

HYBRIDITY AND HETEROTOPIAS IN CHINA MIÉVILLE'S WEIRD WORLD
OF BAS-LAG

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis analyzes China Miéville's imaginary world of Bas-Lag, constructed in his novel series consisting of *Perdido Street Station*, *The Scar* and *The Iron Council*, with an analytic focus on the second and third novels of the series. It analyzes his utilization of the concepts of socio-cultural and biological hybridity and also examines the significance, position and relevance of Foucaultian heterotopias in Miéville's worldbuilding. Miéville uses the concepts of hybridity and heterotopias as essential and characteristic parts of his worldbuilding, and the aim of the thesis is therefore to show how Miéville's Weird variant of worldbuilding uses these concepts, in the context of both the history of the term worldbuilding and its New Weird variant(s), whose existence has been contested.

Keywords: Miéville, World-building, Hybridity, Heterotopias, New Weird.

ÖZ

CHINA MIÉVILLE'İN TUHAF DÜNYASI BAS-LAG'DA HİBRİTLİK VE HETEROTOPYALAR

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Bu tez China Miéville'in *Perdido Street Station*, *The Scar* ve *The Iron Council* dan oluşan roman serisinde kurguladığı Bas-Lag adlı hayali dünyasını serinin ikinci ve üçüncü romanlarına odaklı olarak analiz etmektedir. Miéville sosyo-kültürel ve biyolojik melezlik kavramları ile Foucaultcu bir terim olan heterotopya kavramını kendi dünya inşaatının temel ve karakteristik parçaları olarak kullanır ve bu nedenle tezin amacı, Miéville'in Tuhaf dünya inşası varyantının hem dünya inşası teriminin tarihi hem de varlığı tartışmalı olan Yeni Tuhaf varyant(lar)ı bağlamında bu kavramları nasıl kullandığını göstermektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Miéville, dünya inşası, hibritlik, heterotopyalar, Yeni Tuhaf

To mom.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

...Fantasists, whether they use the ancient archetypes of myth and legend or the younger ones of science and technology, may be talking as seriously as any sociologist - and a good deal more directly - about human life as it is lived, and as it might be lived, and as it ought to be lived. (Le Guin 53)

This thesis analyzes China Miéville's imaginary world of Bas-Lag – constructed in his novel series consisting of *Perdido Street Station*, *The Scar* and *The Iron Council* – with a focus on the second and the third novels of the series. It analyzes his utilization of the concepts of socio-cultural and biological hybridity; it also examines the significance, position and relevance of Foucaultian heterotopias in Miéville's worldbuilding. Miéville uses the concepts of hybridity and heterotopias as essential and characteristic parts of his worldbuilding, and the aim of the thesis is therefore to show how Miéville's "Weird" variant of worldbuilding uses these concepts. in the context of both the history of the term "worldbuilding" and its "New Weird" variant(s) [whose existence has been contested].

This introduction is divided into three main sections. The following paragraphs of the first section introduce and discuss worldbuilding, its centrality to fantasy fiction, and Miéville's worldbuilding in the Bas-Lag trilogy, to which end it also includes an introduction to the world of Bas-Lag. The second section brings the terms heterotopia and hybridity under scrutiny, with respect to their definitions in theory and their uses and interrelations in fantasy worlds, again illustrating these ideas with reference to Miéville's Bas-Lag. Because the focus of the thesis is on Miéville's imaginary world of Bas-Lag, the many and interesting theorisations about hybridity that had developed in postcolonial theories are not going to be pursued directly, and hybridity is largely discussed as a material feature of bodies, places and societies within the imaginary and fantasy world. Although there are (always, with Miéville) political implications to

these hybrid creations and how they are integrated into the plot, these political implications are not the same as those that so concern theorists of postcolonial literature. However, hybridity will take an important place in terms of discussing Bas-Lag's politics and their implications regarding Miéville's own ideas. The third part of the introduction takes us to a brief explanation and introduction to the sub-genres of Weird and New Weird Fiction, explaining in particular the relationship between Fantastic Grotesque, (New) Weird-ism and Miéville's Weird. The chapter ends with a brief outline of the methodology pursued in the examination of these concepts in two novels from Miéville's trilogy.

As will be explained, although *Perdido Street Station* (2000), *The Scar* (2002) and *The Iron Council* (2004) are all set in Bas-Lag, and while there are many places within Bas-Lag presented in these spatially rich novels, the thesis has had to be selective in its main focus and make only a selection of places from the novels to analyze in detail in chapters two and three. The first novel of the trilogy, *Perdido Street Station*, whose world-building is surveyed in this introduction for the sake of background information, has been written about more than the following two, and these later two show both new places and also developments in the places first encountered in that novel, which is why this thesis has chosen to focus more closely on the characteristic Mievilleian world-building features of mainly one place from each of the second and third novels, these characteristic features being the very heterotopias, hybridity and grotesque elements introduced below. While it has been decided to put the novels in different chapters in the thesis for the sake of analytic clarity and direction, this is not to imply that there are any strict ideological and/or thematic borders between the texts, a concept which will be explored through the discussions of the thesis as well.

1.1. Worldbuilding, Miéville and Bas-Lag

The working definition of Worldbuilding taken up by this thesis, is a writer's creation in his or her fiction of a new world, inescapably incorporating elements from the Primary World (the non-fictional world as defined by Tolkien), that may include different settings and time periods. As the discussion below will show, this crucial concept has been variously defined by various scholars with reference to their research aims and to the particular literature they are examining. The definition here has been

designed to capture all the relevant and significant factors involved in the built world and places in Miéville's trilogy and is suitable for this thesis' – and Miéville's – particular focus on hybridity and heterotopias.

From Tolkien to Le Guin, to the likes of Pratchett and Gaiman, fantasy literature as a genre has often been the center of arguments in literary circles in terms of whether the genre or subgenre may be considered canonical or not. Regardless of these perhaps fruitless discussions, it has long been dubbed a literature of escapism (see below), and although this (and the association of fantasy with childishness) was the attitude towards the genre that the late nineteenth and early twentieth century writers felt they had to defend themselves against (Stableford xlvi) this escapist stamp undoubtedly captures an important, perhaps fundamental, feature of the genre, as Tolkien noted in his essay; for fantasy literature entails and is even characterized by extensive worldbuilding that aims - intentionally or unintentionally - to keep the reader in a suspension of disbelief – a term originally coined by Coleridge in his 1817 *Biographia Literaria* – in order to whisk them away from their own consciousness to the author's constructed reality, where they may encounter different levels of a shared experiential, emotional or psychological reality. Indeed, many scholars, going back to Burke, then Coleridge and through to Tolkien and Bettelheim have cogently argued for the beneficial effects of this sort of escapism (Stableford 136).¹ Others have refuted that fantasy is escapism at all, taking a different psychological and symbolic perspective on the genre; Le Guin, for example, in her essay “Why Are Americans Afraid of Dragons?”, puts her thoughts in this way:

...They know that its truth challenges, even threatens, all that is false, all that is phony, unnecessary, and trivial in the life they have let themselves be forced into living. They are afraid of dragons, because they are afraid of freedom. (40)

Her answer to the concurrent question about the “use” of fantasy writing is particularly poignant, too. According to Le Guin, the “truest answer” to this question is “...to give

¹ Stableford notes the arguments of these thinkers as follows: Edmund Burke. *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1757): “mental flexibility and imaginative reach” (136); Tolkien “On Fairy-Stories” (op cit.): “the fundamental and vital psychological effects of [. . .] recovery, escape and consolation” and “an uplifting effect” (xlvi, 136); and Bruno Bettelheim *The Uses of Enchantment* (1976) claims that fantasy stories provide “affirmative ritual” (136).

you pleasure and delight” (38) – in which stance she is going back to Tolkein. Le Guin, then moves on with the following important and original observation about the way in which fantasy worlds offer an escape from the economic world so carefully reproduced in realistic fiction:

The kind of thing you learn from reading about the problems of a hobbit who is trying to drop a magic ring into an imaginary volcano has very little to do with your social status, or material success, or income. Indeed, if there is any relationship, it is a negative one. There is an inverse correlation between fantasy and money. (39)

That is to say that this thesis is investigating worldbuilding in a genre that is fundamentally different - precisely in terms of its created worlds - from non-fantasy fiction. It focuses on Miéville’s *Weird* and on his worldbuilding, through analysis of the places in this world and how it incorporates both other (embedded) heterotopias and hybridity, which, it is claimed, relate the novels to certain *Weird* characteristics.

From its conception to its canonization, from Tolkien’s *Middle Earth* to Le Guin’s *Earthsea*, and finally to the centerpiece of the conversation in this paper, Miéville’s *Bas-Lag*, fantasy literature almost always included worlds different (sometimes vastly, sometimes infinitesimally - and oftentimes in between those extremes) from the one which the readers inhabit. The choices made by the author with regard to these differences direct how the reader and the critic can form a consensus on what kind of worldbuilding takes place in a fantasy novel.

What, though, is the difference between the uses of heterotopias and hybridity in fantasy stories of the past, like Tolkien’s, and in Miéville’s contemporary fantasy novels? What makes the difference between Tolkien’s *Middle Earth* and Miéville’s *Bas Lag*? My argument is that one of the prime differences is the use of heterotopias and hybridity, which in *New Weird* literature these concepts have a much more dominating presence than in the earlier fantasy literature. Before moving on to differences, however, it is imperative to talk about where the concepts mentioned above come from, starting with the term *fantasy worldbuilding*, as it is one of the cornerstones of the discussion in the thesis. Because scholarly discussions of worldbuilding in fantastic fictions are still based on Tolkien’s writings, his explanations and his practice will be referred to extensively in this introduction.

Worldbuilding, like fantasy narratives, has a long history spanning millennia (Stableford xv), and may be numbered among the earliest of recorded literary efforts (the literary evocations of various divine realms in religious and mythological stories are worldbuilding, as too are stories of lost worlds and allegories, such as Plato's Atlantis), outside of satire (*Gulliver's Travels*, for instance), folklore and children's stories (which also grew in literary prominence in Europe in the eighteenth century). Avowedly fantastic worldbuilding appeared in novels, however, mostly from the end of the nineteenth and the start of the twentieth century, at which time it began its exponential growth, to the point where it characterizes perhaps the most popular of genres in writing and other media in our present age.

The distinction between worldbuilding and fantastic worldbuilding that is made in this thesis is related to yet another theme in the critical history of the fantasy genre. The main difference between the terms is that while *fantastic worldbuilding* primarily presents what Mendlesohn defined as "immersive" fantasy stories, where the entire narrative happens in the fantastic world, *worldbuilding* refers to narratives that are or may be what Mendlesohn called "intrusive", where realistic representations of the readers' material world and fantastic worlds intrude upon each other (Stableford 214).² That is, the former are set entirely in an all-encompassing Secondary world, while the latter include both Primary and Secondary worldbuilding. It was Tolkien who coined these much-used terms, first in a lecture (1938) and then in his 1947 essay "On Fairy-Stories" where, as Wolf explains, "He referred to the material, intersubjective world in which we live as the Primary World, and the imaginary worlds created by authors as secondary worlds" (Wolf 23). The Primary World, in this context, refers to the world which we, the readers, recognise as representing that which we inhabit, and secondary worlds, in Wolf's words, are described in the following way:

[. . .] Tolkien termed the making of a secondary world "subcreation", meaning "creating under", since human beings are limited to using the pre-existing concepts found in God's creation, finding new combinations of them that explore the realm of possibilities, many of which do not exist in the Primary World. (23)

² This source is referring to Mendlesohn, Farah. "Towards a Taxonomy of Fantasy." *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts* 13, no. 2 (2002): 173–87.

A question that is relevant to this thesis' investigation arises from this discussion about the Primary World and secondary worlds, and it is related to Wolf's statement that

In order for a world to be "secondary", it must have a distinct border partitioning it from the Primary World, even when it is said to exist somewhere in the Primary World. [...] we find multiverses or parallel universes that contain or are somehow connected to our own; entire galaxies that are separate from our own but still in the same universe; series of planets, which may include Earth among them; Earth itself, but with alternate histories or imaginary time periods... (26)

The question here would be, what degree of difference could make a secondary world into a Primary World of its own? Wolf's assertion is that a world's secondariness depends on the extent to which a place is detached from the Primary World and different from it, and the degree to which its fictional aspects have been developed and built (26), and there are therefore different degrees of secondariness. Further, since the concept of world is itself a worldly one, does this mean that no matter how developed it is, each secondary world is doomed to be secondary to our own? (And then another question arises, what exactly do we mean by "our own" world?)

An example here would be Tolkien's Middle Earth. It is rich both in its sheer vastness and in its use of worldbuilding elements such as language, geography, literature, different races and histories. In fact, one could go as far as saying – subjectively – that it is perhaps the most developed of the secondary worlds created in the 20th century. What ties it to "our world"? Is it the familiar terminology – words such as Earth – or is it other the parallels between it and the "real" world – such as the widespread use of Old English for words and languages that appear to be characteristic of Middle Earth. The place itself takes its name from the Old English word for earth (*midden-erd*, as Tolkien pointed out in a 1956 letter) (Wilton np), which is related to the the later Old Norse name *Midgard* or *Midgardr*, as recorded in the 13th century Eddas. One may wonder whether or not it makes perceptual sense to call such an extensive creation secondary, especially in stories where the reader's own perceived Primary world is nowhere referred to within the text. The question is relevant to the discussions in the thesis, which are going to examine Miéville's Weird worldbuilding and his use of worldbuilding elements (and what they mean). The question also reminds us that the history of imaginary worldbuilding is a vast one that goes from a Platonic distinction between two worlds to a postmodernism-fueled approach that often blurs the lines

between the Primary World and Secondary worlds, constructing one or more worlds that reject any such categorization. It is important to reiterate that the Primary and Secondary worlds are – supposedly –not related in terms of degree, but the words themselves are about the relationships between these worlds, in both Tolkien’s and Wolf’s definitions, and, the very use of such words conveys a sense of hierarchy, therefore, a categorization as this one has inevitable Platonic connotations. Some other scholars have sought to sidestep this covertly hierarchical distinction and claimed that they will simply use the term secondary world for any “invented world that the author has created, one that is fundamentally different from the primary world” – “our planet earth, our recognizable world” --“in some way” (Taylor 9).

While the terms themselves were coined by Tolkien, clear examples of primary-secondary world distinction(s) of literary worldbuilding existed before his time, with the likes of Thomas More’s *Utopia* as an example. *Utopia* exemplifies the earlier “island” Secondary worldbuilding, in which the fact that it is an island is used to justify its separation (and therefore its unknownness by others) from the Primary World. In *Utopia*, More begins his work with written correspondence between himself and other people - such as Peter Gilles - he has met in Europe, about this land, in order to make this world more plausible to the reader. In fact, the book itself is akin to a travel journal, which furthers *Utopia*’s plausibility as a real place. This attitude towards worldbuilding fiction is present in later works such as *Robinson Crusoe*, *Gulliver’s Travels* and even *Lord of the Rings* as well, although Tolkien does not try to make Middle Earth a “real place” in the Primary world, but a world by its own, with its own history, languages, geography and cultures.

While Wolf’s distinction of degree between the secondary and Primary world may seem to be, at least sometimes, irrelevant in an age of the postmodern, New Weird fantasy novel, he justifies his scale of resemblance through the observation that all secondary worlds must resemble the Primary World in some way in order to have the reader relate to them at least partially. What’s more, since the authors themselves are human, their writing and worldbuilding cannot be fully alien and thus incomprehensible to themselves, either. Therefore, it is impossible to achieve an entirely new or different world, because of the limitations of both the author’s and the readers’ human minds and imaginations: the invention cannot be *ab nihilo*, as it were;

and invention is identified by Wolf (33) as a main worldbuilding property.³ The importance of analytical clarity when it comes to the term Worldbuilding is further explored in other works as well. Stefan Ekman and Audrey Isabel Taylor argue that there is a need to further clarify what the term “worldbuilding” means when it is going to be used in a critical discussion of a piece of work:

As common as that term is, it is also problematic, because it has been applied by a wide range of people [...] to a wide range of processes, describing anything from the craft of the creator [...] to the cognitive work carried out by the audience. Sometimes “world-building” is used with a very particular meaning, sometimes it is a vague catch-all (Ekman and Taylor 7).

They follow this by going so far as to clarify even the use of the term “elements” for world-building, stating that these are building-blocks that constitute the imaginary world, and that they can be anything from geographical details to traditions and more (9). The elements this thesis focuses on, for example, are heterotopias and the concept of hybridity. Ekman and Taylor later separate worldbuilding into three kinds: Authorial, Readerly and Critical (10, 11). For the purposes of this thesis, while the concept of worldbuilding will not be confined to their definitions, it is useful to know what Critical Worldbuilding means according to Ekman and Taylor:

Our critical approach to world-building [. . .] focuses on what we have access to through the text: the way in which world elements are presented in a text, their context and various relations, their meaning from a theoretical viewpoint, and so on. World-building, in this sense, is the revealing of the world as the narrative moves along (11).

