of the actual world (Baker 2012, 444). In an interview that Miéville gave to *International Socialism Journal* in 2000 he discusses the importance of fantasy to socialists as a threefold issue. Fantasy should be regarded as meaningful from a socialist point of view firstly for its status as a part of mass culture: fantasy is widely read, which is why it should be studied, as it has an effect on a wide audience. Secondly, Miéville argues that socialists should be aware of subcultures in all forms and fantasy, science fiction and horror belong to sub-literary genres for mainstream literary criticism. Thirdly, Miéville argues that even if not all fantasy is radically political, there are a number of authors of fantasy that have especially left-wing politics in their writing. In addition, Miéville notably states that the issue that some Marxist literary critics have with fantasy is that it is not realist, because fantasy may include supernatural elements. However, he argues that not all stories need to pretend to be direct representations or imitations of the real world and that “suspension of disbelief is crucial”. Miéville says that fantasy as a genre is not so much progressive or reactionary, but it is complex and gives space to critical or subversive ideas. Miéville also admits that some fantasy has had the tendency to be conservative. The focus has been on bad monarchy instead of the whole issue of having a monarchy and hence the focus is on a superficial of political conversation rather than on transforming critique.

Fantastical literature offers a great platform for political research for many reasons. Literature can be a vessel for current conversation on important matters as it is able to have the conversation in the background rather than explicitly state what the issues are. Daniel Baker mentions in his article “Why We Need Dragons: The Progressive Potential of Fantasy” (2012, 437–438) that as fantasy goes beyond reality, it creates a different perspective. He states that not everything in fantasy literature may be political, however. Merely transforming the present, or slightly changing the reality, does not yet convey political conversation in a way that would present different views and conflicting attitudes, and not all fantastical literature is capable of challenging ideology. This does not mean that a text would lack political focus, but it may express a political attitude while simultaneously lacking any deeper critique. In fact, Baker agrees with those who criticise fantasy by noting that J.R.R Tolkien, for example, is a classic example of an author whose fantasy literature is at best escapist<sup>2</sup>, and thus merely affirms dominant ideology instead of challenging it. The key, according to Baker and Miéville, as well, is to consider more modern currents of fantastical literature, including New Weird. Baker uses the term “progressive”, which may be the best description of the fantasy that indeed has most potential in raising discussion on ideology, power and transformation of political circumstances (2012, 437–439). The distinction between the literature that does not transform reality into active conversation on political and ideological issues, and literature that does convey critique of real problems and not merely escape from real issues, lies in its ability to be meaningful through time. Baker suggests that fantasy should aspire to rewrite history to an extent, and it should be possible to give new meanings to older literature, as if to give new meanings to old thoughts. According to Baker a useful starting point for political engagement of fantasy literature is dissatisfaction with the modern capitalistic world. With fantasy literature it is possible to express something that is impossible in the author’s reality via the impossible features in the text, such as magic (2012, 440–441). More significantly, fantasy is able to mimic capitalist modernity in all its absurdity and the impossibility of

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<sup>2</sup> Escapism by definition means the tendency to seek distraction and relief from unpleasant realities, especially by seeking entertainment or engaging in fantasy (Oxford Dictionaries)

fantastical features in the literature can have the effect of exposing reality as it is (2012, 445). However, according to Baker, mimetic, progressive fantasy is “not enough to effect the creation of an opposing subjectivity” (2012, 445). Instead, it commonly shows what is, not what should be. In addition, while fantasy can suggest radical ideas on social, political, and even sexual issues, it may not represent them as improved or better when compared to reality. However, the impossibility of fantastical features is the main element that gives fantasy its ability to discuss real issues beyond the possible and thus create a whole new different perspective (2012, 450). The ability to create new ways to view reality is, according to Baker, why we need fantasy to exist and create conversation with the world (2012, 457).

New Weird carries many modern fantastic features and therefore is a valuable platform from which to explore Marxist analysis. Fantasy literature has been widely discarded by many Marxist literary theorists whereas science fiction has been regarded as the chosen genre to best represent or show Marxist ideas. Carl Freedman states in his article “A Note on Marxism and Fantasy” (2002, 262) that Marxism is regarded rightfully as the dominant theoretical method in Science Fiction critique. However, understanding fantasy literature is considered less significant. Darko Suvin, who is regarded as the ground-breaking theorist in the field of science fiction studies and especially within Marxist literary theory, differentiates science fiction from fantasy literature completely. He states in his book *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction* (1980, 8–9) that fantasy (ghost, horror, Gothic, weird) is harmful and impure. If fantasy literature is unable to create tension between its supernatural elements and the author’s empirical world, which means its capability to critique the issues in the real world, it becomes “just a subliterature of mystification” (1980, 9). According to Suvin claiming science fiction and fantasy are closely related is a “rampantly socio-pathological phenomenon” (1980, 9). He even states that a fantastic tale with supernatural elements is destroying the tension with the real world and is “usually a proto-Fascist revulsion against modern civilization, material rationalism, and such” hence failing to carry overt logic of its own (1980, 69). Suvin’s thoughts about fantasy literature as

incapable of creating tension with the reality is frankly harsh, and perhaps even unjustified. His statement that fantasy is “proto-fascist” lead to the conclusion that fantasy in his mind mythologises its political positions and thus is unable to critique political conversation about them. His views about fantasy are thus very narrow-minded and in some cases wrong.

One of the aims of this research is to prove that Miéville’s work has place in a Marxist literary discussion. Even though the discussion of fantasy in Marxist literary criticism has been argued for some decades now, it is still a current one as the discussion has not yet reached its pivotal point, or come to a firm conclusion. Several theorists that tend to discard fantasy literature as a serious literature especially from a Marxist point of view, have a severely limited conception of the genre. Miéville states in *Red Planets* that in the last decade the Suvinian approach has dominated the Marxist literary criticism and the recent important Marxist publications on science fiction continue to prefer science fiction to fantasy. Miéville argues that Fredric Jameson, for example, describes fantasy as a genre that lacks “epistemological gravity” and which is “technically reactionary” (2009, 232, reference to Jameson 2006, 57–60). In a more up-to-date discussion of the issue by Jameson, he says in his article “Radical Fantasy” (2002, 274) that there is an argued distinction between science fiction and fantasy. The distinction lies in the idea that fantasy literature always represents an outdated, old-fashioned world that has no modern features. Fantastical literature has dragons and wizards, is almost medieval in its depiction of world and cannot be defined as premodern as the premodern time is the only time that exists in fantasy. Science fiction, on the other hand, always carries modernity in its temporal perspective. For fantasy literature, such temporal dimensions, according to Jameson, are rare.

Miéville suggests that since the 1960s fantasy has got past feudalist fantasy (Newsinger 2000). Hence Miéville seems to want to separate new fantasy from older more conservative fantasy, and suggests that fantasy should be regarded as a historical lineage which contains much variety. Miéville argues that there is a distinction between fantasy that criticises problems and fantasy that states

problems but does not focus on suggesting change. Suvin, on the other hand, regards essentially all fantasy as proto-fascist and thus anti-Marxist in his *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction*. The argument appears to not be in whether fantasy is political or not, but how the political aspect is represented in fantasy. Where political issues in some fantasy literature are stated as issues that exist, but are not challenged or criticised to induce change, other fantasy literature is able to create a debate and have a dialogue with the reality. This is the difference between the fantasy that is merely political for being written by a political human being, and fantasy that is political but also critiquing the problems instead of merely stating their existence. Even fantasy, that is not radically political or does not appear to challenge issues that it introduces, is still political for being written by an author that lives in his own political reality. Fredric Jameson argues in his book *The Political Unconscious* that everything is political, if studied thoroughly. Jameson states that making a distinction between texts that are political and those that are not is a convenient working method that is a “symptom and a reinforcement of the reification and privatization of contemporary life” (1986, 20). According to Jameson this division between political and unpolitical prevents an individual thinking of time and change (1986, 20). Jameson’s thoughts are not straightforwardly different from Miéville’s or Suvin’s, but slightly differ from each other on the basis of what kind of political is in question. While Jameson argues that all literature must be political, as all literature is written by political human beings, Miéville admits this but argues that the idea of political literature is based on dialogical political debate in literature, which means that literature should offer critique and change in addition to stating the issues. According to his ideas, dialogically political fantasy is valuable from the Marxist point of view, and can be radically political (Newsinger 2000). Suvin regards fantasy as conservative and even proto-fascist and does not see its value from a political point of view. Miéville suggests that most fantasy today is able to create dialogue with the reality of political issues and fantasy should not be generalised and the whole genre should not be based on a single stream of fantasy, but understood to have variety (Newsinger 2000). Hence the question of fantasy as politically engaged, worthwhile

texts is in need of defining and refining today. Fantasy is necessarily political in the same way as every other literary genre is, because human beings as a species are always political and surrounded by a political society and issues. However, even though all literature is political, it is questionable according to Miéville whether all literature is able to create active commentary and dialogue about the reality, and not all literature may be able to offer debate or critique in political issues rather than just stating issues as facts, just as not all realism is able to imitate reality successfully. Should all fantasy be regarded as useful even if it merely states the issues while excluding the debate and the critique on them, or should only that fantasy be valued that creates political debate? In addition, should only that fantasy be valued from a Marxist point of view that politically aligns with Marxism, or should also the conservative fantasy that avoids issues valued by Marxist still be considered as valuable and analysable in Marxist literary theory? Miéville suggests that

Although an awful lot of books do fit that stereotype to various degrees, it's important to remember that you're *not* talking about fantasy in general here, but about a particular historical stream within it – a stream which has got massive since the 1960s. You also have to remember that many works within that tradition question or undermine its more conservative aspects. (Newsinger 2000)

Fantasy works that are able to have a debate on the issues and have a dialogue with reality are important as political texts, but even the fantasy that could be assessed as more conservative might be questioning the conservative side of the issues in itself, even if the conversation is not critical or dialogical enough to be considered as politically engaged in the same sense as other fantasy or science fiction succeeds in being. However, the question of differences in political debate in literature should be thought with less stereotypical views, and thought more as differences in political, rather than generally condemning one genre as forever incapable of active political debate. In this thesis Miéville's political debate in his novels reasonably aligns with Marxism, but further research should be conducted on fantasy that does not necessarily align with Marxism in its politics. The results may be useful in this conversation.

One of the key arguments in the debate of science fiction being more prominent in the literary criticism as a genre that is able to have a debate and critique on the issues in the real world instead of fantasy, is the concept of cognitive estrangement. Cognitive estrangement is a much-used term that means the capability for a rationalist or scientific mind-set that is estranged from the reality of right now (2002, 43). According to Suvin, science fiction is capable of mirroring the reality through the scientific, even if imaginary and at the moment impossible, narrative world, which is the factor that separates science fiction from other literature, for example fantasy. In *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction* Suvin states that the others, for example aliens or monsters, are “a mirror to a man just as the differing country is a mirror for his world” (1980, 5). The mirror in question reflects and transforms the reality. Suvin says that cognition in literature is not merely a reflection of reality, but it also reflects on reality. This means that cognitive literature is not an unchangeable representation of the author’s own surroundings, but aimed at producing change in the issues that are addressed. Thus cognitive literature is also critical in a sense that it creates ongoing commentary instead of merely describing the problem without being able to invoke change (1980, 10). Suvin insists that the concept of science fiction as the literature of cognitive estrangement and science fiction as an evolving genre into a more of a genre of utopian thought, is first and foremost to be distinguished from “(1) nonliterature, (2) the empiricist literary mainstream, and (3) *non-cognitive estrangings such as fantasy*; furthermore (4) it should try to add as little as possible to the already prevailing confusion of tongues in this region” (1980, 12–13, emphasis added). Carl Freedman says that even though he has accepted Suvinian definition of science fiction as the literature of cognitive estrangement, a feature that fantasy literature is according to Suvin incapable of, he does not believe that fantasy is incapable of ever producing nothing but conservative ideology (2002, 262). Instead he suggests that Suvin’s statement that fantasy may “secretly work to ratify the mundane status quo by presenting no alternative to the latter other than inexplicable discontinuities” (2002, 262) should be regarded as a statement with a strong emphasis on the word “may”. Freedman’s thought is in this sense very similar

to Miéville's critique. Freedman states that objection to fantasy should not be concentrated on Suvinian "anti-cognitive" motifs, such as magic, but on the "anti-*historical*" aspect of some fantasy (2002, 263). Evil in fantasy such as Tolkien's is not debated from the point of view of why it exists and what are the reasons behind evil or good for that matter, since in the fantasy world of Tolkien and other conservative fantasy assumed good and evil merely are and are the motifs behind their actions are not questioned (2002, 264). As Freedman suggests, not all fantasy can be regarded as similar to Tolkien's, where political issues are not challenged. In a subtle way Freedman's article attempts to create room for discussion of different forms of fantasy, carrying different forms of political discussion and hence aligns with Miéville's argument. Where some fantasy does not succeed in creating debate in the sense that political issues are contested in the books, some fantasy especially today is able to carry dialogical political conversation.

According to Suvin, estrangement is also found in myths, but they lack the cognitive aspect in them, as they, unlike science fiction, do not see norms of an age as changeable and unique. Myths, according to Suvin, are static in time, seeing human relationships and social aspects as fixed. Science fiction on the other hand does not offer an unchangeable explanation to problems, but rather questions them and explores the possibilities. Science fiction is opposed to supernatural or metaphysical elements as well as naturalism and empiricism (1980, 7). Fantasy according to Suvin is first and foremost a tale, a genre "inimical to the empirical world and its laws" (1980, 8). According to Suvin, literature that carries supernatural elements or explains events by magic, differs from naturalistic fiction. Where science fiction fits in the scope of naturalistic fiction, fantastic literature, for example, does not. Suvin states that naturalistic fiction depicts relationships between men and their surroundings by reproducing reality faithfully, according to common sense. Literature that goes against these parameters, however, and thus creates representation of reality that is not easily explained with common sense, is called estranged fiction (1980, 18). It is clear that Suvin's attitude

towards the genre is stern at best, but his view of fantasy is perhaps static in time as he suggests myths are.

Furthermore in this discussion, Freedman appears to agree with Miéville and suggests that there may well be fantasy literature that is useful in Marxist criticism. Where J.R.R Tolkien's creations lack in cognitive estrangement in their sexless and conservative world and values, there is fantasy literature that has fantastical, supernatural elements, but also represents the real world to an extent. To be precise, the text needs an adult like mind-set with its satisfactions and dissatisfactions, problems and peculiarities of the human nature to be able to comment on the real world, or have the cognitive estrangement effect. If this approach is regarded as the best solution for Marxist literary research, Miéville's novels have a place in this discussion, as they attempt to create debate on issues rather than merely stating their existence. Miéville's books reference the world around us in depicting human needs and feelings. Even though the books have supernatural features that distance the books from the natural world they also address issues that we all face in our daily lives.

When it comes to Miéville's work, the issue of cognitive estrangement is not a farfetched one, as it is to read similar effect in the narration. According to Suvin, in estranged fiction the relations between human beings and their surroundings are illuminated in a radically different framework, such as different space/time location, unverifiable by common sense (1980, 18). In this sense Miéville's novels are estranged fiction, especially when it comes to *Kraken* or *The City and the City*. The novels are rationalistic but estranged from the reality of right now. Hence, Miéville's novels could be qualified as estranged fiction and having the cognitive estrangement effect. However, there is the issue of supernatural elements that separates Miéville's narrative realities from Suvin's definition of science fiction. Where Miéville is not afraid of writing magic in his stories, Suvin does not approve of the supernatural in literature worthy of Marxist inspection. When we consider how fantasy or even New Weird has evolved, the definitions based on earlier representations of fantasy literature may not apply today. Miéville's *Kraken*, for example, does not fall into the definition of myths or fantasy as

such, as the story does explore possibilities rather than merely explaining all events as magic, but does not exclude supernatural from the narration either. His work falls in between the terms of Suvin's categorisation.

However, according to Suvin evolving science fiction is to be separated from fantasy literature more than it has before (1980, 8–9), which as an idea is rather interesting. Why does it seem to Suvin that fantasy literature as a genre has not evolved like science fiction has and what is the reason that fantasy literature is not able to create tension with reality in the same manner as science fiction? One of the reasons for Suvin's antipathy towards fantasy may be a result from the way he sees fantasy worlds as compared to the worlds in science fiction literature. Suvin states that the world in fantasy is negatively oriented towards the hero or protagonist, who is defined by helplessness. He says that fantasy derive from tragic mythology, where ethics compensate physics. This means that the hero in the story fails because of the empirical world in which they live, but the failure is "ethically exalted and put to religious use" (1980, 19) Suvin states that genres in which ethics determine physics in magical or supernatural manner and have orientation to the hero instead of all humanity, can be called metaphysical. Instead of existing side by side unaffected by each other, Suvin thinks in fantasy physics are defined by ethics and hence are unnaturalistic. Science fiction, however, is a non-metaphysical estranged genre that shares plenty with naturalistic science and material philosophy. The difference is, however, that according to him science fiction worlds do not assure the outcome of the endeavours of the protagonists, unlike fantasy worlds (1980, 20). Hence science fiction is estranged literary genre, but not metaphysical (1980, 21). Suvin's definition, while well argued, may not apply to all fantasy literature of today, especially subgenres such as New Weird. New Weird still carries plenty of features that resonate with traditional fantasy, such as magical elements and impossible events, but also has evolved from helpless heroes and negative orientation towards the protagonist in a sense, which will be analysed from the novels. Suvin, however, does not see the

subgenres of fantasy and science fiction as true forms of literature derived from nature, that is, according to his thoughts, the true form of literature for Marxist research. He explains that

A further step down into pseudo-sophistication – correlative, no doubt, to a marked decadence of cultural taste in bourgeois society and its literary markets - is the parasitism of Gothic, horror, and weird *fantasy* upon SF. Such fantasy is characterized, as I have said, by the irruption of an anti-cognitive world into the world of empirical cognition. . . .But surely SF, built upon the premise that nature is neither a childishly wicked stepmother not inscrutably alien to man – surely SF cannot allow its contract with the reader to be contaminated by the Great Pumpkin antics of fantasy. (1980, 24)

Evidently Suvin does not disguise his rather harsh criticism towards fantasy. Miéville has called Suvin’s approach to science fiction and literature as “enormously and justly influential, if by now somewhat notorious” (*Red Planets* 2009, 231) and it certainly seems to be so. Suvin’s approach is radical especially when it comes to fantasy, as he says that where science fiction is precise in its orientation even though the degree of precision may vary, fantasy is alienating and vampirical (1980, 25). Hence the Suvinian idea of fantasy is that the genre is merely a distraction from reality, a way to escape the reality and unable to rise to the same level of discussion as science fiction. Miéville, on the other hand, states that fantasy is no less an ideological product, but not more so, either (2009, 243).

In addition, it needs to be noted that Jameson in his *The Political Unconscious* states that the production of ideology requires censorship in the fantasy element (1986, 181–183). Fantasy to Jameson, is imagining the outcome for which the characters in the book wish. It is apparent that Jameson does not discuss fantasy as a literary genre, but as a term for imagining the wished ideology, but he still is part of the discussion of the role of fantasy in Marxist discussion. His definition of fantasy, the wish-fulfilment, bears many similarities with the genre itself, and proves that the discussion of fantastic in terms of political agenda is worthwhile. Fantasy is the image of ideology, the outcome that is suggested or hoped for. Fantasy, in other words, is the key to the reflection of the world that carries that ideology, a reflection of political outcome. Hence it would be possible to argue based on this discussion that fantasy may be a better genre to describe the real in a dialogical way

than realist literature, or at least it cannot be discarded as useless for carrying ideology and political critique merely based on the magical features, which would distance it from the real. The image of the real in realist literature is as capable of failing in its critique of the real as fantasy is, and fantasy is as capable of producing an image of the real that is able to debate real issues of the world, even if magic is one of the vessels that fantasy uses to create this debate. Magic is thus to be regarded as a tool of creating the debate rather than a fairy tale feature that would make it somehow irrelevant to real political critique and conversation.

It has to be noted that time has passed since *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction* and Suvin has to some degree come to agree with Miéville, and admits that since the 1960s fantasy has evolved and may have gained ground in Marxist research. In his article “Considering the Sense of ‘Fantasy’ or ‘Fantastic Fiction’: An Effusion” Suvin discusses the development of fantasy alongside science fiction. He says that:

Let me therefore revoke, probably to general regret, my blanket rejection of fantastic fiction. The divide between cognitive (pleasantly useful) and non-cognitive (useless) does not run between SF and fantastic fiction but inside each – though in rather different ways and in different proportions, for there are more obstacles to liberating cognition in the latter. (1999 – 2001, 4)

Therefore, Suvin seems to have come to similar conclusion as Miéville. Not all fantasy fits the category of cognitively significant political literature, but neither does all science fiction. Suvin has changed his so-called “blanket rejection” opinion of fantasy, but still appears to carry the idea that fantasy, when failing to convey a deeper (political) discussion, fails to a greater extent than science fiction in the similar circumstances would. Thus in his mind it is harder and less common for fantasy to produce such discussion and even though it is not straightforwardly impossible for fantasy have politically significant content, it is still very difficult. However, in this thesis it is arguably important to consider Suvin’s earlier and unquestionably most influential piece of work. *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction* is frequently referred as the most influential research in science fiction and fantasy

of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Therefore, it is justified to consider Suvin's thoughts from that time still as valid and important as they were before his slight change of opinion.

What Suvin argues in his article is that fantastic fiction is hard to define as it morphs into other genres. He says that fantasy is not a genre, but rather a family of genres. He would like to divide fantasy into historical time frames: "ca. 1764-1830, 1830-1880, 1880-1960 (the high modernist phase), and the contemporary, post-Tolkien moment" (1999–2001, 8–9). When it comes to magic and power in fantasy, Suvin finds that as a rule godlike creatures in fantasy have power that the individuals in the books cannot refuse. This power distribution signifies "the capriciousness or malevolence of our power apparati" and it can be a tool of showing the effects of that power on individuals. What is left unsaid is how that power came to be and how it can be counteracted (1999–2001, 19). Suvin argues that fantasy is not terribly well equipped for the recent evolution in morphing the literary genres. His opinion is that "science fantasy" would not combine the best parts of science fiction as a genre and best of fantasy, but would rather go against epistemological deep structures (1999–2001, 20). More importantly, Suvin argues that it should be decided with every piece of fantastical literature whether the depiction of hardships of individuals depicted, often subcultures or subaltern social groups, is useful in the sense that it would motivate the reader with similar hardships in reality to act against them, or just demotivate them and thus merely work as escapism (1999–2001, 23–24). This is an interesting notion as it gives room for fantastical literature to succeed in having real effect instead of merely stating that fantasy is, and will always be, a form of escaping real suffering in literature.

When it comes to the accusation of fantasy being escapist, Miéville notes in his interview (Newsinger 2000) that the idea of escapism is impossible in the sense that no writer is capable of escaping his history or his culture completely. Fantasy, according to Miéville, is interpreted through the filters of social reality. Fantasy thus can make the reader aware of their own reality even if it is not realistic or even if the literature is confusing in its surrealist nature. Miéville argues that it is not reasonable to say a fantasy novel is escapist merely because of its supernatural elements and then say

that a realist novel depicts the reality better just because it does not carry magical elements. Miéville notes that “just because these books *pretend* to be about 'the real world' doesn't mean they reverberate in it with more integrity”. What he is suggesting is that while fantasy may be escapist, it will never be able to escape reality in a manner such that it would lose all possible commentary on real issues. In addition, he also notes that not all fantasy is reactionary. His idea of fantasy or weird literature culminates in the possibilities of fantasy literature, derived from the thoughts of Karl Marx. According to Miéville what can make fantasy a politically significant genre is the issue of possibility. He says that in fantasy the world that is created is impossible, but pretends to be real. The story world then creates a space that is able to redefine impossible and hence also able to change the categories within the not-real, and when the not-real is changed, it allows the reader to imagine the potentialities in the actual reality of the recipient, the reader (Newsinger 2000). Fantasy can thus help the reader to imagine not what is, but what could be in the actual reality by changing the rules of reality within literature.

However, Suvin states that in his mind, what is common with all fantasy is its refusal of technology and all other capitalistic features such as urbanisation (1999–2001, 26). This is a very general notion that simply does not apply to all modern fantasy and thus would leave New Weird, for example, outside of the notion. Moreover, Suvin's argument goes further than mere features of the genre. He also argues that fantasy serves a different purpose for its readers than science fiction does. According to him, readers of science fiction are generally confident that historical future can be changed at present, whereas readers of fantasy are generally a younger audience who have lost their confidence in similar access to change (1999–2001, 27). Even though Suvin has accepted that science fiction and fantasy as genres have and will morph into each other to some degree and that not all fantasy is escapist literature he still strongly opposes the idea that fantasy would be equal to science fiction, at least in a cognitive and political sense. This idea is the nucleus of what Miéville has argued against and it is a question that remains crucial in discussions of sci-fi and fantasy, because the other

side of the argument suggests that genre specifically does not imply ability or inability for dialogical discussion with reality. However, if all fantasy is useful from a Marxist point of view, there is still an open question: if only a part of fantasy literature can be thought as engaging in politically significant debate, is this the literature published after the 1960s as both Suvin and Miéville have suggested, or is there another division to be made? According to Jameson all literature is political, so the question is more in the manner the literature displays critique towards real issues. The issue that Suvin is still unable to agree with is what Miéville has suggested: the most useful fantasy is the one that is able to carry a debate and even suggest solutions instead of merely stating the issues without any reference to change. This would fit with Suvin's ideas as well, as he states that the problem with fantasy is that its readers have decided no solution will be available to induce change (1999–2001, 27). Hence dialogical fantasy should be able to fit even Suvin's categorisation. No fantasy can be excluded from being politically significant, as every piece of literature is political. However, the distinction can be located in the way the literature discusses the issues: if it offers meaningful critique and the possibility of change in relation to issues that exist in the real world, or if it merely state that the issues exist but with no dialogical critique presented.

Miéville, states in his editorial introduction to *Symposium of Marxism and Fantasy* (2002, 39–49) that fantasy could be of interest for Marxist critics, because modern social reality, real life under capitalist societies, is a fantasy, which would mean that realist literature would not be the best form of literature to mirror the real as fantasy comes closer to depicting what exists in the surroundings of the author. Miéville suggests that many fantasy novels succeed better in depicting “real” issues and features of reality than many “realistic” novels. His idea is that many “realistic” works fail in depicting the real world by imitating it: realistic imitation does not always lead to convincing commentary on real issues. Fantasy is capable of making such commentary just as realistic literature is capable of failing in depicting the reality with integrity (2002, 42). Fantasy may be able to offer the author a different set of tool for creating a dialogue with reality in a politically engaged sense. If

considered from this perspective, imaginative fantasy is able to separate issues that need to be changed in reality from the context in which they exist, and debate them from a fantastical perspective. This could lead to multifaceted conversation on real issues instead of art merely imitating life, which could not be successful in creating conversation that would lead to change.

Fredric Jameson argues that realism by any definition decodes or demystifies real issues and any realist book should produce an image of the world, and this image plays a significant role in the bourgeois cultural revolution. Suvin, similarly, prefers science fiction from this point of view, as Miéville has stated: “He’s (Suvin) politically behind SF, seeing it as related to the progressive bourgeois project, especially in its infancy” (Newsinger 2000). According to Jameson a book of this kind is an image of the world, but also subjective, critical, analytic and corrosive realistic reflection. However, he states that human consciousness is not free from development and change. According to Jameson, human psychology changes in time and is “rather situation-specific and historically produced” (1986, 152). Miéville’s argument concerning the failure in imitation suggested that the imitation is the key to failure, as the reflection of the world may not be accurate and could thus fail in successful commentary on real issues, but the issue lies in the specificity to time as well. Not all reflections of the world raise similar ideas in readers of different times and thus, a novel may be unsuccessful in creating the same critical political view of issues at the time of writing to every person to read the book. Miéville’s argument is acceptable in these terms, but the same issue remains in fantasy as well. Where realist literature may fail in delivering the same discussion through time, so must fantasy. However, the core in Miéville’s argument still prevails: If realism is arguably not perfect when it comes to political undertones in literature, why would we discard fantasy as a vessel for political commentary? Fantasy is capable of producing successful political conversation as well as realism, but as likely to change through time as the readers and the world change.

The idea of fantastic elements being able to describe social and political problems is apparent in Miéville’s work. Writing about the conditions of the working class might fail in its imitation of

realism by appearing implausible to the reader. Perhaps the emotional or social consequences of a strike in London are not best described in a realist manner, but with fantasy. Fantastical elements may have power to reach the reader in a manner that realist literature fail to reach. *Kraken* has a side feature of striking magical animals who turn are killed while on strike. The depiction of the desperation of the animals, their untimely death and the fact that the side story has little or no effect on the main plot, or the lives of the humans, has a very strong effect on the reader, and does invoke comparison to the real world.

The purpose of the study is to successfully analyse the novels from a Marxist point of view. Proving that fantasy literature has a place in the discussion of literature that presents real life political issues and problems in power distribution and does not merely state their existence, but includes conversation and critique over issues in the reality as well. Even though the novels have magical elements and certainly could not happen in our real surroundings, they do comment on societies of our world today. They are able to raise discussion on the issues and even clarify the problems with magical features.

### 3. Power

Power is a feature of ideology and is one of the elements that is of interest in this study. According to Louis Althusser “*it is in the forms and under the forms of ideological subjection that provision is made for the reproduction of the skills of labour power*” (1984, 7, orig. italics). Power is also a multifaceted issue that is contested not only on its meaning, but also where it exists. According to Steven Lukes (2005, 63) power “is ‘essentially contested’, in the sense that reasonable people, who disagree morally and politically, may agree about the facts but disagree about where power lies”. He also says that

Power is a *dispositional* concept, comprising a conjunction of conditional or hypothetical statements specifying what would occur under a range of circumstances if and when the power is exercised. Thus power refers to an ability or capacity of an agent or agents, which they may or may not exercise. (2005, 63)

The purpose of the study is firstly to examine the power formations and systems that occur in the novels. The occurrence of the power is researched from various angles: how it is organised and who is responsible in keeping the power within the system. Lukes states that to define where, especially dominating, power exists, the least visible forms of power should be searched. Effective power according to him can have an effect on others even without active participation and thus be present wherever it acts positively towards the interests of the powerful and negatively towards those, who are subject to it (2005, 86). Thus power will be searched in the novels from this perspective to see where power is advancing the interests of the dominant part of the society and where it is harmful to others. The idea of order and structure are central of the discussion. Examples from the novels will be given with a careful analysis of the texts. Culture as a part of the societies will be considered and discussed if and how it is depicted in the books and how it is in a conversation with the power structure.