Other narratological approaches and discourse regarding worldbuilding include those of Possible Worlds Theory and Text World Theory. While these theories are not here discussed with respect to Miéville’s work, they are nevertheless an important contribution to the discourse on worldbuilding, and will therefore be explored briefly in this chapter, in relation to the concept of worldbuilding and its adoption into the field of narratology.

³ This does raise a few questions on its own, starting with thoughts of future AI-fueled worldbuilding, which will not be explored in this thesis but are interesting concepts for future literary and theoretical consideration, nevertheless.

Possible Worlds Theory, as discussed by Ryan and Bell in their introduction to *Possible Worlds Theory and Contemporary Narratology*, was first adapted into literary issues by Thomas Pavel in 1975, with his argument that “in creating a fictional world (whether this world is or isn’t technically a possible world), the literary text imposes its own laws on this world and defines a new horizon of possibilities” (Ryan & Bell, 9). This theory, from a philosophical perspective, postulates multiple worlds in which “things could be different from what they are”. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy exemplifies it as a situation in which one can realize that every possibility they have would “have been part of a single, maximally inclusive, all-encompassing situation, a single world”. They follow this with the declaration that therefore, the actual world in which a person is experiencing the moment they are in is only “one among many possible worlds” (Menzel). This theory, being directly related to the creation of other worlds, can be read alongside Tolkien’s Primary and Secondary worlds, as the concepts of the Actual World and Possible Worlds seemingly mirror the ones Tolkien put forward.

Text-world theory, on the other hand, focuses more on the mental representations of language in human minds:

We construct mental representations, or text-worlds, which enable us to conceptualise and understand every piece of language we encounter. How these text-worlds are formed, their conceptual configuration, and how we as human beings make use of them are the focus of Text World Theory (Gavins 2).

While it is not directly related to worldbuilding, text-world theory, as stated by Gavins, is a discourse framework. Worldbuilding, in the context of this theory, takes place only in the mind, which also brings forward the question of narrative gaps in authorial worldbuilding and how the readers themselves fill in those gaps in the mental world that they construct in accordance with the text. Text-world theory, in this context, allows the author to become self-aware in terms of the way they use language to build their world. Such use of language is also discussed by Gavins: “The world-building elements of a discourse can be seen firstly to set the spatial boundaries of the text-world. They locate the discourse in a particular place, which may be real or imagined, novel or familiar (36). Gavins, then, relates the temporal element of the text-world to the spatial one, saying that there is a close link between our understanding of space

and our understanding of time (37) and highlights the importance of world-building deictics in terms of the receivers'/readers' ability to conceptualize a remote text-world that they are separated from, perhaps by the incomprehensible barrier between Primary and Secondary, Actual or Possible worlds (though Gavins does not mention these two examples specifically). Further studies on Text-World Theory also include a focus on focalisation, which is another important point for both Miéville's work and for worldbuilding in general. For instance, in his paper *Rethinking the Text World Theory: Approach to Focalisation*, Ibrahim focuses on the implications of point of view, particularly a non-human point of view, for the construction of text worlds (Ibrahim 24). Thus, the presence of non-human focalisers in Miéville's work would make Bas-Lag a candidate for a study through this perspective, and while they are not the focal point of this thesis, these two concepts of Possible Worlds and Text-World Theory are important for a narrative-oriented look at worldbuilding, which might be the focus of a further study regarding Miéville's work.

1.1.1. On Bas-Lag

The following discussions in this chapter, and in the thesis as a whole, will regularly refer to Miéville's Bas-Lag, both as examples and as the context for the analysis of places within Bas-Lag that form the topics of chapters two and three. A general survey of this built world is therefore provided here, so that readers may understand the places, people and concepts that will be mentioned.

Bas-Lag is the name of the world where Miéville's novels *Perdido Street Station*, *The Scar*, *The Iron Council* – and also a short story, *Jack* – take place. It is influenced by the steampunk genre (with similar technologies existing in the world) and magic is present, being mostly called *thaumaturgy in the world of the novels*. There are two main continents, called Rohagi and Bered Kai Nev respectively, and other landmasses such as islands - including Gnur Kett, which is known for its reputation as a scholarly place - and Armada, which is a mobile-city-state itself, and is the main setting and heterotopia of *The Scar*.

Some of the species that will be mentioned in this thesis include the Cray (a species that looks like a human-rock lobster hybrid), the Garuda (a race that looks like humanoid birds of prey, who are nomadic in terms of lifestyle), the Grindylow (who

are a race of humanoid fish surrounded by mystery and horror), Humans (with the difference from real humans being that those of Bas-Lag are able to use magic), the Khepri (the race of humanoid beetle-like creatures that Lin belongs to), the Scabmettlers (who are humanoid beings whose blood congeals into a carapace-like structure when they are wounded). The artificially created Remade are not counted as a race, as all races can be Remade. However, some of them are able to free themselves from what they have been made into, while still being considered by the rest of Bas-Lag's population as the other.

1.2. Heterotopias and Hybridity

Having found them to be characteristically significant in Miéville's imaginary world of Bas-Lag, this thesis is going to focus on his use of two main fantastic worldbuilding elements: heterotopias and hybridity. Heterotopia is a concept first elaborated on by Michel Foucault in his 1986 article "Of Other Spaces". Here he explores the concept of heterotopias in relation to utopias:

There are also, probably in every culture, in every civilization, real places – places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society – which are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested and inverted. (Foucault 3)

In short, heterotopias represent spaces that are somehow "other" in terms of their existence, and they are, by definition, inclusive of all "real" sites. They may be – in Fantastic worlds they often are – disturbing and/or incompatible with the rest of the world, while having their own natural places in the world itself. They are, in fact, worlds within worlds. According to Foucault, there are different principles of heterotopias. The first principle is that they exist in every culture and every human group. Within this principle, Foucault identifies the first "category" of heterotopias as being *crisis heterotopias*, which he associates with "primitive societies", finding only a few remnants in twentieth century Western society, giving the examples of the nineteenth-century boarding school and military institutions for young men. He defines crisis heterotopias as

[...] privileged or sacred or forbidden places, reserved for individuals who are, in relation to society and to the human environment in which

they live, in a state of crisis: adolescents, menstruating women, pregnant women, the elderly, etc. (4)

Foucault states that the crisis heterotopias are disappearing and are being replaced with *heterotopias of deviation*, which he defines as "...those in which individuals whose behavior is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm are placed" (5). These are exemplified by prisons, rest homes, psychiatric hospitals and retirement homes.

Foucault's second principle of heterotopias is that they can vary in time, for while all heterotopias should have precise and determined functions within a society, "the same heterotopia, according to the synchrony of the culture in which it occurs, can have one function or another" (5). As an example of this principle, he cites a cemetery, stating that "The cemetery is certainly a place unlike ordinary cultural spaces. It is a space that is however connected with all the sites of the city, state or society or village, etc. [. . . which] has undergone certain changes" including loss of the hierarchy of positioning of tombs, loss of the charnel house, loss of the concept of sanctified land, changes in the types of monuments found within it, and so on (5).

The third principle is that heterotopias juxtapose "in single real place" multiple incompatible places, which is exemplified by the cinema and the garden (6). The fourth principle is that they are "most often" linked to "slices in time" or "heterochronies" (as in cemeteries, again, and museums and libraries) (6), and the fifth one is that they "presuppose a system of opening and closing that both isolates them and makes them penetrable" (7). The last trait of heterotopias is that "they have a function in relation to all the space that remains", and this can be done in two ways: either by the creation of "a space of illusion [. . .] a heterotopia of illusion" (for which Foucault gives the example of brothels), or by the creation of "a space that is other, another real space" (for which he gives the example of "certain" – but not all – colonies), which latter he calls a heterotopia of compensation (9).

Heterotopias hold importance for the fantasy genre in general, where they are found facilitating comradery and/or conflict between different races and cultures as a plot device. One such use of heterotopias in fantasy exists in the Portal-quest fantasy, as mentioned by Marius Conkan in his 2016 article:

Portal-quest fantasy belongs, by definition, to the literature of space and illustrates symbolical migrations of characters from a primary world engulfed by a crisis towards a magical and miraculous secondary world. There are several types of spaces, like eutopian [sic.] and dystopian ones that are part of the texture of these secondary worlds. (Conkan, 250)⁴

In this example, the heterotopia formed is a clash of two different worlds - one Primary, and the other called Secondary, though the Primary world mentioned here is yet another Secondary world in Tolkien's terms - these worlds are stacked on top of each other, accessible often by a portal or a mechanism to a similar end. Thus, a crisis heterotopia is formed, and the protagonist's duty is to resolve the conflict caused by it - the conflict either being metaphorical or literal, including the inner turmoil such a situation can create for the protagonist themselves.

Another example, this time again from Tolkien, would be the haphazard re-alliance formed by the elves and humans in his *Lord of the Rings* novels, during the Third Age of Middle Earth. Due to an external threat - the threat being Mordor - the races of Middle Earth have to come together to defeat evil, and therefore a temporary heterotopia is formed, though this time it is mostly in the form of a rather unwilling alliance rather than one specific place, although in the greater context of Arda⁵ even Middle Earth can count as a heterotopia, as well.

Beyond its importance for the fantasy genre in general, the concept of heterotopias is particularly important for Miéville in his worldbuilding, firstly because the cities of New Crobuzon (in *Perdido Street Station*), Armada (in *The Scar*) and the Iron Council (formed as a deviation heterotopia in *The Iron Council*) are places that are incontestably important to his plot, and also because they themselves consist mainly of heterotopias stuck together – sometimes haphazardly, sometimes seamlessly – to make a hybrid whole. In fact, the world of Bas-Lag, which is the world of this “immersive fantasy trilogy” (Stableford 214, 273, 278), includes more than twenty races, even though there are a few that are only mentioned passingly, which is one of

⁴ The spelling “eutopia” in this quotation is Conkan's reference to Tolkien's suggested notion of fantasy's “eucatastrophes”- their ‘good’ endings, an idea contrasted to that of Aristotelian tragic endings that provoke different sort of ‘healing’ response: catharsis.

⁵ Name of the greater world that includes not only Middle Earth but also others, as mentioned in *The Silmarillion*.

the reasons that make the decision of looking at Bas-Lag through the lens of this thesis more important; these races are not completely separate from each other.

1.2.1 On Hybridity

The word *hybridity* has a somewhat turbulent history. While today it is generally used to refer to a mixture of several different things, the word itself comes from the Latin *hibrida*, the offspring of a female domestic sow and a male wild boar (Stross, 255), and it became more familiar as a term used for the offspring of two botanical (or animal) species.⁶ The concept of cultural hybridity came later, as the world got smaller. As Guignery (2011) puts it in the introductory part to *Hybridity*:

In the Victorian period, when different races were identified with species, but also in the essentialist colonial and national discourses that defended a myth of purity, the concept of hybridity found itself the subject of attacks tarnished with racial and racist connotations. (Guignery, 2)

Guignery then follows this with the twentieth-century connotations of hybridity:

[...] the term hybridity extended beyond the biological and racial framework to embrace linguistic and cultural areas. (2)

This concept of cultural hybridity is particularly important for the analysis of Miéville's work, considering his whole world of Bas-Lag is almost completely made up of hybrids, not only in the biological sense, but also spatial, cultural and social hybrids. This is poignant in terms of Miéville's worldbuilding in these novels, because it seems to be based upon concepts of transition and change.

This cultural hybridity is, furthermore, applicable to more than only culture. According to Stross (1999), cultural hybridity is a metaphorical broadening of the biological definition, and it can be more than a person that blends traits from different cultures. It can be a place, a culture, or even an element of culture. Stross, then, furthers his discussion about hybridity by asking whether the biological concept of hybrid vigour is applicable to cultural hybridity or not. Hybrid vigour is a term that applies when the hybrid creature is more *vigorous*, more capable to grow and hardier, especially in the plant and animal breeding industries (Stross, 257). This term is applicable to cultural

⁶ HYBRID (noun) merriam-webster.com

hybridity in, for example, the way so-called hybrid characters in the novels face unique challenges in life, with regards to the treatment they face from a surrounding purist society. These challenges are usually not like the hardships their parents faced, and thus they are forced to develop in ways that their parents cannot help them with. The socio-cultural challenges they face, which may or may not be larger than those of their parents', are often unique to them as hybrids. In *Perdido Street Station* it is possible to see that the society - especially Isaac's academic surroundings - has an adverse reaction to interracial relationships (which may be seen as hybrid relationships). This is exemplified in the very first chapter of the novel with:

They had never said, *We are lovers*, so they had never had to say, *We will not disclose our relationship to all, we will hide from some*. But it had been clear for months and months that this was the case. Lin had begun to hint, with snide and acid remarks, that Isaac's refusal to declare himself her lover was at best cowardly, at worst bigoted. (*Perdido Street Station*, 14, 15)

Therefore, in the context of New Crobuzon, while hybridity itself is more than welcome in the city, there are still forms of social hybridity that are seen, at worst, as taboo, which is a challenge Lin and Isaac must face.

Stross finally discusses what he calls a cycle of hybridity. "[...] a cycle that goes from 'hybrid' form to 'pure' form, to 'hybrid' form; from relative heterogeneity, to homogeneity, and then back again to heterogeneity" [in the case of Bas-Lag, this cycle is more of a social/political one, rather than biological] (Stross, 265). This, again, is important for the world of Bas-Lag, because there are stark examples of this cycle - in both a hybrid being becoming pure and a pure being becoming a hybrid - throughout all three novels of the series, though the transformations are not only biological, but also social and psychological.

Material and cultural hybridity, along with heterotopias, is a concept of crucial importance in Bas-Lag. Whether it be spatial hybridity (New Crobuzon and Armada being the biggest examples), or biological hybridity (Khepri, for example, are insect-like humanoid beings), or social hybridity (the social intermingling of species), there is an abundance of hybrid lives in Bas-Lag. Gordon (2003) explores this concept for *Perdido Street Station* and makes the following statement regarding the Khepri character, Lin, in the novel:

The hybridity cycle, the process of naming a hybrid into legitimacy, hybrid vigor, and the adaptability of a heterogeneous product, are all illustrated with significant metaphorical force in the character of Lin. (458)

The phrase “naming a hybrid into legitimacy” carries specific importance regarding Miéville’s attitude toward his hybrids, and the statement is also important in terms of the history and the relevance of the word ‘hybrid’ in real life, as discussed with the phrase *cycle of hybridity* explained above. Moving forward with the Khepri example, Lin is the first hybrid character the reader knowingly encounters. Hybridity gains relevance as the story in *Perdido Street Station* progresses. Khepri are described as a race of humanoid beetles whose females are very similar to humans in terms of their bodies, except for their skin - which is red - and who have, in place of humanoid heads, upper parts similar to those of scarab beetles. The males of this species are not hybrids, they are non-humanoid and non-sentient, and are thus not part of this discussion. In being named as a species, the Khepri are “legitimized”, and thus are considered different from mere hybrids or “Remades”⁷, as they are termed in Bas-Lag. Gordon exemplifies Lin’s legitimization as the following:

Lin is transformed by Isaac’s loving perception into someone not only grotesque, but also beautiful. [...] The reader undergoes a similar range of emotions in the descriptions Miéville offers. First, the emphasis on her strangeness as a new thing, a hybrid: [...] disgust. [...] Then, the naming of the hybrid [...] Finally, acceptance: desire (Gordon, 458,459).

Gordon further reiterates the difference between Lin (the Khepri) and a hybrid creature:

A member of an established community in a wider society of equally hybridized species, her position in New Crobuzon is unremarkable: she has been named into a “pure” normativity. Isaac’s acceptance further normalizes her hybrid and grotesque position (Gordon, 459).

However, as Gordon also mentions, for the Remade, “there are no loving eyes to normalize or name them into purity as there are for Lin” (Gordon, 460) and thus, they

⁷ In Bas-Lag novels, the Remade are usually people who went against the New Crobuzon law in some way, and thus were punished by being made into hybrids in different ways such as having a motor put in place instead of legs, having arms surgically stuck to their head, or having their mouth sealed shut, and so on. Further discussion regarding the Remade and their treatment in Bas-Lag will be made in Chapter 2 of this thesis.

are outcasts even in a highly hybridized society. That is, at least in New Crobuzon, a city that is a unique example of spatial hybridity, and yet also one that alienates and punishes its subjects through hybridization as well. This hybridization - or bastardization, as one could also say from the perspective of the punished/the subject- of otherwise pure subjects is yet another part of the cycle of hybridity that is explored in the novels. It is more a part of cultural hybridity, as it is an artificial kind of hybridity, rather than a natural one. The Remade in New Crobuzon are, therefore, stuck in the second part of this cycle; in the terms of Stross they have been made ‘impure’⁸ (258) and they mostly do not possess the power to change that. Within the world of Bas-Lag, discussions regarding the Remade and their hybridity and possible purity become increasingly significant in *The Scar* and *The Iron Council*, both in the plots of the novels, and in their significance to the central arguments of this thesis regarding their place in Miéville’s world.

The hybridity of the city is one of its features that is foregrounded in *Perdido Street Station*, as Mr. Motley, a character Gordon calls “New Crobuzon’s connoisseur of hybridity”, describes:

Perched where two rivers strive to become the sea, where mountains become a plateau [...] New Crobuzon’s architecture moves from the industrial to the residential to the opulent to the slum to the underground to the airborne to the modern to the ancient to the colorful to the drab to the fecund to the barren. (*Perdido Street Station*, 41, in Gordon, 461)

The city’s hybridity is both a plot device for Miéville (with the protagonist, Isaac, trying to make a machine that harnesses “crisis energy”, energy that emerges from transition and changing borders), and a worldbuilding device, considering that New Crobuzon is made up of heterotopias and hybridized people, and is itself one as well. However, New Crobuzon’s presence is not only a positive or interesting one for the characters of Bas-Lag, but also an imposing one. Yagharek, the wingless Garuda⁹ from *Perdido Street Station*, for example, seems to detest the city wholeheartedly:

[...] Faint shouts, here and there the calls of beasts, the obscene clash and pounding from the factories as huge machines rut. Railways trace

⁸ Stross defines purity in this context as being more homogeneous in character, having less internal variation. The word “impure”, therefore, refers to the opposite.

⁹ Garuda area species of enormous flying wild creatures in Bas-Lag.

urban anatomy like protruding veins. [...] sewers riddling the earth like secular sepulchres¹⁰ [sic]...

[...] this great wen, this dust city dreamed up in bone and brick, a conspiracy of industry and violence [...] this badland beyond my ken. (*Perdido Street Station*, 2,5)

Therefore, New Crobuzon is viewed as both “grotesque” and “pure” where hybridity is concerned. It is a whole entity, and yet is comprised of many parts that seemingly protrude out at odd angles, creating the impression both to the characters and the reader that maybe they do not really belong there. Gordon’s discussion on the grotesque gains importance here, because forms of hybridity in New Crobuzon - and in the greater context of Bas-Lag as well - are represented both as grotesque and as beautiful. The example of “beautiful” hybridity was seen through Isaac’s gaze upon Lin, and Gordon (459) procures the following example for his argument of a “grotesque” hybridity:

Some woman [...] killed her baby [...] She’s sitting in court, [...] she can’t believe what’s happened, she just keeps moaning her baby’s name, and the Magister sentences her. [...] Her baby’s arms are going to be grafted to her face. ‘So she doesn’t forget what she did,’ he says. (*Perdido Street Station*, 93)

As Gordon also mentions, this is not to say that Lin is completely beautiful or that the Remade are grotesque to each and every eye. The imagery Miéville produces throughout the novel series shows that both can be either, which is the same for spatial hybridity as well. Lin is beautiful to Isaac, but not to some others. New Crobuzon’s hybrid nature is rather grotesque (in a disturbing way) to Yagharek, but Bellis¹¹ misses it dearly.

This is why analyzing the importance of New Crobuzon in the greater context of Bas-Lag is a necessary first step into understanding Miéville’s worldbuilding in terms of his use of hybridity and heterotopias. However, as this first step has been taken by Joan Gordon with reference to *Perdido Street Station*, this thesis is able to refer to Gordon’s study for information about New Crobuzon, and to use examples from *Perdido Street Station* merely to illustrate these points, while focusing on the

¹⁰ Miéville’s spelling of *sepulchers*.

¹¹ From *The Scar*.

worldbuilding, and hybridity/ and heterotopias in the second and third novels of the series for its original contribution to the critical literature on Miéville's novels.

1.3. The (New) Weird and Miéville's Weird

We are in the epoch of simultaneity: we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed. We are at a moment, I believe, when our experience of the world is less that of a long life developing through time than that of a network that connects points and intersects with its own skein. (Foucault 1)

Out of this crisis of traditional fantastic, the burgeoning sense that there is no stable status quo but a horror underlying the everyday, the global and absolute catastrophe implying poisonous totality, Weird Fiction's revolutionary teratology¹² and oppressive numinous¹³ grows. (*Weird Fiction*, 513)

(New) Weird fiction is essentially heterotopic, in that it relies upon a juxtaposition and intertwining of worlds, as the shared elements underlying the two quotations given above indicate. The intertwining is also, of course, a form of spatial hybridity, showing the conceptual interrelationship between the focuses of this thesis.

Studies of China Miéville's fantastic fiction include discussions of the extents to which these novels exhibit, or do not exhibit, the features of the New Weird. This thesis, too, will examine its topics with this question in mind. In the conclusion a sort of assessment of the position of Bas-Lag's heterotopias and hybridities within the concept of New Weird will be attempted, and references to this sub-genre will be made within the thesis elsewhere, too. It is therefore necessary to introduce and discuss the concepts of Weird, New Weird and Grotesque with respect to the focus of this thesis.

"A weird tale," as defined by H.P. Lovecraft in his nonfiction writings and given early sanctuary within the pages of magazines like *Weird Tales* (est. 1923) is "a story that has a supernatural element but does not fall into the category of traditional ghost story or Gothic tale...", (VanderMeer A. and VanderMeer J., np).

¹² "the study of malformations or serious deviations from the normal type in developing organisms". Merriam-Webster.com

¹³ Supernatural, mysterious. Merriam-webster.com

The use of the term to indicate this sort of fiction started with the name of the magazine *Weird Tales* (est. 1923) in which Lovecraft published many of his stories. As described by Lovecraft, and further explored by the VanderMeers, the Weird represents something more than murder, blood or abhorrent monsters. It represents the inexplicable, unexplainable dread of trying to reach an understanding that is beyond the mundane world or natural laws (VanderMeer A. and VanderMeer J. np). It is almost like a “dark reverie or epiphany” (Ibid. np), or what I would call an anti-sublime, or – in Miéville’s own words-- “a radicalized sublime backwash” (*Weird Fiction*, 511). For the usual weird tale, the following example is put forward:

Usually, the characters in weird fiction have either entered into a place unfamiliar to most of us, or have received such hints of the unusual that they become obsessed with the weird. [...] they may pull back from the abyss, they may decide to unsee what they saw, but still they saw it. (VanderMeer A. and VanderMeer J. np)

The abyss in question must not always have to be a literal one. Indeed, Weird fiction does not even have to provide the scare that is central to horror fiction. However, it eschews clichéd tropes such as zombies, skeletons and vampires, and the allusions that come with these tropes. Some of the earliest examples of fiction that can specifically be categorized as Weird are among Lovecraft’s work, which may be one of the reasons why The Weird is often associated with figures of tentacles, octopus-like monsters and slimy bodies of creatures that refuse recognition. As put forward by Miéville, “One of the most distinct ways in which Lovecraft moots a Weird universe is in his revolutionary teratology¹⁴. The monsters that inhabit his tales are a radical break with anything from a folkloric tradition” (“Weird Fiction”, 512). Lovecraft’s work breaks away from traditional Western monsters, delving into a realm of extraterrestrial creatures brought forth by “bubbles, barrels, cones, and corpses, patchworked from cephalopods, insects, crustaceans...” (512). His horror, as Miéville points out in the introduction to *At the Mountains of Madness: The Definitive Edition*, is not one of intrusion, but of realization (xiii), regarding the fact that the world was always this Weird, the true Weird horror comes from acknowledging that fact. Thus, a central difference between The Weird and traditional Gothic is the feelings/thoughts invoked

¹⁴ The study of malformations or serious deviations from the normal type in developing organisms. Merriam-webster.com

by it. “The awe that Weird Fiction attempts to invoke is a function of lack of recognition, rather than any uncanny resurgence, guilt-function, the return of a repressed”, insists Miéville (512) and adds that it is an expression of upheaval and crisis (513).

Finally, perhaps one of the most striking pieces of discussion regarding the Weird is that, to Miéville, after having read real letters from the battle of Passchendaele¹⁵, the ultimate Weird becomes non-fiction:

Formlessness, so brilliantly abstracted and teratologized in Lovecraft, is here something that was *done*, by humans, and more terrible for that. There is no Weird so Weird as the backwashed bad sublime called Passchendaele. (515)

Moving forward to New Weird, Jeff VanderMeer provides the following working definition:

New Weird is a type of urban, secondary-world fiction that subverts the romanticized ideas about place found in traditional fantasy, largely by choosing realistic, complex real-world models as the jumping off point for creation of settings that may combine elements from both science fiction and fantasy. (*The New Weird*, 17)

According to Jeff VanderMeer’s introduction to *The New Weird*, there are two impulses or influences that can distinguish New Weird from the so-to-speak Old Weird. One of them is the New Wave science fiction movement of the 1960s, featuring writers such as Michael Moorcock and M. John Morrison. This movement “...deliriously mixed genres, high and low art, and engaged in formal experimentation, often typified by a distinctly political point of view” (12). The second impulse came with “the unsettling grotesquery of such seminal 1980s work as Clive Barker’s *Books of Blood*” (12). This type of fiction included “...body transformations and dislocations to create a visceral, contemporary take on the kind of visionary horror best exemplified by the work of Lovecraft” (12). However, the primary difference between Barker’s horror and Lovecraftian horror was that it usually starts with the “acceptance of a monster or a transformation and the story is what comes after” (13). VanderMeer

¹⁵ Battle of Passchendaele, also called Third Battle of Ypres, World War I battle that served as a vivid symbol of the mud, madness, and senseless slaughter of the Western Front. Roy, R.H. and Foot, Richard. "Battle of Passchendaele". Encyclopedia Britannica, 24 Jul. 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Battle-of-Passchendaele>. Accessed 16 June 2022.

follows this with a statement on the type of horror that is a crucial part of New Weird: “Transgressive horror, then, repurposed to focus on the monsters and the grotesquery but not the ‘scare,’ forms the beating heart of the New Weird” (13). This introduces the role of the grotesque in discussions of Weird-ness.

Miéville’s *Perdido Street Station* is considered the “lightning rod for what would become known as New Weird” (14). Even though Miéville himself disowned the term later on, “claiming it had become a marketing category and was therefore of no further interest to him” (15), New Weird as a term lived on and was taken up by many others and is still moving forward and mutating beyond the discussion on the *Third Alternative* forum boards of 2003, perhaps moving beyond its label. The investigation of characteristics of Miéville’s worldbuilding in this thesis will find that it is no longer appropriate to use the term New Weird for these novels, and the analytical chapters refer their findings to Miéville’s Weird rather than to the (old) New Weird. As Vandermeer puts it, “New Weird is dead. Long live the Next Weird” (19).

Considering the discussions on Weird and New Weird, regarding Miéville’s work, the term grotesque gains importance, as, to Gordon, “the Remades [in Bas-Lag] are perfect illustrations of how a hybrid form can be grotesque” (459). While definitions of grotesque differ, for the purposes of this thesis, the definition used is going to be based on the Csicsery-Ronay definition put forward by Gordon. Here the term *grotesque* refers to an object or experience that can cause both repulsion and attraction at the same time, because it has a disturbing effect on what the consciousness accepts as rational and natural. It is a “strange conflation of disparate elements not found in nature” (71).

CHAPTER 2

THE SCAR

It has been given many names. Each inlet and bay and stream has been classified as if it were discrete. But it is one thing, where borders are absurd. It fills the spaces between stones and sand curling around coastlines and filling trenches between the continents. (Miéville 11)

2.1 *The Scar* and Armada

The second volume of the Bas-Lag trilogy is a rather unique one. While the imposing presence of New Crobuzon is still felt throughout the novel, the floating city of Armada appears in *The Scar*, and it bears both similarities, and vast differences to New Crobuzon. Like New Crobuzon it has a very species-rich and mixed (hybrid) population, but here all species are considered equal. Later in the novel a different sort of place, a fabled place where reality breaks down called the Scar, is also introduced. This place, it is revealed towards the end of the novel, could entirely destroy Armada, and therefore a search for it is abandoned and the reader never actually encounters it. The prevailing motifs and concepts of heterotopias, hybridity and (New) Weird grotesque continue to prevail throughout this novel.

The Scar opens with a prologue section that takes us to the consciousness of a hybrid creature who lives (mostly) under the sea, and the underwater realms that in this way start the novel and are frequently referred to and described or glimpsed by different characters throughout the novel. The story itself begins with a journey along various coastal parts of Bas-Lag and past various isles and marine features, all painstakingly described and often named, while every now and then providing a description of the sea as a unified, indescribable whole. In the novel, at times, the seawater almost acts

as a bridge between the surface world and the rest but – as Jeanette Winterson put it once, though on a relatively unrelated note, “Bridges join, but also separate. (*The Passion*, 61). This separation from the surface is one of the main factors that present *The Scar*’s undersea settings through a lens of indescribability, and of course the undersea places are separate heterotopias, to greater or lesser extents related to the overwater heterotopias that are also created by the author and often described at length and in detail. The heterotopic, hybrid and grotesque features of *The Scar*’s undersea realms will be described in the third section of the chapter, for they are closely tied to conventional features of Weird literature, which regards the sea/ocean as an incomprehensible entity.

The sea journey that fills the first few chapters of the novel takes characters away from New Crobuzon towards, as they believe, the newly created colony of Nova Esperium. Passengers and prisoners aboard the ship are heading there for a variety of reasons - in the case of the prisoners, who are all Remade, they are sent there for forced labour and what will probably be lifelong exile, according to the reasonable thoughts of Tanner (120). In the case of Bellis Coldwine, the predominating focaliser of the novel, she is escaping from her home of New Crobuzon in a state of desperation and fear, although why she has to escape is not made clear in this novel until, in Armada, she tells a fellow-librarian who had also been press-ganged, but who chose to adapt to Armada rather than reject it. Bellis reveals (198, 199, 200, 201) that she fled on being suspected of involvement with someone under suspicion, - with that someone being Isaac - in events related in the novel *Perdido Street Station*. The ship, *Terpsichoria*, itself can be counted as a deviation heterotopia that contains sub-heterotopias in the form of the prisoners’ hold, the passenger’s quarters, and the undescribed crew’s quarters. After lengthy descriptions of a variety of places encountered or seen on their way, the ship is captured by pirates, and the people aboard taken prisoner and shipped to the floating pirate town of Armada. This extraordinary place is the focus of this chapter’s analysis. It is again seen and described mostly through the focalisation of Bellis, a linguist who is always angry and who is fleeing New Crobuzon in fear and distress. Unsurprisingly, Bellis, on finding herself forced to live for the rest of her life in an alien so-to-speak town, and who is a New Crobuzon citizen through and through, finds it hard to accept Armada, as a real town. She expostulates to her new friend Johannes Tearfly, who is

delighted to be there, in terms which outline her criticism of the place as being too different from her idea of a stable and established city, too grotesque or even freakish in a fairground way, and too small for her to accept:

I've no interest in this city. I do not want to live in a curio, Johannes. This is a sideshow! This is something to scare the children! 'The Floating Pirate City'! I don't want it! I don't want to live in this great bobbing parasite, like some fucking pondskater sucking its victims dry. This isn't a city, Johannes; it's a parochial little village less than a mile wide, and I do not want it. (129)

She claims she has been kidnapped from the biggest and best city of Bas-Lag, that is a centre of culture, in contrast to this "curio". In riposte, Johannes claims that, while having an immense historical depth, as many or more miles of roads as New Crobuzon (stacked, rather than spread out horizontally), and a very large population, Armada is the richest and most dynamic centre of multiculturalism (while static and imperial New Crobuzon, as he describes it earlier, is the true parasite):

Culture? Science? Art? Bellis, do you even understand where you are? This city is the sum of hundreds of cultures. Every maritime nation has lost vessels to war, press-ganging, desertion. And they are here. They're what built Armada. This city is the sum of history's lost ships. There are vagabonds and pariahs and their descendants in this place from cultures that New Crobuzon has never so much as heard of. Do you realize that? Do you understand what that means? Their renegades meet here and overlap like scales, and make something new. (131)

In this chapter of the thesis, the aim is to explore Miéville's worldbuilding through the analysis of the heterotopias and hybridities of Armada and their societies. The chapter will also discuss the place of *The Scar* in (New) Weird Fiction, with references to Mathieson's (2019) concept of Oceanic Weird and Ann & Jeff Vandermeer's definition(s) of the New Weird.

2.2 Heterotopias and Hybridity: Armada and its Inhabitants

"The ship is the heterotopia par excellence" (Foucault 9)

Armada, at first glance, is (as its name roughly indicates) a conglomeration of different ships stuck together. However, as Bellis discovers during her time there, it has a whole

ecosystem that is both vastly different from, and somewhat similar to, New Crobuzon. It has its own people, its own rules and its own culture, but at the same time, just like New Crobuzon, it is a hybrid whole that is made of many different parts, and heterotopias. Armada is not only made up of heterotopias, but as an ever expanding and moving conglomerate it is one of the most elaborate instances imaginable of Foucault's "heterotopias of indefinitely accumulating time" where "time never stops building up and topping its own summit" (7). Within this town-sized heterotopia, one of the most culturally treasured spaces is the constantly updated library, which, like Armada itself, is a heterotopia of indefinitely accumulating texts/time/places. The most outstanding of this town's heterotopias will be discussed in the paragraphs below.