Power is an important in multiple respects. According to Suvin power politics are often “installed in place of any overarching historical laws, whether of bourgeois "progress" or of socialist

sublation of capitalism that retains the achievements of industrialism; even the nostalgic collectivists of the Tolkien kind cannot show a monotheistic religion or Saviour” (1999–2001, 26). Steven Lukes explains power a multidimensional issue. Firstly, there is the concept of exercising power, identifying ability or capacity to exercise power, which may or may not be used. Secondly, there is a definition of power being used by A over B and B’s condition of dependence on A. Thirdly, power is closely connected to domination, which is a perspective that assumes that B is affected against his own interests by A. Fourthly, if power is defines as such, it then affects the interests of its subjects in a negative manner and would fail to see variation or conflicts among the interests of its subject. Finally, Lukes argues that power operates “with a reductive and simplistic picture of binary power relations” (2005, 109). Even though Lukes notions that defining power in this manner is not “power” but an act of securing compliance to domination, the definition is useful for this thesis. The third definition of power is important especially, as the novels describe power that is corrupted in the tense that powerful act against the interests of the powerless. Lukes notes that

The power of the powerful consists in their being capable of and responsible for affecting (negatively or positively) the (subjective and/or objective) interests of others. On this broader view of power, the issues of powerlessness and of domination will no longer seem so obviously separate and locked into distinct perspectives. (2009, 68)

The simple division between those who have power, and those who have not, but are subjected to it by others, can be thus simply made by Lukes’s division. From this perspective it is important in the analysis of the novels to see whether similar division can be made and possible dominative powers can be studied.

Donald L. Donham discusses power from a Marxist anthropological perspective in his book *History, Power, Ideology*. He says that the evolution of political domination conditions many cases of historical transformation. He quotes Ralf Dahrendorf<sup>3</sup>, who says that

The structures of power in which the political process takes place offer and explanation of not only how change originates and what direction it takes, but also of why it is necessary. Power always implies non-power and therefore resistance. The dialectic of

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<sup>3</sup> See: Dahrendorf, Ralf. 1968. *Essays in the Theory of Society*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

power and resistance is the motive force of history. . . .Here is the nexus where norms are laid down, called into question, modified and called into question again. Here is the source of initiative, and thus of the historicity – and that means the vitality, the openness, the freedom – of human societies. (1990, 49)

In literature, the depictions of power structures may reveal them in reality in a way that cause thinking process in the reader, who will compare the structures with the reality. Dahrendorf says that power implies non-power and therefore resistance of those who lack power. The analysis of Miéville reveals how this process works both ways. Resistance is what comes from this implication of power versus non-power. Ideology is very closely connected to power as well, as previously argued by Fredric Jameson (1986, 60–61). According to Donham, ideology equals “systems of belief that uphold sectional interests while appearing to express general ones.” He also notes that his definition of ideology consists of ideas that reveal the world instead of hiding it (1990, 49). Lukes notes that in societies there can be “disguised expressions of ideological insubordination that can be decoded by interpreting ‘the rumors, gossip, folktales, songs, gestures, jokes and theatre of the powerless as vehicles by which, among other things, they insinuate a critique of power while hiding behind anonymity or behind innocuous understandings of their conduct<sup>4</sup>’” (2005, 125). This view supports the analysis of power from fiction, because novels created by authors living in a certain society are able to discuss issues in their reality by creating stories. Necessarily Miéville’s novels need to be “decoded” in order to find their interpretation of real issues.

In addition, a useful distinction in power as a term when it comes Marxist literary research is that Karl Marx originally translated power in to German as “Kraft” and then “Kraft” was later translated back to English as “force”. Donham states that this distinction is an important one as force is usually used to refer to something that is outside of human beings, while power refers to something that comes from people and is in their capacity (1990, 59). Power in this thesis is used in the latter meaning rather than the first, as the political power that is the main concern in this research comes

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<sup>4</sup> Reference to Scott, J.C. 1990. *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

from people, not from the outside. Political power is in the capacity of the human beings and is not wielded from outside of human society, but from within it.

Donham adds distinction between rights and powers is still a fundamental issue in historical materialism<sup>5</sup> as “a person may have a right to material resources but not the power to exercise it; he may have power over resources but not a right”. Productive inequalities thus are powers over those who work and the products they produce, not rights. In summary, some people work and some people live on the work of others (1990, 64). This is the summary on power and capitalism and a usable definition in this thesis, because it is the basis for Marxist research as well. Political power is in close connection to materialism and capitalism, as those who have power are usually rather keen to use it on others in order to produce resources for themselves, who have no right to the resources, but merely to the process. Instances that refer to this process are studied and analysed. Productive inequalities, Donham argues, produce and select ideologies as well, which exist to secure a certain form of power (1990, 131).

When it comes to the novels in question, power is visible in the structures of society as well as in the characters in the stories. In *Kraken*, there is the suggested power system that is parallel to the real world. There is the main society, the order that is best represented by the police in the book. The special task force, the FSRC (Fundamentalist and Sect-related Crimes Unit), represents power to a limited extent. They have very little effect on anything as such, and even they lack normality. Another form of power that represents a similar system is religion, even though the religion in the *Kraken* directly reflects none of the main religious groups today. Lukes discusses religion from the perspective of power as a set of rules that the subjects of that religion follow: “the world’s religions are also not lacking in messages that teach acquiescence in the ‘natural’ order of things --- while translating (as Feuerbach taught Marx) human aspirations and dreams into supernatural fantasies (just as they can also, as Weber<sup>6</sup> argued, inspire this-worldly activity and sometimes world-transforming

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<sup>5</sup> Donham here quotes Cohen, G.A. 1978. *Karl Marx’s Theory of History*. 103 – 119.

<sup>6</sup> Weber, M. 1978. *Economy and Society*. Ed, G. Roth and C. Wittich. Berkeley: California University Press.

activism)” (2005, 133–134) In this sense religion is a power that aspires to affect others. Whether the influence of religion can be seen as negative or positive towards others it will be discussed based on the novel. The religious group that is mentioned in the novel is the Congregation of God Kraken, also referred as the Krakenists.

The tensions between the different groups that have power of their own and power to have an effect on the approaching apocalypse will be studied further. However, there is a system of which even the police are aware and which they use to stay in a close connection with one party: an underworld war between two criminal leaders, one slightly worse in physical acts of violence than the other. Here magical elements appear as well: the one criminal is a tattoo on a man’s back, the other is dead but living as ink in a bottle. These systems are systems of power, because they all intend to have an effect on the rest of the society, as defined by Lukes as well (2005, 109). The criminal leaders could be argued to represent the dominating power, Lukes’s third definition, because their intentions do not necessarily have a positive effect on others. The police attempt to preserve the existing power system whereas the criminal leaders attempt to establish new organisation of power in London, the power concentrating in their hands. Even though criminal groups and Krakenists go against the police force and try to find the squid themselves, and therefore represent the resistance to the established power system, which is the society with the police force supervising and attempting to prevent change in the established system, they cannot be described as powerless. Instead, they as well are powerful systems that strive to have an effect on others. The criminal groups led by Tattoo and Grisamentum respectively have intentions that would affect others negatively and in this case the status quo of the established society would serve others better. The intentions of the Krakenists are much vaguer and it is more difficult to say whether they are powerful, or powerless, as their intentions would not necessarily affect others in a negative way. Hence their resistance is neutral in the sense of how they would affect the society on a large scale. From the perspective of the Krakenists the best outcome would be if the established power system would fail in its search for the squid. Thus they

can be regarded as the powerless party compared to the established society, whose intentions of finding the squid would suffocate the need of the Krakenists to save their god. The Krakenists as well as the criminal groups are led by singular leaders: Tattoo, Grisamentum and Teuthex, the religious leader of the church of Kraken. Adding to these systems, there is an activist group called UMA (Union of Magicked Assistants) that is led by a ghost of a statue. This activist group is best defined as a socialist representation of a working class, even though the ones fighting for their rights, better salary and reasonable working hours are animals.

*The City & the City* has similar features as well. There are police officers who are investigating a murder of a young woman, the police that are corrupted by the politicians, and there are underground activist groups such as The Beszquoma Solidarity Front and those who want the two cities to become one. Main element of power appears to exist between politicians and the police force. The main system exists with the status quo and non-power, the resistance, is represented by the groups that wish to either unify or permanently separate the two cities. There is tension between those with power and those without power. The police force is nevertheless a separate entity from the politicians, who are the deciding organ when it comes to contacting the Breach for a suspected violation in their jurisdiction. The police force appears less corrupted and is not clearly led by anyone, even if Borlú does have his supervisors, they do not affect his investigations straightforwardly. The decisions come from the somewhat corrupted organ of political power, which besides the Breach has most effect on the society, because their actions either maintain the society as it is or attempt to change it. The division in the book between the two cities creates an active discussion and representation of reality, as the political gameplay is represented in a very descriptive manner. The Besz police force is depicted in the book more in a film noir manner with its solitary inspector Borlú, who seems to lack direction or meaning in his life. He has some relationships in his life but none of them seem to represent stability, even though his close relationship with constable Corwi appears to be most stable, but even that remains superficial at most.

*Embassytown* differs slightly from the other two novels in its power distribution. The humans live on the planet at the mercy of the other species. The humans have their ambassadors that have most of the power because they are the only ones capable of communicating with the species that allows life on the planet. However, above the ambassadors are the politicians on another planet, under whose reign Embassytown is. Embassytown is practically a colony, influenced by the main planet Bremen. Political corruption exists in Embassytown as well, as Bremen sends a new ambassador to Embassytown to work as a spy. The Hosts turn into addicts and even they divide into radicals, who want to purify the species of the language drug they are addicted to by deafening themselves and others and kill human life. They also have those who are not yet afflicted by the drug and therefore have no opinion, and those who try to live with the drug by making themselves use it less and less and save the species from the radical purification movement by working with a few chosen Terre people. In *Embassytown*, as well as in *Kraken* and *The City and the City*, there is definite tension between the powerful, which is represented by the Ambassadors and the status quo around them, and the powerless, the resistance that is formed after the language turned into a drug. The existence of the power and powerlessness fit with Dahrendorf's definition of power well, as the tension between those who have power and those who wish to change the power system or gain more power to themselves is an apparent issue in all three novels.

In addition, different tools and occurrences of power and society are studied and analysed. Power is not a separated entity that merely exists and is accepted in the society. Power is wielded through tools, events, organisations or individuals in one manner or other. These tools are studied to see how power is presented in the novels.

### 3.1 Main system

Main system of power refers to a construction in the novels that appears to be the status quo: a formation of political prowess or a group whose ideas are defined as normal or which are supposed

to be followed by other. In Lukes's definition the main system that is analysed is the system that is regarded as powerful, compared to others that could be defined as powerless (2005, 109). These systems are regarded as either positive or negative based on that what kind of effect they have on the society. As discussed earlier, power means that there is non-power, and non-power could also be referred to as subsystems or even resistance. In this section, the element of power is discussed and analysed: to be precise, the system that has the power and produces an ideology of some description that affects the people in the books. What is rather interesting in analysing the power constructions in the books is the essence and the effect of power. The main interest is in the analysis of the main system in the way that the relationship between the status quo and the individuals in the society would be visible. What kind of power does the main construction of power represent and how does it influence the rest of the society?

### 3.1.1 Power in split cities

Firstly, *The City and the City* is perhaps the most fruitful novel for this discussion, because it is rather realistic in the sense that it is on Earth rather than on an imagined planet, but it also includes fantastic and weird features. The milieu feels familiar to a European reader and the description of the landscape is not that different from any old European city. References to European cultures are not rare in the novel. For example, inspector Borlú is described as an old school police officer who likes to drink his coffee as a strong *aj Tyrko*, in Turkish style (2011, 44). The language is also depicted. Miéville writes that Besz has thirty-four letters, it is clear and phonetic and that it looks like Cyrillic alphabet, which is not a description that a citizen of Beszel appreciates (2011, 50). The reason for the aversion of the description is not explained. Illitan, the language of Ul Qoma, uses Roman script, which is said to be recent (2011, 50). The familiar elements combined with the strange creates an interesting juxtaposition which in turn affects the reading. Not only does the landscape carry a familiarising

effect, but also references to the real world. For example, the book from time to time parallelises the real with the imaginary:

Orciny stories had been children's standards, alongside the tribulations of 'King Shavil and the Sea-Monster That Came To Harbour.' Harry Potter and Power Rangers are more popular now, and fewer children know those old fables. (2011, 62)

Where Harry Potter and Power Rangers are cultural references that most probably every reader of the book will recognise as something familiar, the combination of King Shavil and Orciny are something unfamiliar. *The City and the City* uses references such as this to create the effect of real when the story is actually quite far from realism. The tension is a useful tool for including social criticism, as the real elements make the novel more approachable and its social criticism more real as well.