2.2.1 Armada as a Town

Armada, which can only be entered and left either compulsorily or through explicit permission from authorities, adheres to the fifth of Foucault's principles of heterotopias. Within its space, it therefore challenges and invites its new inhabitants, both of the novel's focalizers, and the readers too, into accepting a contrastive reality at odds with their experiences and/or expectations. It is presented in the novel, mostly, as a real and compensatory heterotopia, providing the idea that a different world, a different kind of existence and a different kind of healing are possible. As the plot unfolds, its apparently up-front society is shown to hide other and more politically sinister agendas, and when this is revealed, the reader may consider whether this huge heterotopia is not, in fact, its opposite, a Foucauldian heterotopia of illusion (which provides the appearance of freedoms, but within a space that cuts off and disallows the participants from enacting those freedoms in the spaces around). In this respect, the spying and hostile foreign policies that are revealed to lie at the core of Armada's relations to Bas-Lag (the outside spaces), reflect almost literally the warning given in the penultimate sentence of Foucault's essay, which says that "In civilizations without boats, dreams dry up, espionage takes the place of adventure, and the police take the place of pirates."

2.2.2 Armada as a Pirate Community

Pirate communities have always been considered places where people from different walks of life come together to form a commune, whether willingly or after having been

forced to. This is particularly important for Armada which, while being almost as large as a city, is still a pirate community on the sea. It is many things for its many inhabitants; it is a city for some, a prison for those – such as Bellis – who do not accept their residence, having been press-ganged¹⁶ into it, and it is a new opportunity for a better life for the Remade - people like Tanner Sack who find more freedom here than elsewhere. This situated multiplicity of meanings makes Armada a complex place of heterotopias, and a place resistant to being categorized into a single heterotopic type or encapsulated as a single whole. The heterotopic space of Armada must be explored through not one, but many of the principles of heterotopias proposed by Foucault, because Armada cannot be characterized by in one space and/or heterotopia, as its spatiality, as well as its social functions, is related to the different functions it carries for different inhabitants. First and foremost, then, it is a pirate community. A pirate community has a place in between heterotopias of deviation and of crisis, as it is made up of individuals “whose behavior is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm” but also who may live “in relation to society and to the human environment in which they live” in a state of crisis. (*Of Other Spaces*, 4, 5).

2.2.3 Armada as a Prison

Armada is also a prison. Many people, including Bellis, are press-ganged against their will into living on/working for Armada. They are not prisoners behind bars in the traditional sense, but they did not choose to come there, nor are they free to leave, which are the main causes of distress to Bellis: “She was alone in the city, and it was a prison” (*The Scar*, 72). As mentioned in the Introduction above, Foucault chose prisons as present-day examples of heterotopias of deviation, in his first principle (*Of Other Spaces*, 5). Armada as a prison is also related to the fifth principle of heterotopias, being not freely accessible as a public place, and isolated from the general society of the outside spaces (the rest of Bas-Lag). The entry is often compulsory, and as Foucault puts it, even if it is not “the individual has to submit to rites and purifications” (7). Although the characters we meet are mostly free within Armada, the heterotopia includes also some places of constraint or a degree of

¹⁶ A detachment of men under command of an officer empowered to force men into military or naval service. Merriam-webster.com

confinement. From the comments of several characters, readers learn that suspect entrants are subjected to “re-education” as witnessed by Bellis: “The officers and sailors from the *Terpsichoria* were being led forcibly away for ‘assessment’ and ‘re-education’” (*The Scar*, 71). Even those who are not forcibly re-educated, have to make difficult adjustments in order to thrive in a place and society they had not wished to inhabit. For the sake of their own happiness, the press-ganged must leave their old lives behind and fully accept their new surroundings as a new home, although no one forces this upon them. Some take centuries to adjust (as the librarian Corianne reveals), and some embrace their new identity wholeheartedly and almost immediately, as Tanner Sack does: “I’m an Armada man”, he says to Shekel, “a Garwater man. I’m learning my Salt. I’m loyal” (81).

As noted, Armada is a highly complex heterotopia. Being just as rich in the multitudes it contains as New Crobuzon, if not more, it is also able to travel around Bas-Lag and make additions to itself in terms of both infrastructure and population. Armada is, in fact, made up of different parts of Bas-Lag, as Bellis comments:

Even that, even their earth, their mud, was plundered over years, dragged in great tranches from coastal farms and forests, torn from bewildered peasants’ plots and taken back across the waves to the city. (205)

In its slow journeys around Bas-Lag, Armada had visited places unknown to New Crobuzon’s scientists, and it had plundered those exotic ecosystems. (206)

This was how Armada grew for its populace, swallowing up prey and reconfiguring them, rendering them into its own material like mindless plankton. (207)

The novel’s presentation of the first days of Bellis’ and Tanner’s life in and under Armada paints a colorful, confusing picture of a city, including countless different styles of naval architectures, alien vessels, being constantly on the move, centuries-old vessels being found together with new ones, and underneath it a teaming and strictly guarded undersea space of work which, to the unaware watcher from the surface (Bellis) seems unconfined, “Stunning and empty”¹⁷ (*The Scar*, 71). For the

¹⁷ Though this emptiness is only a facade, because as New Weird critics would agree, Miéville’s ocean is filled to the brim with often incomprehensible - from a Lovecraftian sense - life.

scientists, engineers, and politicians of Armada the sea is their most essential resource and holds the key to their future, as well as being their means of protection and escape from threat, while it acts also as an agent of separation, able to keep Armada away from everything outside it.

Bellis is not the only one who has been plunged into a different world; in Armada, the other focaliser of the narration, Tanner Sack, is a recently tortured and imprisoned/exiled Remade. His capture is in fact a release from his grim situation and previously expected fate. He also must relearn how to be more than what he has been made by the Magistrate of New Crobuzon, in that he still sees himself a Remade as he does not recognize the tentacles as parts of him, and therefore the sea is still not welcoming in his mind, and this is a mostly healing and liberating experience for him. While Bellis lives and works as a librarian in the above-sea town, Tanner works by day as an engineer at mysterious projects under the sea, and he explores the surface town by night. Unlike Bellis, who does not explore, he soon comes to love his new town, embracing its physical, social and personal healing powers, even though at first: “He did not understand how he could bear the cold of the seawater. [...] and the first touch of the water had shocked him. He had almost balked, [...] but he had acclimatized much faster than made sense. [...] He was healing.” (78)

2.2.4 The Library & Life Below Armada

However, Armada is not just an amalgamation of all it devours. The Grand Gears Library where Bellis works, for example, is a heterotopia by itself, physically made up of different vessels, located in an aptly named section of Armada; the Booktown. The sheer number of different texts the library contains positions it as almost like a heterotopia with a strange heterochrony - related to the fourth principle of heterotopias - and therefore, in Foucauldian terms, it can be called a heterotopia of indefinitely accumulating time (*Of Other Spaces*, 7). This means that the accumulated - textualized - periods of time in the library never stops building up in layers and layers. Foucault explains his idea of the library as a heterotopia in the following way:

[...]the idea of accumulating everything, of establishing a sort of general archive, the will to enclose in one place all times, all epochs, all forms, all tastes, the idea of constituting a place of all times that is

itself outside of time and inaccessible to its ravages, the project of organizing in this way a sort of perpetual and indefinite accumulation of time in an immobile place, this whole idea belongs to our modernity. (7)

The Grand Gears Library by itself, therefore, contains multitudes. It is a centuries-old library with countless thousands of books that are yet to be discovered, from every era and from every genre. Most notably, the library contains a book by Krüach Aum, who is the only person who knows the details on how to raise, conjure an *avanc*, a creature of legends (*The Scar* 255, 256, 257). The library is, therefore, both important for plot matters as Bellis decides to use the library in order to learn about what The Lovers, people who run Armada, want, and is a notable heterotopia and heterochrony inside Armada, which, while limited in space, contains information that goes beyond the clutches of time, with the books paralleling the new citizens of Armada in the way that they too, have for centuries been appropriated and press-ganged into what is for them a new and alien space.

Even below the city, there is life thriving in different ways, as put in one of the very first descriptions of it:

The underside of Armada was criss-crossed with life. Fish eddied through its architecture. Fleeting newt-like figures moved with intellect and purpose between bolt-holes. [...] Cray dwellings like coral tumours. Beyond the edges of the city, and below it at the far reaches of light, huge half-tame seawyrms corkscrewed and fed. Sumbersibles droned - rigid shadows. [...] A moving ecology and politics were tethered to the city's calcified base. (95, 96)

The living space under Armada itself becomes another heterotopia, as it houses different creatures, both sentient and non-sentient, for different reasons in the same space. There are animals, only there to feed. There are cray dwellings, in which the Cray, an amphibian sentient race, live. There are man-made machines floating about. And there is Tanner Sack, who spends some of his time there, whose relationship with water will be explored later in the chapter. The fifth principle of heterotopias, stating that "heterotopias always presuppose a system of opening and closing that both isolates them and makes them penetrable" (*Of Other Spaces*, 7), is somewhat relevant for this space, as its nature prevents access to most humanoid creatures without

specific conditions such as underwater suits. This makes it akin to a refuge too, as the specific access conditions prevent a lot of the population from being able to penetrate the space.

Considering all of the heterotopic qualities it contains, Armada itself becomes a heterotopia as well, apart from being a heterotopia as a city or being a heterotopia as a pirate ship, its unique place(s) in Bas-Lag makes Armada into a combined heterotopia of deviation, of indefinitely accumulating time, and of temporality. It is a heterotopia of deviation, because almost all of its inhabitants are deviants in some way, including the Remade, the former slaves, the natives, the criminals and the pressganged. It is a heterotopia of indefinitely accumulating time because throughout its history of thousands of years; it has been adding different parts to itself, consistently changing and growing into an amalgamation of those years. And yet, it is also a temporal heterotopia. A temporal heterotopia is exemplified as fairground by Foucault, since the travelling fairs take place in different times in different places, and if it is the same place, it is often once or twice a year (“Of Other Spaces”, 7). Armada is a temporal heterotopia too, because it has the ability to change its place at any time. The effect of this on its inhabitants is best exemplified in *The Scar* by Bellis’ commentary: “There was no winter in the city, no summer or spring, no seasons at all; there was only weather. For Armada it was a function not of time, but place” (147). With this comment, Armada is likened to an entity unbound by time, and yet it also carries the proof of the ages past on its body, within its streets and in its library.

2.3 Hybridity in *The Scar*

Armada is, by its nature, a hybrid, as the novel itself states (102). As already described, it resembles other old towns like New Crobuzon in being made up of different physical and cultural parts. It has the unique qualities of being entirely constructed from different ships, to which more ships and their inhabitants are added at different times, and being situated on the sea. This means that the town constantly changes its shape, its social construction, and its place, as opposed to a city that came together on the ground. This prime spatial feature allows it a dynamic quality in time and place, and a

degree of independence that any land-based city like New Crobuzon cannot have; Armada can float, and therefore can go anywhere it needs to be. This somewhat unorthodox freedom allows the city a degree of freedom from New Crobuzon's imperialistic, imposing presence, and enables it to respond to its own needs without seeking permission from an outside authority. The same benefits are found in the hybridity of the society that inhabits this extraordinary town.

If we focus on the above-sea constructions, the social distinctions between the physical parts or constitutive ships of Armada are not, however, as stark as the distinctions between districts it was in New Crobuzon, where different species inhabited different areas of the city. and this attempt at a degree of social cohesion is expressed as part of the general philosophy of Armada by the woman who greeted Bellis and the other Terpsichoria captives:

‘Human, cactaceae, hotchi, cray... Remade,’ the woman had said. ‘In Armada you are all sailors and citizens. In Armada you are not distinguished. Here you are free. And equal. (100)

Neither could get used to it. A place where the Remade were equal. Where a Remade might be a foreman or a manager instead of the lowest labourer. (80)

The starkest embodiments of individual hybridity of *The Scar* are, as is the case for most of Bas-Lag, the Remade.¹⁸ Their physical hybridities are, as discussed in the introduction, dependent on the cruel punishment factories of New Crobuzon, and most of the discussion regarding that forced hybridization and its social and political implications takes place in either *Perdido Street Station* or *Iron Council*. However, *The Scar*, and therefore Armada, presents a unique reversal of that hybridity in the form of re-hybridization, and a renunciation by the Remade of their grotesquery in the form of acceptance. The Remade are not only socially accepted as equals on Armada - “you are no longer Remade...” (60) - but are also given the opportunity to make peace with their new bodies, and possibly to subvert the pervasive procedures performed on them by New Crobuzon. There are two main examples of this case in

¹⁸ Although the hybrid bodies of the Remade are individual, the implications of their hybridities are many, most of which will have to fall out of this thesis' scope.

The Scar: Tanner Sack and Angevine, another Remade aboard Armada whose remaking cut her legs off and put in their place a steam-driven machine (148).

In Tanner's case, there is a stark contrast between his experience with his Remade body in New Crobuzon and then in Armada:

He had cut at them [his tentacles], experimentally, and the layers of nerves implanted in them had fired and he had nearly fainted with pain. But pain was all that had lived in them, so he had wrapped them around himself like rotting pythons and tried to ignore them. (78)

But, immersed in the salt water, they had begun to move. Their multitude of small infections had faded, and they were now cool to the touch. After three dives, to his grinding shock, the tentacles had started to move independently of the water. He was healing. [...] Tanner was learning to move them by choice. (79)

Tanner's healing in this case includes both a physical side - with his tentacles literally starting to heal - and a psychological side, with him starting to make peace with his hybridized body. An argument can be made that it is himself who is working to be at peace with his own body, and that is true. However, it is also Armada's hybridity-positive environment which is giving Tanner the chance to ever do so. Tanner's reacclimatization to his own body does not end with self-acceptance and growth. It gains another dimension with his desire to re-hybridize himself with another remaking process, this time by choice:

His coming to terms with the sea felt like a long drawn out birth. [...] When he left the sea, Tanner felt his tentacles hang heavy and uncomfortable. But when he was below, in his harness, his leather and brass, he felt tethered and constrained. He wanted to swim free. (Ref) 'I need you to help me,' Tanner said, faltering. 'I want to be Remade.' (115)

This re-remaking of Tanner Sack is perhaps one of the clearest representations of the novel series regarding self-hybridization with agency. The decision and the responsibility is purely his own, as he himself mentions (ref) and thus while hybridity was once both an imposition on him and a constriction for Tanner, in Armada he voluntarily employs the same hybridization process to free himself.

Angevine presents a slightly different case from that of Tanner. Her remaking, her forced hybridization, had affected a larger part of her body, affecting her mobility and therefore living standards to a greater extent than Tanner's:

Just below her thighs, Angevine's legs ended. She jutted like some strange figurehead from the front of a little steam-driven cart, a heavy contraption with caterpillar treads, filled with coke and wood. (148)

When Shekel (and Tanner) meet Angevine, she has already become a respected member of the Armada, and therefore has already gone beyond the New Crobuzonian restrictions put upon the Remade socially and economically she is even in a relationship with a non-remade person, Shekel. She has made a life for herself despite her remaking. Therefore, her re-remaking, as one could say, is more about improvement than about a complete re-hybridization.

'It's [the engine] probably an old pre-exchange model,' he continued slowly. 'With only one set of pistons and no recombination box. They were never any good.' [...] 'If you fancy, I could take a look. Worked with engines all my life. I could... I could even...' He hesitated at a verb that sounded somehow obscene, discussing a person. 'I could even refit you.' (232)

It is Tanner, after his own re-remaking, who offers this to Angevine, in solidarity. Though this new remaking experience is beneficial for Angevine, it also seems to bring back the trauma of first being Remade:

She was still uncomfortable about it. For him to operate, they had to put out her boiler, immobilizing her. It was the first time for years she had allowed that to happen. She lived in fear of her fires going cold. (264)

The last time anyone had put their hands in her like this, Tanner realized, was when she was Remade. He was gentler with her then. (264)

While she already has agency in terms of being on an equal standing with everyone else around her regarding her personhood, this new improvement is, for Angevine, yet

another representation of the freedom that even the forcibly hybridized Remade can find on Armada.