*The City and the City* presents a difficult division in the power structure. Firstly, the cities, even though they overlap each other, are different countries. It is clear from the novel that defining the different cities as one split in half is a serious political offence and should never be mentioned (2011, 91). Calling the cities split cities is a serious insult towards both, but with both cities feeling as the insult was meant to be towards them instead of the other city: both cities fight for their independent status, which in result resembles historical wars between countries that have fought to be free from the influence of another country in the real world. The two countries are strongly identified as ignoring the fact that they happen to overlap each other in a very literal sense. They are trained to unsee<sup>7</sup> the other country and have to go through a very thorough training if they happen to travel to the other city to unsee what they have been taught to see all their lives. To protect their separateness as much as possible, they have laws to protect their uniqueness. For example, some colours are illegal in Ul Qoma that are legal in Beszel (2011, 64). If a person forgets to unsee, or sees the other city or its dwellers on purpose, a force called the Breach will intervene and the person will disappear. No one has returned from the Breach. Between the orders of the countries and the Breach

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<sup>7</sup> "Unseeing" in the novel refers to avoiding seeing the other city at all costs. They are trained from birth to see the distinctive markers of their own cities, colours and architecture to help them only concentrate on their own city. They are also trained to avoid colliding with the citizens of the other city, as they cities are literally overlapping each other. (2011, 65 – 66, 370)

is the Oversight Committee consisting of both Ul Qoman and Beszelian politicians and other important figures. The committee is hinted to be subject to change (2011, 73). What is most interesting is when inspector Borlú presents the case of the dead girl as a breach to the Oversight Committee, who would then pass the case to the Breach if they thought the crime in case really was an illegal transportation of the body from Ul Qoma to Beszel. A member of the Oversight Committee reminds inspector Borlú that

‘Breach is... an alien power.’ Several of the Besz and some of the Ul Qoman members of the committee looked shocked. ‘We all know it’s the case,’ Syedr said, ‘Whether it is polite to acknowledge it or not.’ (2011, 79)

What has to be pointed out is that the main issue with power like the Breach is that most citizens on both sides of the double city seem to be terrified of its wrath, especially as no one knows who or what they are. The term “alien” catches attention as it best describes the issue of there being a very strong division in power: what the politicians and other mortals have in their hands, and what they have no control over. They have been submitted under the control of Breach and for exchange, the Breach will use its own judgement when it comes to cases where someone breaks the law in a way that includes a breach. Hence the outburst of the politician, who questioned the undisputed power that the breach held in their hands. The issue this kind of power distribution raises is the willingness of the people in both cities to allow an alien, unknown and unseen power to manifest in their lives in such a manner. The power the Breach has is limited only by its specificity to only the crimes to do with crossing the border illegally, whether it was on purpose or ignorantly. In Lukes’s definition the Breach is in this case the powerful party, whereas those who wish for its elimination are the resistance, or the powerless. The term powerless is very descriptive in this sense as well because when a person breaches, there is no court ruling for their removal from the society, the Breach makes the decision. The symbiotic relationship that the cities have with the Breach is best described in the book itself: “The two cities need the Breach. And without the cities’ integrities, what is Breach?” (2011, 84) Breach is an absolute power, that is both feared and on which the population of both of the cities

depend. However, its position as the power does not only imply powerlessness, but also a problematic position as an uncontested power system that is always continued by unwilling subjects, kidnapped to the Breach for their crimes. A good example of how the Breach uses its judgement is when the father of the murdered girl breaches in desperate search for answers to his daughter's death. There is no court ruling for the offence but the man is violently deported from the country with the assistance of the local police. In this manner the Breach closely resembles an absolute monarchy, with only one party being able to decide punishment for a crime (2011, 113). However, the issue whether the Breach is in this sense a dominating power in Lukes's terms (2005, 109–110) is more complex. The power relations in this sense are complex and twisted in the novel. The power is divided in separate entities of elected, but partly corrupted power of politicians, the simple power of the police force, concentrated on preventing a chaos, and the unelected absolute power of the Breach, which causes resistance, but is not straightforwardly maleficent in its actions. The Breach consists of individuals that are unwillingly made part of the more secretive police force whose only purpose is to prevent absolute chaos that would be caused by the damage to the balance between the two cities.

The Breach is empowered by its secrecy as well. A part of the fear and respect that the citizens of the two cities feel towards the unseen power is that researching it is illegal, which means that very few, if any, know exactly what and where the Breach is. Its power comes from fear of unknown, which gives them power in a sense that no other authority has in the book. In this manner, the fear of the Breach resembles to horror or fear of unknown. As discussed earlier, New Weird literature often includes horror features that are not necessarily scary in themselves, but rather tell of an inner fear in the human beings. A fear of unknown power and what happens if you are taken to the Breach is a fear that is included in the society in the novel, an everyday fear inside of the individuals, encrypted to the society.

In addition, there is no other explanation given for the existence of Breach but that it has always existed since the beginning of time for the cities, and it will always exist so that the two cities

will be able to continue to exist given their difficult position overlapping each other. However, the Breach does not appear to be interested in everyday politics as such. They are the keepers of order in many sense, but do not bother themselves with administrations. They are not reachable for discussion, and therefore cannot be used as political strength for the politicians and authorities in the cities themselves. At the end of the novel Borlú is able to uncover some of the Breach's secrecy when he becomes one of the Breach's avatars, as the physical forms of Breach are called. Some of the implied magical elements are revealed as more ordinary features. For example, it is explained that the Breach is able to supervise the citizens through cameras and people who work for them, informants. Ashil, one of the avatars in Breach admits that their fast knowledge of the issues in hand comes from "Taps. Informants." and Borlú finishes with "Agents or systems in offices in Besz and Ul Qoma tell you what you need to know, right?" (2011, 330) Their power comes from the ability to walk in both cities seeing, unlike others. In addition, they have complete access to internet and other technology, while it is emphasised that technology is not very far developed in either of the cities: phones do not work properly between the cities, and internet access is limited. Everything that is said about a fictional "third city" is controlled and punishable in both cities. What the Breach is part of is absolute control. However, it becomes very clear at the end that most of Breach's supernatural powers comes from political propaganda to keep order between the cities, to prevent chaos. Borlú realises in Breach, the place where the Breach exists, that:

The Breach was nothing. It is nothing. This is commonplace; this is simple stuff. The Breach has no embassies, no army, no sights to see. The Breach has no currency. If you commit it will envelop you. Breach is void full of angry police. (2011, 297)

Even though the majority of the novel creates the air of magical elements in the Breach as well as the coexistence of the cities, at this stage the magic is stripped away. The Breach is a power without elections. The Breach is expanded by the breachers, people who disobey it on purpose or sometimes even by accident. It has informants and allies and things that are unreachable for the citizens. In this way Breach is nearly like any monarchy in reality, even though it has a bit more air of magic and

elements of secrecy. The comparison to the real and Miéville's ability to take some of the fantasy elements away from the Breach at the end of the book create an illusion of a regular unelected power form. However, the Breach resembles more a police force than a group that would wish to hold power and influence the societies themselves. As Borlú said, Breach is full of angry police. They have a desperate need to control the chaos, to keep the cities apart for reasons that are thousands of years old.

The Breach, in summary, represent a multifaceted form of power. They are called an alien power, angry police and are either supported or strongly opposed by the citizens of the two cities. They are not invisible, but because they move in Breach, which is in neither city and still in both, they confuse the onlookers. They are not supposed to see what is in the other city, but they do not know where the Breach are, which is why they try to unsee them. Anyone who becomes an avatar of the Breach, lose their identity. No one can look at them and their only purpose is to supervise and ensure that no one breaches. In this way they are the most unpolitical power form in the novel and socially the saddest. This example of power without form, without the politics, without any reference of human needs that they still might have if not the solidarity they feel towards one another, is interesting. Are the Breach a reference to the power itself, the kind of power that is held for the safety of others, or are they victims of the circumstances, the ones without any power as they have no means to escape what they are? They could be compared to soldiers, the army between those who decide and those who are to be protected. Ashil explains the situation with words "We're only the last ditch; it's everyone in the cities who does most of the work ... But if you breach, even if it's not your fault, for more than the shortest time...you can't come back from that" (2011, 370). Hence, the second you have seen the other city, you cannot learn to unsee it again. One becomes one of the soldiers, keepers of the illusion. In this way the Breach and its agents are both a power that induces fear of unknown to the society and certainly are a system of an unelected power, but they also are the keepers of peace and not elected to their position. Their position is thus multifaceted when it comes to power.

In addition to the Breach, there are other separate power constructions in *The City and the City*. First of all, the book revolves around the police work and the police administrations. The cities naturally have their own police force and because they are different countries despite being in unbelievably close proximity to each other, the differences between them are wide. When Borlú travels to Ul Qoma it becomes apparent that the difference between the cities is notable. First and foremost, the relationship between the two cities is coloured with hostility. Even though Borlú travels to Ul Qoma in the role of a consultant in the case of the dead girl, he is treated as a part prisoner, part nuisance (2011, 168–169). The Ul Qoman police force is more secretive, more political and even more military than its Beszelian counterpart. To explain this difference between the two authorities Miéville uses different words for them. The Besz police force in their language is called *policzai*, whereas the Ul Qoman police force is called *militsya* (2011, 182). Both words have Slavic language connotation, but the difference in the words is explainable in English as well. According to Chambers Dictionary of Etymology the word police, closest to *policzai*, means “public order, civil administration and discipline of a community” (2008, 812) and therefore mostly emphasises the traditional meaning of the police, unpolitical in a sense. *Militsya*, on the other hand, bears similarities with military associations. Militia, according to Chambers, is defined as an army of citizens. The word is borrowed from Latin *mīlitia*, which means military service, warfare and soldier (2008, 661). This difference in the vocabulary is a good example of the difference between the police enforcement in the two cities, and good representation of the power distribution in the book. This is because the Besz police force in the novel is described as straightforwardly bringing discipline to the society. The officers are not flashy, but simply defined by their role in the society. The Ul Qoman police force, on the other hand, is more military and described as more organised and they form a unison in their suspicion for Borlú. An officer or militsya is described as wearing “official *militsya* grey with an insignia of rank” (2011, 157). The Ul Qoman police force is more apparently led by those of higher rank:

I followed Dhatt past his own office – he was ranked enough to get a little room – to his boss’s. Colonel Muasi had greeted me boredly with something about what a good sign of the changing relationships between our countries, herald of future cooperation, any help at all I needed, and had made me surrender my weapon.” (2011, 169)

For these reasons it can be argued that the UI Qoman police force is more organised and more defined by their rules.

### 3.1.2 Capitalism on an alien planet

*Embassytown* has a rather different power structure. The main character Avice is an immerser, a profession that could best be described as a combination of an astronaut and a transporter of goods. She earns her living by “floakin”, which translates to a “life-technique of aggregated skill, luck, laziness and chutzpah” (2012, 18). The immersers work in a trade of transporting goods from one planet to another in the immer, which is an element of space, but with a more magical undertone. The immersers live on the ships on which they work. Hence Avice as the main character is very much the outsider when she finally returns to home. Because she is an outsider in the sense that she has been away from her home for a long time, but still is an insider as well as the place she comes from is a huge part of her past and her character, it gives the reader a unique perspective on the organisation of the society in Embassytown. She understands how the society works, but has fallen out with the leaders, the ambassadors. Her role as an outsider and as a simile, which means that she was made to do something specific in order to create a simile of that action into the language so that the Hosts would be able to speak it, eventually leads to her role in the uprising or rebellion that follows. Avice as a heroine is rather mediocre, as she does not possess any significant powers nor will she willingly take the role of a leader in the crisis, even though in the end she will be considered a hero for her actions. Georg Lukács in *The Historical Novel* wrote that the mediocre heroes as central figures are a way of presenting “the totality of certain transitional stages of history” in a historical novel (1981, 35). Similarly, in Miéville’s novels the average heroes may be able to comment on the issues in the society especially via their mediocrity, as the focus is rather on the issues than on the speciality of the

leading characters. Avice does have a huge role in the development of the affairs and hence is a particular nucleus of the change and the development of power structures in the novel.

The main power system is the embassy, where the ambassadors work solely for their unique ability to use the language that the Hosts use. However, the Hosts and the embassy together form a rather capitalist system of power that produces the products that the humans acquire in order to survive in the planet. The Hosts let humans live on their planet and they even protect humans against the surroundings that would otherwise be harmful for them. The humans in return lie for the Hosts. Lies are a great source of enjoyment to the alien species, which is unable to lie. There is no mention of exchange of capital in this process, merely commodities and protection, technology and language. However, that no money is transferred for the produce makes the system no less reminiscent of a capitalist system. Karl Marx wrote that “all the material conditions of labour are capital by their very nature” and that “capital is meat and bread for even though the capitalist purchases labour-power with money, this money in fact only represents bread, meat and, in short, all the means of subsistence of the worker” (1990, 996–997). When people in Embassytown lie and work as similes for the Hosts, which means that they assist in creating new language for the species, the Hosts in return produce what the citizens of Embassytown require in order to survive. The system is symbiotic in the sense that the both species need each other, but the humans need the Hosts more: in order to stay alive. It could be argued that language in this system is the capital: it is used to pay for the services of the Hosts. Thus the Hosts produce protective elements for the humans in exchange for the language capital and humans will be able to survive another day. However, when the language changes and becomes a massively addictive drug for the Hosts, the system is compromised. The capital is corrupted and the immediate consequence is the breakdown of the whole symbiotic system. The Hosts react to the language of the new Ambassadors like drug addicts, some of them instantly hooked and some hiding from the language drug. Worst of all, the radical groups that evolve in the species in the midst of the language drug war take drastic measures in order to survive and even destroy the human

population. Hence the power system that *Embassytown* presents is a great mirror for effects of capitalism that the real world has experienced as is still experiencing today. The capitalist society does not survive as a perfect circuit system where capital is exchanged for labour and labour turned into produce and the whole process starting again. The system is corrupted by faulty capital, or capital turned into corruption, the system appearing thus as a greedy or politically corrupted. The reason behind the language drug is political, as it is explained that the main planet Bremen wanted to corrupt the language in order to not be threatened by the wealth and ambition of Embassytown (2012, 268–270). The labour force, the Hosts, rise up in rebellion and ceases to produce the products that have been exchanged for the language. The power in the novel hence shifts from humans to the radical subgroups, which will be discussed more thoroughly in the next chapter.

However, it has to be noted that the balance of power in *Embassytown* is even more clearly politically motivated than in *The City and the City*. Politics is the key element in the capitalist system and that exists on the planet Embassytown. The politics is the element that destroys the system. What is most interesting is the reaction that is birthed from the developments in the novel. The radical groups are born and the power is turned on its head. The humans lose all their leverage in the politics when the language is turned into a drug, especially as what is spoken by EzRa, the ambassador that is the source of the corrupted language, has little or no effect on the addicts once it has been said once, which means they need to keep producing new sentences. Hence the ambassador would need to keep on producing ever changing language in order to keep the Hosts satisfied and even more addicted, which proves to be impossible. The whole commodity of language capital inflates and loses its value, finally disappearing completely when Ra from the ambassador EzRa dies. The society is left without any capital and the whole system is in need of a rebirth. This is succeeded by the radical group of which Avice is part. The species of Ariekei develop into a new form of species that can lie, and hence can produce their own capital. The capitalist system is thus, very efficiently, destroyed

completely, and a new society is able to develop. The transition is difficult to some of the Ariekei and the process of transforming the species is described as such:

Ariekei staggering out of Language, into language and semes. Others come close, to go next time or the next. And there are those who refuse to; and those that, like Rooftop, sick with purity, just can't. They still can't speak to me, only Ambassadors. They only understand a dying Language. Now we have the drugs, the voices, to keep them alive, and no more gods. (2012, 399–400)

In this sense Miéville is very successful in his description of a breakdown of a capitalist society that will develop into a whole new system of power and distribution of goods. It would be unfair to say that because the book is rather fantastic it would be less of a mirror of reality or even unable to discuss the issues of the author's reality in the novel. *Embassytown* is an example of a text that is in discussion with the real especially because it is not a tale of an upheaval of a capitalist society that smoothly changed into a system that has no problems. As the final section of the novel explains, not all Ariekei develop easily into capital resistant species, but some of them stay as addicts to the old system and still rely on old capitalist Ambassadors to be able to use language (2012, 401–402). However, the new system takes care of them and keeps alive even those, who persistently oppose the new system in their inability to change with the society.

### 3.1.3 Power of faith

*Kraken* differs from *Embassytown* and *The City and the City* in its narrative landscape. Instead of completely fictional surroundings *Kraken* takes place in London. Similarly, the characters are mainly human with some magical additions. The power system is rather different compared to the other two novels. The book describes a world very similar to the real world, with the exception of the magical elements of which most of the society is not aware. The main character Billy is drawn to see the magical side of London when the story develops and the true nature of the society is revealed. The power system is thus in two layers: the representation of the reality, the basic society that the capital city of the United Kingdom represents, and the layer of the magical system which has power systems

of its own. The latter is of an interest in this study especially because in the novel the magical system with its own power systems is a mirror itself of the realistic society in the novel as well. Hence the novel is already in the discussion with the real within itself. The magical elements in the novel and the society the fantastic elements include create a useful platform for commentary on real issues.

Firstly, *Kraken* presents power distribution in the same manner as *Embassytown* and *The City and The City*: there are those who can be considered the powerful, and those who appear as powerless. The society could be divided vertically: the upper side and the underside of the society, based on the intentions of the social groups. For example, the criminals belong to the underside of the society, as their actions and intentions affect others very negatively and even violently. The power formation in the upper part of the division of the society is the police force as it represents the status quo, the society itself with its rules and regulations. What is referred to by the term status quo is the power system recognised in the real world such as the elected power holders and non-elected power such as monarchy. The religious organisation of the Krakenists is more difficult to place in this division of society. They represent an undercurrent of religious society, compared to established religions in reality. Their intentions, however, are not as negative towards others as with the criminal groups. In this thesis the religious groups are placed more closely in the underside of the society for their position as the powerless. They are very much a secretive organisation, hidden inside of a church building in London (2011, 78 – 79). Criminal intent is not rare in *Kraken*. Most of the subgroups and groups with magical power have criminals amongst them or at least have criminal intent. Billy is for all purposes a regular person who by mistake is thought to have magical powers. He is the opposite of a hero in a sense, unlikely to succeed in saving London from the approaching apocalypse. Billy is thought to be a prophet of the God Kraken (2011, 99), because he is the one who preserved the dead animal. His prophetic qualities, however, are non-existent and he himself protests the title (2011, 120). His powers are very much human powers, even though they as well can be powerful:

Human powers are, typically, abilities activated by agents choosing to do so (though the choice may be highly constrained, and alternative paths unlikely to be taken) and also

passive powers which the agents may possess irrespective of their wills. (Lukes 2005, 71)

The agents, according to Lukes, can be individuals or groups, institutions, any collective formations. In this case Billy's abilities are passive in the sense that his powers come from the beliefs of others instead of his own will. In the end Billy realises that his powers that others believe he possesses come from persuasion and belief. He realises that beliefs can be reversed (2011, 460–461). Billy as a hero is similar to Avicé's heroism in *Embassytown*, as he as well is a mediocre character. The lack of the qualifications to be a hero in Billy is an interesting issue as he is both a huge part of the story and simultaneously he has very little part in the development of the situation in London. The character that in actuality carries a plenty of responsibility and represents a Jesus-like renegade in the story is Dane, who tragically loses his life while trying to save his god, the missing giant squid (2011, 440–441). This will be further discussed in the fourth chapter on subjectivity.

What *Kraken* most successfully is able to create is a discussion of the issues of those who have the least amount of power and that discussion is naturally contrasted with the status quo. In the magical society the novel discusses the rights of the working class, represented by the Unmagicked Assistants. The group of the assistant workers for those with magical powers that require assistants for daily chores. The assistants are not happy with their work hours nor salary, which is why a demonstration is arranged by the union. The union is a representation of the resistance that appears against the power possessed by those who hire the assistants for minimal wage for no apparent consequences before the formation of the union. The union therefore represent the resistance for that specific form of power. In *Kraken* there are thus separate powerful and powerless systems, which cause resistance: power of the capitalist society and the resistance of the powerless working class of assistants, the power of the established society, the police force, and power and powerlessness of the criminal groups that go against the order in the society and power system of religion, contested by not only Billy, but by Vardy as well. The power formations thus always have two sides: the powerful

and the powerless. The tension between them is creating the dialogue with the reality as well, as both sides of power are discussed.

### 3.2 Subsystems

Subsystems of power are of a special interest. Subsystems could be defined in Lukes's terms as the systems of the powerless, or the parties that wish to have more power than the powerful possess. Subgroups, whether powerful in themselves or not, are powerless compared to the main systems. Whether this results in radicalism and resistance is an issue that is studied. Radicalism by definition means "the beliefs or actions of people who advocate thorough or complete political or social reform" (Oxford Dictionaries). Radicalism, even though not thoroughly studied in this thesis, is important because it is part of the tension in the novels and the dialogue that the novels have with reality as some subgroups in novels hope for political or social reform of the society. Uncontested power systems described in literature do not result in discussion and would, as discussed in the theory section, be more common in older fantasy. Uncontested power does not debate the issues that power presents in the novels, but would merely state their existence without having any critique on them, and in Miéville's terms would thus not be significant from a political perspective. All three novels have power within power, and the interaction between the systems. How the separate systems exist alongside each other and what kind of friction and tensions may result are some of the questions that will be discussed. Radicalism and corruption<sup>8</sup> are occurrences or consequences of power and the purpose of the research is to see what is wrong with the authoritative power if there has been a need for subsystems. Specific tools of power or fixed formations will also be analysed. These tools can be expressions of power, such as faith or language that are used to influence others in one way or another.

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<sup>8</sup> Corruption refers to "dishonest or fraudulent conduct by those in power, typically involving bribery" (Oxford Dictionaries)

The system that enables power to exist in the narrative societies is interesting as a Marxist feature as well.

### 3.2.1 Resistance in the split cities

*The City and the City* is a mosaic of power in its systems and subsystems of power constructions. Subsystems are represented by anarchists and nationalists alike that have a strong foothold in the political aspect of the novel. They represent the minority groups when it comes to the power of unity or separation of the cities that align. As discussed previously the main power holders are the human leaders of both cities as well as the police in addition to the more magical power of the Breach. The subsystems, however, agree either with the idea of keeping the cities separate and therefore express hostility against the citizens of the other city as well as those who wish to unify them, or support the idea of unifying the cities as one, as apparently they have been before in history. In this way the powerless subsystems resist the current power system and the current order of society. Their resistance, however, is a complex issue as it is not certain if their aspirations would be positive or negative for the other community. It is implied that the current state of affairs is the only solution and hence the powerless in this sense would actually result in negative order of society, whether it was the unification or the separation of the cities (2011, 370). The tension that comes from the groups and the main power systems, however, is a valuable tool in the discussion that the novel may have with the reader, as it creates debate on the how the societies are organised and whether the situations bears resemblance to some societies in reality.

The history of the two cities is not well explained in the novel, but some information is given. The book discusses the immigration to the cities and has some peculiar commentary when it comes to race, country of origin and what it means when a person comes from one city and visits the other. Hostility is one of the aspects that these issues carry, which creates an interesting aspect to the social

political commentary that *The City and the City* is able to have with the real. When the racial aspect of the citizens is discussed, the similarity with the real is apparent.

Hamd Hamzinic was what the murderers of Avid would also term an *ébru*. These days the term was used mainly by the old-fashioned, the racist, or in a turnabout provocation by the epithet's targets. . . .But for at least two hundred years, since refugees from the Balkans had come hunting sanctuary, quickly expanding the city's Muslim population, *ébru*, the antique Besz word for 'Jew', had been press-ganged into service to include the new immigrants, become a collective term for both populations. It was in Beszel's previously Jewish ghettos that the Muslim newcomers settled. (2011, 25)

This short passage captures well the richness of social commentary Miéville does in his writing. Not only is he creating a new milieu for his New Weird writing, but he also combines the real elements, as previously mentioned. These real features work according to the cognitive estrangement principle referencing the real to create a connection with the reader, while similarly estranging them via the imaginary world. The quote above discusses the immigration question that has been an on-going discussion in reality all over the world as well as in the novel. Interestingly in *The City and the City* Miéville writes that the minority populations, and probably most of all, religious groups were given the same offensive term. Even more interestingly, Miéville writes that the original meaning of the offensive title was given for the Jewish population which supposedly derives from the old history of Europe. In addition, Miéville describes this combination of the minority population groups by an example of their unity in good as well. He writes that in Beszel there had been a coffeehouse called "DöplirCaffé", where one side is Muslim and the other Jewish, two spaces rented side by side. One had a kitchen and counter with halal, the other with kosher, and they shared the same name, sign, and tables, and the wall between the spaces had been removed. Miéville writes that "Whether *DöplirCaffé* was one establishment or two depended on who was asking: to a property tax collector, it was always one" (2011, 26, orig. italics). The union of the minor groups may carry commentary on similar situations, where racial, political or religious groups are set against each other. In this example they have chosen to work together and the issues and problems should there be any would only come from an individual's own prejudices, not from the groups themselves. The historical development that is

described in the book is a good example of Miéville's writing in the book, as it combines imaginary narrative with reference to real events that have happened or are still happening. Racial issues are one of the themes that Miéville discusses in the novel and are another example of a critical debate that connects his novels to the issues in the real world.

When it comes to the city of origin, racial issues are discussed in the novel as well. When Borlú travels to Ul Qoma to investigate the murder and to work with the local police, the hostility he encounters is a key theme. The Ul Qoman stare and make quick prejudgements, as well as regard him as deeply suspicious:

“When we had left it had been to another roomful of not-very-friendly stares. ‘Dhatt’, someone had greeted him in passing, in a pointed way. ‘Ruffling feathers, am I?’ I had asked, and Dhatt had said, ‘Touchy, touchy. You’re Besz, what did you expect?’” (2011, 169).

Not only is the other city rather hard to visit, but staying there as the citizen of the other city is made extremely difficult. What the division of the cities and the attitude towards their population in either side of the city recalls is the past division of Germany, but instead of the visible, physical wall there is the magical wall of overlapping cities. Another example that could be a reference to German history is a fairly obvious one of the nationalism enthusiast group, shortly called by the term “nats” (2011, 250), which closely reminds the term Nazis. It is rather intriguing how the nationalists, the nats, are striving for the purpose of destroying the other city. Both of the cities have their own groups of nationalists and unificationists. Miéville writes that

In typical political cliché, unificationists were split on many axes. Some groups were illegal, sister-organisations in both Beszel and Ul Qoma. The banned had at various points in their history advocated the use of violence to bring the cities to their God-, destiny-, history-, or people-intended unity. (2011, 52)

The fact that both cities have their own groups of radicals, acting against the established system, is an important notion, as neither of the cities has any advantage on the other. The balance is preserved by the Breach and by the laws of both cities. Where nats want to destroy the other city in order to gain more power, the unificationists strive for the unification of the city so that there would only be

one and no Breach would exist. Therefore, the power that the unificationists wish to gain is the power that is invested in the invisible power, the power that is not elected by the people. On the other hand, the nats as well wish to gain that power from the Breach as destroying the other city would make the Breach unnecessary as well. The radical groups therefore have similar purpose in taking away the power from the Breach and the whole main construction of power. In the novel radicalism has many magical features, as it is impossible for the system against which they rebel to exist in reality. However, the concept of their radicalism, as defined here as actions against the established system to reform the society, is not very different from radicalism in reality. Similar radicalism has existed in the real world as well, for example radicalism in Great Britain in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century onwards (Burgess and Festenstein 2007). Neither of the groups, however, have a clear insight of the consequences of the result for which they wish, or at least it is not greatly discussed in the novel. Their aspirations are more coloured with hatred and fear than logical thinking. The groups are treated in the book as close-criminal formations that are under constant surveillance by both the police and the Breach. They are politically radical in power, but also in their connections: it is hinted that the groups have connections and allies in the politicians, but it is also clearly mentioned that at least one of the groups certainly does in Beszel: a politician called Major Yorj Syedr, the leader of the National Bloc. His character is described as the bully in the political circles (2011, 71–72). He is in the Oversight committee and has connections with the True Citizens, a nationalist group in Beszel. The depiction of the nationalists in Beszel takes the reference to new Nazis a bit further as they are described as “In leather, denim, one despite the cold in a muscle top his physiology deserved... bodybuilder, several men with cropped hair...” (2011, 121) While Borlú attempts to question the men about the murder of the young woman, lawyer Harkad Gosz arrives at the scene after one of the members called him to notify him about inspector Borlú’s arrival. Borlú mentions that Syedr is part of the problem as Gosz intervenes. Syedr is the leader of a political party that is closely connected with nationalists, his agenda is the national weaknesses that he wishes to eliminate (2011, 69). Most of all, their interest is in the removal

of the immigration camps that lie in crosshatched areas, which are no man land parts in the city. It is explained that because the border control is severe, the immigrants arrive to the shore and whichever border control was there to greet them, Beszel's or Ul Qoma's, that city was the city in which they legally are. It is hinted that Ul Qoma is the preferred place to stay rather than Beszel (2011, 69). Beszel in that sense mirror more those countries with older infrastructure and perhaps harsher living conditions, whereas Ul Qoma mirrors more modern countries with less social issues. However, the references are few and the conclusions come from innuendoes.

To conclude this section, it is rather clear that the power structure is diverse and conflicting. The groups that have the least amount of power, or who are actively working against those who have the most political or physical power, are in a constant interaction with the other power constructions. The novel depicts struggle on several levels. Firstly, there is struggle for independence between the cities. Secondly, there is struggle or wish for independence when it comes to the Breach. Thirdly, there are those who instead of wishing for independence strive to unify the cities, creating tension with the groups who wish to separate the cities permanently. Finally, there is power struggle amongst those who already have it. Power appears to be an elusive concept, as the depiction of politics describes different parties trying to balance the power so that the chaos could be averted, whilst still trying to preserve what is already theirs. This contest for power is not that dissimilar from reality. According to the concept of cognitive estrangement, the text should have an ability to have a rationalist mind-set that is nevertheless estranged from the reality of the now. In *The City and the City* this appears to be true. If the narrative weird element of the aligning cities is not seen as a physical fact but a metaphor for any political feud about borders, the novel is in an active discussion with the real even if it does not discuss any specific conflict of today. The novel is capable of mirroring the real world, even if the mirror is the genre of New Weird, and it is not likely similar circumstances would develop in any near future in this world. Hence the novel does have cognitive estrangement, at least according to Suvin's terms and therefore at least partly aligns with the theory that it is possible

to analyse fantasy in a meaningful way from the Marxist point of view. In addition, it is rather clear that the novel is in a debate with the real world and has plenty of critique instead of stating issues and not offering solutions. As mentioned earlier Suvin's suggestion was that the effect of cognitive estrangement was a result of an author who wished to mirror the reality through settings that have rational features even though these may not be possible in the reality at the moment, and that by the description of reality the author wished to create an active discussion to effect a change on the issues mirrored (1980, 10). These terms appear to be filled in Miéville's work. The novel is in discussion with the real and has a critical tone to both subgroups striving to unbalance what the Breach is trying to keep from destruction. It is not far from the truth to claim that similar situations appear in the world of today, where countries battle for borders and desperate parties wish to keep the peace, or soldiers guard the border to keep the balance.

### 3.2.2 Social change in *Embassytown*

As mentioned earlier, the minor groups of power are best represented by the radical activity in *Embassytown*. The capitalist theme that can be read in the novel leads to the collapse of the social order in the society of Embassytown, as the capital, the language, turns into a corrupted means of addiction and a form of mental slavery for the species of Ariekei. Most of the species become addicts to the language, almost resembling involuntary greed for the corrupted capital, but some individuals of the species decide to try and fight the addiction that the language causes. The novel in this sense describes a situation where redistribution of power is required by the powerless in the society, as the powerful who have the power of distributing the capital of language are the source of the corruption in the society. Hence the powerless in the novel are rearranged in relation to capital, as they rebel against the established society after the corrupted language infects the society.

The humans need the technology of the Hosts to survive in the planet. Interestingly the products that humans require in order to survive on the planet of Arieka are produced in the countryside.