2.4 The Grotesque and Miéville's Weird in *The Scar*

The grotesqueness in *The Scar* is mostly explored through Bellis Coldwine's focalization, as she, as a New Crobuzonian, is seemingly more prone to monsterize the unknown than the other focalizers. However, there are other places and races in the novel that defy any normalization by the characters in general, such as The Gengris, as Bellis learns from Fennec (who went there as a spy):

It was said to be the home of the grindyflow, aquatic demons or monsters or degenerate crossbred men and women, depending on which story one believed. It was said to be haunted. (110)

'There are even a few native human, born and bred in The Gengris...' His mouth twisted. 'And "bred" is the word, though I'm not sure "human" is, any more. It suits them fine that everyone thinks it's... like a little piece of Hell there in the water, that it's beyond any kind of pale... (111)

'Bellis... You've never seen The Gengris.' 'You've never seen the limb-farms. The workshops, the fucking bile workshops. You've never heard the music.' 'If the grindyflow take New Crobuzon, they wouldn't enslave us, or kill us, or even eat us all. They wouldn't do anything so... comprehensible.' (144)

The Grindyflow, or the Gengris (terms used interchangeably in the novel), are a race of deep-sea creatures that terrify the other races of Bas-Lag. They are the proverbial monster in the dark and are found incomprehensible and grotesque by many. Almost all of the accounts regarding the grindyflow are second-hand, which further adds to the mystification of the race, and even relics of the grindyflow are said to have powers that can change people (386). The novel provides one description of them, in a passage recounting an encounter between Bellis and the grindyflow:

They jutted prognathous jaws, their bulging teeth frozen in meaningless grimaces, massive eyes absolutely dark and unblinking. Their arms and chests were humanoid, tightly ridged with muscles and stretched skin, grey-green and black, shiny as if with mucus. And, narrowing at the waist, the grindyflow bodies extended like enormous eels, into flat tails several times longer than their torsos. (439)

The grindyflow was laughing. A horrible, incompetent parody of human laughter. (439)

This far in the novel, the grindyflow are presented as creatures who are beyond any reason; grotesque constructs of nightmare. However, in a twist, Bellis learns that they are not as simple as she previously thought: The grindyflow do not attack Armada for no reason; they are chasing Silas Fennec to stop him passing on knowledge he smuggled out of The Gengris (in part of a New Crobuzon plan to bypass their territory to reach far shores). Under the light of this planned colonial expansion, the mystery and the terror surrounding The Gengris seems to make more sense as a discourse promoted by an imperialistic entity seeking more power. Presenting non-incorporated territories as the hostile, other, the inhabitants as incomprehensible monsters, is a narrative that is, at its core, colonial. Bellis, then, figures it out:

And how much more sense this [the New Crobuzon plan] made of the grindyflow. They were not like the vengeful bugaboos of the stories she had read to Shekel, chasing a symbol. Their motivations were clear. They were protecting the source of all their power, their interests and existence. (443)

Thus, while the grindyflow are still presented as creatures of violence, most of the mystery regarding them disappears, making them more comprehensible. Their bodies might still be viewed as grotesque, but culturally, they are demystified - in the eyes of the reader - into a proper race of sentient creatures. This is one of the steps in a cycle of hybridity as discussed in the introduction, although in this case it is not literal or biological hybridity, but the creation of nightmare creatures who only thrive in terror, and then a re-creation of the same creatures as a sentient species in Bellis' eyes. In fact, what comes next, with the people of Armada killing each other in a mutiny, is akin to a subversion of the narrative of the grindyflow as monsters:

The grindyflow had come and gone and, of those few who had seen them, almost no one knew what they had been. Their presence remained inexplicable and overshadowed by the civil war. Hundreds of Armadans were dead, killed by their own. (450)

Another instance of grotesquery through incomprehensibility is the place of the novel's namesake, The Scar:

'The horizon was only twenty miles away. I could see it clear, jagging across the face of the sea. The Scar. It was like seeing a god.' (461)

'When the Ghosthead touched down in that continent, the force of it split the world right open, broke a fissure right through Bas-Lag. A split. Jagging in from the world's rim for more than two thousand miles, splintering the continent. That's the Scar. That crack. Teeming with the ways things weren't and aren't but could be.' (461)

It is, quite literally, where Bas-Lag starts to break down. In and around the Scar, anything and everything is possible, and not possible, and somewhere in-between. It is a place of utter, complete incomprehensibility. From the account of a friend of Tanner, Hedrigall, which is given before the finale of the novel, Armada faces total destruction in the Scar, has already faced total destruction in the Scar, and will in the future be facing total destruction in the Scar. Hedrigall has seen all of his friends die, and yet he is talking to them, and they too are going to die, unless they change their course. The Scar is not just one place, it is every place possible, all at once:

'That ain't the real Hedrigall,' said Tanner, 'not the factual one, not the one from... from here. Our Hedrigall ran away. That Hedrigall's leaked out... from another possibility. He's from one where he stayed on, and where we travelled that bit faster, got to the Scar earlier. He's what happened... what will happen. (467)

In its spatial and temporal multiplicity, the Scar is both grotesque and not; it represents a breaking down of Miéville's idea of Bas-Lag, and a beginning of something else that is unknown. It plays a role somewhat similar to a deus-ex-machina, only instead of literally helping the characters, it helps change the course of the narrative back to Armada as a pirate conglomeration.

Moving back to a "personal" grotesque, rather than grotesquery from a collective view, Bellis in *The Scar* and Yagharek¹⁹ in *Perdido Street Station* are in a way parallel characters with regard to their reactions to their new surroundings; both struggle to

¹⁹ From *Perdido Street Station*, as briefly mentioned in the Introduction.

accept that these cities and environments really exist. To them, these places are not much more than abominations, and it is through these characters' reactions and reported perspectives that Miéville again reinforces the Weird-ness of his worldbuilding of Bas Lag.

The Scar has been the center of many discussions regarding its Weird-ness. One of the most notable contributions has been Jolene Mathieson's paper on the concept of *Oceanic Weird*, in which she argues that

...oceanic weird offers fruitful mechanisms for conceptualizing the relations between the knowable and the unknowable in engaging the ocean's material reality. (Mathieson 112)

Mathieson's oceanic weird can be used as a concept and perspective from which the reader and critic of Miéville's trilogy can make a New-Weirdesque²⁰ examination of *The Scar*'s weird, wet place. "The weird", Mathieson says, "is foremost a phenomenological tool for confronting a more-than-human world", and in Miéville's Bas-Lag, there is much to confront, including the fabled location of The Scar, a place in the world where reality starts breaking down and there are an infinite number of possibilities, as mentioned previously.

From Bellis Coldwine's perspective, Armada is represented in a way that is close to what we may call the Old Weird, by which is meant that it seems to be built in ways somehow reflecting a Lovecraftian ontology, in which people fear what they cannot understand, in which the incomprehensible is often synonymous with terror-inducing, and in which the alien is something to be escaped from, as discussed in the introduction to this thesis. It is a primarily anthropocentric view of one's new surroundings. "The hypermateriality of the ocean and the alterity of the creatures in its depths may invite us to monster them", Mathieson says (117) and that is the exact reaction through which the reader begins to learn about Bellis. To Mathieson, she "represents the clumsy anthropocentric attitudes of twentieth-century thinkers toward the ocean" (118). This

²⁰ New-Weirdesque because this reading will see the oceanic weird of *The Scar* as functioning to separate the reader from the Weird that, elsewhere, may view the ocean as a completely enigmatic and often scary entity.

assumption is proved by the novel's narration to be correct, especially at the beginning of the story, when considering Bellis' first reaction to being taken on board Armada:

And beyond all that, beyond the city sky that thronged with birds and other shapes, beyond all the vessels was the sea. The open sea. Waves like insects in incessant motion. Stunning and empty. (*The Scar*, 71)

It could come across as surprising that Bellis would say this, even after having seen the Salkrikaltor City, which is a city full of life under the sea. However, while she is able to grow in different ways, her character is shown to have one primary motive right from the beginning:

[...] What was important to her was where she was running away from, not where she was, or where she was going" (26).

Her growth as a character, therefore, is anthropocentric, because her gaze upon that which she finds grotesque is of an othering quality. Miéville creates Bellis as a character who is close to an antithesis of Isaac, with regard to their views of the hybrid, the grotesque, and the other. While Isaac had welcomed differences, Bellis seems to merely tolerate them. Her reaction to the Remade on board the *Terpsichoria*²¹ is an example of her approach towards the grotesque. Regarding her view of the Remade:

Bellis had never seen so many Remade in one place before, so many who had been altered in the punishment factories. Some were shaped for industry, while others seemed formed for no purpose other than grotesquerie, with misshapen mouths and eyes and gods knew what. (31)

She heard gaolers' shouts. Men and cactacae strutted among the Remade, wielding whips. (31)

The wording of this indirect reporting of her thoughts or perceptions here is particularly significant, as it reveals that in her mind the Remade are not counted as humans or as any identifiable species. Again, Bellis' gaze upon them is a monsterring one, and not one of compassion or acceptance. The Remade are made grotesque - in some eyes - for no other reason than cruelty, which may bring the reader back to the almost thematised concept of irrationality in Weird literature. In this sense, bad things

²¹ The vessel on which Bellis leaves New Crobuzon. Named after Terpsichore, one of the nine muses in Ancient Greek mythology, and the patron of dance and choral song. Merriam-webster.com

happen because they happen. This monsterring of the Remade shows the extent to which Bellis is defined by New Crobuzon, and even functions in the novel as a reminder and representative of New Crobuzon attitudes, to sharpen the contrast between that place and Armada. Even her attitude towards Nova Esperium, a New Crobuzon colony rife with disease and violence, provides the reader with insight into what she accepts as civil, and what not:

Halfway across the world, a little blister of civilization in unknown lands. A home from home, New Crobuzon's colony. Rougher, surely, and harder and less cosseted - Nova Esperium was too young for many kindnesses - but a culture modelled on her city's own. (27)

This attitude is very similar to those of protagonists from earlier Weird literature, who, faced with the unknown, would try to cling to anything that is familiar. This, therefore, gives the reader a rather traditional Weird-esque perspective on Miéville's (New) Weird world, which is yet another device to distinguish between Miéville's Weird and traditional Weird. This is not to say that Bellis Coldwine is completely stuck in a Weird world of terror, as she has her moments of awe too, such as her reaction to the platforms Terpsichoria encounters before the Salkrikaltor City, which were, to her, awesome, extraordinary and fabulous (36). The effect these platforms has on Bellis and Johannes²², described as leaving "...their hands numb, their breath coiling out of them in visible gusts..." (37), is notable, too, as the physical proof of the awe they have felt in the face of the unknown. It is similar to the descriptions of terror people face when faced with a Lovecraftian²³ monster, and the reaction does not go beyond that, to the realm of Miéville's "surrender to Weird", as he puts it (Gordon and Miéville, 366).

While its narrative seems to be separate from the rest of the novels, with the only prominent tie being Bellis Coldwine from New Crobuzon, *The Scar* does not fail to inject the politics of Bas-Lag (and therefore Miéville's own, as the two cannot easily be separated) into the narrative. Miéville's Marxist/Socialist influences can be seen through the Armada's inhabitants' lives, especially when considering that all of them

²² A scientist working on nature, aboard the *Terpsichoria*.

²³ As mentioned in the introduction.

are equalized and given occupations once aboard. This, along with the fact that the Armada is a pirate ship that is seemingly against New Crobuzon, a highly imperialistic/capitalistic presence, presents a juxtaposition that could be compared to that of Socialism and Capitalism. Such comparisons, however, also bring the question of analyzing Miéville's work as a political allegory, and while his allegorical storytelling is quite heavy-handed – at parts to a point where it can be called propaganda – these comparisons fall out of this thesis' scope, and apart from a short discussion in the conclusion they are left for a future study.

CHAPTER 3

IRON COUNCIL

Miéville's obsession with crossing and blurring borders and boundaries is in full force in *The Iron Council*, just as it was in the two preceding novels of the trilogy. As in *The Scar*, an unusual site (in Foucaultian terms) or individual setting is presented, and again the title of the novel is also the name given to an unusual and Fantastic site. In this chapter the Iron Council (a "perpetual" train inhabited by "Marxian . . . citizens" (Poole np) is the individual place or setting that will be analyzed in terms of its heterotopic and hybrid features, and with respect to the grotesque and to Miéville's Weird. There is also a New Crobuzon presence in this novel, but this time it is not in the form of a representative character (as it was in *The Scar*), but in the plot and setting, for this novel takes the reader back to New Crobuzon – but to a New Crobuzon seen from a very different perspective than that which dominated its first descriptions in *Perdido Street Station*, for here it is shown as a city in turmoil, with political unrest, and revolutionaries popping up everywhere. A third place of interest is, this time, the wilderness around New Crobuzon, as it is plundered in order to make way for a new New Crobuzonian railway project. *Iron Council*, more than anything, is primarily a novel of politics, tackling issues such as terrorism, imperialism, racism, war, labour rights and sexuality. However, none of this takes away from Miéville's use of fantastical elements in his worldbuilding as he presents Bas-Lag under a new, more politically fueled light in the third novel of the series. In his 2013 article, Jonathan Newell describes it in the following way:

Iron Council, concerned as it is with revolution and societal transformation, is the most overtly political of the Bas-Lag novels; Miéville describes it as his version of a western (Anders), an appropriate genre considering the frontiers, boundaries and borders breached by its characters. (496)

The narrative follows the past and present actions of three central characters: Ori, Cutter and Judah Low, centering around New Crobuzon, the wilderness surrounding New Crobuzon and the Iron Council, the perpetual train. *Iron Council* creates particular interest in New Crobuzon as a colonialist entity, because most of the narration in the novel is woven around the fact that New Crobuzon wants to build a railway, destroying many villages and killing many people in the wild to do so. Much of the novel is concerned with this event, as the train is later liberated to become the Iron Council, to stand against New Crobuzon's oppressive presence. This chapter of the thesis will, therefore, focus mostly on what happens outside New Crobuzon, with the characters mentioned above and the new environment that is explored, with references to the Stiltspear, a race of creatures who use golems, living creatures made out of different materials, and the fReemade, Remade who have mostly freed themselves from New Crobuzon's sphere of influence. The discussions regarding the Remade in general are important for the Iron Council. However, they have specifically been discussed by Newell in his *Abject Cyborgs*, which is referenced in this chapter, so (unlike in the previous chapter) this thesis will shift the focus on the Remade to a discussion regarding their treatment by their environments, which will also be discussed as new heterotopias. Lastly, the worldbuilding of *Iron Council* will be discussed in the context of Bas-Lag, New Weird and Miéville's Weird.

3.1 Heterotopias and Hybridity in *Iron Council*

As was the case with the two previous novels, heterotopias and hybridity continue to take a significant place in Miéville's writing in *Iron Council*. In the context of this novel, the heterotopias and hybridities that will be discussed play the role of almost a catalyst in the revolution(s) the novel offers. In this chapter of the Bas-Lag series, the making and destruction of heterotopias takes center place, with discussions regarding hybridity circling around the Remade.

. . . one might attempt to describe [heterotopias] by looking for the set of relations by which a given site can be defined. For example, describing the set of relations that define the sites of transportation, streets, trains (a train is an extraordinary bundle of relations because it is something through which one goes, it is also something by means of

which one can go from one point to another, and then it is also something that goes by). (Foucault 3).

Iron Council, in this context, is an extraordinary place, because not only does it fit the description mentioned above, but in the novel it is more mobile even than Foucault's train: it is a site or place it does not move along a fixed track; it can go wherever chosen by the people who run it and live on it, as they pick up track from behind the train and lay it in front, in the direction they choose. In this way Iron Council is able to interact with a possibly unlimited number of fantastic environments and settlements, enriching the novel's worldbuilding in terms of the potential social, economic and political interactions that could be depicted.