In the farmlands, huge flocks of biorigging spawned in irregular harvests. Foods and tech came from those stretches by biotic ways. Addiction was chemical: there was a slow stream of it from the city to the kraals and the rural Ariekei. They began to neglect their charges and come to the city, for the sound they suddenly needed without ever having heard. Their deserted manors grew sick, wheezing and hungry. Herds of rigged equipment, medical tech and building tools, girdered and rhino-sized spinners of protein and polymer foundations, went feral. (2012, 224)

The biorigged products that the Ariekei produce and sell to the humans are also living creatures, which makes the actual produce the innocent victims of the drug war that takes place between the Ariekei and humans. The countryside is the area where biorigged creatures are manufactured and kept alive and when the war of corrupted language begins, the victims are not only the two species in the war but the creatures that were the tools of survival until then. This process can be analysed from a Marxist perspective by using Marx's terms. Val Burris argues in his article "Reification: A Marxist Perspective" that:

In Marx's theory, the concept of reification specifies the dialectical relationship between social existence and social consciousness – that is, between objective social relations and the subjective apprehension of those relations – in a society dominated by commodity production. It describes a situation of isolated individual producers whose relation to one another is indirect and realized only through the mediation of things (the circulation of commodities). (1988, 3)

The human society is dominated by the production of the biorigged products, because they need them to survive. The alien species are required to trade these products for language capital, the lies that the humans are able to speak. However, the system is reversed when the capitalist language system is corrupted and the alien species turn into addicts. As the narcotic species is no longer capable of producing commodities for humans, the humans in turn must continue produce new drug language to the Ariekei in order to prevent the total destruction of both societies, as the Ariekei are violent in their despair. Hence the humans in turn must continue producing the commodity of language in order to survive. The political discussion in this sense is very effective.

The description of the Ariekei that have been addicts for some time is very similar to a depiction of any addict of narcotic substances. They are described as on the brink of starvation, waiting for the next sentence, their next hit of the language drug. Their dead bodies are scattered on the streets surrounded by dying buildings that are also biorigged. They are aggressive and violently try to search for EzRa's language (2012, 224). The addict Ariekei are given a new species name, the Oratees, the junkies (2012, 194). The Ariekei take come from the countryside either turn into similar addict Oratees, or react in a different way. In addition to the ongoing drug war there will be a civil war amongst the Ariekei. The ones that react in the most radical way rip off their fanwings that they use for hearing. "They were without fanwings. They had only stumps, flesh rags" (2012, 238). These fanwingless individuals of the Ariekei species begin to slaughter their weak addict counterparts mercilessly in order to cure the planet of the disease and to reverse the society in a very radical manner. Radicalism in this instance is not seen as having a positive effect on the society, because it is fuelled by rage and violence and it would lead into a total destruction of the society and change the essence of what the Ariekei are: language. The process of removing the fanwings essentially changes what the species is: the Ariekei are a species whose lives revolve around language and the eventual inability to speak or hear without the language changes them into directionless and aggressive beings and essentially would finally lead to the death of the whole species. It is rather clear that humans, and the capitalist system that they uphold, are the factors that have started the developments that have these drastic consequences.

However, there is possible for social change presented in the novel. There is a group of Ariekei that have not yet turned into Oratee, and are hiding from their murderous peers in order to try to control their addiction. Avice works with a few of the Ariekei that are addicts to the EzRa's language but still understand their addiction and try to control it by managing their intakes of the language. They wish to change the current system and to reform it completely, and thus can be identified as

radicals. These radicals, however, are more constructive and understand that in order for the species to survive the language war and to reform the society, they would need to evolve:

They resented their new druggy craving and their newer inability to disobey. This conclave could hardly be unique in that. But it dovetailed with what they had always wanted to achieve: their longtime striving for lies, to make Language mean what they wanted. That older desire seemed to make them execrate their new condition even more than other conscious Ariekei. (2012, 304)

These Ariekei have the conscious aim of changing the essence of their species to claim the power to themselves, become powerful instead of powerless. The human species in the novel is powerful only for being able to lie. This idea of changing the society, the whole social order and essentially the species so that the power would be theirs to control and the system of exchanging products for the capital of language into a wholly new order of power, seems very socialist in its essence. This whole process that the novel efficiently describes is in a rather obvious discourse with the real world as well, since the process of a capitalist society in midst of socialist upheaval is not strange or new. Moreover, this conversation is not only critical but also has a solution and a result. Instead of a depiction of a society that struggles in a power system that is corrupted, the novel is tale of the situation where power is distributed unevenly and the change in that situation. The change is not necessarily better, as the new society is left as is and the story does not tell what will happen in future. The main point is, however, that the beginning was worse than the fresh start that resulted from the fall of the old order. What the novel essentially is able to manage is a discussion of similar change in a society with means of fantastical elements and thus makes the reader think the social order and the system without realising at first that this is the discussion the novel is having with the reader. A fantastic novel is able to discuss a capitalist system such as the one in the novel from a fresh perspective. Firstly, the causes for the reformation of the social system are the human species and their politics. This highlights the fact that the issue of similar society constructions is human, even though the other party in the novel is estranging as it is alien. Secondly, the capitalist system in the novel mirror real systems, because the basic concept is the same. Commodities are produced and traded for capital and the producers of

the commodities are enslaved by their position. Thus the novel simultaneously estranges the reader and reminds from the existing formations of society and hence is effective in its political critique.

### 3.2.3 Rebellion in *Kraken*

As discussed earlier, *Kraken* as well has a main system of power that dominates over the systems with less power in the narrative society. However, in *Kraken* the powerful established system is not aggressive in the same sense as it is in the other two novels. The status quo is the society that reflects the society in the real. The city is London, and the main power system supposedly similar than in the real world, at least it is not contested in the novel. The representations of the system in the background are few. The novel concentrates on the systems that have magical elements and hence reflect the real from a different perspective. The underworld, on the other hand, is pursuing power of the powerful and has its own circles of power as well. Power in *Kraken* is more difficult to pin down and define than in *Embassytown* and *The City and the City*, but the elements of power do evoke conversational elements when compared to the real world.

The magical society, which could be defined as the subgroups compared to the main society that mostly reflects reality, has multiple separate groups that have their own aspirations. There are oracles called Londonmancers, who predict the future from the guts of London. In the novel the city is a living creature, only seen as such by the Londonmancers, who with the help of an angle grinder and a crowbar removes a piece of pavement and reveals the innards of the city (2011, 186). In this instance the city is a living creature in a sense, as the operation causes the city to bleed (2011, 186). There is the criminal leader Tattoo, who is in actuality the soul of a criminal mastermind captured on the skin of a man's back as a speaking tattoo (2011, 70). Tattoo, like every other party in the novel, searches for the missing giant squid, which Billy had preserved at the museum before it disappeared. Tattoo searches for the Kraken out of the fear of something trying to shake his grasp of power. His objectives are hence not ideological in the sense that he would like to reform the current society.

Rather he is more afraid that someone would become more powerful than he is. In the subgroups Tattoo's community may be most powerful, as he is uncontested by other criminal groups as long as his old enemy Grisamentum is dead. Hence Tattoo's aim is to strongly preserve his current status as the powerful and violently attack those who as the powerless, compared to him, defy him. Grisamentum seemingly died (2011, 109), but later it is revealed that Grisamentum is living as ink, communicating through written language. Again, similarly to *Embassytown*, language and communication takes a centre stage in Miéville's work, and will be discussed later.

Power is not merely represented in the criminal circles, but religion has its part in the novel as well. The belief in the giant squids is very important to the Congregation of God Kraken. They regard the creatures as their gods and the search for the missing squid is a search for their missing god. The power of religion is well explained in the novel:

Suddenly, ever since something or other, everyone agrees the end's in sight. Nothing unusual in that, you might say, and you'd be right except that I do mean *everyone*. That has... ramifications for you. You need to be with power. Let me tell you. We are the Congregation of God Kraken. And it is our time. (2011, 96)

The religious group of Krakenists, Tattoo and his league, as well as the police, are all searching for the missing squid, an impartial tool of power. They all believe that the disappearance of the squid has something to do with the balance of power, and who ever found the beast first, would somehow be ahead of others in the upcoming apocalypse. The discussion of power and the careful balance of the society in the novel is greatly motivated by greed and fear of losing the power over others that the parties already possess.

What is possibly the most interesting aspect of political conversation in the novel is the depiction of the familiars, the paid workforce for those who have magical abilities. The concept is explained in the novels as such:

“What was that squirrel?” Billy said. “Freelancer,” Dane said. “What? Freelance what?” “Familiar.” *Familiar*. “Don't look like that. Familiar. Don't act like you've never heard of one.” Billy thought of black cats. “Where is it now?” “I don't know, I don't want to know. It did what I paid it for.” Dane did not look at him. “Job done. So it's gone.”

“What did you pay it?” “I paid it nuts, Billy. What would you think I’d pay a squirrel?”  
 . . . Magic animals got paid in something, nuts or something. (2011, 95)

The familiars are simply paid commission for a job, which means that as a working class their rights are minimal. Wati, the spirit that leads the familiars in their aim to reform the system in which they work, is a rebel statue, made by a rebel. It has never been a person himself. It is explained in the novel that he is “carved by a rebel, that resentment flowing through the fingers and the chisel and defining it” (2011, 142) or “they watched each other (the rebel and the statue). Either Wati or his maker learnt by example” (2011, 143), which is why its whole purpose is to rebel against established systems. Wati the statue “led the first-ever strike in the afterlife” (2011, 143), which led to the deaths of many souls of humans and gods. The result is a rather strange order of society in the afterlife.

It must have been a shock for succeeding generations of highborn Egyptian dead. To wake in a strange fogged underworld scandalously off-message. The rituals of posthumous hierarchy to which their corpses had been piously subjected turned out to be antique, overthrown mummery. They and the worker-statue-spirit household they had had made to come with them were met by disrespectful representatives of the new shabti nation. Their own figurines swiftly recruited to the polity of the shadeland. The human dead were told, *If you work, you may eat*. (2011, 143)

The passage highlights the order of the new power system in the afterlife after the rebellion. In time however, “immigration to that afterland slows and ceases” and slowly “the shabti and those human souls who made their peace with the rough democracy of shabti deadland farmers fade” (2011, 144) without much trouble. Wati, however, is not happy with the outcome and will travel from the afterland back to the living. His whole being is about the rebellion, ongoing fight, not able to be satisfied with an almost democracy. “He saw orders given and received, and it fired him up again” (2011, 145). Wati is in essence the spirit of socialism, fighting against any society that is based on reification and commodification. Wati organises magical beings, tools and other elements to fight for their rights against humans, who use them for their own purposes. His rage helps him succeed in his missions and “*quids pro quo* were demanded and often won. Minimums in recompense, in energy, specie, kind or something. Magicians, anxious at the unprecedented rebellions, agreed” (2011, 145). More importantly, it is said that

. . .the New Unionism took London and changed it, and inspired Wati in his unseen side of the city. In their dolls and toby jugs, he learned from and collaborated with Tillett and Mann and Miss Eleanor Marx. With a fervour that resonated hard in the strange parts of the city, the hidden layers, Wati declared the formation of the UMA, the Union of Magicked Assistants. (2011, 146)

In the fight described in *Kraken* the capitalists are the human magicians and the workforce in rebellion are the familiars, the assistants. Wati's mission is to organise them and demand change in the system. Power in this discussion bears similarities to *Embassytown* as the capitalist features are apparent.

In the framework of Marxist literary research, the novel addresses the problems of power distribution into powerful and powerless. It also references capitalism and socialism in many ways. The events described in the novel, even though the participants are magical creatures, animals, statues and magicians, have the same structure as any rebellion for the rights of the working class. The novel even addresses the socialist thinkers such as Eleanor Marx, mentioned in the quote above. Hence it would not be sensible to argue that, because of these magical elements and participants in the rebellion who could never exist in our world, the discussion is somehow less a discussion about the power distribution or structure of the society. More so, it is rather more sensible to agree with the idea that *everything can be political* and in this instance, a particularly close investigation of themes is not even needed, as the reference is rather apparent and clear.

### 3.3 Tools and occurrences

Power is often wielded through tools of some description. What is meant by tools in this thesis are all the material or abstract instances of concepts or processes that are used directly or indirectly to strengthen or weaken the position of the powerful or the powerless. Donham argues that tools of power may be described as productive powers, or forces of production. They are anything that are used in productive interaction with nature. Instances of such can be found from the novels, such as the biorigged products that are produced as commodities that are exchanged for lies in *Embassytown*. Donham says that these productive powers are not merely tools, however, but more abstract such as

“human skills, productive knowledge, and even technical aspects of cooperation in the labor process, all of these being intentionally used to produce” (1991, 59). Power is a force that comes from within people, and is wielded through tools that are used in order to produce a result, usually with a political or similar agenda. Instances that can be classified as aids or utilities of power are discussed.

Capitalism is a mode of production that creates socio-economic and ecological problems (Milne 1996, 16). In a capitalist system, money is often the commodity that could be defined as a tool of power, as it is exchanged for services or products. James Fulcher argues that money, especially in industrial capitalism, is capital money when it is used to produce more money (2004, 14). In the novels, however, money has very little role in all three novels. Instead, other forms that are used as capital are introduced, such as language in *Embassytown*. In *Kraken* the familiars are paid with money, but the rest of the capital in *Kraken* is very much power driven and less economic. *The City and the City*, however, revolves more around political power than anything else. The discussion about tools and occurrences of power in all three novels enlightens the actual usage and the nature of power further.

### 3.3.1 Faith as a tool of power

The novel's depiction of power struggles concentrates on the friction between its different social groups. When it comes to tools and occurrences of power, this formation of the society is in the centre stage, as all power derives from the system.

A specific occurrence of power is the element of narrative or belief. The belief in Orciny, which is the debated third city between the two established cities, is used to have an effect on others: “When the old commune split, it didn’t split into two, it split into three. Orciny’s the secret city. It runs things” (2011, 61) Belief in this sense is a tool of power. Religion as discussed by Lukes carries power as it gives set of rules for other to follow (2005, 133–134). Hence religion, faith or belief are instances of ways of influencing others in a certain way. Not only is the belief for the city used as a

means to affect others, but it is also an issue of political debate. Discussing Orciny is a disputed subject and it mainly exists mainly in folklore (2011, 62). The issue of whether Orciny really exists or not is not important, but the belief in its existence is what creates tensions in the novel. The research that is made by a character called David Bowden to prove the existence of the third city is illegal in both cities (2011, 108). The established society is not willing to support stories of Orciny and belief or non-belief in Orciny is a dispute coloured thus by power. The powerful, the society, supports the view that the faith in Orciny is based in stories. Believing in Orciny is fighting the established society in a way that has forbidden research on the subject. Orciny in the novel appears as a kind of myth or fable, a story within a story, and is not proven to be true. However, it is used in the society to produce the hoped for result. A specific example of this is the corrupted politician, who wants to keep the story of Orciny alive in order to steal artefacts from the archaeological site (2011, 3). Similarly, Bowden's faith in Orciny is so strong that he kills Mahalia for losing faith in it. Bowden wishes the stories of Orciny to be true to redeem his status in the academic world. Because his goals are not met, Bowden's personal faith and struggle from the position of powerless to powerful in the society results in a dispute in which Mahalia is killed. The end result mirrors well any power struggle or fight for a better status in the community. In this case, Mahalia is murdered and the whole society, both of the cities and the Breach, are in a conflict. This feature is very similar to *Kraken* where Vardy's actions were motivated by his loss of faith and desperate need to create such a world where his faith would have more concrete basis and would become true. Discussion around faith, even if it is faith for magical creatures or cities that do not exist, is an issue in the real world as well. Miéville's debate and critique towards religious power is dialogical with the real.