Iron Council started as a colonialist New Crobuzon project designed as part of its war against a place called Tesh, and in use encroaching on territory that does not yet belong to the city. Therefore, at the beginning, it is only a heterotopia in the sense that war trenches could be heterotopias: as a tool of an imperial hand that brings people together in order to wage war, people who are often willing to do so only in order to survive in a capitalistic system. This creates a connection with the sixth principle of heterotopias: that they have a function in relation to the remaining space. In this case, the function is colonization, and colonies as heterotopias specifically designed to be "other" are also exemplified by Foucault, with respect to:

[...] the first wave of colonization in the seventeenth century, [. . .] the Puritan societies that the English had founded in America and that were absolutely perfect other places. I am also thinking of those extraordinary Jesuit colonies that were founded in South America: marvelous, absolutely regulated colonies in which human perfection was effectively achieved. (6)

In this case, however, Iron Council as a heterotopia is at first the tool of colonization itself, rather than the colony, although once it is taken over by its workers, it becomes a colony of New Crobuzon rebels and refugees run on socialist lines. In its earlier, colonizing form, this heterotopia is indeed well-regulated by New Crobuzon, with a strict hierarchy between the free workers, the Remade workers and others such as engineers, scouts and so on. The Remade are particularly oppressed, as they, even by fellow workers, are seen as slaves, as exemplified by Newell:

And there are many Remade. They do not look at the whole men, free workers, the aristocracy of this labour. (120)

And you Remade. [...] I don't know. You are indentured men. I don't make laws. You have debts to the factories that made you. Your lives are not your own. Your money... you have no money. (182)

This colonizing version of the train creates new heterotopias too, such as Fucktown, where women of the railroad work as prostitutes. They too, have a liberation of their own, no longer serving men who do not pay up front. After it is liberated, the Iron Council becomes a beacon of hope both to its own inhabitants, and to citizens of New Crobuzon, helping facilitate new revolutionary movements, and therefore new heterotopias inside the city. Its significance is not only related to what it facilitates elsewhere, however. It is a place that continuously grows with each boundary it transgresses, adding to itself new structures and new people of all races, a monument to the revolutionary effort of the Remade and the other workers who have freed themselves from New Crobuzon's shackles. Iron Council has become its inhabitants' whole lives:

The perpetual train was town hall, church and temple. It was the keep. It whistled as it went, prowling the perimeter of its land of peasants, hunters, surgeons, teachers, drivers of the train. [...] The oldest of them had forgotten New Crobuzon; the youngest had never seen it. (240)

Years. Throwing up structures as they needed them. Their town had grown. And nomads and lost adventurers of all races came to join the renegopolis. The Iron Council. (243)

Later in the novel, the concept of Iron Council as a monument takes on a literal quality; through Judah Low's thaumaturgy, it becomes still in time, with the use of a time golem. No one and nothing can touch it until an uncertain time comes:

The perpetual train. The Iron Council itself. The renegade, returned, or returning and now waiting. Absolutely still. Absolutely unmoving in the body of the time golem. The train, its moment indurate. (372)

The train having to be stuck in time - or outside time, as one could say - is the only solution that could have been found at the time, to escape New Crobuzon's cruelty. It is also an act of stealing the agency of the people of Iron Council, however, with no respect to their decision to come back to New Crobuzon. The Iron Council, therefore,

becomes a symbol of a lost revolution; lost both as in a chance never taken, and lost in time. Its status as a heterotopia changes too; it is no longer penetrable, and no longer linked to time, both to accumulation and to the passing of it. It does, however, create a whole new heterotopia of almost-religious believers - people who believe that the Iron Council will come back again and change everything:

Years might pass and we will tell the story of the Iron Council and how it was made, how it made itself and went, and how it came back, and is coming, is still coming. [...] They are coming out of the trenches of rock toward the brick shadows. They are always coming. (385)

Another significant heterotopia - as a community - destroyed by the railroad project is the Stiltspear commune:

Their commune has no name. Its hutlets rise from the reeds and water and are conjoined with walkways and slung with hammocks, and other rooms are sunk in pits in the sodden ground. [...] Stiltspears' coats of oily down bead with swamp muck. They move like wading birds. They are like birds, and like scrawny cats, with unmoving, near-unfeatured faces. (111)

They are a tribe of people who live by their own in the swamp, with a special golem-making art they use for their different needs. It is from them Judah learns the art and brings it back to New Crobuzon. His interaction with this tribe happens through chance, as it is a mostly closed-off heterotopia that does not often allow outsiders, if ever. They are threatened by the railroad project of New Crobuzon, though not specifically. They are simply viewed as collateral damage, as the project leader tells Judah:

I wouldn't mean no harm but I by gods and by Jabber will not turn away now. [...] Understand, son, what's coming. I have no plans for yon stiltspear, but if their way intersects with mine then yes, my way will crush them down. (114)

I will only tell you that history is coming, and your new tribe best move from its path. [...] What they have, what they've had lying there for centuries in that marsh, whatever it is, it's welcome to face the history I bring, if it can. (115)

The destruction of the Stiltspear is purely an imperialistic act of colonization. The native people are hunted one by one into extinction, though some are able to escape with Judah's insistence, and the only thing that is preserved from them is their art of golem making. Harvey, in his 2012 article, likens the destruction of the Stiltspear to that of Native Americans:

Other native inhabitants, the stiltspear, "revive a death-cult" in a desperate attempt to repel the railroad that is destroying their land; in retaliation, the TRT offers "a reward on each pair of stiltspear hands" (163). The stiltspears' "cult" recalls such Native American responses to the destruction of their culture... (104, 105)

Remote as it is from the domain of this thesis, this comparison is important to any discussion on the influence of real-life politics on Bas-Lag and its significance to this novel is closely related to the facts that *Iron Council* is much more political than its predecessors, and that Miéville's own politics help shape his worldbuilding, facilitating his stories through his use of spatial and racial politics.

Finally, The Collective is a union of revolutionary groups inside New Crobuzon, a group of people who have their hopes on the Iron Council coming back. With the already tumultuous atmosphere of the city, The Collective takes their chances in sparking a revolution, and wage war against the New Crobuzon militia. However, The Collective is also used by a Tesh spy/thaumaturgist in order to sow discord and chaos in the city. Ori, the person who finally figured this out, likens the fact that they have been used, and the fact that New Crobuzon is now in a crisis, to a Remaking (ref). While this heterotopia is short-lived, as the Collective is brutally disbanded by New Crobuzon authority, its implications for the future of the subaltern of New Crobuzon are vast: "[...] as the Collective is brutally disbanded, its revolutionary spirit remains beneath the skin of the city, impossible to expunge" (Newell, 507).

Hybridity in *Iron Council* is explored through three main subjects: Iron Council, the Remade and again, New Crobuzon. There are, as it is often the norm in Bas-Lag, cases of both cultural and physical hybridity. Due to the political nature of the novel, the concept of social hybridity gains importance as well, especially regarding the status conflicts between the Remade and the others. In his 2013 article,

Newell comments on the social distinction between the Remade and the others: "...the novel examines the social distinctions between Remade and non-Remade individuals, mapping their eventual breakdown and dissolution" (496)." Indeed, most of the first half of the novel is rife with narration on the relations between the Remade, their fellow railway workers and their bosses. Newell comments on this also in the following way:

Within New Crobuzon and along the railway, the distinctions between Remade and non-Remade are stark. The Remade have no real rights; to call them second-class citizens would be generous. Early in *Iron Council*, before the revolution, such rigid boundaries are emphasized... (498, 499)

The forced hybridity - or abjection, in Newell's words - of the Remade is, therefore, a big part of the representation of hybridity in this novel. The plight of the Remade is further exemplified in the novel in their interactions with the other, non-Remade railway workers:

In response to the picketing [of the non-Remade workers], the Remade are worked hard. The foremen assure the strikers once that every effort is being made to expedite the money, and then they turn to the Remade, who are made to make up for the strike. The chained and altered men rock from blows, from the hexes of thaumaturge-guards; they drip under the weight of their own limbs as well as the loads they carry. (158).

'Stupid scab bastards', a cactus-man says. They pity the Remade, but cannot forgive them breaking the strikes. (158)

In this specific example, the Remade are both made to work under terrible conditions, and then are chastised for the work they have been forced into by the people who are supposed to be their peers. Newell examines this social abjection of the Remade, stating that:

In essence, Remaking, though clearly physical on one level, is only made intelligible through a process of societal abjection, in which Remade bodies, previously regarded as whole subjects, are forcibly dematerialized. (501)

Thus, the hybridity of the Remade is not only an inhibition regarding their bodily autonomy, but is also used by the authorities as a catalyst for rendering the Remade

social outcasts, constantly reinforcing new behavioural boundaries on the Remade and therefore forcing them into staying as slaves. Newell comments on the physical hybridity of the Remade in the following way, arguing that what is done to them physically is an excuse, a doorway to oppress them:

The extra limbs and alien tissues of the Remade, however, are merely signs of dematerialization, markers of abjection, rather than constituents or true referents of that status: though undeniably physical transformations, the Remade identity itself is a performative effect that uses the mutilated Remade body as its excuse, its alibi for oppression. (502)

As Newell also points out, the Remade are not called as such after the liberation of the train. Ann-Hari makes a passionate speech that functions as an act of social liberation for them: “why did you fight the gendarmes? Because *they*, the Remade, wouldn’t scab. They *wouldn’t*. They took the beating for you. To not break *your* strike. And they did it for *us*” (246). Through this and other liberating acts, the Remade become fRemade, “a linguistic transformation which perfectly represents the discursive nature of Remade and fRemade identity, the social distinctions between the two that play out in the material world” (Newell, 503). Their physical Remaking is seen as nothing more than physical differences between them and the others, though they might be - and usually are - still impaired by those modifications. This, perhaps, is one of the differences between representations of the Remade in *The Scar* and in *Iron Council*, as the former novel focused more on the physical changes, the re-Remakings that the Remade went through in Armada, while in *Iron Council* the social change is starkly shown. While this does not mean that the Remade aboard Armada experienced no social changes at all, it is true that the changes in *Iron Council* are more pronounced.

A non-revolutionary example of a Remade from *Iron Council* is Toro, whose remaking was talked about in *Perdido Street Station* as a grotesque example - the woman who had her baby’s arms grafted onto her face. In this novel, she is at first presented as an enigmatic figure who leads a revolution. However, towards the end, Ori learns that her motivation was purely individual, rather than for the Collective; she wants revenge on the Magister who Remade her, forgoing any real political or social change in order to get what she personally wants. This is not to say that she is a “bad” Remade, it just is

a representation of the more personal and emotional side of being Remade and not being able to deal with this forced hybridity/grotesquery.

In terms of cultural hybridity, Judah's encounters with the Stiltspear and his acquisition of the arts of golemetry are significant. The Stiltspear are destroyed by the railway project. However, an important part of their culture, the art of golem-making, lives on with Judah, and it later becomes a very important part of New Crobuzon in the shape of the time-golem that keeps the Iron Council from harm, perpetually, which can be read as ironic and/or romantic, considering that the legacy of the Stiltspear is now being used to preserve the hopes of those who revolt against the Stiltspear's destroyers. . It could also be argued that the Iron Council is a symbol of cultural hybridity too. However, it is itself subject to the cycle of hybridity - mentioned in the introduction - as in it starts off as a hybrid - of many people, places and cultures -, but later also becomes a society of its own, culturally. However, as Miller also argues, "Like Armada, Iron Council carries the mixed legacy of New Crobuzon with it" (55), therefore, while having its own socio-cultural and political identity, it is still a hybrid of the places it has come from and the people it has had as inhabitants regarding that same identity.

3.2 Grotesque and (New) Weird Features of *Iron Council*

The grotesqueness of *Iron Council* is mostly dependent on the actions and events that are narrated, rather than images of or reactions to people or objects. One of the first examples of this is given with the Tekke Vogu monk Qurabin, who is "enfolding within the Moment" (ref), which means that he can find lost things by paying the price of some part of him - anything intimately connected with him - being lost, such as his sex, his sight, his language or even his name. He joins Judah and Cutter in a suicide-mission; he is ready to lose everything, to disappear completely. However, one instance of his loss is particularly striking:

'It's not hidden anymore,' Qurabin said in a voice that was deadened. 'I know where to find it. But it cost... I lost my own language.' [...] 'I remember my mother,' Qurabin said quietly. 'I remember what she whispered to me. But I don't know what it means.' There was no horror in the voice. Only a passionless assent. (107)

The grotesqueness of this situation comes from its duality; Qurabin does something - a sacrifice - that could horrify any regular person; in one action, he learns something valuable, but also loses something of immense value - his native tongue - but for a very noble goal, which is to find the Iron Council, in order to warn them of danger.

The Iron Council before its liberation can itself be considered grotesque. To the New Crobuzon authority, it is a symbol of power and control. To everyone it destroys, it is a symbol of terror; not only to the native people it displaces and/or helps commit genocide, but also to its own Remade workers:

Anyone willing to return to work now, raise your hand, a captain says. The Remade are confused. He does not wait more than five seconds before turning his back. He signals someone and the tower fires. A shell arcs into the mid [sic.] of the Remade. [...] the circle of bloody clearance in the Remade. (159)

A strong accomplished man drives a spike down in three strikes. Many men take four swings: [...] Remade two. [...] There is one Remade woman who can do this [in one blow], too, but in her the ability is judged grotesque. (160)

The grotesque presentation of the Remade is later nullified, after the train is liberated:

Ann-Hari reaches out and grips Uzman and pulls him to her, he acquiescing with surprise. She kisses him on his mouth. He is Remade: it is a vivid transgression. There are shocks and exhalations, but Ann-Hari roars. (176)

Thus, the Remade of the Iron Council are normalized into having equal standing with the rest of the workers, becoming stripped of their grotesqueness in the eyes of the rest of the Iron Council community.

In terms of its (New) Weird-ness, *Iron Council* “further develops the author’s New Weird aesthetic and the rich, marvelous setting described in the first two novels” (Harvey, 100). The themes of transition and crossing boundaries are further developed through the journey of the Iron Council. In contrast to its predecessors, however, *Iron Council* does not lean as heavily on its Weird literature elements; it can be described

as a political, new weird, steampunk urban fantasy. The horrors of this novel are not facilitated through unknown or grotesque bodies, but rather through grotesque acts of violence, invasion and intrusion, often facilitated by the imperialistic power of New Crobuzon. This conforms with the definition of New Weird provided by Noys and Murphy, in their 2016 article:

The New Weird can be characterized as a new sensibility of welcoming the alien and the monstrous as sites of affirmation and becoming. In contradiction to Lovecraft's horror at the alien, influenced by his racism, the New Weird adopts a more radical politics that treats the alien, the hybrid, and the chaotic as subversions of the various normalizations of power and subjectivity. (125)

This “new” definition is particularly important for *Iron Council* and for Miéville's Weird in general, because what happens in the novel, with the Remade becoming fReemade, with revolution becoming a feasible option and with the Iron Council, a train that is almost an embodiment of hybridity and the alienated other, can be specifically characterized by this definition.

Iron Council, as the most overtly political of the Bas-Lag trilogy, presents the backbone of Miéville's politics of Bas-Lag, and therefore the politics of his worldbuilding. His use of hybridity as an agent of radicalization takes center stage in this novel, with the Remade of the council becoming truly free individuals once they are free from New Crobuzon's sphere of influence. While worldbuilding is not a focal point of this novel – as most of the worldbuilding has already been done for New Crobuzon and Armada in the first two novels – *Iron Council* is still able to shape Bas-Lag through its introduction of unique heterotopias and New Crobuzon's renewed colonialist approaches.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, the aim was to explore China Miéville's (New) Weird world of Bas-Lag through his use of heterotopias and hybridity. The use of these particular concepts was deemed important to analyze Miéville's work because of their prevalent use in Weird and New Weird literature, latter of which Miéville has been the breakthrough author of. Since these concepts were explored for the first novel of the Bas-Lag series, the focus of the thesis was shifted to *The Scar* and *Iron Council*, the second and third novels of Bas-Lag. In order to explore Miéville's worldbuilding of Bas-Lag through these concepts, a literary survey of these concepts, including the history of the term Worldbuilding, was necessary in the introduction. Foucaultian heterotopias, specifically, were found a good match for Miéville's work because of his focus on power and politics in his fantasy world, especially in *Iron Council*. One difference between Foucault's and Miéville's approaches to space and spatial politics was that Foucault had sought greater historical depth in his spatial observations on heterotopias. Miéville, on the other hand, chose a less anthropocentric approach, with a New-Weirdesque view on spatial relations. One other reason for the difference between Miéville's and Foucault's approaches to space could be that, since Foucault focuses on real spaces, his work is inescapably more anthropocentric than Miéville, whose spatial politics were, while being quite political in a literal sense, still represented inside a fantasy world. One of the possible reasons for Miéville's heavy-handed use of heterotopias can also be explained through his commentary on his own worldbuilding. His approach to fiction writing includes extensive systemization, for which he has found the inspiration from RPGs (role-playing games):

...After that, I construct a world, or an area, into which that general setting, that atmosphere, and the specific images I've focused on can fit. It's at that stage that the systemization begins for me. (Gordon and Miéville, 357)

Another significant concept in Miéville's work, hybridity, was chosen to explore the world of Bas-Lag as well. Both cultural and biological hybridity were found to be crucial parts of Miéville's worldbuilding, both in terms of facilitating the narrative and constructing the multiple settings in which the multiple narrations take place. Understanding the concept of hybridity in the post-colonial sense, therefore, was important to understand Miéville's New Weird approach in Bas-Lag. Miéville uses hybridity in both of the novels as a device facilitating thinly veiled allegories of class warfare in his narrative, something which becomes specifically pointed-out in *Iron Council*. Through the partly-shared plight of the Remade and the working class, Miéville pursues – and lets his protagonists pursue – a revolutionary worldbuilding in which the already-set sub-world of New Crobuzon is on the brink of falling apart, only to be built anew. Indeed, investigating the novels in the second and third chapters, the ideas mentioned above were found to work very well in exploring Miéville's worldbuilding of Bas-Lag. Through the use of hybridities and heterotopias of all kinds, Miéville constructs a New-Weirdesque, political/allegorical world in which he uses multiple narrators in order to tell a non-anthropocentric story of possible revolutions.

While *Iron Council* is the more overtly political of the novels, this is not to say that *The Scar* does not have its share of political allegories and implications. The juxtaposition of Armada and New Crobuzon can easily be read as a war between two different ideologies such as Capitalism and Marxism/Socialism. While Miéville is quite unsubtle with his allusions, these cities/city-states are not represented as ideologically whole and/or pure, and their internal conflicts are also successfully represented through the narrative, which brings to Miéville's worldbuilding a layer of believability in terms of the world becoming closer to, in Tolkien's terms, the Primary World, with all of its imperfections. It is, therefore, through this plausibility that Miéville is able to convey his political messages easily, as while the world of Bas-Lag is full of fantastic elements, its troubles are, at their core, very human, with perhaps the biggest one being class warfare.

The political heavy-handedness of Miéville's work also brings to the reader/critic the question of whether his work is propaganda or not. The Bas-Lag trilogy certainly allows the reader to interpret itself as an allegorical piece of work. With Miéville

himself acknowledging that he has always been left-wing (359), and calling himself a revolutionary socialist (360), the reader is clearly invited to read his work as political allegories. “Socialism and sf [science fiction] are the two most fundamental influences in my life” (360) Miéville says in this interview with Gordon, where he accepts the direct influence of real-life politics in *Perdido Street Station* by stating that there indeed are deliberate references to real-world labor issues in the novel (363). One of the reasons this thesis tries to avoid delving into Miéville’s real-life politics and its influence on his work is that Miéville himself leaves very little to interpretation. One can talk about the New Crobuzon as an imperialistic power, perhaps representing that of colonial-age British Empire, or the fact that the juxtaposition between New Crobuzon and Armada is similar to that of Capitalism and Communism/Socialism. However, with the answer to these interpretations already being out there, further discussions along these lines are likely to be at least partly unfruitful. This is definitely not to say that Miéville’s novels cannot be read through a political lens, but only to state that it cannot be done without references to Miéville’s overt political persona, separate from the novel’s world, and perhaps revealing very little information of purely literary interest.

The question of whether these novels are propaganda or not, in these circumstances, entails the question of where the line is between literature and propaganda, and whether a work can be both at the same time. My opinion of this is that a literary work can have political implications, both overtly and also subtly, and can still be read as a literary work, as I hope this thesis has demonstrated. In Miéville’s case, perhaps one downside of his political/allegorical approach to Worldbuilding is that it ties the world - Bas-Lag - too closely to the events of the narrative, which can inhibit the world’s ability to exist as a separate entity from the narration. However, while it may sound like it would be a disservice to the novels’ literary value to completely separate the worldbuilding from the narration in the name of analysis, since Miéville’s method of worldbuilding is to build through systematizing, taking this “system” apart can be a natural part of its analysis.

Therefore, a further exploration of Bas-Lag could be done through a comparative work on worldbuilding, in order to be able to separate the events further from the world itself

and to analyze that world in comparison with another built world such as Middle Earth, Earthsea or Discworld, which could also help separate New Weird worldbuilding from that of Weird and Tolkien-esque worldbuilding. Overall, in its current state, Miéville's worldbuilding seems to be hinged on his use of heterotopias and hybridity in order to both further his narrative and get across his political point(s) of view. However, a formulaic breakdown of Bas-Lag could help diagnose how separate elements of worldbuilding beyond those of hybridity and heterotopias also help make Miéville's world a rather chaotic but cohesive whole.

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APPENDICES

A. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

CHINA MIÉVILLE'İN TUHAF DÜNYASI BAS-LAG'DA HİBRİTLİK VE HETEROTOPYALAR

Bu tez, China Miéville'in *Perdido Street Station*, *The Scar* ve *The Iron Council'den* oluşan roman serisinde kurguladığı Bas-Lag adlı hayali dünyasını, serinin ikinci ve üçüncü romanlarına odaklanarak analiz etmektedir. Miéville'in sosyo-kültürel ve biyolojik melezlik kavramlarını nasıl kullandığını analiz etmekle beraber, aynı zamanda, Miéville'in dünya inşasında Foucaultcu heterotopyaların önemini, konumunu ve uygunluğunu incelemektedir. Miéville, hibritlik ve heterotopya kavramlarını kendi dünya inşasının temel ve karakteristik parçaları olarak kullanır ve bu nedenle tezin amacı, Miéville'in “Garip” dünya inşası varyantının bu kavramları hen “dünya inşası” teriminin tarihi, hem de [varlığı tartışmalı] “Yeni Tuhaf” varyant(lar)ı bağlamında nasıl kullandığını göstermektir.

Dünya inşasının bu tez içindeki tanımı bir yazarın kendi yapay dünya kurgusunu [kaçınılmaz bir şekilde Tolkienci bir terim olan Birincil Dünya'dan ilham alarak] yaratması üzerinedir. Buradaki tanım, Miéville'in üçlemesindeki kurgu dünyaya ve yerlere dahil tez konusu ile alakalı tüm faktörleri kapsayabilmek için tasarlanmıştır ve bu tezin - ve Miéville'in - özellikle melezlik ve heterotopyalara odaklanması için uygundur.

Bu tezde yapılan dünya inşası ile fantastik dünya inşası arasındaki ayrım, fantezi türünün eleştirel tarihindeki başka bir tema ile ilgilidir. Terimler arasındaki temel fark, *fantastik dünya inşasının* öncelikle Mendlesohn'un tüm anlatının fantastik dünyada gerçekleştiği “sürükleyici” fantezi hikayeleri olarak tanımladığı şeyi temsil etmesine rağmen, dünya inşasının Mendlesohn'un “müdahaleci” dediği, okuyucuların maddi

dünyasının ve fantastik dünyalarının gerçekçi temsillerinin birbiri içine geçebileceği anlatılara atıfta bulunmasıdır (Stableford 214). Yani, birincisi tamamen her şeyi kapsayan bir İkincil dünyada kurulu iken ikincisi hem Birincil hem de İkincil dünya inşasını içerir.

Tolkien, bu çok kullanılan terimleri önce bir derste (1938) ve daha sonra 1947 tarihli “Peri Öyküleri Üzerine” adlı makalesinde türetmiştir. Terimlerin kendileri Tolkien tarafından icat edilmiş olsa da, edebi dünya inşasının birincil-ikincil dünya ayırım(lar)ının açık örnekleri, Thomas More'un Utopia'sı gibi, onun zamanından önce mevcuttu. Ütopya, bir ada olduğu gerçeğinin, Birincil Dünya'dan ayrılmasını (ve dolayısıyla başkaları tarafından bilinmemesini) haklı çıkarmak için kullanıldığı geleneksel “ada” tipi İkincil dünya inşasını örneklendirir.

Dünya inşasına ilişkin diğer anlatıbilimsel yaklaşımlar ve söylemler, Olası Dünyalar Teorisi ve Metin Dünyası Teorisi'ni içerir. Bu teoriler bu tez içinde Miéville'in çalışmasıyla ilgili olarak tartışılmamakla birlikte, yine de dünya inşası konusundaki araştırmalar için önemli bir katkıdır.

Olası Dünyalar Teorisi, Ryan ve Bell tarafından tartışıldığı gibi, ilk olarak 1975'te Thomas Pavel tarafından “kurgusal bir dünya yaratırken (bu dünya teknik olarak mümkün bir dünya olsun ya da olmasın), edebi metin bu dünyaya kendi yasalarını empoze eder ve yeni bir olasılıklar ufkunu tanımlar” (Ryan & Bell, 9) şeklinde ortaya atılmıştır. Bu teori, felsefi bir perspektiften, "bir şeylerin şu anda olduğundan farklı olabileceği" çoklu dünyaları ele alır.

Metin dünyası teorisi ise daha çok dilin insan zihnindeki temsillerine odaklanır. Metin dünyası teorisi doğrudan dünya inşası ile ilgili olmasa da Gavins'in belirttiği gibi, bir araştırma çerçevesidir. Bu teori bağlamında dünya inşası yalnızca zihinde gerçekleşir ve bu da yazara ait dünya inşasındaki anlatı boşluklarını ve okuyucuların metne uygun olarak oluşturdukları zihinsel dünyada bu boşlukları kendilerinin nasıl doldurdukları sorusunu da gündeme getirir. Metin dünyası teorisi, bu bağlamda, yazarın kendi dünyasını inşa etmek için dili kullanma biçimleri açısından daha büyük bir farkındalık kazanmasını sağlar.

Bas-Lag Miéville'in *Perdido Street Station*, *The Scar*, *The Iron Council* adlı romanlarının ve aynı zamanda *Jack* adlı kısa öyküsünün yer aldığı dünyanın adıdır. Steampunk türünden esinlenir ve roman dünyasında çoğunlukla *thaumaturgy* olarak adlandırılan bir sihir kullanımı da bulunur. Bu tezde bahsedilen kurgusal dünyanın biyolojik türlerinden bazıları Cray (insan-kaya ıstakozu meleziye benzeyen bir tür), Garuda (yaşam tarzı açısından göçebe olan insansı yırtıcı kuşlara benzeyen bir ırk), Grindylow (gizem ve korkuyla çevrili bir insansı balık ırkı), İnsanlar (gerçek insanlardan farklı, Bas-Lag'dakilerin sihir kullanabilmeleridir), Khepri (insansı böcek benzeri yaratıkların ırkı) ve Scabmettler'lardır (yaralandıklarında kanları kabuk benzeri bir yapıya dönüşen insansı varlıklardır). Çoğunlukla cezalandırma yoluyla oluşturulan Remade isimli varlıklar tüm ırklar bu şekilde cezalandırılabilirliğinden dolayı, bir ırk olarak sayılmaz.

Bas-Lag'da karakteristik olarak önemli oldukları için bu tez, bu kurgusal dünyanın iki ana fantastik dünya inşa etme unsurunu kullanımına odaklanır: heterotopyalar ve melezlik.

Heterotopya, ilk olarak Michel Foucault'nun 1986 tarihli "Başka Mekanlara Dair" adlı makalesinde üzerinde durulan bir kavramdır. Varlıkları itibariyle bir şekilde "öteki" olan mekânları temsil ederler ve tanım gereği tüm "gerçek" mekânları kapsarlar. Dünyanın kendi doğal unsurlarına sahipken -Fantastik dünyalarda genellikle öyledirler- rahatsız edici ve/veya dünyanın geri kalanıyla uyumsuz olabilirler. Kısaca, dünyalar içinde dünyalar şeklinde ele alınabilirler. Bu tez, esas olarak, Foucault'nun önerdiği altı ilke aracılığıyla Bas-Lag'daki heterotopyaları araştırır ve çoğunlukla iki ana heterotopya türüne atıfta bulunur: sapkınlık heterotopyaları ve kriz heterotopyaları.

Mezlik kelimesinin biraz çalkantılı bir geçmişi vardır. Bugün genellikle birkaç farklı şeyin bir karışımını ifade etmek için kullanılsa da, kelimenin kendisi Latince *hibrida'dan*, dişi bir domuz ve bir erkek yaban domuzunun yavrularından, gelir (Stross, 255).

Kültürel melezlik kavramı, koloni çağı sonrası dünyanın git gide “küresel” bir hal alması ile ortaya çıkmıştır. Miéville'in Bas-Lag adlı dünyasının neredeyse tamamen melezlerden oluştuğu düşünüldüğünde, heterotopyalarla birlikte fiziki ve kültürel melezlik, Bas-Lag'da çok önemli kavramlardır. Mekânsal melezlik (En büyük örnekler New Crobuzon ve Armada'dır) veya biyolojik melezlik (örneğin Khepri, böcek benzeri insansı varlıklar) veya sosyal melezlik (türlerin sosyal olarak birbirine karışması) olsun, Miéville'in kurgusal dünyası melezlik üzerine kuruludur.

Perdido Street Station'da öne çıkan temalardan biri de şehrin kendisinin melezliği. Şehrin melezliği, Miéville için hem bir kurgu aracıdır (ana kahraman Isaac, geçişten ve değişen sınırlardan ortaya çıkan enerjiden yararlanan bir makine yapmaya çalışırken), hem de New Crobuzon'un inşası göz önüne alındığında bir dünya inşa etme aracıdır. Bu açıdan New Crobuzon heterotopyalardan ve melezleşmiş varlıklardan oluşur ve kendisi de bir heterotopya, ve bu melez varlıklardan biridir.

Bu nedenle, New Crobuzon'un önemini Bas-Lag'ın daha geniş bağlamında analiz etmek, Miéville'in dünya inşasını melezlik ve heterotopya kullanımı açısından anlamak için gerekli bir ilk adımdır. Bununla birlikte, bu ilk adım Joan Gordon tarafından *Perdido Street Station* referans alınarak atıldığı için, bu tez, New Crobuzon hakkında bilgi için Gordon'un çalışmasına başvurabilir ve sadece bu noktaları göstermek için *Perdido Street İstasyonu'ndan* örnekler kullanabilir.

Tuhaf, Yeni Tuhaf ve Grotesk kavramlarını bu tezin odağına uygun olarak tanıtmak ve tartışmak gerekmektedir.

Weird Tales (Kur. 1923) gibi dergilerin ilk sayfalarında yer aldığı şekliyle “tuhaf bir hikâye”, “doğüstü bir öğeye sahip olan ancak geleneksel öykü, hikâye, hayalet hikayesi veya Gotik masal kategorisine girmeyen bir hikâye türüdür...” (VanderMeer A. ve VanderMeer J., np). Bu tür bir kurguyu belirtmek için Tuhaf teriminin kullanılması, Lovecraft'ın birçok öyküsünü yayınladığı *Weird Tales* (Kur. 1923) dergisinin adıyla başlamıştır. Lovecraft tarafından ortaya sürüldüğü ve VanderMeer'lar tarafından da araştırıldığı gibi, bu bağlamda “Tuhaf” kelimesi cinayet, kan veya iğrenç canavarlardan daha fazlasını, dünyanın veya doğal yasaların ötesinde bir anlayışa ulaşmaya çalışmanın açıklanamaz, açıklanamaz korkusunu temsil eder (VanderMeer A. ve VanderMeer J. np). Neredeyse “karanlık bir düş ya da

tecelli” (Ibid. np) ya da benim söylemimle bir anti-yücelik, ya da – Miéville'in kendi sözleriyle – “radikalleşmiş yüce bir geri tepme” (*Weird Fiction*, 511) gibidir. Özellikle Tuhaf olarak sınıflandırılabilir en eski kurgu örneklerinden bazıları Lovecraft'ın çalışmaları arasındadır, bu da Tuhaf'ın genellikle dokunaç figürleri, ahtapot benzeri canavarlar ve herhangi bir tanımlamayı reddeden yaratıkların sümüksü vücutlarıyla ilişkilendirilmesinin nedenlerinden biri olabilir.

Yeni Tuhaf'tan bahsederken Jeff VanderMeer, aşağıdaki tanımı öne sürer:

Yeni Tuhaf, geleneksel fantezide bulunan “mekan” hakkındaki romantikleştirilmiş fikirleri büyük ölçüde gerçekçi, karmaşık gerçek dünya modellerini seçerek, bilim ve fantazi unsurlarını birleştirebilecek ortamların yaratılması için atlama noktası olarak kullanarak altüst eden bir tür kentsel, ikincil dünya kurgusudur. (*The New Weird*, 17)

Jeff VanderMeer'in *The New Weird'e* girişine göre, Barker'ın dehşeti ile Lovecraft dehşeti arasındaki temel fark, genellikle “bir canavarın ya da dönüşümün kabulü ile başlaması ve hikayenin bunun sonrasında gelmesi” idi (13). VanderMeer bunu Yeni Tuhaf'ın çok önemli bir parçası olan korku türü hakkında bir açıklama ile takip ediyor: “O halde, sadece ‘korku’ değil, canavarlara ve groteskliğe odaklanmak için yeniden tasarlanmış, ‘sınır tanımayan’ korku, Yeni Tuhaf'ın atan kalbini oluşturuyor.” (13). Bu, Tuhaf-lık tartışmalarında grotesk kavramının da önemini ortaya koyuyor. Miéville'in *Perdido Street Station*'ı, “daha sonra Yeni Garip olarak bilinmeye başlanan şeyin paratoneri” olarak kabul edilir (14), Miéville daha sonra bu terimi “bunun bir pazarlama kategorisi haline geldiğini ve bu nedenle onu daha fazla ilgilendirmediğini iddia ederek” reddetmiş olsa da,

Bölüm 2: *The Scar*

Bas-Lag üçlemesinin ikinci cildi üçleme içinde benzersiz bir yere sahiptir. New Crobuzon'un heybetli varlığı roman boyunca hala hissedilirken, yüzen Armada şehri *The Scar*'da ortaya çıkıyor ve New Crobuzon ile hem benzerlikler hem de büyük farklılıklar taşıyor. New Crobuzon gibi, tür açısından çok zengin ve karma (melez) bir popülasyona sahiptir, ancak burada tüm türler eşit kabul edilir. Daha sonra romanda farklı türde bir yer, gerçekliğin yıkıldığı, Yara denilen masalsı bir yer de tanıtılır.

Heterotopyalar, melezlik ve (Yeni) Tuhaf grotesk gibi hakim motifler ve kavramlar bu roman boyunca hüküm sürmeye devam eder.