The other party in the novel that has aspirations for a more powerful position is Mikhel Buric, a right-wing politician who conspires with an American corporation to convince Mahalia, with the aid of the narrative of Orciny, to steal artefacts and smuggle them to a part of the city from where

Buric and his companions were able to fetch them (2011, 338). Buric sells the artefacts to an American company for scientific reasons, explaining that

I've spent years running this place. I've kept the unifs in line I've been getting *business for Beszel*, I've been taking their damned gewgaws out from *under Ul Qoman noses*, and what do you do? You gutless Breach? You protect Ul Qoma. . . .There's only one city, and if it weren't for the superstition and cowardice of the populace, kept in place by you goddamned *Breach*, we'd all know there was only one city. And *that city is called Beszel*. (2011, 339)

Buric's speech defines the political struggle between the two cities are. The narrative of Orciny has merely been a tool to create the discussion of the unification of the two cities and, of course, to benefit Buric financially. Capital in the form of money is a driving force behind Buric's actions, and hence has an effect on the events in the story. Even though money does have a part as a tool that is a motivator for Buric's actions, it does not have a part in Mahalia's or Bowden's, nor in Borlú's actions. Faith and the narrative of the faith and the city has the centre stage. In Borlú's case however, his motivation is merely his occupation and hence his need to find the truth. Borlú's search for truth comes to a conclusion as he becomes an avatar for the Breach, because he then sees things from the other side.

Faith, and capital to some extent, are used by individuals and organisations in the novels to change the way power is organised in the society. According to Lukes nondecision-making power is

“a means by which demands for change in the existing allocations of benefits and privileges in the community can be suffocated before they are even voiced; or kept covert; or killed before they gain access to the relevant decision-making arena; or, failing all these things, maimed or destroyed in the decision-implementing stage of the policy process.”<sup>9</sup> (2005, 22–23)

Decision-making here refers to ability to decide on a change (2005, 17–18). In the novel the non-decision of the faith in Orciny and the aim of Bowden to change the society to believe in Orciny, is finally killed by decision-making power of the established society. In this case, the result can be thought as positive, as Bowden's intentions did not include a greater good for the society. In addition,

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<sup>9</sup> Lukes quotes Bachrach and Baratz. 1970. *Power and Poverty: Theory and Practice*. New York: Oxford University Press. pp. 44

the non-decision of the groups discussed earlier that wish for the unification or separation of the two cities is ended by the decision-making power of the established society and the Breach, as the cities remain as they are.

### 3.3.2 Language

Language is in the main focus in *Embassytown*. Language in the novel can be seen as a tool of power because it is used in the society as capital to exchange to products made by the Ariekei. The corruption of language capital turns it into a drug that enables people to have power over each other and the other species, as well. The society is based in the exchange of language in two ways: the humans create new expressions of language, similes and metaphors, for the Hosts, who cannot speak anything they have not witnessed. Thus humans help the Hosts think in new ways, but limited in the ways the humans create new language. On the other hand, humans intentionally lie for the enjoyment of the alien species, who are unable to lie, as they can only speak what they have seen or what exists. Lies keep humans necessary to the Hosts and can be thus exchanged for protective products that the Hosts are able to produce. The process of creating more language and exchanging it for the purposes of the human beings and returning back to the starting point again formed the basis for the two societies in the planet: human and alien. However, when greed and political agenda corrupts the language, the balance is overthrown and creating more and more of language capital destroys the system. The Hosts crave more and more of the language and become incapable of producing anything, as they become addicts. Hence the tool of language fails in its purpose of producing a desired result, as the power that is behind it becomes corrupted. The idea that this specific tool, very much related to money, capital, in the novel, is the factor that destroys the old formation of society and in the end, creates a new one, is the very issue that mirrors capitalist system changed by socialist endeavours.

A specific tool of power in language in *Embassytown* is the act of lying. The ability to lie is what makes humans to the Ariekei worth of protecting. Lying is a part of the capital in the novel and

it is protected by those who have it, the human population. They are afraid that the Hosts will learn to lie, thus becoming the decision-making power. Because of this the humans aim to suffocate the evolution of Hosts so that the capital would be protected and only limited for the use of humans, which implies non-decision. The two species arrange festivals of lies, where humans lie for the enjoyment of the Hosts. In spite of trying to lie the Hosts regularly fail in the act of producing lies. The first time a Host is able to lie, it creates mixed reactions in the audience in the festival (2012, 150–151). The danger that lies in the Hosts learning to lie is explained by Scile to his wife Avice (2012, 116). Scile says that

But it's no surprise most of *them* would want to meet a simile. You help them think. Someone with reverence for Language would love that. But who'd want to lie? A punk, is who. Avice, listen. There are fans, and there are liars. And only Surl Tesc-echer and its friends are both. (2012, 162 orig. italics)

The Host Surl Tesc-echer, who learned to lie, is a radical individual who learned to turn the tool of power, language, around and use it itself. It thus becomes a threat to the established capitalist system that is based on the fact that humans are the only source of that capital. The radical individual is eliminated to prevent decision-making effect that would change the society (2012, 182). If the society would change in this manner, the powerful party of the Ambassadors, especially, would be endangered: “It was they and the other Ambassadors who would, in closed session, decide what had happened, and what would happen now. They made law“ (2012, 110). However, the attempt to suffocate the decision of changing the society as it is in the beginning is unsuccessful. The capital becomes corrupted which leads to humans attempting to produce more and more of new language to uphold the system. The Hosts, however, learn to adapt and wean themselves off the language drug that enslaved them to humans. The Hosts become able to control their needs and they become powerful in the sense that they learn to use the language similarly to the humans. This leads to the end of the old capitalist system and creates a new one. The novel ends in the possibility of new society, but it is still unformed and brand new. It is said that the future is unknown and it is to be seen how Embassytown will develop (2012, 405). The discussion of the novel shows that the society in

*Embassytown* is defined by the capitalist system it upholds. It can be argued that this discussion mirrors capitalism in reality as well and has the same principles. Because the novel ends in the formation of a new society, and more importantly, breakdown of the old capitalist system, it critiques the existence of capitalist societies well. It is thus in Miéville's terms political in a dialogical way and adds fresh perspective because it estranges the reader. It is clear Marxist analysis is possible on these issues and Miéville's discussion of capitalism has a strong socialist undertone.

### 3.3.3 Faith in god Kraken

*Kraken* is similar to *Embassytown* regarding language as a tool of power. Language in *Kraken* carries a power element especially in its communicative power. For example, Grisamentum has left his body after an illness and lives as ink. When his companion writes with that ink, the consciousness of Grisamentum is transferred to the paper and his thoughts are thus expressed (2011, 402). Grisamentum as a living ink leads the discussion to the object of the squid. The squid is the object of power that everyone in the novel desires and for which they search. The squid represents power, but the power of it does not represent same things to everyone. Grisamentum's purpose is to find Kraken and mix his ink with the ink that he already exists in, so that it would gain the magical powers everyone believes the deceased squid must possess. Tattoo wishes to find the squid so that no one else can have its power and thus to strengthen his position in the underworld, and the Krakenists wish to find it to protect it and the faith that revolves around the squids.

Not only is the squid a central instance of power in *Kraken*, but it is also the element that is most debated in the novel, rather reminiscent of power in that sense as well. Where the Congregation of God Kraken believe that the squid is their god, Tattoo believes there is imminent power that must be gained. However, Billy realises that the power that Kraken has or will give to its capturer, is all imaginary and therefore given to it by the people. Billy argues that since the squid has died and he has preserved it, he is its creator and therefore its magical powers do not exist. Rather they are in the

minds of the people searching for it (2011, 460–461). The squid thus as a tool of power is a symbol of a system that is based on an agreement that everyone follows. In this sense the discussion revolves around religious faith (Lukes 2005, 132–133).

Faith in *Kraken* as well as in *The City and the City* has negative sides as a tool of power. A character called Vardy is in the novel a representation of faith that is harmful. He, having lost his faith in god Kraken in the past, wanted to erase evolution and start again, so that his faith would be based on more true facts than mere beliefs. Faith in the novel revolves around a magical creature, the giant squid, instead of a well-established religion of the real world. The discussion is thus created around a fictional religion, but it still able to mirror the real, as the religion of the Kraken has similarities with any religion of the real world. The Congregation of the God Kraken has a church, sacred literature and a head priest, Teuthex (2011, 88–94). “The flavour of the sect was vicarly, noncharismatic, an Anglo-Catholicism of mollusc-worship” (2011, 94). Hence where the religion does bear similarities to the religions in the real, it is based on a magical creature and thus is estranged from the real.

The debate that the novel presents is how the element of power and the tools for it are derived from the people, the people who give the power to an object and then for which they strive. As referred to previously, Donham argues that power comes from within people and is in their capacity (1991, 59). Power in *Kraken* is exactly that: power is given to Kraken by the society of people who believe in that power. Over that power the society fights, and finally a small-scale rebellion takes place. In the process the power is contested and challenged, which again refers to decision-making power. Finally the occurrence of power, the tool that squid represents, is stripped of the power that came from within the society and results in a change. However, the change that takes place does not change the established society that resembles reality the most. What is changed is the underworld society as those who wanted to strengthen their position as the powerful, Tattoo and Grisamentum for instance, fail. The society is left with a better distribution of power in the sense that the dominating parties are

killed. As argued by Lukes “power as domination is the ability to constrain the choices of others, coercing them or securing their compliance, by impeding them from living as their own nature and judgement dictate” (2005, 85). These were the intentions of the criminal leaders and their intentions were finally destroyed and the society seemingly left without a dominating power. It could be argued that Miéville creates critique around faith and religious organisations first by depicting a religious society that believe in squids instead of known religions in reality, and secondly by debating the negative sides of faith that in the novel lead to deaths and almost a breakdown of the society in a negative sense. The debate around issues relating to power of the powerful and the discussion on the powerless well reflect reality and comment on real issues.

## 4. Subjectivity

Power does not occur without the people controlled and affected by it. An individual in this section is referred to as a subject that has relationship with the society and in some way influences or is influenced by it. The subject as a part of a system and separated from it will be considered and analysed from the point of view of how individuals exist in the narrative worlds and how do they exist in the ideologies of the worlds. What will be studied is the character of an individual from a point of view of subjectivity within a power construction. The aim is to see whether one person has an effect in a larger concept of systemised power and what kind of power does a subject carry.

The role of a subject in this thesis is discussed, because the role of a subject in a political society is important. Louis Althusser argues in *Lenin, Philosophy and Other Essays* (1984, 44) that there cannot be ideology without subjects. Ideology comes from the subjects and is for the subjects. He clarifies that “*the category of the subject is only constitutive of all ideology insofar as all ideology has the function (which defines it) of ‘constituting’ concrete individuals as subjects*” (1984, 45, original italics). Hence ideology is nothing without subjects, and there are no subjects without ideology. As Jameson argued that everything is political, because every human being is political, similarly Althusser argues that every human being is ideological. Ideology and subjects are thus closely and inseparably intertwined. According to Terry Eagleton (1976, 16–17) ideology means the way people exist in a class-society. This includes all the things that exist in a society, such as values, ideas and everything that are included in basic social functions and thus avert them from true knowledge of the society. Panagiotis Sotiris writes in his essay on Althusser and political subjectivity that Althusser insisted that subject is not the starting point but rather a problem to be tackled, in which sense “the very complexity of the social whole, suggested by his conception of a decentred and overdetermined whole, is the condition of possibility for subject formation” (2014, 398). In addition, he states that all the social relations including ideological and political features, take the form of subjects “with ideological social relations rather than the particular human beings in question being

the causal mechanism” (2014, 398). Hence Sotiris agrees with Althusser that ideology is crucial, but Sotiris highlights that ideology is more crucial in this process as ideology makes subjects of individuals, instead of emphasising the dual relationship between the subject and the ideology. Interestingly Althusser adds to his ideas of subjects and has argued that the difference between a subject and a mass is to be emphasised, as according to him “history really is a ‘process without Subject or Goal(s)’, where the given circumstances in which ‘men’ act as subjects under the determination of social *relations* are the product of the class struggle.” That class struggle acts as *motor* for history, not as a Subject (1984, 139, orig. italics). This means that history is not created by subjects, but class struggle is the key feature that creates history. The novels in question include class struggle to a point, which according to Althusser is a central issue in ideology as well. Class struggle and issues related to power and subjectivity have a common nominator of an individual. As Lukes states:

But three-dimensional power does not and cannot produce one-dimensional man. Power’s third dimension is always focused on particular domains of experience and is never, except in fictional dystopias, more than partially effective. (2005, 150)

And that “men have always found that individuals were full of their own ideas, and that opinions varied as much as tastes” (2005, 151). In this respect the role of an individual is an important part of the analysis of the societies and power formations of the novels.

Darko Suvin has a harsher view of subjectivity in fantasy literature especially. He argues that “the long-range structural crisis of capitalism” (1999–2001, 26) has resulted in fantastic fiction that is popular with marginalised social groups especially. He argues that “subjectivity is being bereft of most private oases (work, family) which used to alleviate subjection and marginalisation: it is now sold like Peter Schlemihl’s shadow. This results in a huge rise of everyday humiliations in shamelessly exploited labour buttressed by sexism and racism. . . . up to a score of extremely dirty wars which openly institute global surveillance and reduce people to data murdering or being murdered, but carefully occult the motives” (1999–2001, 27). Suvin seemingly highlights fantastic fiction with

dystopian features and makes a general statement of modern fantastic fiction based on a marginalised amount of fantastic fiction as the whole. What he argues about subjectivity here is that according to him subjectivity in fantastic fiction is stripped away from basic humanity, which would imply that this image of a subject would not mirror reality effectively. His statement, however, does not effectively discuss fantasy as it is rather strongly coloured by personal preference. What is being omitted is the fact that all texts are political and the value of fantasy is in its ability to estrange the reader while simultaneously creating debate on real issues. In addition, his view does not apply to Miéville's novels either that in fact challenge Suvin's limited view of fantasy. In fact, the main characters in the novels are not without work or family, but they belong in the society in the way that allows them to be compared to regular human beings: Billy works as a curator and has close friendships (2011, 14), Avice is married and works as a floaker (2012, 36) and Borlú is a working policeman with a taste for more superficial relationships with women. (2011, 44–46) The fact that the main characters are as normal when compared to individuals in reality supports the idea that they have a role in the development of the events, but as a part of the society, not as inhuman outsiders with no real connection to the rest of the population.