Yüzen şehir Armada, tezin bu bölümünün analizinin odak noktasıdır. Bu şehir çoğunlukla, her zaman öfkeli olan ve New Crobuzon'dan korku ve sıkıntı içinde kaçan bir dilbilimci olan Bellis'in bakış açısından görülür ve tanımlanır. Şaşırtıcı olmayan bir şekilde, Bellis, kendini hayatının geri kalanını deyim yerindeyse yabancı bir şehirde yaşamak zorunda bir halde bulması üzerine, Armada'yı gerçek bir şehir olarak kabul etmekte zorlanır. Orada olmaktan memnun olan yeni arkadaşı Johannes Tearfly'a, Armada ile ilgili ilgili eleştirisini, istikrarlı ve yerleşik bir şehir fikrinden çok farklı, çok grotesk ve hatta bir panayır tarzında garip olarak nitelendiren terimlerle ifade eder. Johannes, buna karşılık olarak, muazzam bir tarihsel derinliğe, New Crobuzon kadar çok veya daha fazla yola (yatay olarak yayılmak yerine üst üste yığılmış) ve çok büyük bir nüfusa sahip olmakla birlikte, Armada'nın çokkültürlülüğün en zengin ve en dinamik merkezi olduğunu iddia eder.

Tezin bu kısmında Miéville'in dünya inşası Armada ve içerdiği toplumlarının heterotopyalar ve melezliklerinin analizi yoluyla araştırılıyor. Bu bölüm ayrıca Mathieson'un (2019) Okyanussal Tuhaf kavramına ve Ann & Jeff Vandermeer'in Yeni Tuhaf tanım(lar)ına atıfta bulunarak *The Scar*'ın (Yeni) Tuhaf Kurgudaki yerini tartışıyor .

Armada, ilk bakışta (adından da anlaşılacağı gibi), birbirine yapışmış farklı gemilerin bir araya gelmesidir. Bununla birlikte, Bellis'in orada geçirdiği süre boyunca keşfettiği üzere, New Crobuzon'dan hem çok farklı hem de ona benzer bir ekosisteme sahiptir. Kendi halkı, kendi kuralları ve kendi kültürü vardır ama aynı zamanda tıpkı New Crobuzon gibi birçok farklı parçadan ve heterotopyalardan oluşan melez bir bütündür. Armada yalnızca heterotopyalardan oluşmakla kalmaz, aynı zamanda sürekli genişleyen ve hareket eden bir bütündür ve Foucault'nun “zamanın kendi zirvesini inşa etmeyi ve zirveye tırmanmayı asla bırakmadığı” süresiz zamansal toplanma heterotopyalarına da benzer. (7). Bu şehrin heterotopyalarının en göze çarpanları Şehir olarak Armada, Korsan Topluluğu olarak Armada, Hapishane olarak Armada, Kütüphane ve Armada'nın altındaki yaşam alanı olarak ele alınmıştır.

Armada, doğası gereği, romanın kendisinin de belirttiği gibi bir melezdır (102). Tamamen farklı gemilerden inşa edilmiş olmanın eşsiz niteliklerine sahiptir. Karada birleşmiş bir kentten farklı olarak şehir, biçimini, toplumsal yapısını ve yerini sürekli değiştirir. Bu biraz alışılmışın dışında özgürlük, şehre New Crobuzon'un emperyalist, dayatmacı varlığından bir dereceye kadar özgürlük tanır ve bir dış otoriteden izin almadan kendi ihtiyaçlarına cevap vermesini sağlar. Benzer faydalar, bu olağanüstü kasabada yaşayan toplumun melezliğinde de bulunur.

The Scar'daki grotesklik, çoğunlukla Bellis Coldwine'in odağı üzerinden işlenmektedir, çünkü o, bir New Crobuzon vatandaşı olarak, bilinmeyen diğer bakış açılarına göre daha fazla “canavarlaştırmaya” eğilimlidir. Bununla birlikte, romanda, Bellis'in Fennec'ten (oraya casus olarak giden) öğrendiği gibi, Gengris gibi, genel olarak karakterlerin normalleştirmesine meydan okuyan başka yerler ve ırklar vardır. Bellis Coldwine'in bakış açısına göre, Armada, “Eski” Tuhaf diyebileceğimiz şeye yakın bir şekilde temsil edilir; bununla, insanların anlayamadıkları şeylerden korktukları, bir şekilde Lovecraftçı bir ontolojiyi yansıtan şekillerde inşa edilmiş gibi görüldüğü kastedilmektedir. Bu tezin girişinde tartışıldığı gibi, anlaşılmaz olanın genellikle teröre neden olan ile eşanlı olduđu ve yabancınn kaçılması gereken bir şey olduđu, kişinin yeni çevresinin her şeyden önce insan-odaklı bir görünümüdür. Dolayısıyla Bellis'in bir karakter olarak gelişimi de insan merkezlidir, çünkü grotesk bulduđu şeylere bakışı ötekileştirici niteliktedir. Miéville, Bellis'i melez, grotesk ve öteki görüşleriyle ilgili olarak Isaac'in antitezine yakın bir karakter olarak yaratmıştır. *Terpsichoria*'daki Remade'e tepkisi bu grotesk yaklaşımının bir örneğidir. Bu tutum, bilinmeyenle karşı karşıya kalan, tanıdık olan her şeye tutunmaya çalışan daha önceki Tuhaf edebiyatının kahramanlarının tutumuna çok benzer. Bu nedenle bu, okuyucuya Miéville'in (Yeni) Tuhaf dünyası hakkında oldukça geleneksel bir Tuhaf bakış açısı verir; bu, Miéville'in Tuhaf'ı ve geleneksel Tuhaf arasında ayırım yapabilmek için başka bir araç olarak da kullanılabilir.

New Crobuzon'dan Bellis Coldwine dışında anlatısı romanların geri kalanından ayrı gibi görünse de *The Scar* Bas-Lag'in (ve dolayısıyla Miéville'in) siyasetini anlatıya enjekte etmekte oldukça başarılıdır. Miéville'in Marksist/Sosyalist ilhamları, Armada sakinlerinin yaşamlarında görülebilir, özellikle Armada'ya giren herkesin eşit bir konuma getirildiği ve kendilerine göre yapılacak işlere sahip olduđu düşünöldüğünde.

Bölüm 3: *Iron Council*

Miéville'in sınırları ve sınırları aşma ve bulanıklaştırma takıntısı, üçlemenin önceki iki romanında olduğu gibi *Iron Council*'da da tam olarak yürürlüktedir. *The Scar*'da olduğu gibi, alışılmadık bir mekan (Foucaultcu terimlerle) veya bireysel bir ortam sunulur ve yine romanın başlığı aynı zamanda sıra dışı ve Fantastik bir mekana verilen isimle aynıdır. Tezin bu kısmında Demir Konsey ("Marksist... yurttaşların" (Pole np) mesken tuttuğu "sürekli" bir tren) heterotopik ve melez özellikleri, grotesk ve Tuhaf edebiyata atıflarla ele alınan mekânın ismidir. Bir başka ilgi çekici yer ise, bu sefer New Crobuzon'un etrafındaki, bir demiryolu projesi için New Crobuzon tarafından yağmalanmakta olan vahşi doğadır. *Iron Council*, bu sebeplerden ötürü her şeyden çok terörizm, emperyalizm, ırkçılık, savaş, işçi hakları ve cinsellik gibi konuları ele alan bir fantastik-siyaset romanıdır.

Anlatı, üç ana karakterin geçmiş ve şimdiki eylemlerini takip ediyor: Ori, Cutter ve Judah Low, New Crobuzon, Bununla birlikte mekânsal olarak New Crobuzon'u çevreleyen vahşi doğa ve "sürekli" tren Demir Konsey etrafında odaklanıyor. Bu nedenle, bu bölüm çoğunlukla, yukarıda bahsedilen karakterler ve keşfedilen yeni ortam ile New Crobuzon'un dışında neler olduğuna, golem kullanan bir yaratıklar ırkı (farklı malzemelerden yapılmış canlılar ve farklı malzemelerden yapılmış canlı yaratıklar) olan Stiltspear'a ve kendilerini özgürleştirmiş Remade'ler olan fReemade'lere atıfta bulunarak odaklanmaktadır. Son olarak, *Iron Council*'in dünya inşası Bas-Lag, New Weird ve Miéville's Weird bağlamında tartışılmaktadır.

Daha önceki iki romanda olduğu gibi, heterotopyalar ve melezlik Miéville'in *Iron Council*'daki yazarlığında önemli bir yer tutmaya devam ediyor. Başlangıçta, Demir Konsey, yalnızca savaş siperlerinin heterotopya olabileceği anlamında bir heterotopyadır, çünkü bir New Crobuzon projesidir. Özgürleştirildikten sonra, Demir Konsey hem kendi sakinleri hem de New Crobuzon vatandaşları için bir umut ışığı olur ve yeni devrimci hareketlerin ve dolayısıyla şehir içinde devrimci grupların bir birliği olan The Collective gibi yeni heterotopyaların oluşmasına yardımcı olur.

Demir Konsey'de Hibritlik üç ana konu üzerinden incelenir: Demir Konsey, Remade ve tekrar New Crobuzon. Bas-Lag'da genellikle norm olduğu gibi hem kültürel hem

de fiziksel melezlik oldukça büyük bir yer kaplıyor. Remade'lerin zorunlu melezliği, bu romandaki melezlik temsilinin büyük bir bölümünü oluşturuyor. Remade'in melezliği sadece onların bedensel özerkliğine ilişkin bir engelleme değil, aynı zamanda yetkililer tarafından Remade'i sosyal olarak dışlanmış hale getirmek için bir katalizör olarak da kullanılıyor,

Kültürel melezlik açısından, Judah'ın Stiltspear ile karşılaşması ve geometri sanatlarını edinmesi önemli bir temsil olarak kabul edilebilir. Demir Konsey'in de kültürel melezliğin bir simgesi olduğu söylenebilir.

Iron Council'in groteskliği, insanların veya nesnelerin görüntülerinden veya tepkilerinden çok, anlatılan eylem ve olaylara bağlıdır. Bunun ilk örneklerinden biri, “Anın içine sarılmış” olan Tekke Vogu keşişi Qurabin ile verilir; “Anın içine sarılmış” olması yoldaşları için bilgi edinmek adına cinsiyeti, görüşü, dili ve hatta adı gibi her şeyi kaybetmeye, tamamen kaybolmaya hazır bir birey olmasına yol açar.

Demir Konsey'in kurtuluşundan/özgürleşmesinden önceki hali grotesk olarak kabul edilebilir. New Crobuzon otoritesine göre, şekillenen bu hali güç ve kontrolün sembolüdür. Yok ettiği herkes için terörün simgesidir; sadece yerinden ettiği ve/veya soykırım yapmasına yardım ettiği yerli halka değil, aynı zamanda kendi Remade işçileri için de.

(Yeni) Tuhafılığı açısından, *Iron Council* “yazarın Yeni Tuhaf estetiğini ve ilk iki romanda anlatılan zengin, muhteşem ortamı daha da geliştirir” (Harvey, 100). Geçiş ve sınırları aşma temaları, Demir Konsey'in yolculuğu boyunca daha da gelişir. Bununla birlikte, öncekilerin aksine, *Iron Council*, Tuhaf edebiyat unsurlarına o kadar fazla bağlı değildir; politik, yeni, tuhaf, steampunk bir şehir fantezisi olarak tanımlanabilir. Bu romanın dehşeti, bilinmeyen veya grotesk bedenler aracılığıyla değil, daha çok New Crobuzon'un emperyalist gücü tarafından kolaylaştırılan grotesk şiddet, istila ve izinsiz giriş eylemleri yoluyla temsil edilir.

Bas-Lag üçlemesinin en açık biçimde politik romanı olan *Demir Konsey*, Miéville'in Bas-Lag siyasetinin belkemiğini ve dolayısıyla onun dünya inşasının siyasetini sunar. Miéville'in hibritliği radikalleşmenin bir aracı olarak kullanması, Yeni Crobuzon'un etki alanından kurtulduktan sonra konseyin Remade'lerinin özgür bireyler haline

gelmesiyle bu romanda merkez sahneyi alıyor. Dünya inşası bu romanın odak noktası olmasa da – dünya inşasının çoğu ilk iki romanda New Crobuzon ve Armada için zaten yapıldığı için – *Iron Council*, benzersiz heterotopyalar ve New Crobuzon'un yeni, daha grotesk tanıtımıyla Bas-Lag'ı hala şekillendirmektedir.

Bölüm 4: Sonuç

Bu tezde amaç, China Miéville'in (Yeni) Garip Bas-Lag dünyasını heterotopyalar ve melezlik kullanımı yoluyla keşfetmekti. Bu özel kavramların kullanımı, Miéville'in çığır açan yazarı olduğu Tuhaf ve Yeni Tuhaf literatüründe yaygın kullanımları nedeniyle Miéville'in çalışmalarını analiz etmek için önemli kabul edildi. Bas-Lag serisinin ilk romanı için bu kavramlar halihazırda araştırıldığından, tezin odağı Bas-Lag'ın ikinci ve üçüncü romanları olan *The Scar and Iron Council'e* kaydırıldı. Miéville'in Bas-Lag dünyasını bu kavramlar aracılığıyla keşfetmek için, girişte dünya inşası teriminin tarihi de dahil olmak üzere bu kavramların edebi bir incelemesi gerekliydi. Foucaultcu heterotopyalar, fantezi dünyasında, özellikle *Demir Konsey'de*, güç ve politikaya odaklanması nedeniyle, Miéville'in çalışmasıyla özellikle iyi bir eşleşme oldu. Foucault'nun ve Miéville'in mekân ve mekânsal politikaya yaklaşımları arasındaki bir fark, Foucault'nun heterotopyalar üzerine uzamsal gözlemlerinde daha büyük bir tarihsel derinlik aramasıydı. Öte yandan Miéville, mekansal ilişkiler üzerine Yeni-Tuhafsal bir bakış açısıyla daha az insan merkezli bir yaklaşım seçti. Miéville'in ve Foucault'nun mekâna yaklaşımları arasındaki farkın bir başka nedeni de, Foucault gerçek mekanlara odaklandığından, eserinin, mekansal siyasetinin, kelimenin tam anlamıyla oldukça politik olmakla birlikte, hala bir fantezi dünyası temsil eden Miéville'den kaçınılmaz olarak daha insan merkezli olması olabilir. Miéville'in heterotopyaları sık bir şekilde kullanmasının olası nedenlerinden biri, kendi dünya inşasına ilişkin yorumuyla da açıklanabilir.

Miéville'in çalışmasındaki bir diğer önemli kavram olan melezlik, Bas-Lag dünyasını da keşfetmek için seçilmiştir. Hem kültürel hem de biyolojik melezliğin, hem anlatıyı kolaylaştırmak hem de çoklu anlatıların yer aldığı çoklu ortamları inşa etmek açısından Miéville'in dünya inşasının önemli parçaları olduğu kabul edildi. Bu nedenle, post-kolonyal anlamda melezlik kavramını anlamak, Miéville'in Bas-Lag'daki Yeni Tuhaf

yaklaşımını anlamak için önemliydi. Miéville, her iki romanda da melezliği, anlatısında ince örtülü sınıf savaşı alegorilerini kolaylaştıran bir araç olarak kullanır; bu, *Iron Council*'da özellikle işaret edilen bir şeydir. Miéville, Remade ve işçi sınıfının kısmen paylaşılan kötü durumu aracılığıyla, New Crobuzon'un halihazırda kurulmuş olan alt-dünyasının parçalanmanın eşiğinde olduğu, sadece yeniden inşa edilecek olan devrimci bir dünya inşasının peşine düşer ve kahramanlarının bunu sürdürmesine izin verir. İkinci ve üçüncü bölümlerdeki romanları araştırırken, yukarıda bahsedilen fikirlerin Miéville'in Bas-Lag dünya inşasını keşfetmek için uygun olduğu tespit edildi. Özet olarak bu romanda Miéville, olası devrimlerin insan merkezli olmayan bir hikayesini anlatmak için birden fazla anlatıcı kullandığı Yeni-Tuhaf, politik/alegorik bir dünya inşa eder.

Iron Council, serideki romanların daha açıkça politik olanı olsa da, bu, *The Scar*'ın politik alegori ve imalardan bir paya sahip olmadığı anlamına gelmez. Armada ve New Crobuzon'un yan yana gelmesi, Kapitalizm ve Marksizm/Sosyalizm gibi iki farklı ideoloji arasındaki bir savaşı temsil eden bir alegori olarak da okunabilir.

Romanlarının siyasi ağırlığı Miéville'in çalışmasının, okuyucuya/eleştirmene yönelik bir propaganda olup olmadığı sorusunu da getiriyor. Bas-Lag üçlemesi kesinlikle okuyucunun kendisini alegorik bir eser olarak yorumlamasına izin veriyor. Miéville'in kendisinin her zaman solcu olduğunu kabul etmesiyle (359) ve kendisini devrimci sosyalist (360) olarak adlandırmasıyla, okuyucu açıkça onun eserini politik alegoriler olarak okumaya davet ediliyor.

Bu romanların propaganda olup olmadığı sorusu, bu koşullarda edebiyat ile propaganda arasındaki çizginin nerede olduğu ve bir eserin aynı anda her ikisi olup olmayacağı sorusunu da beraberinde getirir. Benim düşüncem, bir edebi eserin hem açık hem de örtülü olarak siyasi imaları olabileceği ve bu tezin gösterdiğini umduğum gibi yine de edebi bir eser olarak okunabileceğidir.

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