What is interesting as well is that in all three books the main characters defy authority in some way or other. Billy in *Kraken* will not work with the police when he is asked, (2011, 58) but joins a renegade Dane to investigate the disappearance of the squid. Dane represents the religion, but is on his own, christlike mission to find his missing god (2011, 120–122). Dane, in fact, is much more active in the events of the story than Billy is. Nevertheless, it is Billy who is able to influence the events to reach a conclusion, while Dane dies trying to save his god. Avice in *Embassytown* has had a fallout with an Ambassador and is outside the powerful system. She chooses to join the underground individuals who join the Ariekei who want to save both humans and Ariekei from destruction (2012, 240–242). Inspector Borlú in *The City & the City* will not be influenced by corruption and risks his own life by investigating the murder, against the politicians who want to dismiss the investigation

(2011, 83). The heroes in the books are an interesting factor as they do not represent a classic hero, unselfishly fighting against monsters that threaten the system. They are very regular human beings with their needs, skills and shortcomings, which in essence resembles Lukács's definition of a world-historical individuals, as mentioned earlier. These individuals, according to Lukács, concentrate events into motives for their actions and in this way influence and guide others (1981, 45–46). The heroes in these novels as well adapt to the events and have best intentions in guiding others to a solution to the crisis. In this way they are strongly part of the events rather than observing the issues from the outside.

In the analysis it can be seen that the individuals work as part of the societies, but are able to see the problems from different perspectives. In this way they mirror the issues in a clearer way than they would if they were integral part of the groups and thus part of the issues. Similarly, it can be argued that the individuals, mainly the main characters or characters without heroic qualities emphasise Althusser's arguments of ideology, as the relationship between an ideology and a subject is easy to see in the characters. Individuals in the novels works as individual subjects, but they also belong to the society as a mass.

#### 4.1 Subject in a power system

As Althusser argued, a subject is a realisation of ideology and ideology is a realisation of the subject. This notion is interesting in regards to Miéville's books as well. The individuals in the books are subjects of the ideologies in the novels naturally, as there are no ideologies without subjects and no subjects without ideology. This relationship is closely connected to the political debate that the novels are able to have. The specific role of the subjects in the societies in the novels has plenty to do with the distribution of power itself. This is because the subjects mirror the power system, since power is an ideology as well as religion, state or any other belief system. This ideology could not exist without

the subject which is why the relationship between subjects and ideology need to be studied and taken into account.

The subjects in the books are best studied in the main characters, or the heroes. Firstly, Borlú in *The City and the City* is a subject in the ideology of the society in the novel. He is a part of it even though he does not necessarily represent the superstructure in a way that the politicians in the novels may. His position as an outsider conveys perspective to the events in the novel. Borlú is a lonely character whose human relationships are rather restricted. He has two female friends, but neither are close to him (2011, 46). However, he is an integral part of the society and works closely with others. His closest companion appears to be his sergeant Corwi with whom he is in first name terms (2011, 47). Borlú's character is simultaneously outside of the society, as he does not tend to agree with the established society, and integral part of it as he does not demonstrate any wishes to remove himself from his society. Thus Borlú is able to see issues in his society from the outside and the fact that he does not seem to be politically corrupted like many other characters in the novel, may be a result of his loose relationships with others. His agenda is to find the truth in the case he is investigating and, because he has no distinct human relationships to protect, he is rather free to do so, more even than perhaps his colleague in Ul Qoma, Dhatt, who is married. His position is thus a good way to study the novel from the point of view of a subject. He is an individual in his society and hence must be part of the ideology and ideology must be a part of his character, as Althusser argues. In this respect Borlú's character conveys a picture of the society that discusses its pros and cons. Because he is uncorrupted, the corruption of the others is more clearly visible when compared to Borlú's character. In addition, because he knows the truth of the Breach, and sees the both sides, the fact that the Breach is in many ways separated from the society is more visible in the novel. Borlú is also able to see how the minorities are treated in the society. Hence his character is unbiased in many respects, but he is a character that does attempt to see the both sides of matters as well, or at least the reader is able to see the issues from many respects through his character. In addition, the ideology of power is also

apparent from Borlú, as he does not appear to be in pursuit of more power to himself. If a subject mirrors ideology as well as ideology the subjects, the ideology that Borlú's character would bring forward is a hope for a society where there is balance and less struggle for power in a sense that a strong division between the powerful and the powerless would exist. The struggles that other characters or groups of characters have for the power of money, state or faith are more highlighted since the main character does not belong to any of these groups. Subjectivity in the main character in *The City and the City* is interesting, because Borlú as an individual is separated from everything at the same time as he is part of the society. In a way he is a perfect example of a subject in Althusser's terms, as he is part of the ideology in his society, and ideology is certainly part of him as he is a part of the society, but still his character is able to convey a clear picture of the faults that appear in the society in which he belongs.

Similarly, Avice in *Embassytown* is very similar to Borlú in the respect that she, as well, is not a part of the groups that have most power or wish to have a more powerful position in the society in the novel. Avice is an outsider that is still part of the society, but not in a way that would let her to be engulfed by the ideology. On the contrary, she is able to convey the faults of the society even though she is part of the ideology in the same way as the other characters in the novel. Miéville's ability to mirror the real and discuss real issues in fantastical novels is arguably successful in his depiction of main characters. Because they are integral parts of the society simultaneously as they arguably are separated from it, they are the definition of the relationship between an ideology and a subject. In this manner they fit Lukács's definition of world-historical individuals who are rather shaped by the events than influencing them themselves.

Billy in *Kraken* as well is a part of the society that mostly mirror the real London, but is separated from it in the beginning when he is dragged to the world of magic and religious beliefs. He is not a permanent part of that society either, which results in his position as an outsider as well. Miéville's character depiction thus concentrates in creating the role of an outsider for his main

characters. Because all three novels have main characters that discuss their role as outsiders as well to some degree, it is clear to the reader that they acknowledge their status as separated entities from the society at the same time as they still have to work in the said community. This relationship between a subject and a society is a tool by which the novel mirrors the real. The reader as well is automatically an outsider in the narrative society. The main character is a bridge between the reader and the narrative as they are in a way in the between. This tool enables the cognitive effect to some degree and is part of the reason why the novels are able to mirror the real and create real conversation even though they display ideas and elements that separate the narrative worlds from the real world.

As can be seen from the discussion of the main characters, the events are shaped by the influence of a mass rather than individuals. Where main characters undisputedly have a role in shaping the events and influencing them in the way that make room for the development of the society, the events are not clearly led by them. In this manner the discussion that the novel has is not about the struggles of the individuals, but of the class. Althusser argued that class struggle is a motor for history (1984, 139). In the novels the class struggle of the Hosts in *Embassytown*, familiars and subgroups in *Kraken* and the subgroups in *The City and the City* create history for the new formations of the society that are born from the struggle and the events in which the subjects adapt in the novels. The individuals, or subjects in the societies of the novels, emphasise ideology by being a part of it. A hero that would not be similarly part of the rest of the society might not be able to add critique on the issues in the same manner.

In *Kraken*, as discussed earlier, class struggle is most clearly emphasised in the union of familiars. The references to the history of workers in the narrative world are made as well as explained in Wati's personal history (2011, 144–145). In Althusser's terms *Kraken* critiques the class struggle in magical settings, but while referencing real history. It could be argued that this feature in *Kraken* does align with Althusser's principle. The group of familiars are seen as a mass rather than subjects, the feature that is emphasised by the union that consists of animals rather than human individuals. In

this way the idea by Althusser is applicable in the novel's setting as well. Similar class struggle can be found in *Embassytown* as well, where the Ariekei as yet again nonhuman species search for power from the previous power system. It is thus possible to argue that the history in the novels is not created by subjects, but rather by the class struggle, which will have a great influence in the history and the future to come.

#### 4.2 Heroism

The question of heroism from the point of view of seeing the hero as a subject, or an individual, in China Miéville's three novels is an interesting issue. Firstly, what qualifies the main characters as heroes is their active, even if sometimes resistant, participation in the change that occurs in the novels.

Billy, for example, protests his involvement in the events from the beginning:

“And now you want me to, to go looking stuff up for you? That's it?” “For a starter.” “I do not think so,” Billy said. “I'd rather go home and forget all about whatever's going on.” . . . “No one doubts you'd rather,” Baron said. “But choice, alas, is not given to all of us. Even if you're not interested in it, it's interested in you. Let me just let that stand for a tick.” (2011, 48–49)

The quote emphasises the role of a subject in the novel. Even though the heroes are not particularly interested in the events, the events are interested in the heroes and they are in one way or another swept in the midst of the issues. This is one of the main reasons that enable the main characters to be part of the ideology, as they, willing or not, are made a fixed part of the events.

Miéville's main characters fit the frame of a hero. This is because they have a great influence on changing issues that in the beginning were described as negative and may have changed into something more positive. They also have a great effect on the events in the story and, rather than cowardly running from the problems, they engage with them and decide to stay and hence are shaped by the events. Dane tells Billy in *Kraken* that:

“You've fallen in the middle of a war. I'm not going to bullshit you, I'm not going to tell you you can get your revenge for your mate. . . .It's him who got your friend killed. The best way to ruin his day's to get the god back. Best I can do.” (2011, 121–122)

After this Billy agrees to go with Dane and hence becomes an integral part of the events (2011, 122) Miéville's novels concentrate on character building rather strongly. The main characters come across as regular people with integrity, but normal fears in the face of a demanding situation. Miéville does not describe individuals with inhuman strength or fearlessness, but individuals who are normal people with integrity that is believable, even if rare. Because of this the heroes in the novels could be seen as non-heroes as well as heroes. The main characters in the novels find themselves from situations that they have not chosen, and from which they are in a way outsiders, but still have a major influence on the outcome. This relationship is interesting from the point of view of subjectivity, but also from the point of view of class struggle. There is no chosen leader or absolute power given to a hero. The heroes in the novels act for the change in better, but not to gain from the result. This can be seen from the endings of the novels. Billy simply sips wine and it is said that "Did he have a history to protect? It seemed to him that the streets were no longer starving" (2011, 481) He is not celebrated in any way, actually his actions are not even known in the rest of the society. Only a handful of those who also had their role in the events know that Billy had his heroic moments in the result of the crisis. (2011, 480) Borlú becomes an avatar of the Breach and disappears from the society he used to belong:

So, not ready for that (to go rogue) or the revenge of my new community of bare, extra-city lives, I make my choice of those two nonchoices. My task is changed: not to uphold the law, or another law, but to maintain the skin that keeps the law in place. Two laws in two places, in fact. (2011, 373)

Borlú is not able to say goodbye to his friends because he is in the Breach. He simply appears near them and allows them to see him, to let them know he survived (2011, 372–373). Hence he is not celebrated as a hero, either. Avice leaves the formation of the new society open. Her role in the events is not emphasised (2012, 405).

Avice's role as the heroine in *Embassytown* is as coloured with mixed emotions as are Borlú in *The City and the City* and Billy in *Kraken*. Even though Avice in *Embassytown* does have a role in the change that will take place in the society of the novel, she acts as a part of the group in the story, alongside the rogue Ariekei. In this way it could be argued that the reader is able to have a more

realistic reference of the critique to the issues, since they are not that far from reality. The “world-historical individual” of the novels is a better way to discuss and critique issues that appear in reality than inhuman superheroes might be. This is because the reader can more strongly identify with the individual that is rather shaped by the events and who adapts to them with the strength and abilities of a normal being. It could be argued that in this way the changes to the issues suggested in the novels would appear more possible in reality as well, as they are conducted in the novels by normal human beings. In addition, in real life as well, those who change issues do not possess any inhuman magical powers or capabilities to take a society and change it by themselves. They are regular human beings with determination. If magic, foreign planets and alien species are factors that work as the estrangement effects, the reality that none of the heroes in the novels are heroes from the legends, but merely any individuals that work in the ideology as a subject, and will or will not choose to be a part of the change in the ideology, is the cognitive effect. Hence, heroism is one of the factors in Miéville’s work that allows them to mirror the real and discuss issues that exist in reality as well as in the novel. In addition, it would be unnecessary to argue that a text would not be able to have the mirroring effect, because after all the text is written by an author, who lives in his own surroundings and as a political being will, even if unconsciously, always mirror his reality in his works to some extent. Thus it is easy to argue that the main characters of Miéville’s novels naturally mirror the real despite the magical elements that they do display, because their abilities as human beings are not supernatural when it comes to courage or humanity, but more mirror the real humanity rather well. In Miéville’s novels this fact may be considered a strength, because that factor is one of the things that place his novels farther from escapist literature.

In conclusion, the subjectivity in Miéville’s novels adds to the novels’ engagement with reality. He has chosen to write main characters with the status of an outsider to a degree, which is why they work as blank canvases for the discussion of the issues in their respective societies. The research questions on subjectivity were: 1) how individuals exist in the narrative worlds and how do

they exist in the ideologies of the worlds 2) what is the individual like from a point of view of subjectivity within a power construction, and 3) does one person have an effect in a larger concept of systemised power and what kind of power does a subject carry. In the analysis it can be seen that the individuals work as part of the societies, but are able to see the problems from different perspectives. In this way they mirror the issues in a clearer way than they would if they were integral part of the groups and thus part of the issues. Similarly, it can be argued that the individuals, mainly the main characters or characters without heroic qualities emphasise Althusser's arguments of ideology, as the relationship between an ideology and a subject was easy to see in the characters. Individuals in the novels works as individual subjects, but they also belong to the society as a mass.

## 5. Conclusion

Every text is political. It cannot be avoided, as every human being is necessarily political, hence every author is political as well. It is well established that China Miéville, especially, is a political being and hence his political views, intentionally or unintentionally, are sewn into his novels as well.

The purpose of this study was to examine the three novels by China Miéville, *Kraken*, *Embassytown* and *The City and the City*, from a Marxist point of view to prove that the blind spot, that the Marxist literary theorists have for fantastical literature as a form of text that is able to mirror the real world with its true issues, is a large one. Fantastical literature is changing into something new and old principles that worked as means of disregarding fantasy as a relevant genre from a Marxist point of view have lost their meaning. Modern fantasy novels are able to create debate on issues in reality and instead of merely state their existence, also suggest solutions. While the fantastical literature lacked cognitive estrangement especially if compared to science fiction, the genre evolved and as proven in this thesis, it is possible in fantastical literature, as well. However, it needs to be noted that none of these changes are the sole reason for this research, as it is certainly debatable whether they were valid reasons for the disregard of fantastical literature before the evolution of the genre. Even though Miéville himself often agrees with Suvin in that the fantastical literature before 1960s had more reasons for its disregard, it is still debatable whether the new fantasy is any more significant from a Marxist point of view than the fantasy before the 1960s any less so.

It is clear from the results of this study, is that power and subjectivity are issues that are greatly debated in the novels. The issues with power display class struggle, the status quo versus the minority groups and social circumstances that depict how power is distributed in the societies in the novels. The depiction of subjectivity in the novels presents the main characters as canvases for the critique as they are depicted as partly outsiders in the novels.

What needs to be researched and discussed further is the role of fantasy in Marxist literary research not as a developed genre that is now proven to be as political as any other form of text, but

as a piece of evidence of the blind spot that Marxist literary theory has. In addition, heroism in Miéville's novels especially could prove to be a fruitful subject of research in future. His novels express subjectivity that effectively mirrors the reality and further research on these matters could raise interesting discussion. Subjectivity could be researched further in Miéville's novels as well. The relationship between an individual and a society or subject and a class could result in a fruitful research in the future, as these matters could be researched in a deeper level than was achieved here.

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